



GATE THEATRE CLIMATE ACTION AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY 2026





The Gate Theatre recognises the climate crisis as one of the defining challenges of our time. As a leading cultural institution, we must respond by reducing our environmental impact and by embedding environmental sustainability into our strategy and operations.

Operating from a historic, protected theatre building in Dublin's North Inner City presents both challenges and opportunities. We must balance heritage conservation with environmental responsibility, and identify opportunities to improve energy and resource efficiency, while safeguarding the architectural significance of our home. We will leverage the creativity and problem-solving spirit of theatre-making to drive innovation in sustainability, by reducing the Gate Theatre's carbon footprint and inspire positive change across the wider arts sector.

This means thinking beyond incremental change. It means exploring solar energy on a protected theatre building, investing in low-carbon technologies, embedding circular principles into every production and, as we reach our centenary year, ensuring sustainability shapes the decisions we make for the next century.

This policy sets out clear commitments, strategies and actions to guide our work over the next decade and aligns with the sustainability goals in our current Strategic Plan, *An Open Gate*. Through collaboration – with staff, artists, arts workers, audiences, suppliers, sector partners and our Board members – we will continually learn and improve. Our ambition is that by 2030, the Gate Theatre will be recognised as a leader in sustainable theatre practice, where environmental responsibility and artistic excellence go hand in hand.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for action on environmental sustainability, and to reduce our own environmental impact.

Informed by and grounded in our core values of care, collaboration and excellence, this policy is integral to the Gate Theatre's mission and long-term creativity and resilience. It will ensure that environmental considerations are embedded in our strategy, building management, productions, procurement, audience engagement and culture. This policy is underpinned by the Gate Theatre's Climate Action Plan (2025–2026), which identifies specific actions, targets and performance measures.



We recognise that sustainability is an ongoing journey and we will continually adapt our practices as new knowledge, technologies and opportunities emerge.

Sustainability is a shared responsibility and all Gate Theatre staff, artists, arts workers, suppliers, sector partners and our Board members are expected to work in accordance with this policy. We will review this policy annually to ensure best practice.

This policy applies to all areas of the Gate Theatre's work and covers:

- **Governance and planning:** Integration of sustainability into strategic decision-making and organisational policies.
- **Operations and facilities:** Energy use, building maintenance, materials, waste, water use and other physical resource management.
- **Artistic productions:** Set, costume and technical design and construction, and all aspects of producing performances.
- **Procurement:** Purchasing of goods, services and capital works.
- **Travel and transport:** Staff, artist, arts worker and audience travel related to Gate Theatre activities.
- **Audience engagement and communications:** Marketing, ticketing and audience services.

The Gate Theatre's heritage venue is central to our identity.

At the same time, it poses specific environmental challenges, as the age and design of the building can limit energy efficiency, insulation and modern system upgrades. We plan to view these challenges as opportunities, but some of the substantial upgrades required to meet certain Climate Action targets, will be significant in cost and will require funding support from other sources. In addition to the building, the Gate Theatre's environmental impact extends to how we make theatre and run our organisation. The choices we make in staging productions (materials, transport, waste), in the office (energy, consumption, digital systems) and in engaging audiences (travel, ticketing, communications) all matter.

This policy is guided by national and global frameworks; Ireland's climate policy (including the commitment to a 51% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (notably SDG 13: Climate Action and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption), and sector initiatives, such as the Irish Theatre Green Book and the Green Arts Initiative, all inform our approach.



The Gate Theatre recognises that meaningful environmental progress requires long-term commitment and ambition. In practical terms, we will work towards:

- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions** in line with Ireland's climate targets, which include a 51% reduction by 2030. While our absolute emissions may be modest, we will aim for continual reductions through energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies. In the long run, we support the goal of reaching net-zero carbon in line with national policy.
- **Improving our building's environmental performance.** We will strive for a more energy-efficient, climate-resilient theatre while preserving our historic fabric. This will include phased retrofits, renewable energy opportunities, and better monitoring of utilities.
- **Embedding sustainable theatre-making.** Sustainability will be integrated into production processes across the board. We will minimise waste, maximise reuse and recycling of sets and costumes, and adopt design and technical standards that reduce impact. We aim to progressively align our productions with the principles of the Theatre Green Book (Irish edition) and other industry frameworks.
- **Reducing waste and fostering a circular economy.** We will reduce single-use materials, improve recycling, and extend the life of assets. This includes applying circular economy thinking by choosing durable materials, leasing or sharing equipment where possible, and donating or selling items at the end of their use.
- **Using resources responsibly.** We will consume energy, water and materials thoughtfully. This means turning off equipment when not in use, reducing paper and printing, and choosing suppliers and products that prioritise sustainability.
- **Strengthening engagement and awareness.** We will increase environmental literacy among staff, artists and audiences. Our aim is that everyone involved with the Gate understands the importance of sustainability and feels empowered to contribute.

We have identified the following objectives and actions to deliver on our ambition for and commitment to climate action and sustainability:

1.1 Governance and Leadership

Objective:

Embed sustainability in organisational governance, planning and decision-making. By making sustainability a leadership priority, we ensure it becomes part of “how we do business” rather than an optional extra.

We will:

- Maintain a live Climate Action Plan with clear objectives, targets and responsibilities.
- Monitor progress against this policy and the Climate Action Plan and review them annually at Board, Executive, and Senior Management levels.
- Integrate sustainability goals into annual strategic and operational planning (e.g. annual programme, budgets, capital project proposals, development, resource planning and training).



1.2 Buildings and Infrastructure

Objective:

Transform the environmental performance of the Gate Theatre while preserving the architectural and cultural significance of one of Ireland's most important historic theatre buildings. Through ambitious capital investment, innovative technologies and responsible stewardship, we will demonstrate how a protected heritage building can evolve to meet the climate challenge while continuing to serve artists, audiences and future generations.

We will:

- Monitor energy (electricity, gas, etc.) and water consumption and establish organisational baselines and publish progress annually. Deliver a phased programme of energy efficiency measures (e.g. LED lighting, efficient controls) where practical.
- Develop and implement a long-term roadmap for improving the thermal performance of the building through insulation, fabric improvements and conservation-led interventions that respect the building's protected status. When making capital improvements or maintenance upgrades, include environmental considerations (e.g. more efficient heating/cooling systems, smart building controls).
- Investigate and actively pursue renewable energy generation, including solar photovoltaic (PV) installation, alongside other low-carbon technologies that can be sensitively integrated into the Gate's historic building. Seek external funding or grants for energy and sustainability projects when available.
- Plan for periodic building audits (e.g. SEAI review) to identify further efficiency opportunities.





1.3 Sustainable Theatre-Making

Objective:

Reduce the environmental impact of productions while maintaining artistic ambition and excellence. We believe sustainability and artistic excellence are mutually reinforcing. The same creativity and resourcefulness that underpin great theatre can drive innovative, low-impact productions.

We will:

- Embed environmental considerations early in production planning (e.g. material selection, set design).
- Promote reuse, repair and recycling of sets, props, costumes and technical equipment wherever possible.
- Prioritise purchasing or renting second-hand or eco-friendly materials for productions.
- Reduce production waste by tracking disposal and exploring how sets/props can be repurposed after a show closes.
- Require and encourage creative teams to adopt sustainable design principles (e.g. modular sets, multi-purpose scenic elements, low-energy lighting).
- Explore alignment with the Theatre Green Book (Irish Edition) and other industry tools, adapting its principles to our scale and context.
- Reduce paper consumption throughout the production process by embedding digital-first approaches to scripts, schedules, technical documentation and rehearsal materials wherever practical, while maintaining the flexibility required for artistic and technical excellence.

1.4 Procurement and Resource Management

Objective:

Ensure procurement and resource use support sustainability wherever feasible. Thoughtful procurement and resource management are key to reducing our overall impact. Even small choices (like choosing recycled paper or renting equipment) can add up across the organisation.

We will:

- Consider environmental and ethical factors (e.g. materials sourcing, product lifecycle) alongside price and quality in purchasing decisions.
- Give preference to suppliers who demonstrate strong environmental practices (e.g. using recycled materials, minimal packaging).
- Purchase durable, repairable and reusable goods wherever possible.
- Reduce unnecessary consumption: for example, avoid stockpiling resources and order supplies only as needed.
- Limit single-use items (e.g. disposable cups or cutlery) across the organisation.
- Encourage digital solutions (e.g. online documentation, double-sided printing) to minimise paper use.
- Ensure proper disposal of electronic waste and hazardous materials through certified channels.

1.5 Travel and Transport

Objective:

Encourage lower-carbon travel options and minimize transport-related emissions. Travel can represent a significant portion of cultural organisations' carbon footprint. By promoting alternatives and planning smartly, we aim to minimise these emissions.

We will:

- Encourage staff and artists to use sustainable transport (e.g. public transit, cycling, walking) for work where feasible.
- Provide information to audiences on sustainable public travel options such as public transport routes, cycling facilities and share incentives to encourage commuting without cars.
- Plan tours and guest artist visits efficiently to reduce travel (e.g. group bookings, maximise local collaborations).
- Review travel arrangements annually to identify opportunities to reduce flights or long-distance travel.



1.7 People and Culture

Objective:

Build a culture in which sustainability is understood, valued and integrated into everyday work. Lasting change depends on having everyone on board. By fostering a sense of collective responsibility and empowerment, we aim to make sustainability an integral part of our organisational culture.

We will:

- Communicate the sustainability policy and climate action goals to all staff and artists and create opportunities for employees to contribute ideas.
- Include sustainability in staff and volunteer onboarding, so new team members are aware of our commitments.
- Provide training and resources to help staff and artists develop green skills (e.g. workshops on energy-saving practices or sustainable costume making).
- Celebrate sustainability successes and recognise individuals or teams who make significant contributions.
- Establish a Gate Climate Committee with representation from every department to support the implementation of this policy, drive continuous improvement and embed sustainability across organisational culture

1.6 Hospitality, Waste and Circular Practices

Objective:

Minimise waste generation and apply circular economy principles in all areas, including hospitality services. Adopting circular economy practices—where materials are reused and recycled rather than thrown away—will reduce costs and environmental impact. Small steps like eliminating plastic straws, using recycled content products, or repurposing old props all contribute to this objective.

We will:

- Implement waste segregation bins throughout the building for recycling, composting and landfill, making it easy for staff and audiences to sort waste.
- Track waste generation and recycling rates to identify improvement areas.
- Engage catering suppliers who use sustainable packaging and source food/drink from ethical, local producers where possible.
- Encourage a culture of reuse: for example, through regular internal swap days: for example, share or borrow office and production equipment with peer organisations.





The Gate Theatre will embed monitoring and reporting mechanisms as follows:

- **Key Indicators:** We will collect data on energy use (electricity, heating), water use, waste volumes (general, recycling, compost), and other relevant metrics (e.g. paper usage, travel distances). Where possible, we will translate these into carbon emissions estimates to gauge our footprint.
- **Performance Review:** The Senior Management Team will review performance annually, assessing progress towards our objectives. Any shortfalls or new opportunities will be identified and corrective action planned.
- **Board Reporting:** The Executive Director will report on sustainability progress at least once a year to the Board of Directors. This report will cover achievements, challenges, and updated plans for the year ahead.
- **Updates to Action Plan:** The Climate Action Plan will be updated periodically (at least biennially) to reflect completed actions, revised targets, legislative changes or emerging best practices.
- **Transparency:** We will share summary results and learning with staff and stakeholders through newsletters, the website or annual reports.

Through this Climate Action and Sustainability Policy, we are setting a clear direction for our organisation: one that balances artistic ambition, environmental responsibility and long-term stewardship of our cultural legacy.

We recognise that success will depend on commitment at all levels – from Board to staff to artists and audiences. By integrating care for people and planet into our values-led organisation, we aim to build a Gate Theatre that is as sustainable as it is inspiring.

We commit to measuring our progress, learning from experience. In doing so, we will contribute to the sustainability and resilience of the Irish theatre sector and ensure that future generations can continue to experience the cultural and civic value of the Gate Theatre.

REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING FRAMEWORKS

This policy has been developed with reference to national and sector frameworks and best practice. It builds on the Gate Theatre's Strategic Plan and Climate Action Plan and reflects our commitment to align with broader climate goals. Key references and resources include:

- **Gate Theatre Strategic Plan (2024–2026):**
- **Gate Theatre Climate Action Plan (2025–2026)**
- **Ireland's Climate Action Plan (2023)**
- **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**
- **Arts Council of Ireland Climate Action Programme:** The national arts funder's framework for supporting the sector's response to climate change.
- **Theatre Green Book – Irish Edition**
- **Green Arts Initiative**
- **Sector Policies:** Examples from peer organisations (e.g. Abbey Theatre National Theatre UK, The Lir Academy, The Old Vic, Theatre Royal Waterford)

Area	2026	2028	2030
Climate Leadership	Establish a Gate Climate Committee with representation from every department and quarterly meetings. Publish the first annual Climate Action Report.	Climate Committee membership refreshed annually, with 100% of departments represented and annual recommendations presented to Senior Management and the Board.	Climate Committee recognised as a permanent cross-organisational leadership group driving continuous improvement and innovation.
Staff Engagement	100% of new staff, Board Directors, artists and arts workers receive the Climate Action & Sustainability Policy as part of onboarding.	Deliver annual Climate Action engagement sessions with 75% staff participation.	Deliver annual Climate Action engagement sessions with 90% staff participation and sustainability embedded in organisational planning.
Sustainable Theatre-Making	100% of productions include a sustainability discussion at production planning stage. Establish Communication Plan to share targets and achievements with collaborators. Further develop interactive inventories and review existing stock before purchasing new materials. Waste Audits carried out on all productions. Show specific Energy audits carried out on all productions.	Theatre Green Book principles applied to 100% of productions. 30 % of all materials onstage to be reused or recycled for all productions. One Production a year at Irish Theatre Green book intermediate level with 60% of everything onstage reused or recycled and 70% Stored. Continue to phase out the use of incandescent stage lights and replace with LED. Reducing emissions by 30%.	Theatre Green Book Basic becomes the Gate benchmark and 85% of productions achieve at least 50% reused scenic elements. The use of Incandescent lamps to be completely phased out and replaced with energy efficient lighting solutions, reducing emissions by at least 50% Use of PVC tape to be reduced by 50% from our 2025 baseline.
Circular Production	Develop the Gate reuse inventory and ensure 80% of all scenic stock is catalogued and available for reuse.	100% of scenic stock catalogued and shared internally and with partner organisations	Demonstrate year-on-year growth in reused scenic elements and formal resource-sharing partnerships across the sector.

Area	2026	2028	2030
Energy & Operations	Complete energy baseline and replace 100% of poster box lighting with LED technology while installing smart controls	Complete 100% of identified quick-win energy efficiency measures and secure funding for at least one major capital sustainability project.	Deliver at least one transformational building project (solar PV, low-carbon heating or equivalent) and publish measured building performance improvements
Audience	Increase paperless ticketing from 77% to 85% and provide sustainable travel to the theatre information with 100% of bookings	Increase paperless ticketing to 90% and undertake the first audience travel survey.	Maintain 95% digital ticketing and demonstrate increased use of sustainable travel by audiences through annual surveys.
Waste	Eliminate single-use audience cups and ensure 100% of front-of-house cups are reusable. Introduce a Gate-wide waste baseline and improve recycling and waste segregation across the organisation.	Reduce general waste by 15% against the 2026 baseline and expand recycling and reuse initiatives across front-of-house, offices and productions.	Reduce general waste by 30% against the 2026 baseline and establish waste reduction as a core operational practice across all departments.
Procurement	Introduce environmental criteria into 100% of utility reviews and significant supplier evaluations, ensuring sustainability is considered alongside cost and quality.	Apply sustainability criteria to 100% of significant procurement decisions and prioritise suppliers that demonstrate strong environmental performance and circular practices.	Sustainability is embedded in all major procurement and contract renewal decisions, with the Gate actively partnering with suppliers who share our commitment to environmental responsibility and continuous improvement.

