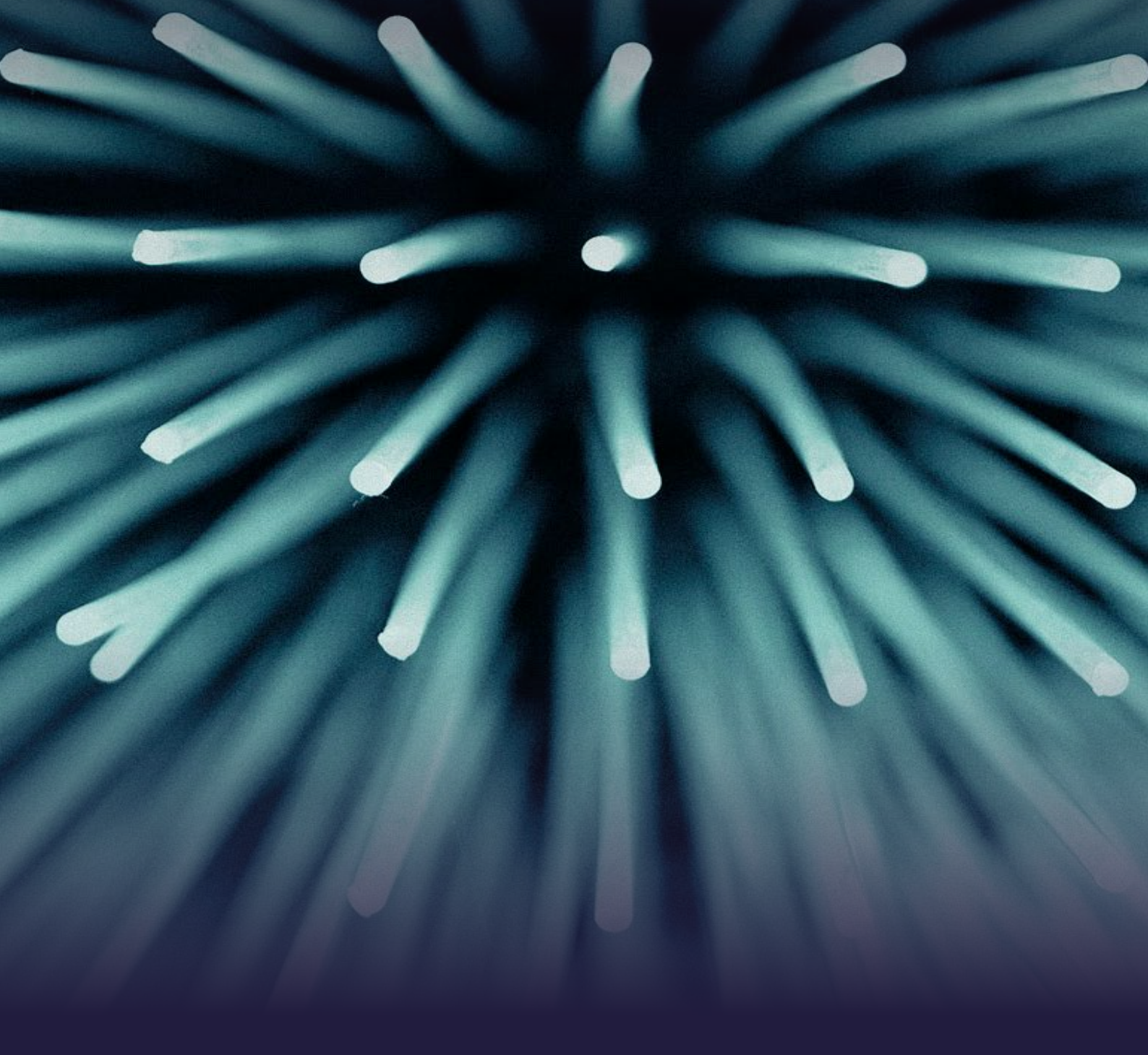


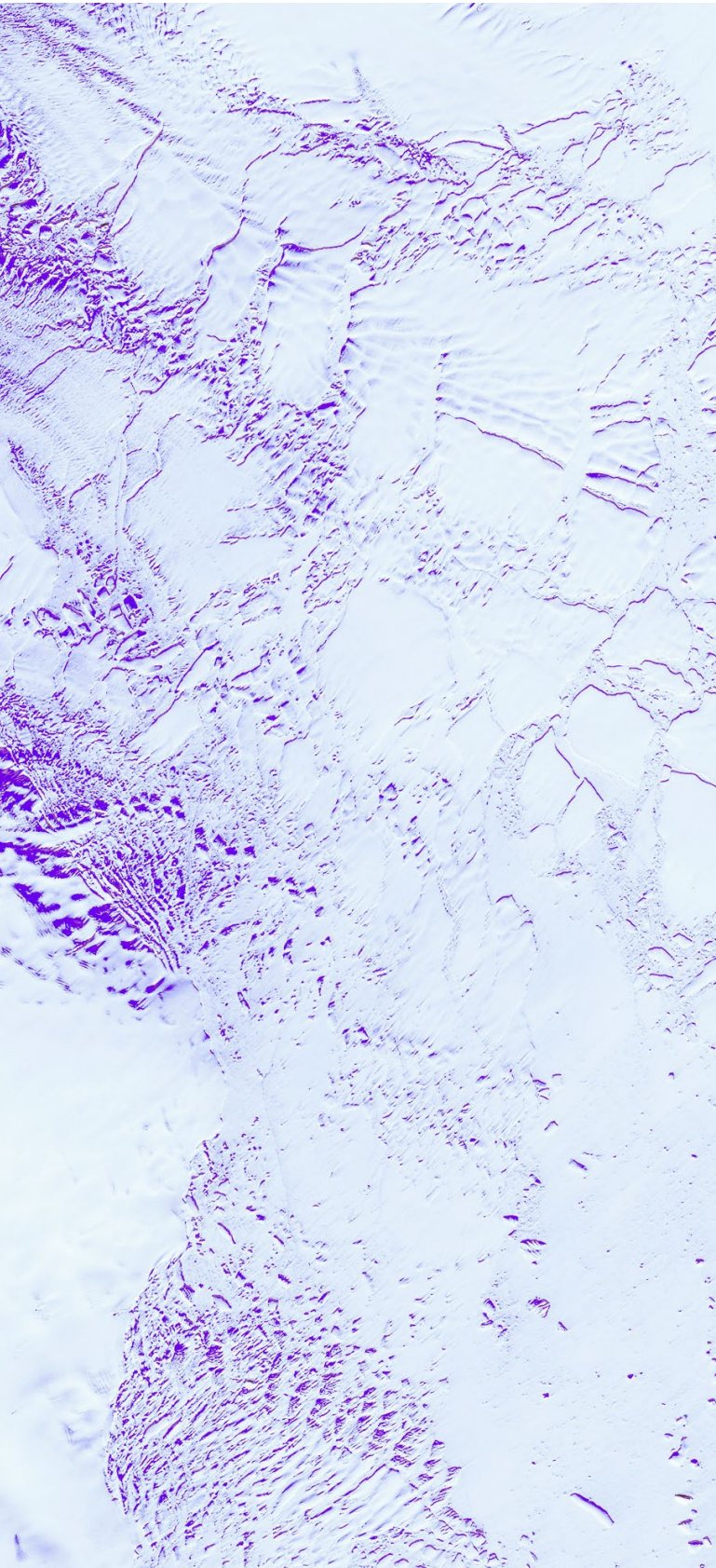
The Climate Connection

Culture and Environment Roundtable Turkey

Outcomes and Insights Report



Contents



Global context

03

Culture and Environment Roundtables

03

Turkey Roundtable

03

Turkey context

04

Questions and themes

05

Snippets and insights

06

ANNEX 1 – Keynote speakers

09

ANNEX 2 – Attendees

10

ANNEX 3 – About the partners

12

Acknowledgements

14

Global context

The most important attempt to commit all countries in the world to tackling the climate crisis, the United Nations COP26 climate summit will host 200 heads of state, ministers, and thousands of delegates, with civil society, including artists and activists, locking arms. These negotiations, taking place in Scotland, will be guided by the Sixth IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Assessment Report. The most current and comprehensive report on climate change to date, it was published, co-commissioned, and agreed by the world's 195 national governments, and shows that emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from human activities are responsible for approximately 1.1°C of warming since 1850-1900. This has led to the unprecedented rates of global warming we are seeing today and has locked in climate-related impacts and threats for decades to come.

The IPCC authors have synthesised leading research from thousands of sources to inform effective policy decisions. They now pass the torch to the COP26 negotiating team, who have the vital job of securing ambitious climate action.

Culture and Environment Roundtables

In summer 2021, a series of digital Roundtables were held in four countries: Turkey, Indonesia, Colombia and Nigeria, with a final event in Milan during Youth4Climate and the Pre-COP 26 Summit.

The Culture and Environment Roundtables brought selected participants together from policy-makers and institutions, municipalities,

fundors, youth participants, civil society organisations and cultural and arts practitioners to explore how culture, and cultural policy specifically, is responding to the climate crisis. All the Roundtables were conducted under amended Chatham House Rule.

A cross-section of cultural and environmental voices came together in real time to explore the dynamics of culture. These conversations have already created new perspectives and collaborations.

This report is not a set of minutes, nor a verbatim account; it offers glimpses into the rich conversations and presentations and makes the case that culture is the missing link in climate action.

Turkey Roundtable

14 July 2021 – 08:30-11:30 (UK) / 10:30-13:30 (Turkey) – Online, hosted by İKSV + Julie's Bicycle for The Climate Connection

36 participants

4 speakers

1 performer

This Culture and Environment Roundtable was hosted in Turkey and convened by UK non-profit organisation Julie's Bicycle and the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) in partnership with The British Council as part of The Climate Connection. The Climate Connection is a global platform for dialogue, cooperation, and action against climate change, in the lead up to the United Nations climate conference, COP26. International cooperation through cultural relations is key to addressing shared development solutions.

“We are in a very busy age. There are different names for it. One is the Anthropocene epoch – whereby human impact is evolving into great scales – a mass destruction age of different species.”



Turkey context

Like many economies, a determined economic growth agenda relies on new thermic- and hydro-based energy, new construction, and natural resource extraction. This has led to a severe ecological crisis marked by loss of biodiversity, ecosystems, water basins and livelihoods, decline of the commons, deforestation and air, water, soil and microplastic pollution. Turkey is situated in the Mediterranean region, which is likely to experience serious climate impacts and significant climate risks including:

- Drought, which will impact agriculture and food production
- Exposure to increasing heat extremes in summer
- High population density along its coastlines, vulnerable to rising sea levels; and industrial pollution and climate change leading to 'sea snot' choking the sea and marine life, impacting livelihoods

Turkey's contribution to global climate change

Up until September 2021, Turkey was the only remaining G20 country and one of a handful of countries in the world that had not ratified the Paris Agreement. Turkey has just ratified the Paris Agreement, now expected to update its INDC to match the vaguely formulated target of achieving net zero around 2050. In the meantime, 24 Turkish cities and municipalities have committed to the Paris Agreement independently, pledging to significantly reduce emissions and adapt sectors such as transport, building renovation, energy and agriculture to meet the target of limiting global warming to well below 2C, aiming for no more than 1.5C. These include Ankara, Izmir, Bursa, and individual districts in Istanbul. Many grassroots organisations, festivals, and artists in Turkey have been developing creative responses to the ecological crisis.

The big questions

During the Roundtable stakeholders from the intersection of culture and climate were invited to discuss current culture/climate trends, challenges and solutions.

These questions included:

- What is being done to tackle climate and environmental issues with culture?
- As arts and culture organisations, practitioners, artists, academics; what would be most helpful in working towards ecological transformation?
- How can the connections between policy-makers and the cultural sector be strengthened to develop solutions to tackle the climate crisis?

Emerging themes

Systems change

Bottom-up policy dialogue urgently needed

Creativity to power material transformative practices

Skills and capacity building

Digital shifts

Centring climate justice

Art is seen as a way to connect social and ecological issues

Nature is art

Communication between sectors

Increasing interaction with policy-makers

Adapting to more sustainable practices

Greater inclusion of regional networks

Developing a common language of storytelling

Contact and collaboration

Fairer redistribution of financial resources

International art exchange



Snippets and insights

Systemic change

In order to get out of this bottleneck of inaction, different actors – grassroots, national, across borders – need to work together. National frameworks are not keeping up with what is happening on the ground. National policy has to cascade down and up from citizens, communities and the hyper local level. Circularity is important, but so is changing our practices, including ensuring grassroots participation should be at the forefront of policy making.

Bottom-up policy dialogue urgently needed

Consistently throughout the project there have been calls for policy dialogue that creates space and place for the expertise and the experience from local and creative practitioners working from the ground up to inform policy.

Digital shifts and arts and culture related data

How can we make sure international art exchange on climate change does not itself become extractive. By using the digital shifts of our time, it is possible to share and make data on climate action practices open sourced and available.

Material transformative practices

Adapting to more sustainable practices across the cultural sector is desired at various levels, such as reducing material consumption and wastage in arts production through recycling and sharing resources between networks, to local administrations committing to carbon reduction through policy and collaborations with NGOs, the private sector and the public.

Financial support/fairer redistribution of financial resources

Fairer redistribution of financial resources to fund artists, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those working on environmentally positive themes, is an important step towards creating a healthy artistic ecosystem and greener sector. A policy-driven turn to establish more ethical funding frameworks, which opposes corporate greenwashing and censoring of political debates, would allow artists to create work more freely about climate justice.

“Present economic and social systems are increasing inequalities, making past inequalities deeper, and creating new victimising effects (e.g. displacement).”

Fair access to knowledge

Fair access to rapidly disseminate knowledge, fair access to digital resources. Archives and sources of reliable data need to be made available so that people have an open and reliable set of data to enable transformation and upscaling of efforts.

Storytelling

Developing a common language of storytelling between the public, civil society, and artists to discuss the climate crisis together is valued. This speaks to the desire for a structured framework of support that provides a connected network of the interdisciplinary people working in the field, as well as new grant programmes to recognise the volunteer labour of practitioners pushing for sustainable changes.

Centring climate justice

Centring climate justice in Turkey's unique political climate requires facilitating and strengthening the bottom-up transformation in the media, the arts and across cultural organisations to include an open dialogue on climate change and the social issues it affects, particularly for some communities. It is necessary for the arts and culture to be defined not only as an industry, but vitally, as a space for everyone to participate on the basis of citizenship, rights and climate justice.

Arts and culture to power shifts

Creativity to power material shifts – transformation is trial and error: our path will be defined by creativity. Can artists find alternative ways of “telling” that are circular, not one-way? Allowing for people to understand the material shifts and infrastructure shifts – in buildings and energy – needed for a decarbonisation transformation.

“A tree not giving out new fruits is an indicator that there are new dynamics in nature. Our real question is what kind of future we choose?”

Art connects us to nature

Art is seen as a way to connect social and ecological issues, yet it is important to recognise that like climate and environmental discourses, it is also capable of exclusionary practices. Therefore, its capacity to encourage inclusive, critical and interdisciplinary ideas in the democratic arena of public discussion, through collaborative processes and accessible public education on climate change, should be encouraged. Art does not tell people what to do – it inspires and allows us to connect with nature.

“Calling for urgent action does little to help people understand how to respond concretely. Art does not tell people what to do, it touches people's hearts.”

Capacity building, collaboration and action

A compelling call is made to policy-makers to enable and support artists and cultural institutions in working towards, creating and collaborating for ecological transformation. Public resources should be used with the future good of the public in mind in order to develop skills and capacity for climate action.

Connection and integration within the arts

We need dialogue between different disciplines because concepts like “sustainability” have different meanings. Dialogue requires safe space to criticise and be criticised. Different forms of social movements: the way you create the alternative is itself an art.



“We are both the architects and victims of this crisis.”

Agency – connection and collaboration

There is a need for the arts to connect with policy-makers, and be included into decision-making structures. Co-creation networks are needed to increase engagement via meetings, workshops, programmes that focus on justice and deep transformation. Transparent public communication of how cultural institutions and local administrations spend public budgets on sustainable activities is seen as important, in order to invite consensus and feedback from the public and create an open, mainstream environment for these discussions. Greater inclusion of regional networks beyond Istanbul, especially in Turkey’s countryside, is emphasized as a meaningful strategy to confront the varied experiences of climate impacts on the sector, and to collaborate in mobilising on climate actions.

“In all of this, the real artist, the original artist, is nature itself.”

Emotion and narrative/culture *is* environment

Art actions kindle the fires of creativity in each and every person. The vitality of nature can be found everywhere. Nature touches us and energises us as does art – it creates change in the chemistry of our bodies. Public art, especially in cities, provides citizens with positive engagements with their built environment. It is important to link this to the natural environment to sustain the connection between humans, nature and the changing climate, and there is interest for more opportunities to support artists with space and resources to create publicly accessible arts.

ANNEX 1 – Keynote speakers:

Oktay Kargül, General Secretary of İstanbul Planlama Ajansı (Istanbul Planning Agency/ IPA): Keynote Speech

Oktay Kargül emphasised the need for multidisciplinary and inclusive planning and cultural policy strategies, which advocate for cultural rights and ensure urban development works with ecological protection. He states that the current rate of urbanisation in the country contributes to urban heat island effects, deforestation, high consumption of fossil fuels, and production of waste, noting the 2019 Istanbul Biennale's theme of plastic as the world's "Seventh Continent". Oktay Kargül discussed how the UN SDGs aligned 2050 Vision for Istanbul commitments, and the "Fair, Green, and Creative City" 2050 vision of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, can guide purposeful urban development for future generations.

Hande Paker, Faculty member of Istanbul Bahçeşehir University Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences: İKSV's Cultural Policy Report: Arts And Culture For Ecological Transformation

Hande Paker delivered an overview of İKSV's Cultural Policy Report on Arts and Culture for Ecological Transformation. She spoke about two critical roles for arts and culture actors in ecological transformation, the first being the need to reduce the sector's carbon footprint, exemplified by the City of Amsterdam's adaptations in line with the Paris Agreement. She also highlighted creative expressions to stimulate cultural change, in describing Zone2Source's emphasis on horizontal methodologies, interdisciplinary work, local knowledge and civic participation. She concluded by encouraging ecological transformation through democratizing practices, and co-creative processes between grassroots participants and policy-makers that focus on climate justice.

Baran Alp Uncu, Institute İstanbul and 350.org Turkey: Seeking Climate Justice in Cities

Baran Alp Uncu focused on climate justice as the key framework for repairing the climate crisis. He spoke about how "cities are both the culprit and the victim", as high emitters of CO₂, while being vulnerable to climate impacts. He mentioned the "Cities for Climate" campaign in collaboration with 350Türkiye, emphasising the urgency of ceasing fossil fuel development and shifting to renewable energy. Baran Alp Uncu explained that technological innovations alone cannot fix the unjust social, economic and political systems that unevenly impact climate or pandemic effects for more vulnerable urban demographics, and that fairly addressing basic needs like food and energy security need to be at the heart of our response, and benefits of climate action on public health.

Güneşin Oya Aydemir, One Seed Foundation Director: Transformation And Transformative Power Of The Arts In The Era Of Extinction

Güneşin Oya Aydemir discussed how the arts can create a roadmap to take us through the psychological and spiritual transformations needed for climate action. Stating the cyclical damage that people cause to the planet, she emphasized the need to follow nature's attempt to rebalance our shared environments. She challenged human ownership of nature and land in favour of cooperative access, and in turn advocated for public artworks, including digital media arts, that promote social, cultural, and political collectively.

Yiğit Özşener, actor: Earthlings! Can Art Heal The Planet?

Yiğit Özşener delivered a video message of how hope and collaboration through the arts can motivate people to act on climate change. He spoke about the forests as an inspiration for humans to communicate with each other. Where information and facts can feel overwhelming, the arts can touch us to transform awareness into behavioural change, through positive storytelling and integrating climate actions into the sector's work routines.

ANNEX 2 – Attendees:

Attendees included the people listed below. There were other attendees who joined the discussions, for whom we do not have formal permissions for their names to be shared. We would like to thank everyone who attended for their valuable contributions.

| İsim / Name | Kurum | Organisation |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Asena Günal | Anadolu Kültür | Anadolu Kültür |
| Ayşegül Kurtel | K2 Güncel Sanat Merkezi | K2 Contemporary Art Center |
| Baran Alp Uncu | Enstitü İstanbul ve 350.org Türkiye | Institut Istanbul and 350.org Turkey |
| Barış Işık | Mordem Sanat Merkezi | Mordem Art Center |
| Bige Örer | İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı (İKSV) | Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) |
| Cihat Arınç | Kültür A.Ş. | KÜLTÜR A.Ş. (Istanbul Culture Co.) |
| Doç. Dr. İtir Erhart | İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi / Festtogether | Istanbul Bilgi University / Festtogether |
| Dr. Ali Alper Akyüz | İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Sanat ve Kültür Yönetimi Bölümü | Istanbul Bilgi University Dept.of Arts and Culture Management |
| Elif Avcı | İstanbul Planlama Ajansı | Istanbul Planning Agency |
| Elif Duru Kireççi | Bağımsız | Independent |
| Esra A. Aysun | British Council Türkiye | British Council Turkey |
| Ethem Özgüven | Bozcaada Uluslararası Ekolojik Belgesel Festivali (BIFED) | Bozcaada International Festival of Ecological Documentary (BIFED) |
| Ezgi Cemre Er | Bağımsız | Independent |
| Fatma Çolakoğlu | SALT | SALT |
| Gizem Gezenoğlu | Bozcaada Caz Festivali | Bozcaada Jazz Festival |
| Güneşin Aydemir | Bir Tohum Vakfı | One Seed Foundation |
| Hande Parker | Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi | Bahçeşehir University |
| Hüseyin Sert | İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi | Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality |
| Isabelle Van de Gejuchte | British Council | British Council |
| İrem Çağıl | Sinek Sekiz Yayınevi | Sinek Sekiz Publishing House |
| M. Cemil Arslan | Marmara Belediyeler Birliği | Marmara Municipalities Union |
| Melisa Tapan | Gate 27 | Gate 27 |
| Meryem Kayan | İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi | Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality |
| Oktay Kargül | İstanbul Planlama Ajansı | Istanbul Planning Agency |
| Ömer Madra | Açık Radyo | Açık Radyo (Open Radio) |

| İsim / Name | Kurum | Organisation |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Özlem Ece | İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı | Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts |
| Pınar Öncel | Sürdürülebilir Yaşam Film Festivali | Sustainable Living Film Festival |
| Prof. Dr. Doğanay Tolunay | İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi | Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality |
| Refika Kadioğlu | GOLA Kültür, Sanat ve Ekoloji Derneği | Gola Culture, Arts, and Ecology Association |
| Seçil Kınay Yılmaz | Vehbi Koç Vakfı | Vehbi Koç Foundation |
| Seda Aydeniz | British Council Türkiye | British Council Turkey |
| Serkan Kaptan | birbuçuk Ekoloji ve Sanat Çalışmaları / oddviz Kolektif | birbuçuk (one-and-a-half) Ecology and Arts Studies / oddviz Collective |
| Serkan Taycan | İki Deniz Arası / Carleton Üniversitesi | Between Two Seas / Carleton University |
| Sibel Horada | Bağımsız | Independent |
| Sinan Çağlar | İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi | Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality |
| Sinan Eren Erk | AICA Türkiye | AICA Turkey |
| Tanyeli Behiç Sabuncu | WWF Türkiye | WWF Turkey |
| Yaşar Adnan Adanalı | Mekânda Adalet Derneği | Center for Spatial Justice |

ANNEX 3 – About the partners:

British Council

British Council is the UK's international organisation responsible for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We connect, build understanding and trust between the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education, and the English language. Last year, we communicated face-to-face with more than 80 million people, and over 791 million people online, through our radio and TV programs and our print publications. Founded in 1934, the British Council is a charity and public organisation that has become a legal entity with the Royal Charter. Fifteen percent of our revenue is covered by the UK government.

Julie's Bicycle

Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, Julie's Bicycle has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on.

Julie's Bicycle works with cultural policy-makers to create structural change at a local, national and international level. Julie's Bicycle's freely available resources are the most comprehensive library of good environmental practice for culture anywhere, co-created with the thousands of artists, cultural workers, and creative organisations we have worked with. We exist at the heart of a thriving informal network of organisations and individuals who share our vision across the world, using our 14 years of experience to support others on their journey, and helping to catalyse new projects at the intersection of culture and climate. Find out more: www.juliesbicycle.com

İKSV

İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) is a non-profit cultural institution. Since 1973, the Foundation continues its efforts to enrich Istanbul's cultural and artistic life. İKSV regularly organises the Istanbul Festivals of Music, Film, Theatre and Jazz, the Istanbul Biennial, the Istanbul Design Biennial, Leyla Gencer Voice Competition, autumn film week Filmekimi and realises one-off events throughout the year. The Foundation hosts cultural and artistic events from various disciplines at its performance venue Salon İKSV, located at the Nejat Eczacıbaşı Building. İKSV organises the Pavilion of Turkey at the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of la Biennale di Venezia and supports artistic and cultural production through presenting awards at its festivals, commissioning works, taking part in international and local co-productions and coordinating an artist residency programme at Cité Internationale des Arts in France, as well as the annual Aydın Gün Encouragement, Talât Sait Halman Translation, and Gülriz Sururi-Engin Cezzar Theatre Encouragement Awards.

One of İKSV's three main objectives is defined as "contributing to development of cultural policy". To this end, İKSV Cultural Policy Studies unit, with a focus on the right to access and participate in cultural life, conducts research on various subjects and supports the Foundation's activities with data-based approaches. İKSV Cultural Policy Studies drafts reports and policy text, and organises events around this work with the aim of fostering the exchange of ideas in the cultural field. İKSV has launched a conversation on arts and the ecological crisis with the publication of its ninth cultural policy studies report "Arts and Culture for Ecological Transformation". İKSV invites the arts and culture sector in Turkey to think about how arts and culture may inspire ecological transformation and facilitate exchange on climate action, nature-human relations and intersectionality.

İKSV has most recently created a podcast series entitled “Earthlings! Can Art Heal the Planet?” with Yiğit Özşener on responses from theatre, literature and documentary film to the ecological crisis, using the “Arts and Culture for Ecological Transformation” report as a departure point. Find out more: [İKSV](#)

What is the Climate Connection?

The Climate Connection is the British Council’s global platform for dialogue, cooperation and action against climate change. It connects millions of people from the UK and the rest of the world through collaborative and creative solutions to the climate crisis.

Why?

International cooperation through cultural relations is key to addressing shared development solutions. By encouraging cross-sectoral, inter-generational and international collaboration, and bringing in new voices across the arts, education and English, the Climate Connection will enable more innovative, creative and sustainable solutions to our shared climate crisis. Through this approach, the Climate Connection will make climate action as inclusive as possible, by strengthening cooperation between the UK and the world, and across all parts of society, to enable everyone to contribute to a better future for our planet.



Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the British Council team in Turkey and our partners at Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSİ), as well as the British Council's The Climate Connection team.

Thank you to all the Roundtable participants for your invaluable time and insights. We would especially like to thank the speakers and facilitators: Dr. Hande Paker, Bahcesehir University; Baran Alp Uncu, Independent Researcher and 350.org; Oktay Kargöl, General Secretary of İstanbul Planlama Ajansı (Istanbul Planning Agency/ IPA) and Güneşin Oya Aydemir, One Seed Foundation Director; Özlem Ece, Director, Cultural Policy Studies İKSİ and Esra A. Aysun, Head of Arts, British Council , Istanbul.

Many thanks to actor Yiğit Özşener for his video message, bringing life and creativity to the climate and environmental challenge. Further thanks to all the facilitators from İstanbul Planning Agency, the translators and technical team, and particularly the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSİ) for their organisation and support. Thanks to Ada Jusic for the visual minutes.



The Climate Connection

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