National Youth Orchestra of Ireland
Ceolfhoireann Náisiúnta Óige na hÉireann

CLIMATE POLICY AND ACTION PLAN

JANUARY 2025

Introduction

The National Youth Orchestra of Ireland aims to follow best practice and operate in a sustainable manner across its operations and artistic delivery.

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact while promoting artistic excellence and music participation in a meaningful and resource-efficient way. Our sustainability plan focuses on minimising harm and encouraging awareness and action across our network of young people, artists, staff, and stakeholders.

We recognise our responsibility to operate in an environmentally sustainable way, by:

- Reducing our carbon footprint;
- Reducing the environmental impacts of our courses and activities;
- Reducing our digital carbon footprint;
- Maintaining, repurposing and reusing our equipment and consumables;
- Encouraging sustainable practices in the arts.

Our policy applies to:

- **NYOI Staff and Board**: All staff and board members are expected to align with our sustainability goals in their work, travel, and day-to-day operations.
- **Contracted Collaborators and Orchestra Members**: Contracted artists, staff and participants are encouraged to consider sustainability in their interactions with us and adopt similar values in their own work and practice.
- **Stakeholders and Audience**: We will engage our audiences and partners to promote awareness and action toward sustainability, using our platform to advocate for change.

Our policy and action plan, outlining our commitment to reducing our environmental impact and improving our environmental performances, focuses on five areas:

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Key Focus Areas

1. Travel and Transport

Travel poses a significant area of our environmental impact, involving travel of staff and board members, touring of artists, staff and orchestra, and transport of equipment.

In order to **reduce our carbon footprint**, we will:

- Use public transport when feasible for all domestic travel for our staff, board members and guests;
- Arrange coach transport to and from our activities;
- Prioritise national over international touring, assessing social benefits versus environmental costs of any international travel;
- Reimburse our staff, board members and guests only an equivalent amount to taking public transport;
- Encourage participants and audiences to use sustainable transport options, providing information and incentives where available;
- Conduct all meetings in hybrid form reducing emissions associated with travelling to meetings in-person.
- Use appropriate postal / courier services to transport instruments and equipment when appropriate.

Recognising that public transport can take longer, we will explore strategies to support staff in using more sustainable travel options, including:

- Flexibility in working hours;
- Fair compensation for extended travel times by way of time-off-in-lieu;
- Recognition and compensation for staff for increased subsistence costs related to travelling sustainably;
- Supporting staff to work remotely and / or *en route*;
- Minimising international travel, travelling internationally only when this is strongly beneficial to the organisation and travelling overland and sea where this is feasible.

2. Courses and Artistic Activities

In addition to travel, impact of our activities is found in accommodation and catering during residential courses, and venue climate control during performances.

In order to **reduce environmental impact of our courses and activities** we will:

- Encourage the provision of vegetarian and plant-based food options by our suppliers;
- Make drinking water and other drinks available without the use of disposable containers;
- Provide snacks that come with minimal use of packaging;
- Enquire about the environmental commitments of suppliers of venues, accommodation, and meals, and opt to support and collaborate when possible, with those that strive for sustainability.

3. Technology and Digital Footprint

Although a small organisation, we recognise our environmental impact of digital technologies, especially with regards to data storage and online content and activities.

In order to **reduce our digital carbon footprint**, we will:

- Purchase repairable devices and strive to repair equipment when possible, and correctly dispose of old devices;
- Freecycle, donate or recycle hardware when possible (having securely erased information);
- Monitor the charging of devices, avoiding wireless charges when possible.
- Monitor email space by emptying relevant folders frequently;
- Create a policy for email deletion to minimise our online footprint while keeping other necessary correspondence (legal etc);
- Communicate materials via email with the use of links to online files instead of attached documents;
- Dispose of old data, and review and clean files and applications regularly;
- Opt for efficient hosting platforms for meetings when possible (Zoom & Google).
- Store and stream video from optimised services only;
- Monitor the carbon rating of our website;
- Review annually how our technology usage impacts our carbon footprint.

4. Materials Usage

Our environmental impact of materials is found mainly in programmes and instrument production and disposal.

In order to **reduce waste**, we will:

- Avoid the use of plastic in our promotional materials and aim to produce the minimum amounts necessary to facilitate our purposes.
- Reuse and recycle, separating paper, cardboard, glass, plastic bottles, food tins, drink cans, and food. Recycling bins are in place in the NYOI office and distributed in our residential courses, clearly labelled for members, staff and visitors. Individual waste bins are eliminated as much as possible in order to prompt recycling.
- Print less by instead opting to use devices such as laptops or tablets wherever possible. This includes all Board papers and the distribution of the NYOI parts across members and staff.
- Purchase quality instruments and equipment that will last and regularly service and maintain instruments to gain the maximum lifespan from them;
- Purchase materials from sustainable suppliers and resources.
- Encourage our audiences to recycle printed material by including a message on our programmes.

5. Building Energy Use

The NYOI is hosted within the premises of Griffith College in Dublin, with limited impact on the building's overall energy use. The NYOI is committed to engage in shared responsibility for energy efficiency and resource usage within the larger building, including monitoring our energy and building resource consumption through energy-saving practices.

Implementation and Monitoring

We will integrate sustainability into our daily operations by:

- Regularly reviewing our energy and travel usage;
- Implementing simple metrics to measure our environmental impact;
- Engaging with staff, board, participants, and partners to seek continual improvement.

The NYOI commits to review and update its policy annually.