

LIVING BODY/IES CHARTER

CIRCOSTRADA CHARTER FOR ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction

The Circostrada Charter for Ecological Sustainability is the result of a collaborative process between members of the Living body/ies internal committee, with support from the Circostrada coordination team, and in consultation with outside experts working at the intersection of arts and climate.

Developed over the course of 2022, the Charter sets the initial parameters for the network - as well as its affiliate members and any actor engaged in its activities - to take concrete, measurable actions that improve the sustainability and ecological impact of Circostrada's programming. In doing so, the Charter lays the foundation for an ongoing, open dialogue on the interdependencies that define the notion of ecology - with ramifications for the network's role as a promoter of cross-cultural exchange, as well as for our shared responsibility for environmental stewardship.

The suggestions and best practices presented in this Charter shall be recognized and approved by all members, artists, festival organisers, participants and other guests involved in Circostrada's programme of activities. As a European network, however, Circostrada appreciates the great diversity of political environments and cultural contexts that its members operate within. In recognition of the ongoing injustices and disparities inherited from colonial and geopolitical history, the network is vigilant to not reproduce harmful power relations in its international collaborations. This commitment also implies an understanding that its members have varying levels of access to information and necessary public infrastructure, and that meeting our defined ecological goals carries an unequal burden for some actors.

The network strongly stands in favour of shared-responsibility between all players from the field and will strive to foster solidarity, mutuality, and reciprocity within its international ecosystem. Rather than imposing an overly prescriptive approach to each actors' sustainability practices, the network will encourage solutions that arise democratically, recognizing that these will be necessarily tailored to the differing responsibilities and capabilities of each individual, collective and organisation.

The Circostrada Charter for Ecological Sustainability is a work in progress. The internal Living body/ies Committee will meet annually to assess the network's progress according to the stated objectives, and to enrich the content of the Charter.

Finally, Circostrada belongs to a consortium of European cultural networks organised around the SHIFT (Shared Initiatives for Training) initiative and will strive to meet the criteria of its eco-label.

1. Working outdoors

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Connection between culture and the natural environment; outdoor arts as an entry point to sensitise publics to undervalued aspects of the ecosystems we participate in
- Decentralisation as an ethic and strategy to promote local vibrancy and control in cultural programming, and to reduce the intractability of systemic inequalities and isolation

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Prioritise opportunities to engage local cultural professionals and artists (Y1)
- » Address access and accessibility conditions when organising events in rural areas (Y1)
- » Strive to decentralise Circostrada events and visibilise non-urban spaces (Y3)

2. Audience and community engagement

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Cultivation of diverse audiences through equitable outreach strategy and deep, long-term relationship building
- Audiences and publics as stakeholder, partners and co-creators, rather than only consumers
- Opportunities to benefit local economies and work directly with local artists, producers, cultural professionals and artistic communities
- Shift in internal culture, practices and awareness among our own working teams

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Deepen the network's internal understanding of structural barriers that limit how inclusive current programming and activities are for diverse communities. Identify opportunities and develop specific strategies to make these measurable more inclusive and inviting (Y1)
- » Create resources on these topics to be incorporated into programming contents (Y3)

3. Mobility

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Recognition of the innate advantages of in-person meetings and the necessity of travel for cultural actors
- Discernment of necessary and unnecessary travel, and commitment to weigh the ecological impacts of relevant modes of travel as a factor in planning decisions
- Consideration of the available green mobility options for artists, audiences and cultural workers in each setting - with an eye to the differences in infrastructure between urban and rural areas, as well as from one country to the next
- Amplification of the positive cultural and professional outcomes associated with slower travel practices (e.g. local networking opportunities; artistic work and research anchored more deeply in sense of place)
- Expanded awareness of green mobility grants (understanding and reducing financial and logistical burden of these grant applications)
- Understanding of the ecological impact of touring with large-scale sets, especially internationally; consideration of the impact of these choices during artistic creation

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Calculate its own carbon footprint and identify opportunities to measurably reduce it each year (Y1)
- » Share resources on existing green mobility grants
- » Develop new green mobility grants that aim to level access to mobility and international connection for transportation-disadvantaged applicants, taking into account the infrastructural inequalities within the EU (Y1)
- » Invest in measures that would ease barriers for artists to participate in longer residencies, with slower travel (e.g. family-friendly residences)
- » Create internal sustainable travel guidelines (Y3)
- » Encourage the use of public transportation and bikes wherever possible in association with the network's events (Y3)

4. Digital footprint

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Responsible participation in and stewardship of the digital space as a commons
- Advancement of organisational and individual digital sustainability, as measured by digital footprints

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Share resources and provide trainings on reducing digital impact (Y3)
- » Select greener, more ethical banks, sponsors, insurance providers (Y4)

5. Materials and waste

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Identification of preferred suppliers with understanding of true environmental impact and supply chain concerns
- Eco-friendly and reused materials for festivals and cultural events, and prioritising wherever possible new, sustainable innovations and local providers
- Recycling of apparatuses, circus tents, decoration, scenography
- Advocacy for greater accountability among actors in the sector
- Mindfulness of greenwashing in marketing and misleading environmental credentials

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Redefine its communication strategy in order to produce less waste, shift to sustainable communication materials and modalities, and shorter supply chains (Y1)
- » Create an environmental sustainability framework to be included as a term of partnership with event hosts (Y2)
- » Provide space for members to share information and resources on best suppliers and recyclers of specialty materials (Y4)

6. Water, soil, and food:

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Celebration and honouring of local biodiversity and ecologies through site-specific artistic work and responsible land and water management practices
- Restoration of symbiotic relationship between human cultural activities and the environment, with an eye to sustainable and just food systems

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Propose sustainable menus for catering, including vegan and vegetarian options and biodegradable utensils (Y1)
- » Ensure availability of on-site recycling options for catering (Y1)
- » Seek out local suppliers and partners wherever possible (Y2)
- » Provide space for members to share feedback and resources on best sustainability practices at festivals (Y3)

7. Energy

What to emphasise / What to focus on / What is important:

- Raise awareness about viable, energy-efficient alternatives for heating and air conditioning in circus tents (Y4)
- Test and share information about viable, energy-efficient alternatives for lighting and preferred suppliers (Y5)

What Circostrada network is doing/will do about it:

- » Petition owner of the network's office building to retrofit its energy systems (Y5)

8. Includes resources, guides and toolboxes

- [Circostrada Handbook to Navigate Ecological Transformation](#)
- [Green Art Lab Alliance](#)
- [On the Move](#)
- [SHIFT \(Shared Initiatives for Training\) - Sustainability Guidelines](#)
- [The Green Room](#)
- [THE SHIFT PROJECT \(The carbon transition think tank\) - Decarbonise the Economy](#)

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