

# Green Arts Initiative in Ireland Guide to Creating A Green Team

(With Support from **Creative Carbon Scotland**)



When you're full of enthusiasm to Green your organisation, it can be tempting to throw yourself right into the action and hope that one person's energy and commitment will carry your Greening initiative through. But you'd be wrong.

Making any arts organisation more sustainable requires a holistic approach and a joint effort, from Board level to volunteers. Spending time developing a Green Team early on will save you a lot of frustration in the long run. Here are some tips for getting started:

**BEGIN BY:** Inviting everyone in your organisation to a session where the creation of a Green Team will be discussed. It's important that senior members of staff are fully behind any Green Team initiative to ensure its success. Draw up a simple agenda and aim to include as many people as possible – Board members, full-time and part-time staff, and volunteers. If necessary, schedule more than one session to accommodate evening staff. You could offer them an inducement! Invite a guest speaker to inspire them, screen a short film on waste management or biodiversity, provide them with sustainably sourced food and drink. Anything that will tempt them to turn up while at the same time communicating the theme of sustainability.

Not everyone who attends your meeting will want to join a Green Team – and that's fine. But it's a great way of involving everyone and ensuring that they understand what the purpose of the Green Team will be.

- Invite the views of those attending and discuss some of the issues that you're trying to address – climate change, biodiversity loss, the problem of plastic waste.
- Provide them with some basic information on the organisation's environmental impacts and where there is room for improvement.
- Try and find out what they know, rather than tell them what you know. The key to a successful move to a sustainable organisation is that **the majority of your staff team understand why you want to become sustainable and they want to be part of it.** Without that staff support, you will struggle to Green your organisation. You will probably find that some of the people working in your organisation are already committed to reducing their environmental impact in their private lives and will be invaluable in pushing the initiative forward.
- Finally, finish up by identifying who might be interested in getting involved in a Green Team.

If your organisation is large, you may want to establish some guidelines about who will be on the Green Team. You may want to limit the team to one member from each department so that the work is shared throughout the organisation. It is important that the Team includes people working across your organisation – particularly in the technical, Front of House and Cleaning areas. In order to ensure that the team is effective, you will need at least one senior management staff or Board member involved. This will also help in terms of allocating a budget for the work you want to do.

## Making The Green Team Work

- Once you have established a Green Team, ask the members to pick a particular area that interests them – energy reduction, waste management, supporting biodiversity, water, transport and travel, Green suppliers etc. If your organisation is large enough, you could even establish separate Green Teams for different areas who then meet collectively at longer intervals
- Schedule meetings – and stick to them. One of your first jobs will be to draw up an agenda which will be applicable to each meeting. Try not to be too ambitious. Tackle one or two areas at a time, perhaps beginning with energy reduction.
- Ensure that each action agreed has a team member or members responsible for its completion and aim to set a deadline for completion. Everyone researching or working on a project should provide a quick report back on progress at each meeting to maintain momentum and encourage idea sharing and avoid ‘flogging a dead horse’. Postponing or giving up on ideas/projects should be a normal part of the research process.
- Try to make sure team members don’t all come from same ‘function’ (traditionally admin and technical roles) to ensure a balance across the organisations (eg. finance, artistic and marketing staff).
- Rotate the Chair of your team meetings regularly. This will help to change the focus of the meetings and will expand the team’s goals from the initial obvious ideas. If your organisation is a large one, rotate the Team members as well.
- Identify a Green Ambassador to liaise with external organisations.
- Ensure that the work of the Green Team is shared and not carried out by one or two people

## Creating An Environmental Policy:

Your first object as a Green Team will be to draw up an environmental policy. This will set the goals for your Green Team. You can find more information on Creating An Environmental Policy on our website.

Ensure that you have ongoing buy-in from your Board and include your Greening Initiative on all Staff, Operational and Board meetings so that it becomes central to how your organisation operates rather than a separate issue. This will allow you to report on your successes and ensure that there is awareness throughout the organisation of what is being done. It will also ensure that your environmental thinking runs through all strands of the organisation.

## Measure Your Impacts

Your next step, if you haven’t already done so, will be to measure your impacts: your energy usage, waste produced, water used, travel stats and the carbon footprint of all of these. It is only by measuring these impacts at the beginning of your greening journey that you can benchmark your progress. A reduction in waste to landfill, or energy usage, for example will be a real and visible achievement for your organisation and an incentive for staff to maintain the investment in time and resources in running a Green Team. Information on measuring your Energy Usage is available on the Green Arts Initiative page of Theatre Forum’s website, and further tools will be made available.

## Communicate Your Success!

Communicate and celebrate the establishment of your Green Team to your stakeholders. You will certainly get some positive feedback! Set aside a section of your website where you can list the Green Team members, post updates on your social media, schedule occasional films, talks, workshops which connect with the work of your Green Team. If you print a season brochure, be sure to include the work of the Green Team – and don't forget to celebrate the achievements of individual staff members.

Check out some examples of how others have greened their organisations!

## Edinburgh Book Festival

## Siamsa Tíre

*Please Note: This Guide has been adapted from the Guide to Creating a Green Team published by **Creative Carbon Scotland** as part of its Green Arts Initiative. The information contained in this guide has been amended to suit an Irish context. The Green Arts Initiative in Ireland would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of Creative Carbon Scotland.*

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Building a stronger  
performing arts  
community in Ireland.