



BELFAST INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL SUSTAINABLE EVENTS & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Belfast International Arts Festival is committed to ensuring that our activities and events are as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible and comply with current legislation as well as recognise future changes. We endeavour, where ever possible, to incorporate the policy of Reduce, Recycle, Reuse and Recover in all our activities and events, and encourage the adoption of such policies among our partners, and include compliance with our policy in our tendering processes.

This document is to provide all staff, stakeholders, partners and contracted service providers an understanding of the impact BIAF's programmes and operations have on the environment now, and to provide realistic guidance and actions that BIAF will undertake to reduce these impacts.

INTRODUCTION

What is the problem?

Our global climate is changing, causing devastating impacts on many around the world, particularly those who have the fewest resources and are the most vulnerable. Without decisive changes, the situation will become far worse over coming decades, with mass migration, more pandemics and conflicts over resources deemed 'inevitable' unless urgent action is taken.

What is the context?

The global response to climate change means it is essential for our organisation to evolve its current form of operating. The historic Paris Agreement commits the world's nations to limiting global heating through carbon emissions reductions. The UK has committed to reducing emissions by the fastest rate of any major economy. This will be achieved through changes in law, policy and financial incentives, which will prohibit or discourage carbon-intensive activities. Public opinion and behaviour are also shifting quickly, with young people citing climate change as the most important issue of our time, and environmental action becoming increasingly important to Festival-goers.

Why do we want to take action?

If BIAF is to flourish in a net-zero carbon future, we need to find innovative, sustainable ways of operating and fulfilling the function of a Festival: providing time and space for people to exchange ideas and celebrate our common humanity.

We are committed to minimising any adverse environmental effects caused as a result of our activities. We aim to meet all relevant regulatory requirements concerning the protection of the environment, minimising where possible resource and materials use. We will continually assess and aim to reduce the environmental impact of our programme and operations.

1. *Creative desire:* Creatives of all genres have been responsive to the great debates and concerns of their day, seeking locations and partnerships which allow them to freely create their response. We fully support that desire and are keen to nurture, raise and allow discussion, debate and action by using our creative platform to bring issues to the fore, particularly within our Talks & Ideas programming.
2. *Ethical responsibility:* We know that as an established organisation in a wealthy country, we are emitters and are more able than many to reduce such emissions. Further, by reducing our emissions, we will help reduce the impact on those in our own country and around the world who are more vulnerable due to geography, health, lack of resources or other factors.
3. *Audience and funder expectation:* Cultural audiences, sponsors and funders are increasingly supporting organisations that perform highly against Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria, a trend which we not only welcome but are keen to encourage and evolve especially amongst younger audience groups.
4. *Business interest:* As a responsible business, BIAF is planning for a managed transition to carbon neutrality. We want to change according to our own design, rather than wait until we are forced to change by necessity. Acting now will help to preserve and futureproof our reputations, our visions and our finances.
5. *Unique ability to help find solutions and bring about change:* The challenge of climate change calls for the spirit of global solidarity, understanding and empathy. While reducing our own emissions won't save the planet alone, our influence extends through the work we programme and the events we hold, through our venues, our funders, our city and our global audiences, amplifying imaginative responses and promoting exchange and debate, with the potential to inform policy and motivate demonstrable change

CARBON REDUCTION PLAN - Our Action Areas

Artist and Production Travel

- Encourage travel using more sustainable public transport, such as train, ferry or electric vehicle
- Where possible, engage artists for longer periods so they can make fewer journeys
- Share international touring productions with other venues/Festivals across the UK/island of Ireland
- Enable digital participation
- Reduce the carbon intensity of freight transport by building sets locally

BIAF Team Travel

- Avoid domestic flights when possible
- Choose carriers that use carbon offsets
- Set carbon targets for staff and artist travel which decrease year on year
- Attend more meetings digitally
- Programme more work from video or livestream rather than flying to see
- Continue flexible/hybrid working and work from home policies

Lighting, Heat and Power

- Limit energy use only to what is necessary
- Continue with policy to turn off heat from April to September annually
- When purchasing new equipment choose the most energy efficient options
- Ensure equipment is not left on standby when not in use
- Maintain equipment regularly
- Where possible avoid the use of mercury and cadmium based batteries and switch to rechargeable ones.

Offices

As the BIAF offices are rented we are not always able to control the supply of our services but will endeavour where possible to:

- Minimise the use of electricity, heating, air conditioning
- Replace lighting stock with LED at end of life
- Discuss matters of insulation, resource economies and energy efficiency assessments with our landlord
- Investigate the option of re-location to a more energy efficient site

Digital

- Reduce file size of videos and images shared via social media
- Switch to a carbon offsetting internet search engine, such as Ecosia
- Encourage staff to be mindful of their digital footprint and to take the following actions where possible:
 - Use bookmark functions to avoid searching for articles and documents you continually reference
 - Download content rather than stream
 - Avoid sending unnecessary emails (by proofreading to reduce the need for sending

corrections and missing info, and avoiding forwarding long email chains, cc'ing unnecessary contacts or resending large attachments)

- Link to files already stored in the cloud, rather than attaching copies to emails

Audience Travel

This is the largest contributor to our existing carbon footprint, we will:

- Motivate audiences to choose lower impact travel option
- Expand our digital offering to enable a portion of international audiences to enjoy the Festival without attending in-person
- Include a note in our event reminder emails to travel to the event in the most sustainable way possible (e.g. by using public transport or carpooling)
- Measure audience transport use in post-event surveys

Waste, Paper and Print

- Shift from paper-based systems towards digital systems
- Strengthen sustainable procurement policies to reduce the amount of material which would eventually become waste or recycling
- Work with our marketing collateral suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of our printed material
- Use recycled materials and source sustainable paper supplies
- Replace print with online communications where possible.

Production, Events and Venues

This is a wide area of focus, encompassing:

- Zero-carbon power solutions for outdoor events
- Building sustainability into production design
- Reducing emissions from production freight
- Ensuring that more materials can be re-purposed post-Festival; and working with touring companies and venue partners to improve the sustainability of venue operations and facilities.
- Work with partners to make use of industry tools such as 'Julie's Bicycle' to collect data on the carbon footprint of events and identify areas for reduction.

<https://juliesbicycle.com/>

Catering

- Work with local catering businesses for the supply of catering for events
- Procure local, seasonal food and drink
- Minimise packaging and carbon in the supply chain
- Encourage an increase in plant-based options

Accommodation

- Book greener accommodation for staff and guests, as well as
- Encourage audiences and participants to choose accommodation providers that can demonstrate their environmental credentials
- Encourage artists, staff and guests to opt for shared rooms wherever possible

Influencing Through Artistic Programmes and Leadership

Motivate others to reduce their own carbon footprint through our creative programmes and management actions, and advocate for greater climate action by businesses, governments and throughout society.

- Appoint a Green Champion
- Seek accreditation through initiatives such as Green Tourism and the Theatre Green Book

Carbon Offsetting

Though not ideal, nor a full solution, Carbon Offsetting will form part of this reduction plan using certified UK organisations accredited by the UK Environmental Agency, such as:

- Woodland Carbon Code
- Peatland Code

TARGETS

BIAF has set targets through to 2027 of a year-on-year reduction of 15%. An annual review will be undertaken, at which point the targets may be adjusted based on performance/outcomes.

Across the core operations of BIAF, we aim to reduce emissions by 70%, against a UK Government target of 68%, by 2030. In the current stage of our Action Plan from 2023 (baseline) to 2027, we set out to achieve a year-on-year reduction of 15%.

We will carry out an annual audit and review, and adjust actions and future targets against the outcomes.

BIAF Target	2023/24		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
<i>Carbon Footprint by heading</i>	<i>(kgC02e)</i>	<i>% of total:</i>			
Energy	99643.297	24.75			
Water and Waste	112.57	0.03			
Travel and Freight	31996.70314	7.95			
Audience Travel	25439	63.18			
Procurement	4594.77	1.14			
Digital	11869.51498	2.95			
Carbon Footprint (kgC02e)	402612.8551				
Carbon Footprint (tonnes)	402.6		342.21	290.88	247.25

Last Reviewed: September 2023

Ongoing: Review and regular monitoring throughout the year by Board and Executive staff

Next Full Review Due: September 2024