

Climate Action Policy

2026-2030

Áras Éanna
H91H006 | INIS OÍRR

Áras Éanna Climate Action Policy and Plan

1. Introduction

Aras Éanna is Europe's most westerly arts centre located on the beautiful island of Inis Oírr, the smallest of the Aran Islands off the coast of Galway and Clare. It serves a variety of audiences including the local community, visiting artists and tourists and has developed into a sanctuary for the creative. We provide a creatives space for artistic expression of all disciplines, offering superb facilities, of international standards.

Áras Éanna, recognises the urgent need to address climate change and its impact on both the local environment and global ecosystem. Our commitment to environmental sustainability is reflected in this Climate Action Policy, which outlines our ambitions, specific actions, and accountability framework to reduce our ecological footprint while promoting environmental awareness through art and culture here on Inis Oírr. This policy serves as a foundational guide for the Art Centre's ongoing efforts to foster climate resilience, sustainability, and responsibility.

Under the National Climate Action Plan 2019, every local authority in the country is required to plan a Decarbonising Zone. Further to this, as part of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, every local authority is also required to produce a detailed Climate Action Plan. A Decarbonising Zone (DZ) is a chosen area where local authorities and communities work together to reduce the amount of carbon produced by their everyday activities. To qualify as Decarbonising Zones, the chosen areas need to have certain characteristics that have the potential for climate action across a variety of sectors. Oileáin Árann were chosen as a Decarbonising Zone as it was considered; 1) to be ready to support climate action, 2) to have a strong sense of community, and 3) a distinct area with measurable inputs and outputs.

Áras Éanna will liaise with Galway CoCo and Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teo (CFOAT) when writing our Climate Action Plan.

2. What we do

Áras Éanna's primary function is to provide artists with high quality facilities and surroundings to undertake residencies to develop their work. We house and facilitate residencies for approximately 40 individuals throughout the year. Our residency programme is open to all disciplines of artists, however we do not have facilities for large-scale sculpture or a kiln or firing equipment for pottery and ceramics.

In concurrence with the residency programme, we operate a small theatre space (75 capacity) which hosts music, drama, and cinema for the local community and for visitors to the islands. This theatre space hosts approximately 15 events throughout the year, mainly occurring in the shoulder and summer seasons.

We also have two additional gallery spaces which host around three exhibitions per year as well as an outdoor courtyard which hosts installations and outdoor exhibitions.

We also co-produce or facilitate 5 festivals on the island.

3. Our Impact

Áras Éanna operates from a large, energy inefficient commercial building constructed in the early 1980s. Our day to day impact is greater than other Arts Centres because of the challenges in the space we occupy. The building was originally constructed as a weaving factory, with all the functional elements that that activity would have required. Our day-to-day energy costs and use for heating the building are high as a result of this. We have a combined system of heating using electricity for the day to day heating of the building and using oil for our theatre. Our building's energy use is offset by a set of Solar PV panels approximately 50m from the main entrance of the building.

The building that Áras Éanna occupies comes with a number of other challenges that impact our ability to pursue retrofitting and other capital improvements. A recent survey undertaken as part of a development consultation with Bane & Mullarkey and building owners Údarás na Gaeltachta brought the following matters to light:

- The roof is asbestos
- Heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and electrical systems are outdated, unreliable, and not energy-inefficient

With that in mind, we have to balance our environmental ambitions with the level of work that can be undertaken in the context of the facilities we have. It is not possible to undertake any insulation work that could disturb the roof, given the construction material. This limits both external wall insulation work and roof insulation work. With that said, there is scope to improve the existing electrical systems and improve the overall consumption efficiency of the building. We hope to pursue these upgrades with the help of the building owners, Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Additionally, our impact has to be assessed in the context of what we provide to the community. As a public space open throughout the year, we provide a potential third space for groups and community members to meet. We have to provide a warm welcoming environment for anyone who care to visit and this is essential to the viability of the centre in the community as well as for visiting artists. We also, in operating a theatre, have health and safety requirements that prevent us from phasing out the use of things like single-use plastics completely, however we can reduce or make neutral our impact in these areas with strategy and good planning: e.g. using reusable or low-impact alternatives in cases where waste is unavoidable.

2. Environmental Ambitions

Our ambition is to become a leading example of environmental stewardship for small island Art Centres , creating a sustainable, low-carbon environment that aligns with Inis Oírr's ecological needs, while promoting the arts. Key goals include:

- Transitioning to 100% renewable energy for the operation of Áras Éanna by 2030.

- Reducing waste generation by 50% by 2030 through improved recycling, composting, and sustainable materials usage.
- Enhancing biodiversity on the Áras Éanna's grounds by integrating rocks, native plant species, and sustainable landscaping practices.
- Promoting climate awareness and action through our exhibitions, programs, and collaborations with local and international artists who focus on environmental themes.

3. Commitments

In pursuit of our environmental ambitions, Áras Éanna commits to the following actions in consultation with Údarás na Gaeltachta:

3.1 Energy Management

- Prioritise energy efficiency upgrades for all facilities, such as LED lighting, motion-sensor controls, and high-efficiency heating systems in the Arts Centre building and the Artist's accommodation.
- Transition to renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal to power the Art Centre and Artist's accommodation, with a goal of achieving full renewable energy use by 2030.
- Implement an energy monitoring system to track energy consumption and reduce overall use by 10% by 2028, and a further 25% by 2030.

3.2 Sustainable Building and Operations

- Request that Údarás na Gaeltachta build and retrofit spaces with environmentally friendly materials, ensuring compliance with green building standards.
- Integrate green roofing, passive solar design, and rainwater harvesting into the Áras Éanna's development plan.
- Source all operational products (such as office supplies, exhibition materials, stage props, artist's materials and cleaning agents) from sustainable, non-toxic, and recyclable options.
- Implement sustainable transportation options for Áras Éanna i.e an electric van. Encourage staff, artists, and visitors to walk or cycle to and from the pier to the centre. (Inis Oírr is an Island and we have little influence over how people reach the Island. We can encourage our artists to use public transport as far as Rossaveal but this is not always feasible as they need to bring equipment with them)

3.3 Waste Management

- Establish a zero-waste policy and action plan by 2027, including comprehensive recycling, composting, and repurposing programs.
- Reduce the use of single-use plastics and encourage alternatives, especially during evening events, exhibition openings and residencies.

- Organise waste audits to ensure that waste reduction targets are met.

3.4 Community Engagement, Education and Visiting Artists

- Host exhibitions, workshops, and programs focused on environmental issues, encouraging the local community to engage with sustainability through art.
- Support artists who address environmental concerns in their collaborations with Áras Éanna and collaborate with environmental organisations on the mainland to further climate action.
- Educate visitors, members of the community and artists on Áras Éanna's sustainability practices and encourage them to adopt eco-friendly habits in their own lives.
- Establish a green-arts residency with a climate action focus.

4. Accountability and Monitoring Framework

To ensure transparency and accountability, Áras Éanna will implement the following monitoring and reporting framework:

4.1 Climate Action Task Force

- Establish a Climate Action Task Force comprised of staff, board members & artists, who will oversee the implementation of this policy and assess its progress.
- The Task Force will meet annually to review the status of all environmental goals, address challenges, and propose new initiatives as needed.

4.2 Reporting and Public Disclosure

- Áras Éanna will publish a two short sustainability reports for the duration of our climate action plan outlining progress towards our climate goals, key achievements, and areas for improvement.
- Progress on emissions reduction, energy consumption, waste management, and community outreach will be made publicly available through our website and at public events.

4.3 Third-Party Auditing

- Engage independent environmental auditors to conduct an annual review of the Art Centre's climate impact, ensuring that we are on track to meet our long-term sustainability goals.
- The audit will assess energy use, waste management systems, carbon footprint, and environmental education programs, providing recommendations for improvement.

4.4 Stakeholder Engagement

- Consult with local stakeholders, including island communities, Island cooperative, environmental organisations, and government agencies, to ensure that our actions align with broader regional sustainability efforts and to identify opportunities for collaboration. (Comhar Caomhán Teo, Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann Teo (CFOAT), Galway County Council.
- Hold occasional forums as necessary where the public can ask questions, provide feedback, and engage directly with the Áras Éanna's environmental initiatives.

5. Conclusion

Áras Éanna is committed to a sustainable future and will continually strive to reduce its environmental impact while fostering a deeper connection between art and climate action. We aim to serve as a cultural hub that inspires and empowers others to take meaningful action on climate change, demonstrating that sustainability and creativity can go hand-in-hand.

By adopting this Climate Action Policy, we acknowledge our role in both the local and global fight against climate change, and we will remain accountable to the community, our visitors, and future generations.

This policy will be reviewed and updated every three years to ensure it remains relevant and effective in addressing the evolving challenges of climate change. Climate Action Plan outline is below.

Signed:

Artistic Director:

Date:

Action Plan

This action plan focuses on immediate priorities within our direct control - such as energy efficiency, sustainable operations, and waste reduction - while progressively addressing broader impacts through partnerships and advocacy.

Áras Éanna is the primary arts centre in West Galway, correspondingly we have a duty to embody our policies through our arts programming to be a leader and an example for future arts centres in the area. As a result we are committed to implementing a green arts programme and establishing a carbon positive residency focused on artists and arts forms that can improve the relationship with the centre and the surrounding environment.

Key staff, Údarás na Gaeltachta, and other stakeholders will lead implementation, with progress tracked through measurable targets like energy audits, waste reductions, and sustainable procurement. A dedicated **Climate Action Task Force**—including staff, artists, and technicians—will meet annually to review actions such as retrofitting buildings, transitioning to renewables, and eliminating single-use plastics, with annual evaluations to ensure alignment with objectives.

Training and risk assessments will support delivery, while integrating climate messaging into arts programs and visitor education reinforces long-term stewardship.

The plan balances achievable steps (e.g., LED lighting, digital archives) with aspirational goals (zero waste, carbon-positive residencies), ensuring Áras Éanna's leadership in sustainable arts practice.

OBEJCTIVE	TARGET	ACTION	TIMELINE	RESPONSILIITY	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	BUDGET
Energy Management	Reduce building & equipment energy use and related emissions	Conduct a full review of energy use with energy saving recommendations	Spring 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Increase the centre's insulation and heat efficiency	Detect areas that could be improved	Spring 2026	Áras Éanna & Údarás na Gaeltachta		
	Increase energy efficiency	Ensure that all new appliances acquired for the Centre are A-rated for energy efficiency wherever possible.	2026 – 2028 (as capital funding is secured)	Údarás na Gaeltachta		
		Replace old lighting fixtures as they fail with energy-efficient LEDs	2026 – 2028 (ongoing)			

	Use low or zero carbon energy sources	Implement capital improvements recommended in the SEAI Energy Audit. Ensure the solar panels that are in place are connected and ready for use. Move from carbon-based to renewable energy sources.	2026-2029 (as capital funding is secured) Spring 2026 All electricity provided through renewable energy by 2030	Áras Éanna & Údarás na Gaeltachta Áras Éanna & Údarás na Gaeltachta		
Sustainable Building and Operations	Reduce use of bio-hazardous materials and waste in artistic practice	Source all operational products from sustainable, non-toxic, and recyclable options. Create a store of unused materials	2026 Ongoing, 100% by 2029 Jan 2027	Áras Éanna staff Áras Éanna staff		

		from artist residencies for use by future artists					
	Plan to retrofit or redevelop existing structure at Áras Éanna	Request that Údarás na Gaeltachta build and retrofit spaces with environmentally friendly materials, ensuring compliance with green building standards.	2026 – 2029 (as capital funding is secured)	Údarás na Gaeltachta			
	Ensure all physical press and promotional material is sustainable	Liase with printers to ensure posters, programmes, and other promotional material are printed on recycled paper and using inks without volatile organic compounds (VOCs)	Summer 2026	Áras Éanna staff			

	Use of recycled and recyclable plastics	Identify supplier of recycled plastics for products used during events	April 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Implement sustainable transportation options for Áras Éanna	Identify funding stream for LEV purchase		Áras Éanna staff		
	Meet remotely	Reduce emissions by moving 50% of board meetings online	Jan 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Encourage use of public transport to ferry ports	Develop an information resource highlighting the different in carbon costs in travel to Áras Éanna	Feb 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
		Advocate for better transport links in Galway and Clare to ferry ports		Áras Éanna staff		

Waste Management	Reduce use of paper in centre	Maintaining a digital archive of printed material using a QR code placed on site, reducing quantity of printed materials by 20% in 2026.	2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Zero-waste policy	Establish a zero-waste policy by 2027, including comprehensive recycling, composting, and repurposing programs.	Dec 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Whole-of-life measures	Assess feasibility of implementing a rainwater conservation system	Jan 2027	Áras Éanna staff		
	Avoid single-use plastics	Avoid using single-use	Ongoing	Áras Éanna staff		

	Waste audits	plastics where possible, using biodegradable low-impact alternatives Conduct bi-annual waste audits to ensure targets are being met, starting in 2026, with an annual review of targets.	March, October (ongoing)	Áras Éanna staff		
Community Engagement, Education and Visiting Artists	Green arts programme	Establish a green arts programme within current capacity by 2027 specifically curated to develop climate awareness and encourage sustainable living in the area	Sep 2026	Áras Éanna staff		
	Support artists who address environmental concerns	Liase with funders and arts organisations to discuss the	2028	Áras Éanna staff		

		development of an co-funded carbon positive residency				
	Educating visitors	Develop a digital resource outlining eco-friendly habits while visiting centre and corresponding signage within the building.	Summer 2026	Áras Éanna staff		