



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY //

The climate crisis poses one of, if not the, greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. The world has warmed by 1.1°C since the preindustrial era as a result of human activity causing too many greenhouse gases (GHGs) to build up in our atmosphere. The climate crisis presents risks of more frequent and extreme weather events, severe impacts on human health, mass migration and vast disruptions to supply chains.

Scientists say that to avoid the worst impacts, we need to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2050. We can do that by ensuring all industries and countries halve total emissions by 2030 and reach what is known as **'Net Zero'** by 2050.

Some countries must do more to reduce emissions, and do so at a faster rate. A small number of industrialised countries are responsible for the majority of GHG emissions, and now must achieve Net Zero earlier than 2050. Mitigation is not a level playing field: developing countries will need more time to reach Net Zero.

This understanding of climate justice must be built in to the UK's response as an industrialised nation. Our emissions cuts must be faster and deeper.

The Spotlight programme is a key industry response from the cultural sector focused on achieving Net Zero.

It consists of 30 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) across 80 sites responsible for the highest carbon emissions with the Arts Council England portfolio. The programme forms part of the Arts Council England 2018-2023 sustainability strategy delivered by Julie's Bicycle, with technical support from Pilio. The Spotlight group have made significant reductions in their energy use since the start of the programme¹.

The purpose of this report is to provide guidance around what Net Zero means, why we need to achieve this, and how. This guide provides cultural organisations with an overview of the key sources of emissions for the cultural sector, and practical examples from organisations leading the way in their energy reduction journeys. Annexes provide an overview of technical solutions useful in particular, for venue-based organisations.

¹ For more information please visit the Spotlight page on the Julie's Bicycle [website](#)

What does Net Zero mean?

Simply put, **Net Zero means removing as many greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere as are being put into it.**

Recent guidance from the Science Based Target initiative (SBTi) says Net Zero must involve actual reductions of emissions in-line with what climate science tells us is needed to limit warming to 1.5°C². This is what's referred to as a 'science-based' target. Only the remaining unavoidable emissions can then be offset. This differentiates Net Zero from 'carbon neutral', which places greater emphasis on offsets to balance out emissions.

What does Net Zero cover?

An organisation's Net Zero target should cover all material sources of GHG emissions within its value chain. It is therefore important to define your organisational boundaries and understand the different sources of emissions.

The different sources of emissions are defined by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and categorised into different 'Scopes'. These include:

- **Scope 1** – Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources (e.g. company owned vehicles, natural gas boilers).
- **Scope 2** – Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the reporting entity.
- **Scope 3** – All other indirect emissions that occur in an organisation's value chain (e.g. purchased goods and services, travel using vehicles not owned by the organisation and waste).

As with most organisations, Scope 3 emissions represent the largest proportion of the footprint for cultural organisations in Spotlight. Visitor travel and procurement of goods and services are the most significant emission sources.

In the Spotlight programme, most organisations are initially aiming to reach Net Zero for their energy-related emissions (i.e. Scope 1 and 2) as there is a greater ability to control these emissions in the immediate term. Some organisations are aiming to reach this target by 2030.

Achieving Net Zero (Scope 1 and 2)

There are a number of actions that organisations can take to achieve Net Zero for energy-related emissions. These include:

- **Avoiding emissions** – By identifying where power is not needed at all (e.g. 'switch-off' policies when lighting and heating is not being used).
- **Reducing energy use** – By implementing energy efficiency measures (e.g. Building Management Systems, LED lighting).
- **Replace energy sources** – By opting for low-carbon alternatives for electricity and gas.
 - Electricity – e.g. green tariffs, green suppliers, on-site generation
 - Gas – e.g. biogas, heat pumps
- **Offset residual emissions** – By balancing any unavoidable emissions with solutions that take carbon out of the atmosphere. This should only be the approach for any emissions you cannot feasibly remove by the previous actions.

²<https://sciencebasedtargets.org/resources/files/foundations-for-net-zero-full-paper.pdf>

Achieving Net Zero (Scope 3)

The recommended approach for Scope 3 is to engage the key stakeholders involved in the activity to start measuring these emissions more accurately and influencing positive behaviour change. The measures listed below outline what this might look like for each major source of emissions for cultural organisations:

- **Visitor/audience travel** – Encouraging and incentivising more sustainable forms of transport (public transport, walking, cycling and electric cars).
- **Procurement of goods and services** – Favouring suppliers that can provide more sustainable goods and services.
- **Business travel** – Encouraging web-conferencing instead of travel where possible and more sustainable forms of travel through a green travel policy where it is necessary.

To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, every organisation needs to play their part in reaching the Net Zero target, and organisations in the cultural sector are no different. While they too need to reduce the emissions from their operations, they are also uniquely positioned to use their platform to connect with and influence wider society.