



culture/SHIFT methodology

Creative Carbon Scotland's method
for supporting arts and
sustainability collaborations to
tackle the climate emergency

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Executive summary

This methodology describes Creative Carbon Scotland's approach to supporting collaborations between artists and climate change organisations through our culture/SHIFT programme to harness the role of culture and creativity in tackling the climate emergency.

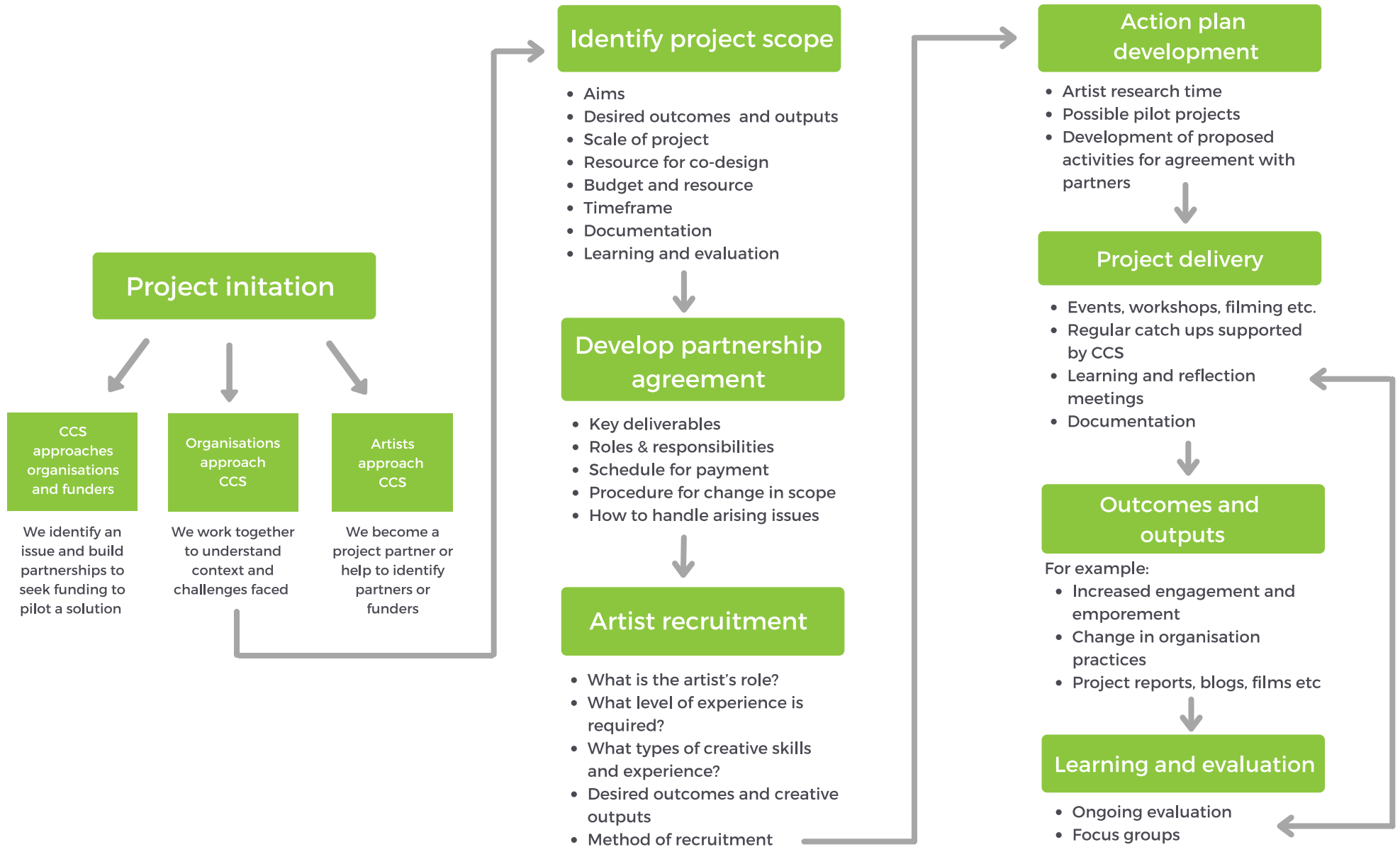
Since we formally launched the culture/SHIFT programme in 2017, we have had the privilege of participating in and contributing to a wide range of projects, from the restoration of the peatbog in [Scotland's Flow Country](#) as a vital carbon sink and diverse natural habitat, to engaging communities in the [Outer Hebrides in Marine Protected Areas](#), and supporting the development of a transformational approach to catalyse Glasgow City Region's [adaptation to climate change](#).

Gathering the knowledge and experience gained from such initiatives, this resource illustrates our typical approach to initiating, designing and delivering artistic and climate change partnerships, as well as the rationale for working across these sectors and the benefits partners can expect from doing so. From our experience, bringing together different skillsets and perspectives can help to enhance engagement and participation of everyone involved, enable projects to reach new audiences, and facilitate different, creative ways of thinking and working.

As well as the benefits, the methodology offers examples of some of the common problems we've encountered when working across sectors and disciplines, and some thoughts on how to address these. We've also developed some guiding principles that we think can help to underpin the whole process and ensure everyone's perspectives are equally valued and respected. We describe how we typically work as a mediator between and supporter of partners, including our process for defining project scope and developing artists' briefs as well as supporting project delivery, learning and evaluation.

We hope that you enjoy reading it and find it a useful and inspiring resource for creative, cross-sectoral working to help build a more environmentally sustainable, resilient and just society.

culture/SHIFT methodology diagram



Introduction

What is this resource for?

This resource describes the methodology developed from [Creative Carbon Scotland's](#) (CCS) experience of running collaborations between artists and organisations who are interested in working together to address the climate emergency and build a more environmentally sustainable, resilient and just society. It is intended to guide collaborations in which CCS is involved directly, and as a method that other groups and organisations involved in arts and sustainability initiatives may find interesting or helpful.

The methodology has been developed as a result of CCS's experience of supporting such collaborations since 2017: initiating new partnerships, acting as a mediator between cultural and climate change partners, and encouraging the interweaving of cultural and creative perspectives in our response to the climate emergency. It also reflects the learning and inspiration we have taken from individuals and organisations around the world working towards similar goals. This is a first version, describing our current methodology but it is important to say that this continues to grow and evolve with each project we are involved in. We welcome your feedback, ideas, and suggestions to help make it a useful resource for cultural and climate change practitioners working in Scotland and further afield.

Definitions

What is a climate change organisation?

We define climate change organisations as any organisation for whom some of or all their focus is on addressing the challenges (and opportunities) posed by the climate emergency. This could include local and national authorities, public bodies, NGOs and charities, community organisations, education institutions or businesses. These organisations may be focused on a range of issues, including reducing the negative impacts of climate change through carbon mitigation, supporting society to adapt and be resilient to the impacts of climate change already locked into the **earth's system** due to existing emissions, or addressing issues relating to social inequalities and climate justice.

What is an artist?

We define an artist as a creative practitioner with training and experience in any artistic discipline, including visual art, crafts, participatory or social practice, performing arts, music, theatre, dance, literature, poetry, or film. Although we define artists in this way, we recognise that creativity is not restricted to the realm of the arts and culture and see it as an inherent part of human expression and experience. Having an embedded artist can help to bring out the creativity of

project partners or create the space for other cultural aspects relating to heritage or lived experience to play a stronger role in the project.

Why arts and climate change collaborations?

Climate change is the most pressing issue of our time, posing fundamental challenges to the ways in which we live. We believe that arts and culture have an essential role in achieving the necessary transformation to a more environmentally sustainable and socially just society. Arts and artists' creative practices are well placed to help shape our wider culture – they can bring new ways of thinking through the complex issues, engaging communities through creative approaches, challenging accepted norms and values, and imagining completely different versions of the type of society we want now and for future generations.

What are the opportunities for cultural and climate change partners?

The opportunities for cultural and climate change collaborations are multiple and vary depending on the individuals and organisations involved, as well as the contexts in which they are working, and the scope of any given project.

The usual measures of success may not apply as creative practices often encompass intangible aspects of human experience, including emotions, values, imagination and sense of identity. Additionally, project outcomes may not manifest in the short-term and can be more dispersed, posing challenges for drawing a causal relationship between an activity and a discrete result or impact. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the opportunities that can arise from working together in this way and we have curated [a series of inspiring arts and sustainability case studies on our website](#) to help demonstrate this potential.

Projects using this type of approach tend to be a richer experience in all respects as they encourage a more open-minded, inclusive, and stimulating experience in getting to grips with often challenging and complex issues. Artists and climate change organisations bring different skills, resources and perspectives that can complement one another and help in reaching shared goals that may not be possible to achieve on their own.

Climate change organisations can benefit in the following ways:

Challenging assumptions and encouraging different ways of thinking

Artists within projects can help to challenge underlying norms, values and assumptions within an organisation or team, and facilitate the creativity in others to generate new insights and open up different perspectives on particular challenges.

Project example: [The Natural Resources Defence Council Artist in Residence](#)
 The NRDC in the United States worked with artist Jenny Kendler to find creative ways of engaging the public on issues concerning biodiversity loss whilst giving the artist a seat at the table to influence the wider organisation's approach to advocacy and behaviour change.

Awareness raising and communication

Projects can benefit from collaboration with artists, who have a strong understanding of audience and are skilled in communicating complex ideas in more personal, tangible ways and making connections between the global and local impacts of climate change.

Project example: [Peat Cultures](#)

Initiated by environmental artist Kate Foster, this project supported the physical restoration of peatlands by drawing attention to the roles they play in a living cultural heritage, using artistic activities to encourage people to consider peatlands as valuable in their own right as well as of wider significance for climate action and wildlife protection.

Enhancing community engagement and participation

Creative approaches can help break down traditional barriers between institutions and communities by providing alternative spaces and entry points for engagement and discussion. Many artists bring training in, and experience of, participatory work and community engagement, which form an important part of contemporary artistic practice. Involving artistic practices can make meetings more enjoyable and locally relevant and can help to create a more equal playing field for those who have been historically marginalised or excluded from decision-making or planning processes.

Project example: [Creative approaches to flood awareness](#)

Musician Simon Gall piloted a fresh approach to community engagement with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, working with a local primary school in Aberdeen to co-write songs and create sound recordings of their local river to increase awareness of flooding.

Harnessing narratives and storytelling

Artists can bring skills in storytelling and the crafting of narratives that can help project participants, communities and the public explore and debate realistic and desirable futures and prepare the ground for new changes that we are seeking to catalyse.

Project example: [VeloCommunities embedded artist project](#)

Theatre-maker Lewis Hetherington and filmmaker Geraldine Heaney worked with Glasgow cycling charity Bike for Good to co-produce films with community members about their visions for a more cycle-friendly city and make connections between cycling, social justice and climate change.

Observation, synthesis and reflection

Projects can make use of an artist's relative 'outsider' position to observe, synthesise ideas, and pose questions that might not otherwise be asked. This position can complement other roles within a team, helping participants reflect on their work at different stages in the process and shaping the design of project activities.

Project example: [City of Ghent embedded artist](#)

Artist Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert has used her position within the Environment and Climate Department in the City of Ghent to contribute to their work building community engagement and participation in how the city adapts to the impacts of climate change including through the creation of greenspace.

Artists can benefit in the following ways:

Involvement in civic action and work with new audiences

Artists will have the opportunity to reach new audiences in different ways, taking an active role in bringing about social change and working with more pragmatic and practical outcomes than are usually available to them.

Project example: [Cuningar Loop](#)

As part of the redevelopment of an area of waste land into a woodland park, two artists were brought in to work as part of the project, providing a point of reference with the local community by organising discussions, workshops and activities that ensured that the redevelopment responded to their needs.

Providing a new frame of reference and focus for practice

Projects can provide valuable learning opportunities for artists, creating space for them to engage closely with climate science or policy and build an understanding of how they can develop their practice with new approaches to the areas that they are engaging with.

Project example: James Hutton Institute artist in residence
 Artist Frances Davis was embedded into the life of the James Hutton Institute for a week, interviewed researchers there, and produced proposals for arts-based methods that the institute could use to expand its research approaches and engagement methods.

Opening up potential for collaboration

Collaborations provide artists with insight into methods of working with organisations such as local government and NGOs as well as the chance to develop relationships and collaboration techniques that will allow them to develop their practice for future work.

Project example: [Glenrothes Town Artist](#)

David Harding was employed as Glenrothes Town Artist for a period of 10 years during which he was fully embedded within the local government structure.

Funding or in-kind support

Climate change-related collaborations provide the opportunity to access funding streams or resources that would not otherwise be available to artists or arts organisations.

Project example: [Maintenance Art](#)

Artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles did not receive a formal salary for her role as artist in residence at the New York Sanitation Department, but she did receive studio space and access to materials and resources.

Fun, experimentation and intellectual stimulation

Artists relish the opportunity to work in unfamiliar environments in new ways as a chance to continue reinventing their methods and thinking differently. These kinds of collaborative experiences provide an opportunity for artists to get outside their comfort zone.

Project example: [Recycled Artist in Residence](#)

This scheme provides artists with the opportunity to take up a residency at a waste recycling company and produce work that makes use of scrap material and industrial machinery there.

What principles and values are common to this type of project?

In supporting collaborations between climate change and artistic partners CCS promotes some key principles and values that should be jointly desired and held for the project to work:

- **Ambition:** the climate emergency requires bold ideas, imaginative thinking and creative solutions. Working across cultural and climate change sectors offers the opportunity to approach issues from a different angle, engage new partners and take a step into the unknown to generate new insights and solutions to complex challenges.
- **Embracing different perspectives:** embedded artist projects are, by their nature, boundary crossing, benefiting from the cross-fertilisation of ideas to create new possibilities, and helping break down barriers and siloed thinking.
- **Willingness to try a new approach:** it is important for all partners to be open to what the others bring to the project and to set out with the expectation that they are going to try new things with a constructive mind-set.
- **Mutual respect and understanding:** the point of view of everyone - members of the project team, communities or stakeholders in the project - involved in or touched by the project is as equally valid no matter what degree of agency they hold. Creative Carbon Scotland is committed to actively promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all our work and applying this to different project stages, including recruitment, project design and evaluation.

Common problems

- **Managing expectations:** Directly involved individuals from different partners do not fully understand each other's point of view; [senior] personnel in partner organisations not directly involved in the project do not fully understand the aims or purpose; differing assumptions about what they mean by success, the process, outputs or outcomes.
- **Capacity:** Non-traditional approaches are often more resource intensive and make it more difficult to source funds over more extended time periods, to define the boundaries of the project and to manage it in action.
- **Continuity of project leads:** They are often the conduits or main champions for the work and the project can suffer if there is a change of personnel.
- **Evaluation:** Project results may be intangible, and 'success' not conveniently assessed by traditional methods. For example, culture/SHIFT projects tend to be process-oriented so producing creative artworks may not be an outcome, although it may be part of the process.

Ways of tackling common problems

- **Anchoring phase** (as named by Swedish arts agency [TILLT](#)): Allowing enough time in the early stages of the project can help to build shared expectations of what the project is aiming to achieve and how it will go about doing this. It can also help identify gaps in capacity and where additional funds or support may be required to deliver the work. This phase plays a crucial role in building relationships and trust between partners who may be new to working in this way.
- **Partnership agreement**: The partnership agreement is another useful way to clarify everyone's expectations and the key deliverables of the project (for instance, key milestones, number of workshops to be held, the nature of any creative artworks being produced), as well as each of the partners roles and responsibilities and how any arising conflicts will be resolved. An example partnership agreement is provided in the appendix.
- **Regular partner meetings and consistent communication**: Communication throughout the project is key to make sure that everyone is up to speed on activities being planned and is key to sharing and building on success along the way, as well as identifying any issues or problems arising. CCS supports the communication between partners by acting as a regular point of contact for the artist and partner organisations and convening regular catch-ups to address issues and keep plans on track.

Project development

Routes for initiating partnerships and sourcing funding

Where we have identified an issue that artists can help to address, we use a number of ways to get a project off the ground. In developing new partnerships across cultural and climate change fields, we create opportunities for connecting to different funding sources. In the project development phase, we may identify funders from a wider pool, including local and national government, public bodies, the academic sector, and cultural funders.

At this stage it is important to understand the scale of the project and therefore the nature of the partnerships required for the project to be successful. Will it be focused on one key group e.g., an organisation, department or community; involve working with a local authority or agency at large and with multiple departments within the organisation; or working across a larger geography or with multiple agencies?

Routes for initiating partnerships include:

1. We approach organisations and potential funders

- We identify an issue and build appropriate partnerships to seek funding to pilot a solution
2. Partner organisations approach CCS
- We work with the project partners to understand the context in which they are working, challenges they are facing, and where creative practices could help
 - We develop an initial proposal outlining CCS's and/or an artist's role and an indicative budget (a sample budget is provided below)
 - This supports a proposal to a funding call that the partner organisations have identified or to internal funds of the partner organisations
 - It may not be that funds for the whole project are obtained from the start. For instance, we have used a pilot project approach to test different methods, which provide evidence for a larger funding proposal
3. We are approached by an artist to help build support for a project working on climate change related issues
- We might become involved ourselves as a project partner or could help to identify possible climate change organisations partners and funding sources to support the project

After this initial period, the anchoring phase begins. This can take any length of time between one month and two years depending on the scale and complexity of the project or length of the application process. More details on the anchoring phase are provided below.

Identifying the project scope

The scope of the project is identified by CCS and the partners involved. Through this process we seek to define the scale and complexity of the project e.g.:

- What the project is seeking to achieve or the controlling idea of the project
- Project aims e.g., changing organisational cultures or practices, empowering communities and widening participation in climate change related issues or local decision-making, influencing policy
- Desired outcomes, both tangible and intangible e.g., enhanced engagement between a local authority and communities in local adaptation plans, a wider awareness of the socio-cultural value of peatlands as well as their climate change and ecological importance
- Project outputs e.g., creative materials produced during workshops or activities, films, blogs, photos, podcasts documenting the project process,

recommendations, strategies or action plans that will be informed by project learning

- The amount of time allocated for co-design during the project, which allows project partners to shape the aims and activities in collaboration with the communities or stakeholders they are working with. Co-design can improve the whole approach by ensuring activities are reflective of and responsive to **communities' or stakeholders'** interests and needs but also increases the time and resources required to deliver the project
- **How the project will ensure that it meets partners' equality, diversity and inclusion aims**
- The scale at which the project will be working - local, regional, national or international level
- Partner roles and responsibilities
- Project budget (sample budget provided in the appendix)
- Project timeframe, which is linked to the project goals and resources available. This can be broken down into three broad categories:
 - Less than 12 months (building on previous work, piloting of methods/testing ideas, limited scope)
 - 12 months (may be building on an earlier pilot phase, may be fitting into existing programme of work)
 - Multi-year or ongoing (project focused on bringing about systemic level change or working with multiple stakeholders, which requires longer investment from artist and partner organisations)
- Project documentation and evaluation, which both link to project outputs
- Communications roles and responsibilities

Partnership agreements

- A partnership agreement is developed by CCS and the partners. Funders or partner organisations may have a standard template for issuing partnership agreements or CCS can provide one (sample partnership agreement in the appendix)
- Key information that the partner agreement holds includes:
 - Aims and scope of the project
 - Project budget
 - Key deliverables
 - Timeframe
 - Key roles and responsibilities for the partners including:

- Supporting the development and maintenance of the partnership
- Research and development
- Project activity
- Documentation
- Communications
- Evaluation
- Procedure for a significant change in the project scope or people involved
- Risk register
- Intellectual property rights of any outputs produced
- Agreement of how to handle arising issues or conflicts
- This is signed off at an early stage and used to help steer activity and maintain clarity in roles and responsibilities throughout the project. It can also be used by any of the partners in the event of mission creep or if the project scope changes significantly.

Project anchoring

- The early phase of the project is a pivotal time to build relationships and trust between the partners, and to ensure there is capacity and willingness within the partner organisation to take on this new work. It is key for managing common problems such as differing expectations of what the project is going to achieve or securing commitment from project partners.
- During this time CCS meet with key staff members from partner organisations to build an understanding of the organisational history and the wider context, as well as the key issues or challenges and where creative practices could play a part.
- CCS also use this time to build understanding and enthusiasm within the partner organisation(s) of the value of creative practices and the different skills and approaches that could be applied by an artist to help lay the groundwork for what is to come. It is often the case that there is one enthusiast in the partner organisation who needs no persuasion, but the concept may be less well understood, known or appreciated by others, so this is a useful time to address that.

Artist recruitment

- Following the scoping phase CCS works with the project partners to develop an artist brief. This is an important phase in further clarifying

partner expectation of the artist's role and ensuring that there is not a mismatch between the selected artist and the aims of the project.

- Key questions we ask when developing the artist brief include:
 - What will be the focus of the artist's role?
 - Will their role be more strategic, conceptual and open ended, more focused on facilitating events and activities, or developing creative outputs?
 - Will they work with team members from within the organisation, or will their role be more public facing, or focused on working with specific communities?
 - What level of experience is needed?
 - Does the scope or scale of the project require someone with a significant level of experience, or would it be equally suited to an artist at an earlier stage in their career?
 - What creative skills or expertise are required?
 - E.g., experience of designing and facilitating workshops, skills and training in a particular artform, experience of working in specific contexts, such as working with communities, in academic and research contexts, within organisations or with policy makers.
- Typically, we include the following aspects in the artist brief although these may vary depending on the scale and scope of the project:
 - Key project and partner information
 - Envisaged outcomes of the artist's role
 - Specific activities they will undertake
 - Creative artworks and materials that they will be expected to produce as part of their role
 - Budget and support of the artist's role
 - Project timeframe and key dates
 - The application and recruitment process
- The brief is commonly publicised by the partners, with CCS identifying relevant cultural organisations and networks through which to share the advert including our own Green Tease network of artists and sustainability practitioners working in Scotland.

- We most commonly publicise the artist brief through an open call to help ensure equal opportunity in applying for the position. In some instances, we may use a targeted call, e.g., if we are working with a shorter recruitment timeframe.
- Applications are anonymised through CCS's equal opportunities recruitment process and CCS leads on shortlisting applications for the interview panel.
- Interviews are generally conducted with a panel of partner representatives and can either take place in person or virtually.
- Once the artist is selected, CCS holds responsibility for the artist's contract and fee payments.

Example culture/SHIFT project artist call outs and briefs

- [Zero Waste Scotland Decoupling filmmaker](#)
- [Climate Ready Clyde Embedded Artist](#)

Project delivery

Action plan development

- As the project gets underway, CCS supports the artist to build their understanding of the context in which they are working and the groups and organisations involved. This is also a time for the partners to learn more about the **artist's practice and their approach**, usually in the form of one or more induction meetings.
- The artist has time to undertake a period of research and development of the issues, undertake interviews or meetings with the people involved and develop plans for delivering key activities.
- During this phase we may suggest running a short pilot project to trial some different methods that can inform future activities.
- As a result of this process an action plan is produced with an outline of proposed activities for the artist and partners to undertake, with support from CCS, which is agreed with the key partners. This often occurs as an iterative process over the course of the project lifetime as it grows richer in content and form.
- Optionally, the partners may choose to mark the launch of the action plan through a meeting or event with the wider organisation to help build interest and buy-in from a broader group of people.

Project activity

- During this phase artist(s), CCS and partners undertake the agreed activity. This varies greatly between projects with examples of past projects

provided (on pages 6 - 8). Further examples can be found on our [culture/SHIFT project page](#) and in the [Library of Creative Sustainability](#).

- For shorter term projects, we co-ordinate weekly or bi-weekly catch-ups with the artist and key partners to help keep everyone up to date, on schedule with programmed activities to celebrate successes, and to address any issues that arise. For longer term projects these meetings are co-ordinated on a monthly or bi-monthly bases.
- Depending on the agreed roles and responsibilities, CCS may support practical as well as creative activity planning e.g., event planning support, building community contacts, producing promotional material, and developing project outputs.

Outputs and outcomes

- We define 'outputs' as practical products that result from project activity and 'outcomes' as impacts that the project has achieved.
- CCS supports the artist to deliver creative activities or outputs. The nature and form of these vary between projects, reflecting the context, places and people involved. They could involve any number of things, including creative workshops or events, documentary films, exhibitions, performances, podcasts, stories, poems, blogs, or reports.
- A communications plan supports the production of creative outputs. This communicates the results to a wider audience and may be led by CCS or one of the other project partners.
- The outcomes are likewise specific to each project and could focus on a range of impacts such as:
 - Raising participants' awareness of climate change or related environmental issues
 - Increased community engagement with local climate issues
 - Improved relations between communities and organisations
 - Increased understanding and appreciation of the socio-cultural aspects of climate change and the role of culture in tackling the climate emergency.
- Depending on the project timeframe, changes in behaviour or perspectives are harder to measure and equally there are less tangible aspects such as emotions, values and imagination which may not be measurable, but rather are captured or expressed through creative activities and outputs.

Learning and evaluation

- We encourage all partners to embrace the new learning and insights that can arise from working with creative approaches. Each project is an opportunity to develop the partners' understanding of the benefits and challenges of collaborating across cultural and climate change sectors, and how to best support this way of working.
- As part of our role in supporting the project, CCS leads the hosting of focus groups for everyone to reflect on achievements as well as challenges and learnings that can be derived from their experience. This may be repeated at various stages to enable an iterative learning approach and for plans to be adjusted.
- We may also suggest hosting a 'linking event', which brings together participants from similar projects to share learning and continue building the network of arts and climate change practitioners working across Scotland.
- Where a project has specific learning objectives, we may undertake a more formal evaluation process with funding to support partners to design and deliver an evaluation framework. You can read about the evaluation of past projects, including [Aberdeen Adapts](#) and [Creative Approaches to Flood Awareness](#).
- We also use the reflection and evaluation time towards the end of the project to discuss further opportunities to extend the life of the project or continue working together and possible funding routes to do this.

Call to action!

We hope that you have found this a useful introduction to our approach to supporting arts and climate change collaborations, and that you have been inspired to incorporate creative approaches into your own work tackling the climate emergency.

We would love to hear from you if you are interested in working directly with Creative Carbon Scotland or if you're seeking advice on how to get started.

How can you get involved?

More information about past and current culture/SHIFT projects can be found [on our website](#).

Climate change practitioners and organisations

As a sustainability practitioner or organisation, you may be interested in collaborating on a project that could benefit from integrating creative practices or cultural perspectives to help shape the project design and contribute to your aims. Get in touch to discuss your ideas!

Artists and arts organisations

We are interested to hear from artists who have an idea for a collaborative project, where we might be able to suggest sustainability or climate change organisations to work with and help to broker the collaborative process.

For enquiries about partnerships, embedded artist projects or the culture/SHIFT programme more generally, please contact [Gemma Lawrence, culture/SHIFT Manager, Creative Carbon Scotland](#)

Appendix

1. Sample budgets

For a 10-month project with light touch involvement from CCS, paying a rate of £300/day in line with Scottish Artist Union's day rates for artists with +5 years' experience.

Item	Activities	Total
Artist fees	Research, prep, project delivery and evaluation meeting	£5850
CCS producer fees	Brief writing and recruitment, artist support, debriefing and report writing	£3600
Expenses	Travel in central belt of Scotland and materials	£400
Contingency @ 10%		£985
TOTAL		£10,835

For a one-year project with high level of involvement from CCS and artist, paying a rate of £300/day in line with Scottish Artist Union's day rates for artists with +5 years' experience.

Item	Activities	Total
Artist fees	Research, engaging community members, project delivery, event participation and reflection/evaluation meetings	£13,350
CCS producer fees	Project development, brief writing and recruitment, artist support, event participation, co-ordination of reflection meetings/evaluation	£7,350
Expenses	Travel and subsistence, materials	£1500
Contingency @10%		£2220
TOTAL		£24,420

2. [Example partnership agreement](#) (available via Google Drive)
3. [Creative Carbon Scotland's Equalities Policy](#) (downloadable PDF)
4. [Creative Carbon Scotland's Safe Working Statement](#) (downloadable PDF)