

## Policies and Risk Management

# Environmental Sustainability Policy and Action Plan

<b>Created by</b>	Operations Manager
<b>Approved by</b>	Senior Management
<b>Date of Approval / Last Revision</b>	July 2025
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	July 2026
<b>Purpose</b>	Define how TRACS will promote and advance environmental sustainability through its programming, carbon footprint management, and recycling
<b>Scope</b>	This policy applies to all TRACS staff, volunteers, and contractors across all its operations - including Forums (TMF, SSF, TDFS) and festival (SISF)
<b>Agreement to follow this policy</b>	This policy is fully supported and approved by TRACS Board and Senior Management in consultation with currently contracted staff.
<b>Related Policies</b>	Staff Code of Conduct
<b>Key Contact(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">TRACS CEO</a> (line management queries)</li> <li>2. <a href="#">TRACS Operations Manager</a> (administrative queries)</li> </ol>
<b>Source credits</b>	Culture food Climate Scotland

### TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland)

Registered Office: Scottish Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1SR  
 Scottish Charity No. SC043009      VAT Registration No. 269 2679 51



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Summary

TRACS' priority is to advance Environmental Sustainability through its programming, carbon reduction management, and facilities management. TRACS expects all staff, volunteers, and contractors to minimise their environmental impact and to take responsibility for adhering to this policy.

TRACS is committed to:

- Monitoring and reducing the environmental impact of our operation
- Conveying a positive environmental approach across all our public communications
- Presenting creative work that features environmental sustainability as central to our ethos
- Using suppliers and venues who themselves promote environmental sustainability

TRACS is a member of Culture for Climate Scotland's 'Green Arts Initiative' (GAI). We have appointed a 'Green Champion' (our Operations Manager) and we complete the GAI member annual survey.

We are also a member of the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN) and, through the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, of Festivals Edinburgh's Environmental Sustainability Working Group.

All environmental issues and queries can be discussed with the Operations Manager or raised at regular staff meetings.

Overall, TRACS aims to foster a supportive atmosphere for positive environmental behaviour, and to engage staff members with environmental concerns.

## 1.2. Potential breaches of this policy

Breaches of any part of this policy will be dealt with under the [TRACS' Disciplinary Procedure](#) as appropriate. If the breach is considered to be gross misconduct, this may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

### **1.3. Monitoring and Review**

TRACS' CEO is responsible for monitoring the application of this policy, but it is the duty of every Staff and Board member to ensure that the terms of this policy are adhered to and upheld.

Monitoring will also include assessing how this and associated policies are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and updating them to ensure fairness and take account of changes in the law.

## 2. Strategic Priorities

We want all our staff, board, performers, partners and audience to consider their impact on the environment, and take steps actively to mitigate it.

We have identified 5 Environmental Sustainability Strategic Priorities, cross-cutting all areas of our operation, and forming the basis of the appended Environmental Sustainability Action Plan:

1. **Reduce** carbon emissions in line with Scotland's pathway to Net Zero
2. **Ensure** TRACS is climate resilient and adaptive to change
3. **Adopt** a local, community-centred and 'climate just' approach to climate change
4. **Focus** TRACS programming on environmentally sustainable practice
5. **Use** Traditional Arts to inspire and empower culture change

### 1. Reduce carbon emissions in line with Scotland's pathway to Net Zero

#### 1.1. Carbon Reduction

TRACS currently reports its environmental impact through Culture for Climate Scotland (CCS) and the Festivals Edinburgh and local authority frameworks. We attend the Festivals Environmental Sustainability Working Group and follow its Environmental Policy alongside our own.

Our 2023-24 CCS feedback report has given us a good overview of our downward trajectory and we have set specific targets to reduce our emissions from air travel and office energy use over the next two years. While our most recent emissions are slightly higher than the previous year, we are recording core emissions at approximately 44% of 2018/19 levels. We are on track to reach net-zero by 2045, and we will continue to implement a range of actions with the support of the CCS framework to consider how we can keep our emissions down.

We have recently begun conversations with the Borders Forest Trust (BFT) as to how we might support nature-based carbon insetting through woodland creation and peatland restoration in the Southern Uplands. This complements

existing volunteering work undertaken by TRACS staff with BFT, including traditional crafts projects, which we will expand further alongside.

Alongside our ongoing monitoring and reporting, we will develop a process of carbon budgeting, using calculation tools from CCS. We recognise that within our overall processes, we need to go further in ensuring the visibility and transparency of individual TRACS Forum carbon emissions.

## **1.2. Community**

Recognising our key role in the Traditional Arts community, as well as in the wider arts community, we will actively engage with sister organisations and colleagues around carbon reduction and environmental sustainability, to share information and good practice. TRACS will:

- Engage proactively with membership of the [Green Arts Initiative](#)
- Liaise regularly with fellow traditional arts organisations through the Traditional Arts Working Group, Festivals Edinburgh Environmental Sustainability Working Group (ESWG) and the ICH Scotland Partnership, to collaborate on frontlining Environmental Sustainability
- Attend Culture for Climate Scotland training and update seminars

## **1.3. Office Systems and Equipment**

TRACS moved away from a physical server-based infrastructure to cloud-system computing in 2023. This included purchasing new laptops for all staff, more energy-efficient than our previous desktops.

Wherever practical TRACS buys reconditioned or renewed items: for example, a reconditioned laptop for the CEO and a reconditioned high resolution screen for the Marketing and Communications Manager. Old equipment is recycled or repurposed via partners such as the Edinburgh Remakery.

In our offices, we operate a 'power down policy':

- All electronic equipment should be switched off when not in use
- At the end of the working day, the last staff member to leave the office should check equipment to ensure that
  - all computers are shut down
  - all printers are switched off (unless otherwise labelled)

### **1.3.1. Server Storage**

Whilst a cloud-based system has numerous operational advantages, we also recognise that servers have a significant environmental impact, owing to their high energy consumption and consequent carbon emissions.

We therefore aim to:

- Be responsible with the amount of data which we save online (documents and emails) and only store it for the duration required and in line with our Privacy Policy
- Introduce an online housekeeping system for staff where emails not needing to be kept are deleted once a week and shared document editing in Google Drive is used effectively so only one version of each file is saved online; and unnecessary files are deleted once projects are complete
- Reduce unnecessary email traffic between staff where possible - e.g. if staff members are in the same physical space and it is something which can be discussed in person
- Reduce the use of online messaging tools where other, non-internet based options are available

### **1.3.2. Printing**

Whilst lots of things can be done on screen, TRACS acknowledges that printing is still an operational necessity. We are currently in a service contract with Xerox, and once this has elapsed, we will investigate more environmentally friendly options (such as vegetable-based inks).

TRACS encourages all its staff and volunteers to:

- Print documents and correspondence only when necessary
- Minimise paper and ink usage by printing double-sided and/or multiple pages per sheet whenever possible
- Use FSC certified or recycled paper as standard, both for general office use and all programmes/leaflets.
- Re-use scrap paper and envelopes whenever practical

### **1.3.3. Recycling**

Staff and visitors are expected to use the internal recycling facilities at the SSC, which can take paper, cardboards, glass, plastics and cans (see d) ii below).

Printer inkjet and ribbon cartridges are recycled through the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

For other items, contact the Operations Manager to determine whether they can be recycled.

## **1.4. Premises**

TRACS' rented facilities at SSC are in a modern building constructed in 2006. Discussions around renewal of the fabric and facilities to improve the building's efficiency and emissions are ongoing. Given the considerable portion of TRACS activities taking place at the SSC, we aim to reflect this in our reporting.

### **1.4.1. Utilities**

Whilst TRACS utility usage is covered by its rental agreement with the Church of Scotland, we recognise that as tenants we play a significant role in helping to reduce the SSC's carbon emissions:

All TRACS staff and visitors should:

- Turn off or use 'sleep' function on computers and screens when not in use
- Turn off all lights, heating and inessential machines (such as computers, printers and screens) at end of each day or when spaces no longer in use.
- Consider whether it's necessary to turn lights on when it is a bright day

### **1.4.2. Waste**

All staff and visitors at the SSC are expected to use the recycling facilities (provided by Change Waste Recycling), as set out below for paper, plastic, aluminium, glass and cardboard:

- Staff kitchen, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor: plastic and aluminium
- Storytelling Court, ground floor: paper, aluminium
- Haggis Box, ground floor: glass
- Hive: paper and cardboard
- Admin office, 1<sup>st</sup> floor: printer cartridges, batteries

### **1.4.3. Water**

All staff and visitors at the SSC have the responsibility to make best use of the resources provided for their use. This includes making sure water is not wasted and taps not left running.

## **1.5. Procurement**

Whilst TRACS is not directly involved in any supply chains, we recognise we have a responsibility to be mindful of the impact on our wider networks, and will include this as a measurable risk in our Adaptation Plan (in development) and Sustainable Procurement Policy (forthcoming).

When procuring goods or services, environmental sustainability is always taken into account alongside cost effectiveness. TRACS will:

- Use environmentally responsible and/or ethical suppliers wherever possible
- Choose environmentally responsible products where reasonable options exist
- Produce Sustainable Procurement Policy and Ethical Suppliers List for internal and external use

All providers will be asked to supply their environmental policy with a quote, which can help us to make decisions and also influence their own sustainability. If they do not have an environmental policy, you can ask just for some details of how they're working towards greater sustainability.

## **1.6. Events - internal and external**

For catering at TRACS events held at the SSC, we partner with in-house caterer, The Haggis Box, who are committed to using locally-sourced produce as much as possible. We prioritise vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options for our staff and board members.

For external events, we will always use in-house catering where possible - for efficiency and to reduce waste. Should we need to buy in external catering, we will always do so with reference to our Sustainable Procurement Policy and Ethical Suppliers List.

## **1.7. Travel**

In practical terms, a range of changes to TRACS working practices have already affected our emissions, including reduced air travel in our programming and increased use of public transport overall.



Staff travel is recorded through the Claim Expenses portal, allowing accurate tracking of carbon footprint.

Approx 50% of staff are now home working and online meetings are the default for both staff and boards. For office-based staff, TRACS will explore the feasibility of the Government's Cycle to Work scheme (through e.g. [Bike2Work](#)) and salary advance schemes to encourage alternative modes of transport for commuting.

All staff and board members are encouraged to consider the environment when commuting to and from TRACS premises and when representing TRACS nationally and internationally.

TRACS commits to:

- Encouraging staff, visitors and artists to consider their carbon footprint when travelling, and to walk, cycle, or use public transport whenever possible
- Using public communications (website, box office, printed marketing) to encourage the above
- Offering secure bicycle storage for staff in John Knox House basement (N.B. 'Sheffield toast racks' available on street outside JKH for visitors)
- Booking artist accommodation within walking distance of venues whenever possible

When travelling on office business, staff are asked to choose their method of travel on the basis of cost effectiveness and environmental impact:

- For journeys within Edinburgh: Public transport rather than own car or taxis (e.g. airport bus/tram service to Edinburgh airport, unless leaving early or returning late)
- For journeys within the UK: Train over air travel.
- For international flights: Non-stop flights over multiple short-haul

Occasionally it may be cheaper / easier / more sustainable for an employee to use their own car on TRACS business, e.g. if travelling as a group and/or to a remote location. The HMRC approved mileage rate is 45p per mile for car travel; and 20p per mile for bike travel.

We will work towards increased use of video-conferencing where appropriate, and towards setting firmer limits of when air travel is used over the next few years, as our environmental work develops.

## **2. Ensure TRACS is climate resilient and adaptive to change**

Climate change already impacts us. Storm Babet led to several cancellations in the Go Local strand of the 2023 Scottish International Storytelling Festival (SISF). We will consider how to mitigate such disruption in future and share this learning with our networks.

### **2.1. Adaptation Plan**

Over the next year we will engage with the Adapting Our Culture toolkit from Climate for Culture Scotland to develop an Adaptation Plan for our organisation and continue to refine this over the funding period.

### **2.2. Risk Management**

TRACS' Risk Register is being revised to include a climate resilience component to consider potential risks to the sustainability of the organisation and we aim to integrate this with our Adaptation Plan.

### **2.3. Trad Arts Working Group**

TRACS was set up on the basis that several organisations working collaboratively would result in a more resilient, sustainable footing for traditional arts - a sector that has always concerned itself with maintaining and passing on cultural practices which have often been on the margins of mainstream society.

In promoting a collective platform for traditional arts, we believe this also reduces the risk of fragmentation and diffuse voices after several decades of vital work in bringing the sector together.

As a consortium, TRACS and the Forums share a range of operational resources across staffing, finance, administration and strategic development.

Key changes that we have already made (and will continue to be reviewed) include:

- moving to hybrid and remote working, reducing the impact of commuting, office use and energy
- Using COVID recovery funds to help TRACS transition from older physical IT infrastructure to more flexible mobile and cloud solutions

- availing ourselves of heavily discounted and donated software and systems from technology providers directly and through the Charity Digital Exchange.

We believe this cooperative resource-sharing reduces our collective impacts on the environment and supports our operational stability, reducing costs and carbon emissions.

Through our membership of the Trad Arts Working Group, we will promote Environmental Sustainability as a standing agenda item and collaborate with our fellow members to share best practice and look into producing a sector-specific Trad Arts Green Guide.

### **3. Adopt a local, community-centred and ‘climate just’ approach to climate change**

Traditional arts have a strong affinity with issues of social justice and human rights and this extends to climate justice. Recent cultural exchanges have involved North American First Nations, Indian regional cultures and the Sami people of the Arctic rim. Our work with marginalised and endangered cultures from areas of the world at high risk from climate change plays a vital role for cultural equity and climate justice, with lessons for traditional culture at home.

#### **3.1. Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Our ongoing engagement with the UNESCO ICH Convention gives us insight into how other countries safeguard local traditions. We recently participated in the Library of Congress’ symposium “Global Practices in Safeguarding Living Cultural Heritage” which considered approaches in India and Kenya. In a similar vein, TDFS secured British Council Climate Connections funding for its screen dance commission as part of COP27 in Egypt connecting the traditional tale of Beira and Bride with climate concerns.

In terms of delivery, the ICH domain relating to human interaction with the environment offers TRACS a clear opportunity to highlight the strong link between environmentalism and everyday culture that reflects the story of place. Emphasising localism - connecting local artists with local groups for local events - will be a key plank of our commitment to produce a Trad Arts Green Guide.

### **3.2. Localism**

Working with people in their local places is a key principle of our activity and we will continue to champion this as an important operating model.

Our model of locally-based cultural development, with hubs of activity across the country rather than solely focussed on large events in urban centres, will mitigate effects of climate change through reducing long journeys and delivering cultural activity with local people in place, using local practitioners wherever possible.

From a business planning perspective, we anticipate that this approach will also help keep costs down, while creating local creative networks that will become self-sustaining over time. In doing so, it is important that we continue to engage with local climate resilience and community planning networks, e.g. our involvement with Forth Environment Link during the People's Parish project, to help raise awareness of climate justice conversations through our creative and community work.

### **3.3. Digital Delivery**

During COVID, TRACS and the Forums experimented with digital delivery of our work. While being mindful of the limits of online presentation, we will develop an appropriate Digital Delivery Plan to widen access to our activities while lessening our climate impact by reducing participant travel miles.

## **4. Focus TRACS programming on environmentally sustainable practice**

Engaging creatively with climate and environment themes in our programming will be a core and developing part of TRACS' and the Forums' work over the next three-five years. Traditional culture and environmental sustainability are inextricably linked, so we see the climate emergency as a matter of urgent and direct action. We have a responsibility to use our creative networks to inspire and motivate people to work together on local solutions to the climate crisis.

- Encourage and support environmentally-responsible artists through programming and collaborative projects
- Give artists opportunity to reprise performances with longer runs to reduce carbon emissions and material waste

- Support practitioners who are working environmentally consciously and sustainably

#### **4.1. TRACS Programming e.g. Scottish International Storytelling Festival**

SISF is currently TRACS' main platform for engaging with ecological concerns. The Festival continues to partner with Earth Charter International, bringing together local initiatives from around the world, and SISF co-founded the Earth Stories Collection, collating global cultural narratives which express ecological connection.

The Festival's Global Storytelling Lab continues to share creative initiatives around environmental themes, involving more than 300 practitioners from 46 countries since 2017.

Hosting events in the natural environment is a feature of SISF, including collaborations with the Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, the Scottish Wildlife Trust and One Nature Education. Previous festivals have featured the story of James Croll of Perthshire, the pioneering climate change scientist.

#### **4.2. Traditional Crafts**

Our developing work with Traditional Crafts also offers a major opportunity to foster awareness of environmental sustainability: most materials used by traditional makers are sourced from the natural world - at best home-grown, locally sourced or materials that would otherwise be wasted.

We will celebrate the place of natural materials in the objects and cultures of Traditional Arts and aim to explore the changing interface with contemporary practices, whilst upholding a focus on environmental sustainability and climate adaptation.

### **5. Use Traditional Arts to inspire and empower culture change**

We agree with the statement that '[t]here can be no economic sustainability without environmental sustainability' and align ourselves with the Scottish Government's priority of making a transition to a ['wellbeing economy'](#).

In order to demonstrate our commitment to the environment, we aim to put environmental sustainability at the heart of our operation and working practices - from strategy, to programme, to finance, to communications.

## **5.1. TRACS and Forums**

TRACS will:

- Ensure this policy and action plan are complied with across all areas of TRACS operation
- Establish a 'culture of sustainability' award for staff, contractors, volunteers
- Produce a Sustainable Procurement Policy with Ethical Suppliers List for internal use
- Produce and market 'Trad Arts Green Guide' for the sector, to provide guidance on reducing carbon emissions across our artforms

## **5.2. Working with External Partners**

Together, TRACS and the Forums:

- Advocate good environmental practices as project stakeholders
- Prioritise engagement with contractors who share our values
- Report achievements to green industries media
- Produce 'Trad Arts Green Guide' for the sector, to provide guidance on reducing carbon emissions across our artforms

# TRACS Environmental Sustainability

## Revised Action Plan 2025-28

### 1. Reduce carbon emissions in line with Scotland's pathway to Net Zero

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>1.1 Carbon Reduction</b>	Reduce air travel carbon emissions by 10%	July 2026	Environmental reporting
	Reduce air travel carbon emissions by 10%	July 2027	Environmental reporting
	Reduce office carbon emissions by 10%	July 2026	Environmental reporting
	Reduce office carbon emissions by 10%	July 2027	Environmental reporting
	Partner with an accredited carbon insetting programme in Scotland e.g. Borders Forest Trust, Woodland Carbon Code, Peatland Code, Woodland Trust, FLS	Oct 2025	Engagement in programme confirmed
<b>1.2 Community</b>	Use networks to collaborate on and share best practice around carbon emissions reduction.	Oct 2025	Carbon reduction on the agenda of every working group agenda
<b>1.3 Office Systems</b>	Develop an approach to digital environmental sustainability, making use of CCS guidance	Mar 2026	Plan in place around measuring and reducing digital carbon emissions

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>1.4 Premises</b>	Put in place annual review of utilities and waste with landlord	Aug 2025	Annual meetings in place
<b>1.5 Procurement</b>	Produce Sustainable Procurement policy, including Ethical Suppliers List, and encourage compliance	Aug 2025	Policy complete and signed off
<b>1.6 Events</b>	Put Environmental Sustainability at forefront of event planning through sustainable Procurement and Travel policies	Aug 2025	
<b>1.7 Travel</b>	Produce Sustainable Travel policy and encourage compliance	Aug 2025	Policy complete and signed off

## 2. Ensure TRACS is climate resilient and adaptive to change

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>2.1 Adaptation Plan</b>	Develop Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Extreme Weather Action Plan	Mar 2026	Draft plans for Board approval
<b>2.2 Risk Management</b>	Develop climate resilience component of Risk Register	Aug 2025	Draft revision for Board approval
<b>2.3 Trad Arts Working Group</b>	Formalise Environmental Sustainability as standard agenda item for Traditional Arts Working Group	Oct 2025	Environmental Sustainability as rolling agenda item with resultant actions



### 3. Adopt a local, community-centred and ‘climate just’ approach to climate change

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>3.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage</b>	Use programming focus of ICH to crystallise and promote Environmental Sustainability agenda	Mar 2026	Pilot ICH and Environment events in 2026 programme
<b>3.2 Localism</b>	Ensure environmental messages disseminated to local communities through national programme e.g. TRACS People’s Parish and SISF Go Local	Oct 2026	SISF 2024
<b>3.3 Digital Delivery</b>	Use existing staff and consultants to develop Digital Delivery Plan to encourage access for people in areas affected by climate change	Mar 2026	Draft plan

### 4. Focus TRACS programming on environmentally sustainable practice

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>4.1 TRACS Programming e.g. SISF</b>	Through the lens of ICH, ensure Environmental Sustainability considerations - including biodiversity and nature planning - at the heart of TRACS programming	Oct 2025	
<b>4.2 Traditional Crafts</b>	Source funding to create database of environmentally sustainable traditional	Mar 2026	Database drafted

	crafts practitioners and interfacing with existing TRACS artforms		
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## 5. Use Traditional Arts to inspire and empower culture change

OBJECTIVE	TASK	DATE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
<b>5.1 TRACS and Forums</b>	Establish a 'culture of sustainability' award for staff, contractors, volunteers	Oct 2026	Award established
<b>5.2 Working with External Partners</b>	Produce and market 'Trad Arts Green Guide' for the sector, to provide advocacy and guidance on reducing carbon emissions across artforms	Oct 2026	Draft guide