

Creative & Cultural
Climate Action

SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT 2025



REALISE EVENT REPORT

Sustainability Summit for
Ireland's Creative & Cultural
Industries

Prepared by

native events

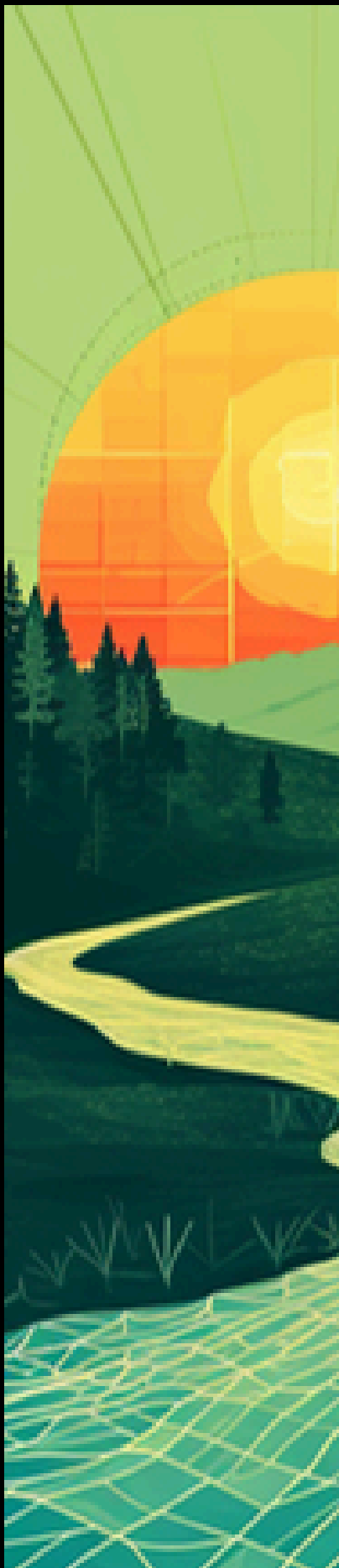


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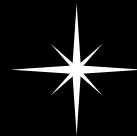
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THE REALISE SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT REPORT 2025

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DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

It's 2025 and the world is a very strange place. It's been 53 years since the publication of the "Limits to Growth" report and much has changed, but the trajectories for humanity and all life on earth are playing out very much as foreseen in that prescient document. We are, as a global community, facing a polycrisis. In 2024, the 1.5 ambition of the Paris Agreement was surpassed, and carbon emissions as a result of anthropogenic activities continue to rise. Glaciers are collapsing, nature is in decline, we are in the midst of a plastic pollution crisis and inequality, unrest and polarisation are on the rise. We are experiencing growing manifestations of planetary disruption.

I think, and many I've spoken to echo this sentiment, that we are in a state of societal shock, accompanied by a sense of unreality. Having spent our childhoods reading and watching science fiction, we have shaped our imaginations around a dystopian vision of the future. This vision is now playing out all around us, visiting us daily on our news feeds. As a population in overshoot, having breached the carrying capacity of the biosphere, we are now witnessing the great decline in real time.

The underlying causes of the set of messy, complicated and intertwined 'wicked problems' we now face are many, and have deep roots. A dominant culture for thousands of years, valuing a severance from the natural world and placing humanity as somehow superior to our very life support system, has acted as a soil in which has cultivated thought processes and ideologies including greed, oppression, slavery, colonialism, industry, and most recently, capitalism. We are now a 'superorganism', but in the words of Nate Hagens, there is no-one driving this bus.





We conceived the REALISE Summit to provide a space for seeing this polycrisis as it really is. If our culture, our beliefs, our values, are really the soil from whence springs the future, then what can we do now to foster new ways of thinking, new ideologies, new ways of living and being on earth? If transformative and radical change is needed, then who can be at the forefront of creating an alternative vision for 2025, 2030, 2050?

Science and Policy have failed to change the trajectory foreseen by the pioneering authors of the Limits to Growth, because we have collectively failed to understand that our behaviours are a result of locked-in programming that has evolved over centuries of thinking of ourselves as individuals, the vanity of the Homos Economicus.

We believe that the leaders being called for in this time of crisis are the Cultural and Creative Industries. Art and activism have always gone hand in hand, and there has never been a greater urgency. Across the globe, we are seeing creative thinking and new approaches appearing in a groundswell movement of innovation and transformation. The Sustainable Event Alliance, the Green Deal for Circular Festivals, Julie's Bicycle, Creative Carbon Scotland, Ad Net Zero, Creatives for Climate, Music Declares Emergency, and Design Declares Emergency are all brilliant international examples. At home in Ireland, we are also witnessing pockets of environmental action. We work with everyone from large scale promoters and events organisers, to theatre crews and fashion designers, advertisers and film makers, policy-makers, educators and facilitators, funders and state agencies - our reach is broad, multidisciplinary and all inclusive. Through our work, we have seen that there is awareness and action happening in every corner of the island.

At Native Events, our core tenet is one of both perspective and practice. We undertake deep and considered research, seeking out the drivers of our compounding crises, and for those inspiring people and collectives, both internationally and at home in Ireland, who are breaking the status quo and taking steps (often at great personal expense) to create change. We are working with collaborators to write policy and strategy documents, undertake industry and sector consultations, publish guides and toolkits. A list of the resources we've created in recent years is provided in the appendix. But we're also putting these initiatives into practice - over the past 15 years we've been trialling initiatives in renewable energy, resource reallocation, salvaging and the circular economy. We've been experimenting with engagement campaigns, tools and software to better understand the environmental impacts of the Cultural and Creative Industries. We've made mistakes along the way, and learned from these, so that our policy and advocacy work is informed by practice on the ground. We are working to drive systemic change, with an eye on all leverage points.



At REALISE, we sought to bring this core ethos to life. Our aim was to create an immersive experience using best practice in environmental sustainability and the circular economy, and to provide a platform to showcase all the brilliant work underway by the CCIs in Ireland. This was an opportunity to share stories, frustrations, observations, learnings and inspirations. More information on the day is included in the following pages, and the results of these interactions have formed a clear pathway forward, a set of recommendations for the future of the sector.

In 2024, Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency published its eighth State of the Environment report, which simply put, was sobering reading. A key message of the report was:

"It is critical that people and communities are supported to achieve the changes required to address climate change. To overcome the practical barriers to climate action, and to ensure that objectives are both achievable and equitable, **understanding the beliefs, attitudes and challenges facing people in Ireland is crucial.** Policy should be designed and implemented so that the desirable action becomes the default action."

It is clear that the Cultural and Creative sector is being called upon - not just for story-telling, but for engagement and activation of our hearts and minds. To reach people and communities where they are, and to provide opportunities for agency and collaboration. We are already responding, but we need political and structural support to rise to the challenge of our generation. Our hope is that the REALISE Summit and this report will help to highlight this, and to provide context and evidence in advocating for the investment that's needed, both at local and national level.

We've learned a great deal, and will continue to learn and to share in our mission to build a collaborative community of practice through dialogue, learning, and co-creation. We're looking forward to the next one, and to welcoming you there.

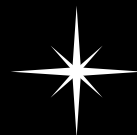


THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POLYCRISIS CANNOT BE OVERSTATED. THIS GOES BEYOND STORY-TELLING, TO WHAT DRIVES US, OUR VERY CULTURE, OUR CONNECTION TO OUR HUMANITY AND TO THE NATURAL WORLD AROUND US.

AS AN INDUSTRY, WE ARE CALLED UPON TO FOSTER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE. CAN WE RISE TO THIS CHALLENGE?

WE BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS YES.





Creative climate and environmental projects underway all across Ireland, fostering collaboration, action and community.





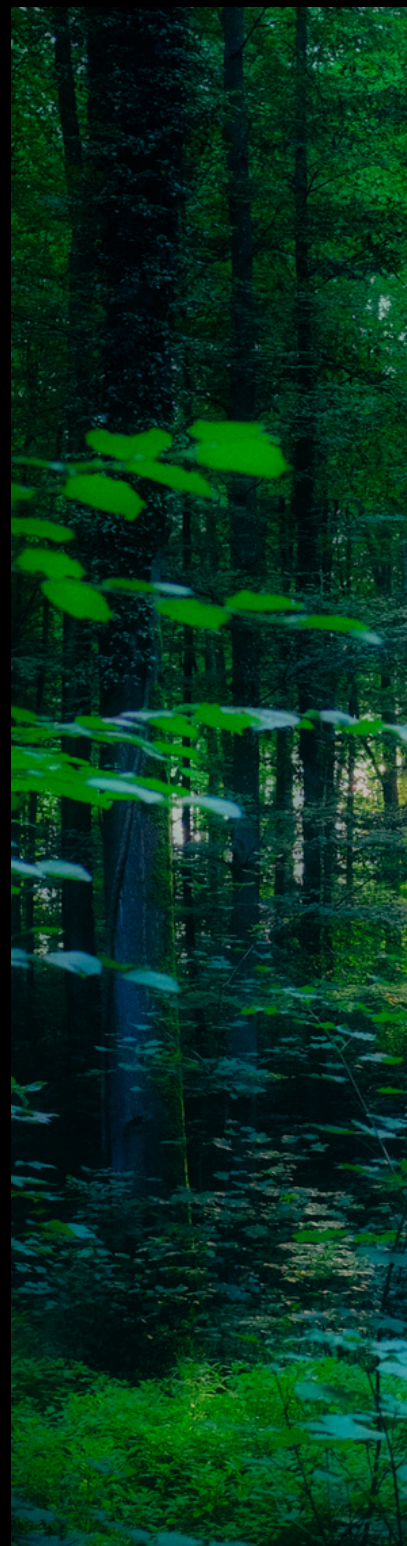
VISION

A **thriving, regenerative Ireland** where the Cultural and Creative Industries **catalyse societal transformation**, fostering harmony between **humanity and nature**.

MISSION

To **build a collaborative ecosystem** through dialogue, learning, and co-creation.

To **drive innovation, inspire change**, and embed sustainability in cultural practice.



The REALISE Summit is a new project dedicated to bringing together Ireland's artists and performers, writers and musicians, designers and curators, filmmakers and facilitators, researchers and educators, to convene and coordinate creative climate action and to foster resilient community. Held for the first time in 2025, the aspiration of the teams behind this initiative is to host the event annually, and to grow it to showcase further projects and champions in this space.





COORDINATED ACTION

The challenges we face are profound, but so too is the opportunity. As we stand at the turning of the tide, it is clear: **change will not come from doing more of the same.** It will come from bold creativity, courageous coordination, and **a commitment to new ways of thinking** and working together.



INTRODUCTION

Organised by Native Events and Julie's Bicycle Europe, the REALISE summit was not a traditional conference. We called our summit REALISE, using two meanings of the word. First, to fully understand the reality of our environmental, social and economic systems as they stand. Second, to manifest the collective, creative responses we need to build a resilient community for the future.

The REALISE Summit took place on Thursday 10th April 2025 in the Great Hall of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, within the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Chosen for its cultural significance, commitment to sustainability, and ease of access / proximity to public transport links, the venue set a fitting tone for a day of collective exploration and creative ambition.

With a sold-out crowd of 110 participants, the event opened with a welcome address from Megan Best, Director of Native Events and Julie's Bicycle Europe. The morning featured powerful insights on the role of creativity in addressing the climate crisis, followed by panel discussions with cultural leaders working at the intersection of policy, sustainability and the arts.

After lunch, Play Strategist Martin O'Donoghue led an energising group activity, creating space for reflection and connection ahead of the afternoon's interactive workshops. The day concluded with a keynote from Ella Saltmarshe, who invited attendees to think in "deep time" and consider their work in a broader, legacy-focused context.

Throughout the summit, participants shared stories of collaboration and innovation, generating a strong sense of momentum. Attendees left energised and inspired—ready to continue building the networks and initiatives sparked by REALISE 2025.



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHTS



REALISE 2025 highlighted many brilliant projects that reflect the diverse leadership emerging within Ireland's Cultural and Creative Industries. Each initiative demonstrated the power of creativity to drive environmental and social transformation. Highlights from the day included -

BRINK!

Led by Gawain Morrison and Paul Kelly, BRINK! is a visionary urban regeneration project in Belfast. Situated on a derelict site at Union Street and Kent Street, the project reimagines this space as a community-led hub of nature, culture and experimentation. Through greening and creative placemaking, BRINK! is reshaping how we think about public space - demonstrating the potential of meanwhile use to foster education, play, and community cohesion while city spaces await long-term redevelopment.



Green Your Festival

This pilot project, led by Suzanne Dempsey in collaboration with Native Events, addresses sustainability barriers for small, community-led festivals. The team developed a "Green Your Festival" kit - featuring solar power, waste management tools, and training resources - available to borrow through Laois County Council. Several festivals are currently trialling the equipment, which is supported by a guidebook and training videos. The long-term goal is to create a replicable model for local authorities across Ireland to support climate-conscious cultural events.

Showpower

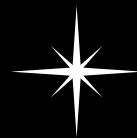
Pioneered by Rob Scully, Tim Benson, and Paul Schurink, Showpower offers a game-changing alternative to diesel-powered events. Their SmartGrid system powered Coldplay's 2023 stadium tour using 100% battery energy - proving that sustainable large-scale events are not only possible but scalable. Their approach integrates proven technologies in innovative ways, and is ready for widespread adoption. As shared at REALISE, this isn't a future ambition - it's a current reality that challenges the sector to rethink how we power live entertainment.





INITIAL IMPACT: MAPPING CREATIVE LANDSCAPES

LEADERS ROUNDTABLE



At the REALISE summit, Native Events hosted two morning sessions in parallel - a morning of presentations and panel discussions for those working in the CCIs who are new to the world of environmental sustainability, and a closed roundtable session for leaders who have already progressed projects in creative climate action all over the island. We called this leaders roundtable “Mapping Creative Landscapes”.

The purpose of this session was to connect the dots between people, places, creative sectors, and specific climate actions that the leaders in the room had worked on or knew of.

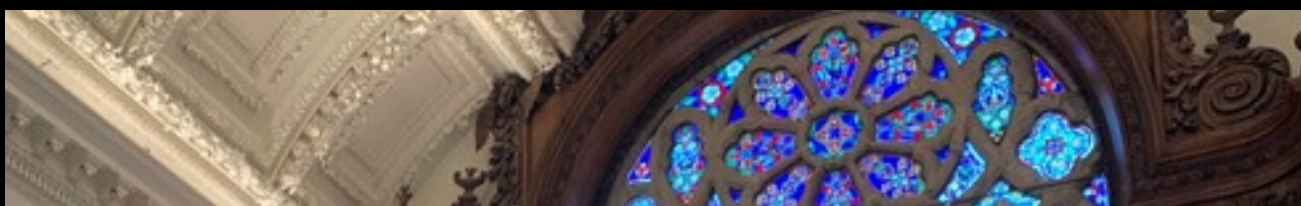
Working in groups of six, participants were asked to discuss:

- What has worked in the creative climate action projects you’ve worked on?
- From 2020 to now, what has not worked? What have the challenges been?
- Looking ahead to 2030, what is the potential that you see for this work and how can we co-ordinate our efforts more effectively as a sector?

Using a large map of Ireland, connections were drawn between places, projects and sectors. Notable findings included:

- **143 creative projects were highlighted and mapped by REALISE participants.** 41 of these were categorised under the “Communications” impact/ topic area; 24 under the “Materials” impact/ topic area; 67 under “Nature”, and just 7 under “Energy”
- A diverse range of projects are represented on the “Creative Landscapes” map, including community initiatives, education, films and festivals, materials re-use and the adoption of innovative technologies.
- Without exception, all projects included on the map are collaborative in nature, involving groups, collectives and various organisations working together.

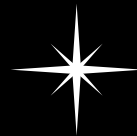
The resulting map has now been digitised and is available online [here](#). If you wish to add an additional project, you can do so by filling out this [form](#). The full list of projects is included in the appendix.





EMERGING THEMES: SHARED REALISATIONS





TRIOPTICON WORKSHOPS

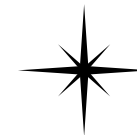
The afternoon session at REALISE began with four thematic workshops - Communications, Energy, Materials, and Nature - which ran concurrently from 14:00 to 16:00, each selected for its relevance to both the climate agenda and the growing interest within Ireland's culture and creative industries.

The workshops followed a customised, experimental approach inspired by the Triopticon Model as first devised by David Snowden of the Cynefin Co. Each session unfolded in four structured phases:

- Expert Input: Three speakers shared insights from their own experiences and professional perspectives on the respective workshop themes.
- Small Group Reflection: Participants broke into groups of three to discuss and digest the ideas they had just heard.
- Plenary Exchange: Each workshop reconvened for a broader group discussion, where small groups reported back key reflections and posed questions to both speakers and peers.
- Emergent Synthesis: Finally, participants formed new groups of ten to document emerging ideas, patterns, and insights, guided by three central questions:
 - What have you realised about this topic in relation to climate?
 - What is the role of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in this area?
 - What are the potentials for change?

This format enabled a rich exchange of perspectives, sparking new thinking on how Ireland's CCIs can meaningfully engage with critical climate-related themes.



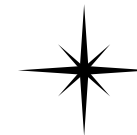


Communications Workshop: Major Themes & Findings

The discussion was informed by three diverse projects - communicating the development of the Regenerative Strategy for host venue IMMA; research and implementation of Humane Communications; and the Good Life alternative advertising campaign, a Creative Climate Action funded project.

The following themes, actions, and broader sector connections emerged during the workshop:

Topic Themes	Broader Sector Relevance	Actions to take - Individuals / Organisations	Actions to take - Collective / Sector	What Native is Doing
True climate communication begins with honesty: about our intentions, our impacts, and the future we choose to imagine together.	Culture shifts from the top - leadership must centre climate and environmental action as core purpose, not just another programme or performance metric.	Management needs to be on board within organisations and effectively communicate why climate change and environmental responsibility matters to the business.	The creative communications industry has a responsibility to tell the truth about environmental impacts, sharing what is real and factual and bringing awareness to what is artificially created and not real.	Working towards Carbon Literacy Certification for the organisation. Actively engaging and embracing both creativity and factuality with communications campaigns, webinars, newsletters, and our Sustainability Policy is published on our website.
The role of storytelling in untangling the polycrisis - for creative practitioners across the sector, orgs large and small.	Smaller organisations often lack comms capacity. We need collaborative tools and time to tell the deeper stories of change.	Use your platform - however small - to tell the truth with care. Share your sustainability values and the actions behind them.	Provide dedicated funding streams to small orgs for sustainability communications, reducing administrative burdens that stifle impact.	Running collaborative communications campaigns with partners, clients and similarly-minded organisations. The REALISE Summit.
Community-based behaviour change, sparked through joy and meaning, can be the antidote to climate despair and false promises of growth.	Stories of land and place are being lost. We need sector-wide recognition of landscape as identity, not just backdrop.	Use print media and paper mindfully. Tactile, accessible communication can ground ideas and make sustainable thinking feel real and relevant.	Invest in culture-led climate storytelling rooted in reciprocity, joy, and truth - not growth narratives or extractive tourism promotion.	Undertaking research and development in the realms of Cultural Sustainability and Humane Communications, informing our approach.

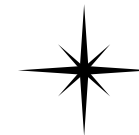


Energy Workshop: Major Themes & Findings

The Energy Workshop discussion was informed by three diverse projects - the 2023 Linte Na Farraige lighting installation project, showing sea level rise in three Irish coastal regions; the energy audit and lighting and heating retrofit of an Arts Centre in Portlaoise; and the use of innovative battery technology at the Coldplay tours in various global stadiums in 2024.

The following themes, actions, and broader sector connections emerged during the workshop:

Topic themes	Broader Sector Relevance	Actions to take - Individual / Organisation	Actions to take - Collective / Sector	What Native is Doing
Energy use is connected to art, and art can make invisible systems visible, reframing our connection to power, space and responsibility.	Energy often gets the least attention, yet it offers the biggest ripple effect - from cost savings to emissions reductions to artistic integrity.	Build energy conversations into pre-production - before contracts, riders or specs. This is where creative choices and carbon impact truly begin.	Require local authorities to embed green procurement and energy sustainability into event licensing, especially at heritage and nature-based sites.	Engaging with Local Authority representatives to showcase innovation in sustainable event management. Undertaking industry research projects and providing reports and recommendations to Government at local and national scale.
Changing mindsets matters: energy use isn't just technical - it's about awareness, intention and shared understanding in every space we inhabit.	Creative professionals don't need to be engineers to make energy-smart choices - just the right tools, some guidance, and shared accountability.	Use tools to track energy use and reduce waste. Visibility - like pedal power or public dashboards - drives engagement and deeper understanding.	Pilot scalable infrastructure solutions like smart power plans, hybrid technology, batteries and solar.	Piloting batteries and solar technology with a range of applications, from community-led events to film production. Additionally, undertaking power audits with markets and festivals and using the data to create smart power plans.
Small shifts add up. From lighting design to renewable sourcing, energy efficiency is often about doing the basics—consistently and creatively.	Production teams, venues, and traders all have roles in energy management. Clear, early communication unlocks smoother, more sustainable events.	Upskill your team. A little knowledge about power supply and demand can dramatically change how you plan, produce, and perform.	Fund upskilling and digital tools for energy measurement in cultural sectors - demystifying data, enabling innovation, and supporting carbon literacy.	Providing training programmes for the Arts Sector, delivering webinars, and working with the Carbon Literacy Project on a dedicated training programme for Irish Event Managers.

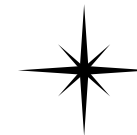


Materials Workshop: Major Themes & Findings

The Materials Workshop discussion was informed by three diverse projects - BRINK!, the re-use of an abandoned lot in Belfast City Centre, reimagined using salvaged materials, shipping containers, planters and solar and battery installations; the establishment of a stage and set salvage and reuse distribution hub in Athlone, called Re-Staging; and new projects in materials and reuse across Ireland's vibrant film industry.

The following themes, actions, and broader sector connections emerged during the workshop:

Topic themes	Broader Sector Relevance	Actions to take - Individual / Organisation	Actions to take - Collective / Sector	What Native is Doing
Sustainability and circularity must be designed in from day one - creative choices around materials can't be an afterthought or optional extra.	Sustainability must be systemic. No one venue, artist, or organisation can do this alone - sector-wide collaboration is essential.	Reframe reuse as an artistic challenge. Give designers time to source and work with materials creatively, not just logistically.	Scale successful models like the Lyric Theatre and Re-Staging, demonstrating that sustainability can drive innovation and strengthen business resilience.	Actively salvaging and repurposing materials to create exhibition sets, staging, furniture and decor for events and activations.
Time is a sustainability issue. Rushing production kills reuse. Build in space to adapt, to verify, and to choose better.	The perception of poor-quality reused materials undermines adoption - quality control, trust, and creative framing can flip this story.	Audit your production timeline: does it allow for sourcing reused materials, storage planning, and cross-team collaboration from the start?	Incentivise sustainable production planning through grants that require early integration of reuse and clear accountability from creative leads.	Working with partners and collaborators in detailed advance planning, to showcase best practice for the sector.
Reuse isn't just technical - it's artistic. Unlocking the potential of second-life materials requires vision, trust, and time to create.	Shared storage and transport infrastructure are essential. Without them, smaller organisations can't participate in circular systems meaningfully.	Develop trusted supplier and verifier relationships to build confidence in reused materials - creativity thrives when trust is in place.	Fund regional materials hubs with shared access, storage, and quality control - co-designed with artists, venues, and production teams.	Gathering data on materials use and disposal (particularly bulky items) in the CCIs, across theatre, festivals and film. Investigating technology - asset management systems - towards creating a sharing economy in Ireland. Working on grant applications to establish circular economy hubs for Ireland's creative industries.



Nature Workshop: Major Themes & Findings

The Nature Workshop discussion was informed by creative projects in diverse areas - forestry and woodland culture; farming and food production; and submarine ecosystems respectively.

The following themes, actions, and broader sector connections emerged during the workshop:

Topic themes	Broader Sector Relevance	Actions to take - Individual / Organisation	Actions to take - Collective / Sector	What Native is Doing
Many creatives are driven by a deep emotional connection to the natural world - yet this passion often meets exhaustion and underfunding.	Burnout is a systemic issue. Supporting sustainability must include care for those doing the work, not just project outcomes.	Foster collective creativity. Join or form cross-sector collaborations that nourish both community ties and environmental goals.	Advocate for long-term, expanded Creative Climate Action, and Leadership Development funding to support deeper, sustained work across arts and environmental sectors.	Partnering with various organisations - Julie's Bicycle Europe, Creative Ireland, Leave No Trace, Common Purpose - towards the design and delivery of impactful leadership development training programmes in the CCLs and the nature sector.
There's a growing disconnect between everyday life and natural systems—especially in how we produce, source, and relate to food.	Disconnection from nature is a cultural issue—creative industries have a vital role in restoring emotional and ecological intelligence and relationships.	Build sustainability strategies that include responsible, local food sourcing - this is a tangible way to reconnect people with place.	Embed nature literacy and food system awareness into national cultural policy, including funding criteria and programme design.	Undertook a review of operations in relation to impacts on nature and biodiversity, using the parameters of the ESRS Biodiversity and Ecosystem Standards.
Nature-based action starts with awareness: understanding the broader systems we're part of can reveal real leverage points for change.	The Creative Climate Action Fund has proven its worth—fueling impact, community building, and fresh ways of thinking across disciplines.	Strengthen support networks by following, sharing, and amplifying each other's work - peer communication builds resilience.	Invest in awareness campaigns linking climate, food systems, and cultural practice - targeted at communities and sector leaders alike.	Incorporating considerations around food production impacts into sustainability policies and engagements with caterers. The REALISE Summit.

Ireland's Cultural and Creative Industries - Directions of Travel

Nature

Towards a sector that is empowered and equipped to understand its impacts on nature, and how to engage wider society in wide-scale regeneration of our natural world.

Materials

Towards the establishment of a cross-sectoral, cross-artform working group with a view to a suite of inventoried material sharing hubs in Ireland - the circular economy in action in Ireland's CCI

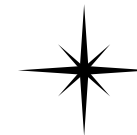
Communications

Towards an aligned and coordinated CCI sector, working together on defined goals in materials reuse, energy efficiency and emissions reductions, and actively regenerating nature.

Energy

Towards a knowledgeable and energy efficient creative sector, using its platform and voice to engage wider society, and embracing renewables at scale.





REALISE SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

The challenges we face – from climate change to social inequity – are classic “wicked problems,” messy and interconnected issues that defy simple solutions. In today’s era of polycrisis, multiple crises converge and amplify one another, creating a complex entanglement that is difficult to manage with linear plans. In such a shifting landscape, our summit recognised the need to move away from rigid targets and toward adaptive directions of travel. This directional approach keeps us responsive: open to novelty, learning, and course-correction as we go.

Crucially, a directional approach shifts the focus to immediate, real-time action – to what we can do now. We cannot control every outcome decades from today, but we can control our next steps. By taking meaningful actions in the present, we shape the conditions under which longer-term change will unfold. Every small experiment or intervention becomes a learning opportunity; each contributes to the direction we are traveling. Over time, these micro-actions accumulate and interact, leading to larger patterns of change.

Based on the results from the triopticon workshops at the REALISE summit, below are our next-steps recommendations in four key topic areas - towards funding and investment at a structural level, in order to coordinate the sector to take meaningful steps forward as an aligned community of practice.

Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoint a working group / taskforce to engage creative and cultural communications practitioners.• At national level, put anti-greenwashing legislation in place to empower this industry in their corporate engagements.• Establish a national framework, tools and guides for the CCIs on humane technologies, cultural sustainability and greenwashing.• Create funding streams, recognition and national awards for leaders and champions in this space. This to include programming, film, theatre, spectacle, literature and cultural events.
Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a specific, targeted funding stream via the SEAI for upskilling the CCI sector in energy management and emissions reductions.• Require local authorities to embed green procurement and energy sustainability into event licensing.• Taking inspiration from the film sector, and expanding on this programme, provide an innovation grant scheme to energy suppliers in the creative industries to drive investment in energy efficient and renewable energy equipment and infrastructure.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appoint a circular economy working group / taskforce specific to the cultural and creative industries.• Empower this working group, via funding and investment, to undertake a 3 year pilot project in developing a digitally available national inventory of the CCIs material assets, storage spaces (material banks) and associated insurance and logistical considerations.• Require local authorities to embed green procurement and reuse into event licensing.
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue and expand the Creative Climate Action fund, introduce an additional strand dedicated to nature and biodiversity.• Provide opportunities, via specific, targeted grants and funding schemes, for the CCIs to work with environmental and conservation charities towards national creative engagement campaigns.• Establish a national framework, tools and guides for the CCIs on environmental sustainability that includes nature and food system literacy.

IMPACT AND REACH

A CALL TO ACTION: BUILDING THE FUTURE



For the REALISE summit, we were aiming to bring together a very diverse audience from a range of different artforms, sectors and creative industries. We knew that we needed many different voices and perspectives in the room from all across the island, folks who have been working across all sorts of challenges and impact areas, to speak openly about their frustrations and their successes, to share and to learn.

We know that we need to tell a compelling story about the polycrisis we face in 2025, communicating facts with truth and integrity but also engaging with the reality of human emotion, needs, biases and preconceptions. Our communications campaign was borne of an understanding that many in the sector might sometimes feel excluded, that we needed to avoid jargon and create a platform that was open to all.

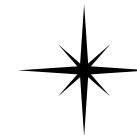
This challenge is in front of all of society, and this specific challenge has been the greatest failure of our scientists over the past 30 years - failing to engage and inspire individuals, communities and industries. As David Attenborough famously put it, "the climate crisis is now a "communications challenge," meaning that while the science is clear, translating that knowledge into widespread action requires effective communication and a global will to change."

With all of this in mind, our communications campaign aimed to make sustainability accessible, relevant, and rooted in creativity. We wanted everyone - regardless of background - to feel welcome in this conversation.

To understand our approach, the table below illustrates the channels we used, and the engagement and reach we achieved. Interestingly, we encountered a barrier using META (facebook) for our campaign, as it blocked us for "campaigning on social issues". Despite this setback, the result of our efforts was a sold-out event in our first iteration. Lots of learnings to build upon for the years to come!



REALISE Summit Communications Campaign



	Description	Dates	Reach
Email Campaign	Event proposal descriptor / targetted invitation / contributor and participant invitations to environmental champions in Ireland's CCI's	January - April 2025	40 high profile individuals and organisations, Govt. Departments, Local Authorities
Email Campaign	Wide-scale email invitations via Mailchimp to arts organisations and collectives	March - April 2025	340 arts organisations and collectives
Social Media - Instagram	10 posts - launch, ticket sales, programme announcements, assets and information	February - April 2025	35,000 views; 13,000 reach
Social Media - LinkedIn	10 posts - launch, ticket sales, programme announcements, assets and information	February - April 2025	5,500 impressions; 314 responses; 16 comments
Press - online	Articles in SustainabilityOnline; Screen Producers News; Irish Architecture Diary; Archive Market Research; ThinkBusiness.ie; Entertainment.ie	March - April 2025	Unknown
Press - print	Articles in Irish Independent; Hotpress; Sunday Times Climate Supplement	March - April 2025	Unknown - Nationwide
Radio	Newstalk with Pat Kenny; Dublin City FM	April 2025	Unknown - Dublin and Nationwide



DIRECTIONS OF TRAVEL: COLLECTIVE ACTION

In a world of interlocking crises – climate, inequality, and beyond – we face “wicked problems” that resist simple solutions. Traditional planning, with fixed targets and linear goals, falls short in such complexity. Instead, we propose a shift: from rigid endpoints to adaptive directions of travel. This means orienting ourselves toward shared values – sustainability, justice, regeneration – and staying responsive as we move.

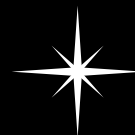
As complexity expert Dave Snowden notes, in unpredictable systems, progress comes not from grand plans but from sensing, adapting, and evolving. Ambiguity is not a threat but fertile ground for creativity. We focus on the next adjacent possibility – the steps we can take now that open new paths forward.

In the cultural and creative sector, we already operate this way. Ideas spread, adapt, and self-organize through networks of artists, organizations, and communities. Small acts ripple outward. Collective change emerges not from consensus imposed top-down, but from shared effort built step-by-step.

This is our call: to act now, together. Not to wait for certainty, but to co-create the future through continuous experimentation, reflection, and collaboration. The REALISE 2025 Summit is not a destination but a beginning – a collective commitment to navigate complexity with creativity, courage, and a clear compass. We look forward to seeing you at the next one.

If you're interested in learning more about our work and getting involved, please get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

RESOURCES



● **Autumn 2024 Arts Sector Training Programme**

A programme of climate action training workshops for the arts sector, hosted by the Arts Council.

[!\[\]\(e78f798d4ea5c530c9db49e7d26e6b95_img.jpg\) View Programme](#)

● **Summer 2024 Arts Sector Training Programme**

A parallel training programme supporting the arts sector in its climate action ambitions.

[!\[\]\(ec9132f1d27c8919987d92907322654d_img.jpg\) View Programme](#)

● **Guide to Plastic-Free Festivals and Events (April 2024)**

The result of an 18-month project including industry roundtables and pilot events. A practical, step-by-step guide for festivals and events looking to reduce single-use plastics.

[!\[\]\(dd161862f9164df98f62b726e9846241_img.jpg\) Download Guide](#)

● **Sustainability Toolkit for the Cultural and Creative Industries**

Developed in collaboration with Skillnet, this online toolkit supports cultural and creative organisations in embedding sustainability into their practice.

[!\[\]\(626ce8ac21792b9405bfddfea8e0c96a_img.jpg\) Visit Toolkit](#)

● **Sustainable Festivals Guidelines (March 2023)**

A Fáilte Ireland publication offering 175 practical actions for festivals of all sizes, across seven key impact areas.

[!\[\]\(899d8b7697d64725bf017d3296cfcf1b_img.jpg\) Read Guidelines](#)

● **Climate Action Playbook – Festivals Chapter (November 2022)**

Part of Fáilte Ireland's Climate Action Playbook, this chapter—authored by us—focuses specifically on sustainability strategies for festivals.

[!\[\]\(d3e32d099174a7c248ec1f564ee4f69c_img.jpg\) Access Playbook](#)

● **Future Festival Tools (October 2022)**

A comprehensive Erasmus+-funded sustainability toolkit for festivals and outdoor events across Europe. Includes online training modules, a case study book, assessment tools, and a train-the-trainer manual.

[!\[\]\(c724c83fe216b2427610afdbd31f92cc_img.jpg\) Explore Toolkit](#)

● **Native Events Webinars**

A curated series of online webinars discussing sustainability in the cultural and creative industries.

[!\[\]\(a2bb1e57b467f1e41142026aa73db90f_img.jpg\) Watch on YouTube](#)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Huge thanks is due to our partners, the brilliant team at IMMA, our titled Circular Economy Partners the Regional Waste Management Offices, and our supporters in the Economic Development Unit in Dublin City Council and in Screen Ireland. Additional thanks due to our technical suppliers, Magpie who provided us with a huge discount and to Philip at Total Event for providing event furniture free-of-charge, a fantastic contribution to the day.

Huge thanks also to our contributors and speakers, including keynote Ella Saltmarshe, panellists Lisa Dooley, Tim Benson, Elaine O'Farrell, Suzanne Dempsey, Pauline McDonagh, Gavin Kelly, and panel chair Tania Banotti.

A special thank you to Play Strategist Martin O'Donoghue, for bringing a unique energy and vibrancy to the day, your intervention really helped us to set the REALISE Summit apart.

Our deepest gratitude to our workshop speakers and facilitators -

- The communications workshop was facilitated by Ciara Moynihan & Claire Buckley. They were joined by speakers Lisa Fitzsimmons, Strategy and Sustainability Lead at IMMA; Kate O'Neill, Humane Communications Expert at Native Events; and Laura Costello, Head of Sustainability and Planet Services at Thinkhouse.
- The energy workshop was facilitated by Aine May Hughes and Brecken Byron. The three speakers included David Dodd, Environment and Climate Scientist at DECC; Nick Anton, Technical Manager at Dunamais Arts Centre; and Rob Scully, COO at Show Power.
- The materials workshop was facilitated by Noreen Lucey and Josh Brownlow. The three speakers included Gawain Morrison, Co-founder and Director of BRINK!; Stephen Bourke, Founder of Re-Staging; and Stan Nangle, CEO of Climate Innovation Ltd.
- The nature workshop was facilitated by Megan Best, Oscar Mooney and Quinn Bonta. The three speakers included Rob Monaghan from the Seabed Sanctuary, Lisa Fingleton, Artist and Organic Farmer, and Matt Smith of Hometree.

Sincere gratitude to the team at Native Events who worked so hard to realise our potential to make the summit happen. Huge thanks to Brecken Byron for Programme Curation and Management, to Nicola Coetzer for Production Design and Delivery, to Hilary Kavanagh for registration management, to Ciara Moynihan for concept and ideation, to Aine May Hughes and Noreen Lucey for session design and delivery, to Azeez Saeed for all his hard work in crafting and delivering our communications campaign across all channels, and to our brilliant volunteers who genuinely gave the summit 110%. We couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks to Ken Lyons for hosting the event as Master of Ceremonies - this role required a very particular personality, a knowledge of the subject, a welcoming aura and wry sense of humour. You were the perfect person for this job.





THANK YOU

Finally, **a massive thank you to the REALISE attendees.** It was a huge achievement for us to sell out this event in its first year and to welcome so many of you to this important conversation - **asking the defining questions of our generation.**

Thank you for coming, for your energy and enthusiasm, your willingness to participate, share and learn. We look forward to continuing the conversation with all of you.



