**The MAC Environmental & Sustainability Policy**

**1. Purpose**

At the MAC, we recognise that sustainability is not a destination but an ongoing journey; one that requires commitment, innovation, and resilience. As a cultural institution rooted in Belfast, and as a charity encompassing art galleries, theatres, conference facilities, and a café bar, we face a unique set of challenges in our efforts to operate more sustainably. Despite these, we continue to make meaningful progress through our facilities management strategy and by embedding sustainability across all aspects of our work.

This policy aligns with our strategic vision, the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](https://unric.org/en/united-nations-sustainable-development-goals/) (SDGs), the [UN Global Compact (UNGC) principles](https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles), and wider sectoral and governmental sustainability goals.

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to all MAC employees, operations, contractors, suppliers, visitors, and community-based activities.

**3. Responsibility**

* **Executive Responsibility**: The CEO, supported by the Facilities Manager, is accountable for implementing this policy, integrating it with our Sustainability Strategy, and reporting progress to the Board and stakeholders.
* **Green Team**: A cross-departmental group that develops the Green Action Plan, monitors progress and supports implementation across departments.
* **Leadership & Staff**: Department heads are expected to integrate sustainability into all planning. All staff must complete mandatory induction and annual sustainability training and act as champions for positive change.

**4. Policy Statement**

The MAC acknowledges climate change as one of the defining challenges of our time. We are committed to reducing our environmental footprint, promoting social sustainability, and using our platform to model and inspire sustainable practice through our programming, operations, and partnerships.

"Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."[[1]](#footnote-1)

**5. Policy Areas**

**5.1 Waste Management**

* Implement improved systems for reduction, segregation, and responsible disposal.
* Prioritise recycling, reuse, and composting to minimise landfill contributions.
* Continue to divert 100% waste from landfill.
* Reduce single-use items and encourage green procurement.

**5.2 Energy Efficiency & Carbon Management**

* Monitor and reduce energy usage, upgrading infrastructure where possible.
* Explore renewable energy options, including onsite generation.
* Promote low-carbon travel among staff, artists, and visitors.
* Target: 40% carbon reduction by 2027.

**5.3 Local & Responsible Supply Chains**

* Prioritise local, ethical suppliers for CaféBar and operational needs.
* Ensure at least 75% of suppliers meet sustainability criteria by 2026.
* Focus on ethical sourcing, life-cycle environmental impact, and social value.

**5.4 Artistic Practice & Programming**

* Encourage use of recycled/reusable materials in productions in line with the Theatre Green Book.
* Minimise paper usage through digitisation.
* Embed sustainability themes in MACtivate, youth programmes, and artistic commissioning.
* Support artists in adopting climate-conscious practice.

**5.5 Education, Research & Partnerships**

* Maintain academic partnership with Queen’s University Belfast, hosting student placements to link research with practice.
* Deliver public engagement activities such as Green Talks and creative recycling workshops.
* Share learning through sector networks and toolkits.

**5.6 Community & Charity Support**

Sustainability at the MAC extends beyond environmental impact to include strong social responsibility. We actively support and collaborate with local advocacy and community organisations, including:

* Participation and the Practice of Rights
* Alliance for Choice
* The Rainbow Project
* Action Mental Health
* Extern

**5.7 Green Accreditation**

* Maintain and strengthen our Green Tourism Award status, progressing towards Silver by 2026.
* Apply for at least one additional sustainability recognition or award during this policy period.

**6. Achievements to Date**

* **Waste Management**: Introduced improved recycling and waste segregation systems,100% of waste is now diverted from landfill.
* **Energy Efficiency**: Implemented energy monitoring systems and efficiency upgrades; installation of 40kW solar panels generating 37,000 kWh annually (6% of electricity use).
* **Local Supply Chains**: CaféBar now sources the majority of ingredients from local and ethical suppliers, reducing transport emissions and supporting regional producers.
* **Education & Research**: Established academic partnership with Queen’s University Belfast, hosting MSc student placements focused on sustainability.
* **Green Accreditation**: Awarded Green Tourism Bronze Award, with recognition of best practice across operations.
* **Public Engagement**: Delivered monthly *Green Talks* and creative recycling workshops; engaged over 1,000 visitors in sustainability programmes, provided a Summer Art Camp for 7-14 year olds full of creative workshops about climate and sustainability.
* **Community Impact**: Supported grassroots organisations through MACtivate and maintained strong partnerships with local charities.

**7. Looking Forward**

We remain committed to continuous improvement. Future priorities include:

* Reducing energy consumption further and increasing renewable uptake.
* Expanding use of sustainable and recycled materials in operations and productions.
* Deepening staff and visitor engagement in climate-conscious practices.
* Expanding partnerships with third-sector organisations and sustainability networks.
* Enhancing biodiversity and wellbeing initiatives within and around our venue.

Sustainability is not a standalone initiative, but a responsibility integrated into every aspect of our work. The MAC is proud to be part of a growing movement that recognises the vital role cultural institutions play in modelling sustainable practice and inspiring change.

**8. Monitoring, Reporting & Compliance**

* Annual progress reporting aligned with UN SDGs and UNGC Principles.
* Green Team and Facilities Manager responsible for monitoring KPIs and enforcing compliance.
* Annual policy review and Board approval required.

**9. References**

* [UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)](https://unric.org/en/united-nations-sustainable-development-goals/)
* [Theatre Green Book](https://theatregreenbook.com/)
* [Green Tourism UK](https://www.green-tourism.com/)
* [Queen’s University Belfast Sustainability Programmes](https://www.qub.ac.uk/about/sustainability/)
* [Supply Chain Sustainability School](https://www.supplychainschool.co.uk/)

1. **The Brundtland Report’s Vision of Sustainable Development** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)