

Towards a sustainable
and ethical delivery of

Scotland + Venice



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Scotland + Venice
2023 Venue Docks
Cantieri Cuchini.
Photo courtesy of
Scotland + Venice



Part 1

The Research Fellowship

This section explains the context, origins and scope of this research fellowship, including the policy background. It:

- introduces the researchers, Sculpture Placement Group (SPG),
- outlines the brief, including a list of research questions
- explains the Scotland + Venice partnership, giving a brief history

1.1 The brief

The Scotland + Venice partnership invited SPG to explore how to embed environmentally sustainable and ethical working practices across both the art and architecture projects, and support aims to work towards net zero. The work was intended to generate learning that would benefit the wider creative sector in Scotland, and support more sustainable models of international working.

The partnership approached SPG in summer 2022, to undertake a research fellowship to review the current model and shadow the delivery of the architecture offer, due for delivery in 2023. This allowed time to observe the closing stages of the exhibition and the return to Scotland of the 2022 art edition. SPG were also asked to look at past editions – and chose to focus on those delivered from 2015 onwards.

In early 2023, Scotland + Venice announced its decision to pause the project for the 2024 edition, ‘to allow for a period of reflection and review’. This decision acknowledged the very pressing financial challenges facing the arts, screen and creative industries as well as the environmental and ethical implications the present model brings.

This announcement significantly changed the scope of the research. Until this point the research had focused on the delivery format of the existing model. But the announcement of the review, approximately halfway through the fellowship, enabled it to reflect on:

- alternatives to the current format; and
- what no longer participating would mean for the project

This shift in focus is reflected in the findings in Part 2 which focus on changes that could be made to the current model and Part 3 which focuses on new and different ways of working.

“This has been a difficult decision to make especially given the project’s significant achievements over the last twenty years. However, in the current financial and planning environment it feels necessary to review the current model of delivery, and to consider the project’s position within the wider scope of international opportunities available to Scotland’s art/architecture communities. The decision also acknowledges the impact that the project has on the environment and needs to consider how it can be delivered more ethically and sustainably into the future.”

Amanda Catto, Chair of Scotland + Venice partnership/ Head of Visual Arts, Creative Scotland (Until Dec 2023)

About Sculpture Placement Group

SPG is a research organisation with a focus on ‘action research’. It helps the arts, screen and creative industries address the climate crisis, by finding new ways of working and developing tools to implement these new ways of working in the real world.

SPG is not qualified to provide in depth qualitative carbon calculations or data analysis, but rather was selected for this research because of its experience of enacting change in practice within the sector.

1.2 Research questions

As a guide, the brief instructed SPG to consider the following questions:

- **Research Q1**

How do we embed environmental sustainability within the Scotland + Venice management and Governance structures?
- **Research Q2**

How do we build environmental sustainability into the project from the outset (e.g at commissioning stage) and maintain this focus throughout the project?
- **Research Q3**

How can we work better with other participating nations to ensure activity across the biennale is environmentally responsible and sustainable?
- **Research Q4**

Can we build long-term partnerships in Italy (e.g around fabrication, production and venue support) that support our environmental aims?

How do we balance this with the desire to provide development opportunities for organisations and individuals based in Scotland?
- **Research Q5**

How do we encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transportation and travel? What barriers (if any) does this present and how do we overcome them?
- **Research Q6**

Can we make more effective use of digital platforms to support our audience development plans and minimise environmental impact?
- **Research Q7**

How do we develop opportunities to utilise the knowledge and insights of the PDP team to help us further understand the environmental challenges in Venice, and opportunities within the venue?
- **Research Q8**

How do we monitor and evaluate the impact of our work and continually seek to improve into the future?
- **Research Q9**

How do we ensure that our participation in the Venice Biennale does not leave negative impacts for the city?
- **Research Q10**

How do we ensure an environmentally sustainable legacy for the work?

For example in relation to onward touring, sales/acquisitions, long-term care plans?



1.3 Research methodology

SPG's research methodology is practice-based. This involves:

- reflecting on past and current practices
- making practical suggestions of how to achieve better or best practice

The research included interviews with key stakeholders from the partnership, as well as delivery teams from past editions of both the art and architecture projects. This included interviews with:

- artists
- technicians
- curator/producers
- members of the Scotland + Venice partnership
- members of the Scotland + Venice Architecture Steering Group

It also conducted interviews with personnel from:

- Wales in Venice
- the British Pavilion
- organisations based in Venice, such as: Rebiennale and We are here Venice

SPG also spoke to people working in different artforms in international contexts. This included Alchemy Film Festival and Sounds Festival.¹

The research included a visit to the Scotland + Venice exhibition in November 2022, where SPG:

- spoke with invigilators
- met with members of the creative team delivering the 2023 architecture edition
- attended the Towards the Green Lion workshop²

SPG undertook desk-based research, such as:

- reading the partners' and steering group members' Climate and Sustainability Action Plans³
- reading articles
- watching talks related to sustainability and international working

SPG also participated in discussion events and panels. During the research period all SPG team members undertook Carbon Literacy Training and accreditation.⁴

¹ We approached Alchemy having learned of changes they'd implemented to address the Climate Emergency. So we held further discussion with them to establish the circumstances and impact of these implementations.

² See appendix 5 for papers produced by the Pro Helvetia from the workshop.

³ All partners of the Scotland + Venice partnership have some form of plan or policy related to sustainability and/or the Climate Emergency. Partners have all published net zero targets, ranging between 2030-2045. Some policies were published in full while others were internal, with summary statements on their websites.

⁴ Accreditation received through the Carbon Literacy Project <https://carbonliteracy.com>, some staff training delivered by them and others received training via Keep Scotland Beautiful

1.4 Terminology

“The point is being both conscious of the impact of what you are doing and finding a way for what you are doing to be restorative.”

Karen Ridgewell, Climate Emergency & Sustainability Lead, Creative Scotland

The brief asked for ‘Sustainable’ and ‘Ethical’ approaches to be recommended. Sustainable tends to refer to environmental impact whereas ethical refers to the human one.

Sustainability can also refer to economics – whether something can be maintained at a certain level over time.

Ethical considerations in this report take into account the very specific nature of Venice and the impact the Biennale has on the communities that live and work there. This includes considering their dependence on the seasonal source of income that the Biennale represents, and the challenges it presents in terms of fundamental resources such as housing.

In this report SPG is aiming to address lowering carbon impact and emissions, rather than looking at options such as carbon offsetting. This recognises the flaws of offsetting programmes, such as:

- the problematic aspects of the unregulated market of carbon offsetting
- its relative lack of real-time impact in the short term
- that achieving real term carbon emission reductions is the best outcome to aim for⁵

Creative Scotland has published guidance on offsetting and insetting.⁶ An interview with their Climate Emergency and Sustainability Lead confirmed that Creative Scotland will recommend in-setting as an alternative to off-setting.⁷ This would involve nature-based solutions in Scotland, from verified providers, such as:

- reforestation
- agroforestry
- regenerative agriculture

Achieving these aims by mitigating carbon emissions and achieving net-zero will require behaviour change across all sectors. SPG are interested in how behaviour change is brought about, and recognise the challenge of achieving it, especially rapidly.

“Transformational action on climate change requires cultural change throughout society.”

Creative Scotland’s Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan

“Collaborative and collective action is required to address climate change and especially to achieve transformational change in society: actions by single organisations or individuals are not enough to address the complex and systemic challenges we face. The creative sector can help.”⁸

Creative Carbon’s Springboard Assembly

⁵ theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/30/delta-air-lines-lawsuit-carbon-neutrality-aoe

⁶ <https://www.creativescotland.com/resources-publications/publications/plans-and-strategy-documents/creative-scotlands-approach-to-offsetting-and-insetting#:~:text=Creative%20Scotland%20as%20a%20public,report%20on%20its%20progress%20annually.>

⁷ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/03/carbon-insetting-vs-offsetting-an-explainer/>

⁸ <https://www.creativecarbonscotland.com/project/springboard/>

1.5 Metric definitions

We use the following metrics and terminology as follows:

- 1 SPG uses carbon equivalent (CO₂e) measurements, which is where the gas emitted is converted to its equivalent in carbon dioxide, either in metric tonnes or kilograms.
- 2 We understand the terms 'net zero' and 'carbon neutrality' are often used interchangeably but that they had different scopes:
 - Carbon neutrality means having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks. A person, company or country is carbon neutral if they balance the carbon dioxide they release into the atmosphere through their everyday activities with the amount they absorb or remove. This includes carbon offsetting measures, which are not recommended within this report.
 - Net zero is similar in principle to carbon neutrality, but more expanded. To achieve net zero means to go beyond the removal of just carbon emissions. Net zero refers to Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions being emitted into the atmosphere. It does not cover Scope 3 which are the larger indirect emissions and more complicated to attribute. Scope 3 **must** be addressed (as they are greater) and require behaviour change.⁹ SPG believes it's best practice to acknowledge all scopes of emissions, and so the majority of SPG's recommendations relate to Scope 3 emissions.¹⁰

The Scottish Government has established a net zero target of 2045, which every sector receiving public funding must meet. Earlier reductions will achieve greater savings by avoiding future impacts, so the highest reductions should be aimed for sooner.¹¹

⁹ Scope 1 – raw fuel, 2 – electricity consumption, power that you use, 3 everything else (ie majority of aspects of Scotland + Venice delivery).

¹⁰ "Definitions for what constitutes net zero ambition can be slippery - but businesses looking to adopt best practice will commit to tackling Scope 3 emissions as part of their plans. Mapping your emissions footprint by scale, and how much control you have over the source will be a good way to start addressing them. As well as making the emissions hotspots within easy reach of your first ports of call." https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/focus/climate-change/zero-in-on-scope-1-2-and-3-emissions.html?gclid=CjwKCAjw0ZiiBhBKEiwA4PT9zyYaEXrCM2EBKb7MEWco578FIXjv-PVxdYMT-mDGHZNI7ESQMp_tcxoCLnMQAvD_BwE

¹¹ "...There are sound scientific and economic reasons to reduce emissions as much and as fast as possible. Global temperature change is determined by cumulative emissions, that is, the total of all emissions over time, and not isolated emissions at a particular point in time. How quickly emissions are reduced therefore matters. Scientists have demonstrated that every year of delay before initiating emission reductions decreases the remaining time available to reach net-zero emissions while keeping below 1.5 °C by approximately two years." <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-021-01245-w>

1.6 Scotland + Venice to date

Scotland + Venice is a partnership that comprises:

- Creative Scotland
- V&A Dundee
- British Council Scotland
- National Galleries Scotland
- Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS)
- the Scottish Government

Launched in 2003, Scotland + Venice is aimed at positioning Scotland as a unique and dynamic world-class centre for creativity; 'fostering ambitious, innovative work in the fields of contemporary art and architecture, strengthened through international development, professional dialogue, public engagement and cultural exchange.'

Scotland participates in the Venice Biennale as part of the Collateral Events Programme, and does have a fixed 'national' pavilion. This is because Great Britain is the recognised national participant by La Biennale. Scotland's collateral event has now occupied the same venue at the Cantieri Cucchini Docks since 2019. Prior to this the project had occupied various sites in the city, including one which was used for 3 art editions from 2009–2013.

It was the partnership's desire to use fully accessible and easily located venues, which prompted the move and ongoing commitment to the current space.

The approach to the visual arts presentation has evolved from the Group Show format 2003–2007, to the selection of a single artist for a newly commissioned solo exhibition, adopted for the majority of the exhibitions since 2009. The architecture presentation has included a variety of approaches, such as:

- the construction of large-scale structures
- group exhibitions
- film screenings
- socially engaged programmes of activity ¹²

The collateral events programme has to be approved by the Curator of La Biennale and this leads to certain restrictions around communication and firming up commitments. These play out differently across the Art and Architecture projects. In the case of the Art Biennale there is less need or desire to respond to the wider curatorial theme set for La Biennale whereas in previous years the themes of the Architecture Biennale have been more pronounced.

¹² Not all of the architecture presentations have had collateral status. A Gathering Space in 2008 was the first, then collateral status was not applied for again until 2018.

1.7 Changing environmental and economic context

Scotland declared a Climate Emergency in April 2019. This recognised that the world needs to take collective and urgent action to keep the global temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees celsius. Everyone globally will need to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Scotland aims to reach net zero by 2045. The Scottish Government requires all public bodies to contribute to this by:

- reducing the greenhouse gas emissions
- contributing to the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP) ¹³

Within the arts, screen and creative industries the desire to take action is gathering pace. There's also a realisation that the enormity of the task at hand will require urgent, widespread and systemic change.

The declaration of the Climate Emergency was followed by the COVID-19 pandemic which enabled many working within the arts, screen and creative industries sector to slow down and take stock, giving consideration to how they might work differently.

The pandemic also saw the National Pavilions at the Venice Biennale discuss how they might work together more effectively. This evolved into the Towards the Green Lion working group, which will be explained in greater detail later in this report.

This means Scotland + Venice considering these issues now feels timely and prescient.

Scotland + Venice is committed to delivering the project sustainably and ethically, acknowledging the impact the project has on the city itself and the people that live and work there. Scotland + Venice cannot be ethical if it's not delivered sustainably. There's an imperative to ensure the transition to net zero is just.¹⁴

The economic context has changed considerably. This is in part due to the lasting financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis brought about by the war in Ukraine and other global factors.

“The current cost of living crisis, coming on the back of several years of standstill funding for the arts in Scotland, is creating serious financial challenges. Visual arts organisations have limited capacity to lead on the commissioning and delivery of the project, which includes a significant element of additional fundraising.”

Scotland + Venice Partnership – Brief for the Scotland + Venice Review, September 2023

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/climate-change/climate-change-adaptation/>

¹⁴ Just Transition means moving to a more sustainable economy in a way that is fair to everyone including people whose livelihoods depend on polluting industries. This is particularly important to consider within the context of Venice where the local economy relies heavily on the biennales and tourism

1.8 Current policy and operating environment

Scotland's cultural strategy

*"It is important that our arts, screen and creative industries maintain their ability to collaborate, exchange knowledge and access the international talent pool and attract global talent to participate in Scotland's world renowned festivals. It is equally important that the sector is able to enjoy mobility to take works and services overseas and across borders without barriers that render projects unfeasible."*¹⁵

A Culture Strategy for Scotland

Scotland's cultural strategy, published in 2020 by the Scottish Government, clearly articulates the ambition for international working which is critical to Scotland and Scottish artists' visibility within the global art world.

It's widely acknowledged that culture has great potential to influence the behaviours and attitudes of society at large. As such it has an important part to play in the transition to net zero.

"Culture thus offers potential for galvanising climate action and could play a major role in influencing the widespread behavioural change that will be required to meet our ambitious targets ...Artists and practitioners can help communities to visualise and

understand the impacts of climate change, can provide leadership through debate and practice and can encourage people to imagine the possibilities and potential of a greener future."

A Culture Strategy for Scotland

Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan, April 2022

*"As a funder, a development body, and an influencing organisation, Creative Scotland's role goes further. The cultural and creative sectors have an essential role to play in helping Scotland to prepare for the climate-changed future. As well as working on our internal plans, we will use our funding, our policies, our development role and our influence to help the culture and creative sectors reduce their own emissions and adapt to climate change."*¹⁵

Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan

Creative Scotland's *Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan*¹⁶ was codesigned by Creative Scotland staff, in collaboration with Creative Carbon Scotland and Adaptation Scotland. It was published in April 2022.

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/culture-strategy-scotland/pages/5/>

¹⁶ https://www.creativescotland.com/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/90444/Climate-Emergency-and-Sustainability-Plan.pdf

It includes 60+ actions to inform a plan for Creative Scotland's organisational pathway to net-zero by 2030. Importantly, Creative Scotland's plan aims for transformational change – recognising that achieving net zero will significantly affect 'who we are, how we work and the work we do, as well as changes in the culture and creative sectors that we support.'

Meeting the challenge of attaining net zero in a just manner will require radical changes to current ways of working. The Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan states they will:

- > 'develop 'carbon 'budgets' for ourselves and the sectors we support and work with'
- > 'adapt funding criteria and guidance across all Funds... so that conditions of funding ensure sector contribution to Net Zero targets and addressing the climate emergency.'¹⁷

Climate ambitions of other Scotland + Venice partners

Each of the Scotland + Venice partner organisations has their own plans, targets and ambitions for the transition to net zero. The focus, path and timescales vary from organisation to organisation. What's clear from reviewing these documents is that each is aware of the need to examine and change working practices within the arts, screen and creative industries.¹⁸

A few key highlights that may be useful in developing for a plan for Scotland + Venice are outlined in this section:

> V&A:

- > air travel in the UK and cities serviced by Eurostar are not permitted
- > internal carbon compensation scheme established
- > reducing the negative environmental impact of how they deliver activities and operate buildings, targeting net zero by 2035 for Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions¹⁹
- > working to close material loops, focusing on longevity of materials, leasing and using service packages, reuse and recovery to design out waste and maximise resource value
- > highlighting sustainability in the content and delivery of galleries, temporary exhibitions and displays

> British Council:

- > taking account of environmental and sustainability factors in procurement
- > communicating its progress in reducing environmental impact to internal and external stakeholders
- > 77% of their engagement will be digital and 23% face-to-face, compared with 48% digital and 52% face-to-face in 2019–20.

¹⁷ The inclusion of Environmental Sustainability Funding Criteria as mandatory for Multi Year and Open Funding has since been implemented to address this action.'

¹⁸ This is further demonstrated by the partnership's commissioning of this research fellowship to help inform changes to the format and delivery of Scotland + Venice.

¹⁹ NB: this target is more onerous – and will have greater carbon emissions reductions – of all the partners policies.

➤ **Architecture & Design Scotland:**

- fostering a culture of collaboration to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create a more successful Scotland, future-proofing their places, as best as they can, to make them better for everyone
- using co-design and collaborative engagement tools to involve local people and stakeholders from the beginning and throughout the project
- sharing insights with others. By providing examples and evidence they can help implement the Place Principle and continuously make places better

➤ **National Galleries of Scotland:**

- reducing energy consumption and carbon footprints through improving their buildings and adopting virtual couriering for art works
- preparing for the effects and impacts of climate change in order to protect Scotland's art collections for future generations
- their Art Works capital project will deliver Scotland's largest building designed to the highly energy efficient Passivhaus standard to care for the national collection

Related activities and initiatives

Towards the Green Lion, November 2022

Towards the Green Lion workshop was the first of a planned series of workshops on the subject of sustainability organised for and by a number of the National Pavilions.

The workshop took place in the closing week of the 59th Biennale in November 2022 and saw participation by 20 countries and 7 guest contributors including:

- Gallery Climate Coalition
- Rebiennale
- Super Use Studios
- We are here Venice

The event was initiated by the 'Global Commissioners Group'. This is an open association of the organisers of the Biennale Pavilions in Venice. The aim of the group is to consider 'sustainability and ecology' within exhibition planning and approaches to projects within the Venice Biennale.

The aim of the first workshop was to:

- share experiences and discuss pragmatic approaches to exhibiting
- develop working relationships, approaches and networks for sustainable exhibition-making

SPG took part in the first workshop on behalf of Scotland + Venice. The workshop acknowledged that the push for significant and radical change is unlikely to come from the La Biennale organisers. Instead, the onus is on participating countries to make these changes for themselves and to:

- ensure that support and resources are shared fairly and generously
- enable all participants to make a just and equal transition to net zero

Springboard, Feb/March 2023

Creative Carbon Scotland's Springboard Assembly took place in February/March 2023. It's a collaborative project between cultural and creative organisations in Scotland aiming to:

- bring about transformational change in Scotland's creative sector
- build a net zero climate-ready world

The Assembly took place over 4 days and plans were developed between 12 Cohorts each addressing a different issue that affects the delivery of their work sustainably.²⁰

For example SPG is convening Cohort E, who will make sure a commitment is made throughout commissioning processes to sustainable and ethical:

- materials
- supply chains
- labour
- transport
- resource sharing

The individuals and organisations taking part recognised that only collective action can truly achieve transformational change.

The Cohorts will work throughout the coming year to establish and embed new networks and ways of working to affect change. Many of the issues being addressed by the cohorts touch upon working within international contexts.

²⁰ <https://www.creativecarbonscotland.com/springboard-2023/cohorts/>

Participants in Annan workshop collaborating with Beautiful Materials to explore the High Street. Architecture Biennale 2021. Photo by Bash Art Creative



Part 1 Conclusion

In the time since Scotland declared the Climate Emergency, conversations around sustainability have happened at pace across the arts, screen and creative industries.

There's a growing consensus on the need for a just transition, which is both ethical and sustainable. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how huge changes can be made quickly and at scale. It also gave many organisations a pause to enable reflection on how to adapt to sustainable working.

This presents an opportunity to rethink and restructure the Scotland + Venice project, in order to:

- radically reduce its carbon footprint
- provide a nourishing experience for the participating artists, designers and organisations
- make a valuable contribution to the Venetian community

This will involve making significant changes to how the project has been developed – some of which will be challenging and controversial. Other changes will be better for all involved.

The public announcement to pause was probably the hardest part – in terms of interacting with the sector. Therefore, it's imperative that the partnership make the most of this opportunity.

All of the partners involved in Scotland + Venice have publicly declared commitments to net zero and other related ambitions. But in particular, Creative Scotland has a:

- well developed Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan; and a
- lead role dedicated to its implementation.

Creative Scotland is also the main funder of the project and closely involved in its delivery. The organisation is in a good place to lead on the changes required and apply the same measures that it will be taking to its own operation. This includes carbon management and taking responsibility for the carbon emissions associated with the project.²¹

Doing this would set a great example, enact its Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan, and demonstrate best practice for the whole arts, screen and creative industries.²²

²¹ This includes setting carbon budgets, keeping carbon records and reporting on them accordingly.

²² SPG recognises that the partners are equal in the Scotland + Venice partnership, however the emissions have to be owned by someone and it would be impractical to divide them up (unless for example, A&DS takes the Architecture reporting and CS takes the Art edition reporting). Karen Ridgewell suggested in an interview with SPG that as the main funder, Creative Scotland should 'own' the responsibility. All partners are public bodies ultimately accountable to the Scottish Government, so it makes little difference and a lot of sense for CS to take ownership from a reporting perspective.



Graham Fagan,
Installation View
Commissioned
and curated by
Hospitalfield for
Scotland + Venice
2015. Photo by
Ruth Clark

Part 2

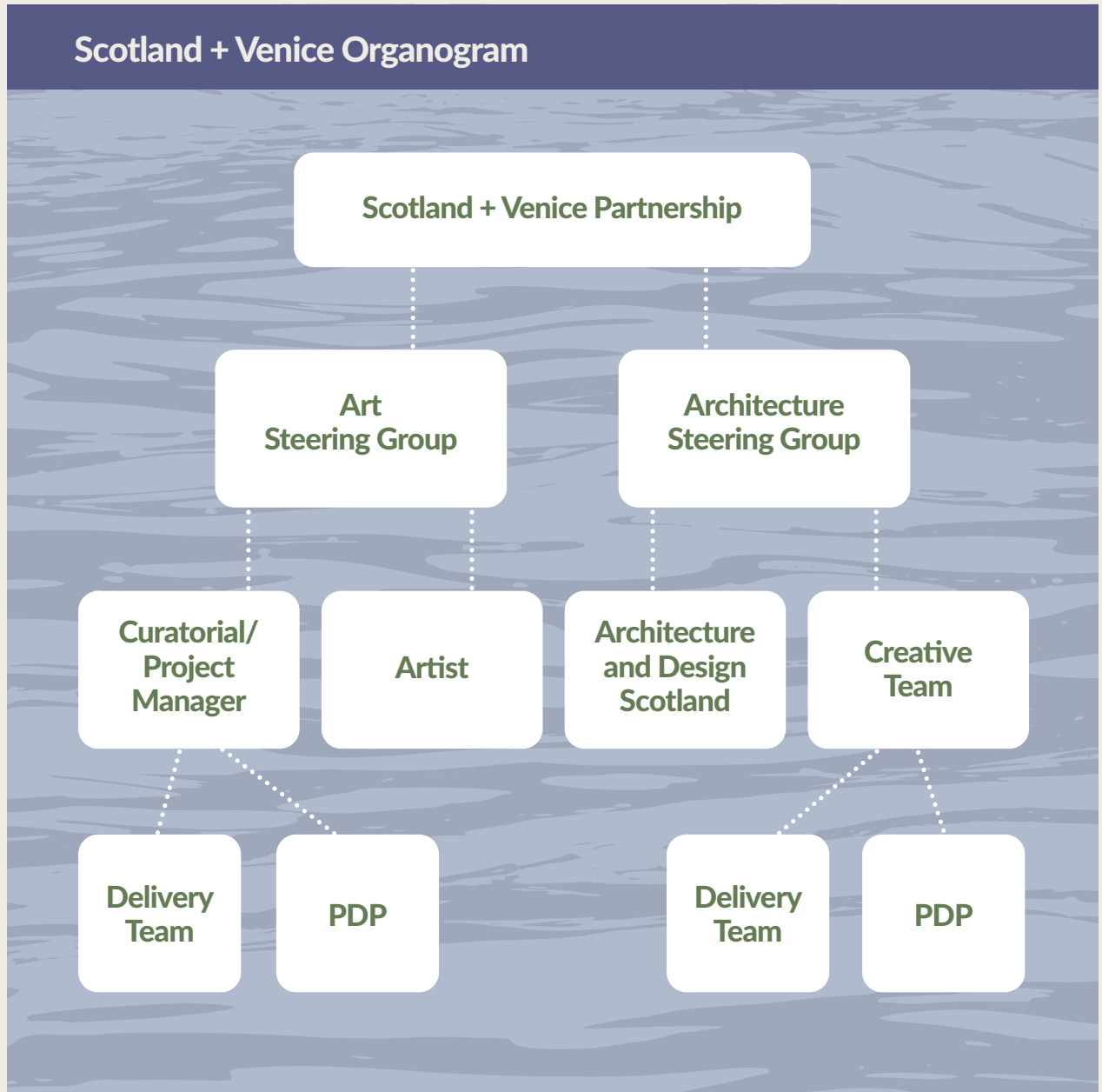
Examination of the Current Scotland + Venice Model

In this section SPG will:

- examine the current Scotland + Venice model
- draw from interviews with people involved in past editions
- break down the process chronologically
- expand on aspects highlighted as barriers to working sustainably and ethically
- make suggestions of changes that could be made to overcome these barriers ²³

²³ There's a full bulleted list of actions at the end of the report

2.1 Governance and continuity



“If Scotland + Venice could become an organisation in itself, with a bank account, credit cards, and people who can oversee these things, you are going a long way to give them the ability to be more sustainable and build relationships.”

Previous Technical Manager, Scotland + Venice (Art)

“The synergy between Art and Architecture improved in recent years. Back of house there’s the potential to be more streamlined, (for example having fire information for the venue, insurance etc) making that information held centrally would reduce a lot of time and wasted labour. Time pressures are acute in handover years.”

Member of Design Team, Scotland + Venice (Architecture).

The lack of continuity afforded within the structure of Scotland + Venice, was a strong theme that emerged from interviews with previous team members. As it is not its own entity with permanent staff members, there’s no sufficient framework or mechanism for the retention of knowledge, networks, and information.

It is appreciated that efforts are made to pass information and contacts across the delivery teams, but this is not the same as the knowledge that comes with actual hands-on experience of delivering the project on the ground.²⁴ It was also flagged that the different cycles of delivery between art and architecture mean the timing of this handover (and availability of staff who have moved on to new employment) can be problematic.

SPG recognises that work has been done to build continuity across the art and architecture editions. However, there

remain challenges, perhaps because of the differences in approach that naturally exist between these sectors, and the differing nature of the exhibitions themselves. There are significant opportunities to share resources and best practice that would be better facilitated by greater continuity between delivery teams, or the establishment of a consistent overarching delivery team.²⁵ In the 2022 edition, some of this work began and this will be discussed later in the report.

Several interviewees mentioned that the governance structure of Scotland + Venice is an outdated model that would benefit from being reviewed. Individual members of the Partnership Board – while bringing a lot of value in terms of expertise and experience, are limited in their capacity.²⁶ This means that the high level of continuity present in the partnership board does not filter down to delivery – where continuity and past experience of Venice are vital.

This presents an opportunity to embed sustainable and ethical practices at governance level.²⁷ Currently no one on the partnership board has a mandate to advise and oversee this or communicate this issue at the very highest level. Someone could take on this mandate, or the board as a whole could commit to addressing this at the top level. This would ensure it’s communicated down at every stage and monitored.

²⁴ In particular it is challenging to maintain good working relationships with contacts in Venice, without having a continuous person or role associated with the delivery of the project. This can be a barrier for growing and strengthening these relationships, as well as providing repeated employment and professional development opportunities for Venetian citizens.

²⁵ Many of the national pavilions who participated in the ‘Towards the Green Lion’ workshop had a continuous member of staff – sometimes based in Venice (as with the French Pavilion), it was clear how much of an asset this was, in particular when talking about sustainable and ethical practices. Other countries employ the same commissioning team to oversee delivery of both Art and Architecture projects.

²⁶ given their other commitments in their senior roles

²⁷ It does not currently feel like a fundamental principle underpinning the project.

Issues around continuity could be mitigated by having a year-round position straddling both editions. It is also recommended that the Scotland + Venice partnership assumes a mandate of responsibility for the sustainable and ethical delivery.²⁸ Which should be communicated, monitored and reported on throughout the project stages, from the open call to the return leg. This may mean appointing members to this board who have less senior roles and/or more time to dedicate to this oversight.

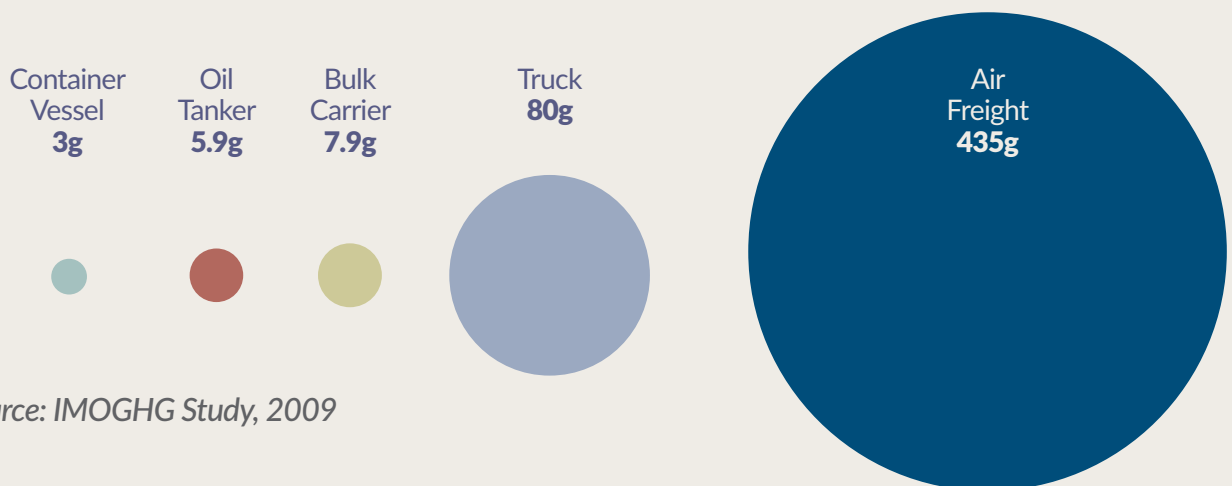
2.2 Budget

Despite the Scotland + Venice project having a significant budget relative to the wider Scottish funding context,²⁹ there is still a significant additional fundraising target on the project, and all involved recognise that the budget does not go a long way in Venice.³⁰ Anecdotal evidence from SPG's own experience and the research conversations undertaken as part of this research, suggest that sustainable and ethical options often

cost more to implement.³¹ The inverse is true in relation to some aspects, such as sea shipping versus air. This means savings could be made in some areas to make up for the extra costs. However in both these examples there's an impact on time frames.

SPG suggests that the budget from the previous edition is issued to appointed teams as a template to show most recent costs. This can be used to support advance planning, pending additional funds being secured, as is common practice in arts projects.

The 2022 edition was shipped via road, which is the second worst method after air in terms of emissions.³² The image below is from Gallery Climate Coalition's useful resources on shipping and other aspects of art-related emissions such as travel, packing etc. This illustrates the carbon emissions associated with artwork transport, and clearly shows the extent to which air and road freight have greater emissions than sea freight.



Source: IMO GHG Study, 2009

²⁸ With the budget, creative and logistical decisions which support this

²⁹ The budget for S+V from CS is maintained at £250,000, although the minimum cost of project delivery is £350,000. The average visual arts regularly funded organisation annual award is £187,590

³⁰ with the very high overheads of the venue and official participation fees etc

³¹ Average cost of train travel to Venice is £402 and takes 24 hours, whereas an average economy flight is £250 and takes 7.5 hours. However flight emissions are 10 times greater than those of train travel (see appendix 3 and the table on p25 for a more detailed comparison). Gallery Climate Coalition have calculated that sea freight has a 96% lower carbon footprint than air freight. <https://galleryclimatecoalition.org/user/library/documents/main/the-climate-benefits-of-ocean-vs-air-transport-of-artworks.pdf>

³² These calculations (based on 2021/22) show that artwork shipping via road emissions were 4.3 tonnes CO₂e. See Gallery Climate Coalition <https://galleryclimatecoalition.org/shipping/>

The affordability of train travel vs flights may change over time as demand for sustainable choices increases. In the meantime, additional funding will need to be sought to cover these changes. Or elements of the budget will need to be ring-fenced to cover the additional cost of choosing local fabrication and installation contractors over shipping.

SPG notes that other areas of the Scotland + Venice budget are fixed when given to the delivery team, such as venue costs and Biennale registration fees, demonstrating a precedent for ring-fencing areas in the budget. The responsibility lies with the Scotland + Venice partnership to make these constraints clear at the commissioning stage and/or by making them a requirement of the funding award.

2.3 Brief and commissioning

“You start to look at everything you are doing a bit differently, from the commissioning stage right through to production, what materials are used, reused and recycled. And then what’s the impact in practice? It’s really important to not take it for granted or leave it to the creative team to find the approach, [we, the Partnership, should be] actually pushing them and challenging them – and challenging ourselves at the same time – to really make sure the thinking makes sense, from an environmental point of view.”

Ian Gilzean, Chief Architect, Scottish Government (until November 2022)

“If we, as the organisations who have the choice to define what is included in a project brief, why aren’t we focusing on the planet already. Yes, it will force challenging decisions but if artists and creative practitioners have a clear framework, I’m sure there’s some amazing things they’ll come up with.”

Karen Ridgewell, Climate Emergency & Sustainability Lead, Creative Scotland

Establishing environmental sustainability as a fundamental principle of the project will be key and a revised set of project aims could achieve this.³³ Sustainability has been highlighted in the brief for the most recent edition (Architecture 2023), and sustainability questions were asked at the interview stage.

The open call contained the following statement on Environmental Sustainability:

‘Scotland + Venice is committed to building and maintaining a culture where environmental sustainability is intrinsic to and embedded in all areas of our work. We are committed to reducing and minimising the environmental impact arising from our activities and expect those we work with to work sustainably, ethically and with care within the context of both Scotland and Venice.’

³³ Scotland + Venice Aims <https://scotlandandvenice.com/about/about-scotland-venice/>

The Scotland + Venice partnership has an opportunity to set the framework and parameters for delivery through the brief and the commissioning process. They can establish targets for sustainable and ethical delivery from this early stage, making it transparent and measurable for the appointed delivery team. It will be important to establish mechanisms to assess, manage, reduce and report on emissions and deliverables. This will help measure how the project is performing in these areas and can be monitored throughout.³⁴

Artists, producers, curators and technicians spoken to during this research felt that targets or frameworks in relation to sustainability are tolerable, if made clear from the start.

This means if sustainability is written into the framework of the project, the Scotland + Venice partnership can then take responsibility for any reductions in 'ambition', or changes to the delivery.³⁵ These 'reductions' will become a funding requirement rather than a creative decision.

“The unpaid open call and pitching process, which this year was very late to take place, seems destined to generate potentially unsustainable outcomes where people are trying to produce a lot of work, to fill a specific space, in too short a space of time – all in order to provide the most interesting looking and comprehensive project, in order to win that pitch.”

Design Team Member, Scotland+Venice (Architecture)

2.4 Timescale

Interviewees and a number of nations taking part in the Towards the Green Lion workshop, felt that cycles of the art and architecture Biennales are challenging. SPG's research also strongly reinforced that time pressures are a significant barrier to sustainable and ethical choices, as both require more time for planning.

Elements like sea transport and land travel have implications on time-frames that become impossible when deadlines are too tight. The partnership should stipulate in the brief that travel by rail by all staff members is essential. The additional time taken to travel via train needs to be adequately paid for (for freelancers) and allowed for within their existing schedules (for PAYE staff).

Longer lead times could also positively impact the budget, for example booking travel far in advance. This is going to require significant behavioural change and in the meantime it is suggested that a flight free approach is contractually enforced.³⁶

³⁴ As mentioned previously in the report, no data relating to emissions is currently formally recorded

³⁵ Rather than this reflecting on any individual artist or creative team

³⁶ It is noted in section 3 of this report that the draft carbon budget modelling SPG has done, shows that using 2022 staff flights as a guide, the whole project's carbon budget for 2024/25 would already be exceeded with just the flights alone.

Sustainable suppliers should be used. Advice on these matters can also be sought from local organisations such as Rebiennale. It was highlighted during Towards the Green Lion that where materials cannot be sourced within Venice, they can be sourced slightly further afield in Italy or from neighbouring countries in mainland Europe – rather than the UK. It's also strongly suggested that Amazon is not used as a source for materials during the project given how vastly that contributes to global carbon emissions.³⁷

Ethical practices like finding local staff, using local suppliers and fabricators will take time to foster and develop, as will finding community partners who could benefit from second life opportunities.³⁸

“Often there isn’t time to think things through thoroughly. If we had at least a year, approaches might develop in a different way. It becomes highly stressful because of a lack of time which has a huge effect. More time would allow space to research and consider more options for materials, construction and transport, people also might consider not flying.”

Morag Bain, Architecture + Design Scotland

“In relation to sustainability, both the very tight timescale and the lack of strategic oversight [from the partnership] contribute significantly to making it harder than it should be to be sustainable. We’ve tried where possible to make positive choices but in some situations we’ve not been able to make the ideal choice, because of time and resource pressures.”

Design Team Member, Scotland+Venice (Architecture)

SPG recommends that editions would benefit from a two-year lead-in, even if the budget is provisional or estimated in the initial planning stages. It's usual practice for arts organisations to apply for funding well in advance of project delivery and they're often required to adapt the budget if costs change. It's also fairly common for projects to be in discussion or appointed well ahead of any budget expenditure, although this time would need to be recompensed for curators/delivery partners not in a salaried position. It therefore should be noted that the budget may need to be increased or adapted to accommodate for this extension in time-frame. Any additional pressure on the finances or fundraising that arise through the extended lead-in time would need to be absorbed by the Scotland + Venice Partnership, rather than the appointed team.

³⁷ Amazon global CO₂e of 71.54 million metric tonnes in 2021, up 18% from 2020.

³⁸ Happenstance (2018) was a really positive example of local engagement and community impact, however it was extended from a one-month project to a 7 month one, which had a negative impact on other aspects such as staff well being and fair pay.

2.5 Delivery

SPG learned that building sustainable supply chains and storing and reusing materials require some level of continuity between editions and years.

Maintaining continuity in the Scotland + Venice delivery team, or employing a local fixer on the ground, would help maintain these relationships and networks and retain the knowledge of what's already in place (in terms of either materials or contacts). In particular, pavilions with their own venue were able to save and reuse materials and store tools etc from one edition to the next.

During Towards the Green Lion two prevalent models were apparent. The first was for the project to be managed by a third party organisation or company on an ongoing basis with the organisation being responsible for the delivery of multiple editions. The second was for the commissioning body to retain management via its appointment of a creative team for each edition but for permanent staff to be appointed on the ground in Venice. This person usually has extensive knowledge of Venice or is native to the city.

A lot of the work around establishing these working relationships for Scotland + Venice has already been done. If the project was to continue, it could commission work to bring these contacts together in one comprehensive document to help future delivery.

There's been an admirable commitment from Scotland + Venice to profile the work of Scottish fabricators by appointing them to fabricate work presented within the editions. This is intended to extend the benefits of the biennale to the wider sector in Scotland.

However, we need to acknowledge this is at odds with sustainable ways of working.

SPG's interview with Glasgow Sculpture Studios, who fabricated elements for the 2022 art edition, acknowledged these benefits. However, it was also noted that an alternative approach could be for artists to work with fabrication sites in Scotland to develop and design the work. These sites could then instruct and liaise with fabricators in Italy to produce it. Scotland-based fabricators could even spend time with counterparts in Italy, helping to fabricate the work and furthering their own knowledge-sharing and development.

This would offer exposure for these organisations, and international connections with counterparts in Venice, Italy and Europe. There's the potential to build a network of fabricators, suppliers and facilities. While the benefits to Scotland-based fabricators and collaborating organisations is noted, it may not be possible to achieve this as well as the carbon emission reductions necessary to meet net zero targets and a sustainable/ethical participation.

"It's really hard to manage relationships when you are not there, whether that's with fabricators, landlords, contractors. To have someone on the ground would avoid the additional stress of not feeling quite in control. Also having that person [in between editions] to hold all that knowledge is really key."

Former Producer, Scotland + Venice (Art)

2.6 Exhibition formats

Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency & Sustainability Plan and the Springboard Assembly both recognise the requirement for transformational change. Many of the commonly held conventions in exhibition-making will need to be challenged as we implement the necessary changes to meet targets. This will affect all aspects of how Scotland + Venice is planned, developed and delivered.

Everything will need to be questioned, challenged and changed. This includes changes to expectations of:

- > how we view art
- > who makes art
- > who art is for
- > what art is
- > the spaces in which we see art

Prior to starting this fellowship, SPG had found through our wider research that commissioners and curators often do not want to put limitations on artists, in order to uphold their artistic freedoms.

While this is not a barrier anyone involved in the delivery of previous Scotland + Venice editions has expressed during this research,³⁹ it should be acknowledged that these attitudes do exist and need to be challenged. Furthermore artists and creative teams are important collaborators on these issues and will need to be willing and ready to tackle them with the Scotland + Venice team.

"I haven't worked with anyone that would think that putting in an emphasis on environmental sustainability would be limiting. I find that creative people respond well to this important consideration."

Moraig Bain, Architecture + Design Scotland

While audiences for visual art and architecture projects have come to expect almost any and every kind of presentation or project, the pavilion and other exhibitions within the Venice Biennale generally conform to 'white cube' style conventions of exhibition practice – despite the material reality of the space (for example creating gallery style seating, partition walls, soundproofing etc).

Audiences expect to see art and architecture presentations within rooms that have been 'made good' with:

- > uniform colour
- > specially built partitions
- > screening spaces
- > seating
- > specially designed lighting

We expect to see museum-like spaces within exhibitions that are intended to be very temporary. All of this is achieved at great effort, expense and cost to the planet.⁴⁰

³⁹ It was cited as an issue by Sevrá Davis from the British Council, quoted elsewhere in this report

⁴⁰ It should not be underestimated how wedded to these conventions we are: we expect exhibitions – particularly those of the standing and scale of the Venice Biennale – to look a particular way, which is often completely at odds with acting on the Climate Emergency.

If Scotland + Venice is to become sustainable, many of these conventions will need to be challenged – as long as the principles of access and inclusivity are built in. Commissioned artists and teams should be working with what is already available first and foremost.⁴¹

“Over the past nine months, in hundreds of conversations, text messages, Zoom calls and meetings, the question of whether exhibitions of this scale – both in terms of carbon and cost – are justified, has surfaced time and again.”

Extract from Lesley Lokko’s introduction to ‘The Laboratory of the Future’, Venice Architecture Biennale 2023⁴²

Lesley Lokko, Curator of the 2023 Architecture Biennale instilled a real focus on sustainable approaches to the works within the large exhibitions installed within the Giardini and Arsenale. In response, Scottish architectural practice Dualchas presented screened films with minimal built or shipped elements for their contribution to the main exhibition.⁴³

Other simple but effective changes adopted in recent years by Scotland + Venice include avoiding issuing handouts with information, instead making this available via large printed boards and scannable QR codes. It should be noted that there are both physical and digital requirements to make the information as inclusive as possible. It’s not always clear how effective replacing print with digital is

in reducing emissions. A careful assessment of this should be carried out as part of any future assessment of approach.⁴⁴

2.7 Venue

“The current venue’s location is absolutely amazing, so to put forward a case for staying there, just for the continuity, would really benefit sustainability. Also the fact that you have the exhibition space, and the red space where you can store packaging, materials, tools etc.”

Former Technical Manager,
Scotland + Venice (Art)

Scotland + Venice have used the same venue since 2019, prior to that the team would make multiple trips each year to identify and secure a venue. The Cantieri Cucchini Docks, presented an improvement in terms of access and location.

SPG’s early interviews were strongly in favour of securing the venue long-term. There are obviously lots of drawbacks in not having a fixed venue – particularly from a sustainability point of view. Journeys to view and locate venues add to the travel emissions of a project and eat into the project timelines. This means flying becomes a necessary timesaver, which leads to more carbon emissions. Procuring materials and fabrication in the UK entails transporting all tools and materials to Venice and back, which also adds to the shipping volume.

⁴¹ see Rural Studio in list of case studies, Appendix 1. An excellent start has been made for establishing this approach during the handover between the creative teams working on the 59th Art Biennale in 2022 and the 18th Architecture Biennale 2023. Key to this was negotiating with the landlord that the space did not have to be fully ‘made good’ between editions, enabling the creative team to respond and incorporate what was already in the space at an early development stage. The result of this was a huge reduction in waste with partitioning walls and sound-proofing being retained, and the colour of the walls from one project being adopted and augmented by the following one.

⁴² <https://www.labiennale.org/en/architecture/2023/introduction-lesley-lokko>

⁴³ <https://universes.art/en/venice-biennale/2023-architecture/central-exhibition-arsenale/dualchas-architects>
See section 2.10 for more detail on Print and Digital comparisons

⁴⁴ See section 2.10 for more detail on Print and Digital comparisons

As expressed in the quote from the previous Technical Manager, the current location has advantages in terms of its prime location and storage potential. These attributes benefit the audience numbers and offer greater opportunity for sustainable practice such as reuse and continuity by being able to store items between editions. The venue is also wheelchair accessible, which is a necessity for the project, and is by no means guaranteed in Venice.⁴⁵

However, there are also drawbacks to the current situation. Until 2022/23, the space was required to be reinstated to its original state after each edition. This prevented reuse of walls, soundproofing etc, which had both budget and carbon ramifications. Through negotiations with the landlord by the 2022 edition's Production Manager, it was agreed the space did not need to be returned to grey. This allowed for the 2022 edition's purple colour to be carried through to the 2023 edition.⁴⁶ This is a definite improvement on previous years but was very much driven by the commitment of the two creative teams to sustainable practices. Therefore, it's not assured that this approach can be continued in future. It needs stipulated as a condition in the brief and facilitated by the partnership.

When you have a venue, there's an onus on any delivery team to utilise that space to its fullest capacity. It's unlikely for an artist or curator to choose to deliver a

stripped back show or only utilise one of the spaces, even if this would be sufficient for the work. The less space available to fill, the more sustainable the exhibition is likely to be – even with minimal exhibitions there's a correlation between size of space and materials used.⁴⁷

When previous editions showed film installations – although appearing minimal, this required a significant amount of building and materials. When seating has been required, delivery teams were inclined to fabricate artwork/seating as opposed to utilising existing chairs, which would have had less visual impact but also less carbon emissions. The report will come back to this later, but if Scotland + Venice is truly ambitious in its sustainability goals, it should explore the potential of letting go of the venue model. This will allow it to compare the impact of different types of exhibition-making approaches that are less focused on physical build/installation elements and conventions.

2.8 Hospitality

Between the art and architecture projects there are two very different approaches to who and how those contributing to the project are hosted in Venice and how the launches are managed. From SPG's interviews with members of the project teams, it is understood that these differences come down to conventional approaches to opening events within each sector.

⁴⁵ However, it was also noted by the incoming Architecture technical manager that there was room for improvement with regards to access alternatives for the film and interpretation aspects of the display. Things that could be considered would be hearing loop systems, audio descriptions and large print versions of interpretation text.

⁴⁶ According to available calculators, the paint saved from repainting the venue has a carbon saving of 0.43 tonnes. This is just under the emissions of a return flight from Scotland to Venice. Based on calculations here: <https://communityrepaint.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/How-to-calculate-your-schemes-CO2-savings.pdf>

⁴⁷ As we mention later, paint for example has a not insignificant carbon footprint.

Art project: Art editions tend to host a large opening event for invited guests. This is followed by a private dinner following directly afterwards for:

- > supporters
- > the project team
- > the artist
- > the artist's guests

In the past, this has either been catered by local teams or teams flown over from Scotland for the event.

Architecture project: The architecture edition has taken a varied approach from edition to edition. But the format tends to be a large celebratory event with catering and drinks sourced locally.

A good example to build on was the 2022 Art edition where Forma, who co-commissioned Alberta Whittle's film, funded the travel and accommodation of four contributors. However, in the latest Architecture edition, only a few of the many contributors were able to go to Venice, and it's understood some of their travel was self-funded.⁴⁸

Another example from the 2022 Art edition was the catering for the preview and other events was delivered by an Afghan/Iranian refugee living in Venice, who is a restaurant entrepreneur who runs a few social enterprises in Venice.⁴⁹ This provides employment to other refugees and a way to share different cultures. This affirmed the themes of Alberta Whittle's work enabling the artists' desire to have her Caribbean roots represented in the event's food. But also supported a worthwhile, local cause.

While it's important to thank and acknowledge the contributions of everyone that works on the project, it needs to be highlighted that the numbers from Scotland to attend these events are by far the greatest cause of emissions across the project.⁵⁰ There are also questions around the exclusive nature of invitation only events as an ethical concern.

As part of this research SPG issued a number of survey questions to a selection of attendees of Scotland + Venice's 2022 Opening Event. The majority of respondents confirmed that they travelled by air from Scotland to this event and would not have travelled to Venice at this time had they not been invited by Scotland + Venice. They all confirmed that they would be receptive to travelling by more sustainable methods of transport but cited issues such as caring commitments, budgets and work time constraints prevented them from doing so.⁵¹ The majority of the respondents said they had attended all of the opening events since 2003.⁵²

The Venice Biennale can seem like an elitist event, even for those within the art and architecture worlds, and a 'who's in and who's out' approach can create anxiety and feelings of exclusion for many.

It's recommended that Scotland + Venice takes an inclusive approach and focuses on hosting and marking the opening event in Scotland rather than everyone travelling to Venice to attend. The only way to avoid the large carbon footprint of guests travelling to Venice, and the demand of people to be invited to an event, is not to have one.

⁴⁸ Information given to us during interviews

⁴⁹ <https://www.vice.com/en/article/59w9pd/how-an-afghan-refugee-is-changing-venices-restaurant-landscape>

⁵⁰ Approx 42 tonnes of CO₂e from travel by air (approx 31 tonnes of this was from guests travel), by far the biggest contributor across the project, when compared to, say, 3 tonnes on artwork shipping. Louise Briggs flight numbers calculated using Creative Carbon Scotland's emissions guidance, see appendix 2 for full carbon calculations.

⁵¹ SPG issued questions to 10 attendees and received responses from 4 attendees all working within visual arts orgs in Scotland

⁵² 2 respondents have attended all Scotland + Venice Art opening events since 2003, one had attended 7 opening events and one had attended 1.

2.9 Travel/transport

“When you tell people it’s possible to get a train to Paris they say ‘oh but we don’t have time’, mainly citing work pressure. However, taking finances out of the equation, if you organise yourself well, the overall travel time from leaving home to arriving at the destination doesn’t necessarily take a huge amount much longer. And you can work really well on a train, it’s a brilliant office, but people tend to put up psychological barriers.”

Fiona Robertson, Sound Festival

A conscientious approach to travel and transport is one of the main opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the Scotland + Venice project.⁵³

Very few people interviewed for this report were able to contemplate travelling by train. It should be noted that people often compare the journey times of flying versus rail. This often does not account for the journey to the airport and airport waiting times, which often make the comparison less distinct. In reality it takes the best part of a day to fly from Scotland to Venice, even if the flight time is under 3 hours. Train travel by comparison would take:

- 1 day if done unbroken
- 2 days with an overnight stop

As the previous quote demonstrates, the train is more conducive to remote working than airports and aeroplanes.

The following table shows SPG’s comparisons between the time, emissions and costs of train and flight travel:⁵⁴

Average Flight Emissions	559	10 times greater
Average Rail Emissions	54	
Average Flight journey times (+Security+ Travel to Airport)	7.5 hours	
Average train journey time	24 hours	Rising to 48 with overnight stay
Average Flight Cost (Economy, return Edinburgh to Venice)	£250	
Average Train Cost (return Edinburgh to Venice)	£402	Rising to approx £600 with overnight accommodation

⁵³ Without impacting the artwork itself.

⁵⁴ It uses an average figure from a number of carbon data sources, including Creative Carbon Scotland, UK Government etc (all sited in appendix 3), with costs and timings based on SPG’s trip to Venice by rail in Nov 2022, and current ticket pricing online

As expressed by attendees of the Scotland + Venice Opening Event in 2022, the barriers to slower travel often cited are time and budget, as well as commitments at home such as family or work pressures. The SPG directors both have childcare and work responsibilities but were able to take two days each way to travel by train. They still had enough time in Venice to achieve their goals and see many of the other exhibits, while utilising at least half of the journey days to work.

This was made possible by early planning, but mainly because the fellowship necessitated a firm commitment that this was the only way to do the trip: the principle dictated the practice from the outset.

From an accessibility perspective, it may not always be possible for everyone to travel by train. If this is the case then measures to limit the impact of air travel will need to be taken elsewhere to achieve carbon reductions.⁵⁵ The difference in carbon impact of flights versus train travel cannot be denied. It's one of the easiest ways to reduce overall carbon emissions, without compromising the ambition or quality of the exhibition.⁵⁶

2.10 Digital platforms, print & interpretation and dissemination

In the 2022 Art edition a commitment was made to move towards presenting information via text boards and QR codes that could be scanned by visitors. This move came from a desire to work sustainably, with the commonly held view that digital interpretation materials and advertising are better for the environment. The internet accounts for 2% of global emissions, which is approximately the same amount as the global aviation industry.⁵⁷ While the pulp, print and paper industry accounts for 1% of greenhouse global gas emissions.⁵⁸ Both print and digital have an environmental impact. So, the project needs to consider what action will have the least impact in a particular scenario. A general guidance document could be produced to guide the delivery team.⁵⁹

As with all material supply chains, print supply chains should be carefully considered, ensuring that they're sustainably sourced. The print industry has reduced its footprint by more than 90% since 1990.⁶⁰ Monochrome printing is always a better choice for the environment because monochrome printers contain less consumable parts like toner and therefore less cartridges are wasted.⁶¹ Eco-friendly inks that do not include solvents can also be chosen and recycled paper can be used and recycled again.⁶²

⁵⁵ For example: audience, PDP, etc.

⁵⁶ In Appendix 3 we have included a table of comparisons, calculations vary across resources, showing flying to be on average, 10 times more impactful than travel by train.

⁵⁷ https://www.csrwire.com/press_releases/36618-more-than-20-leading-u-s-companies-remove-anti-paper-green-claims

⁵⁸ https://www.csrwire.com/press_releases/36618-more-than-20-leading-u-s-companies-remove-anti-paper-green-claims

⁵⁹ For example: you could consider printing off 1000 leaflets for visitors vs 1000 visitors accessing the information via their phone or 100 people experiencing an event online vs 100 people travelling to the venue and experiencing the same thing in the room.

⁶⁰ <https://www.bandt.com.au/debunking-the-myths-the-environmental-cred-of-print-media/>

⁶¹ <https://techengage.com/is-printing-bad-for-the-environment/#:~:text=Another%20negative%20impact%20of%20printing,per%20cartridge%20is%203.2%20kg.>

⁶² Such as RISO

With digital technologies there are a number of actions the Scotland + Venice team can do to reduce their impact. Becoming generally more aware that digital technologies indeed have significant impact on the environment is a good place to start. There are simple steps within the delivery and communications of the project that could be taken as a first measure while a more detailed analysis is carried out, for example:

- sending less emails
- ensuring that digital advertising is targeted and simple
- ensuring the S+V website is easy to navigate to reducing the time people spend looking for the information ⁶³

While more research is required to make definitive decisions on the use of print and digital resources for Scotland + Venice, the commissioner should ensure the delivery team is well informed and empowered to make appropriate choices.⁶⁴

2.11 Professional Development Programme (PDP)

The PDP is regarded as one of the most positive and impactful aspects of the project.⁶⁵ It's also one of the key ways the wider sector in Scotland benefits from participation at Venice. It provides a paid professional development opportunity for a team of students appointed to spend several weeks living in Venice and invigilating the exhibition.

“The Invigilator Programme is seen as a significant success and provides considerable professional development opportunities... All invigilators said that Scotland + Venice impacted on their creative ambitions and outlook, with 87% saying this effect was to a large extent.” ⁶⁶

The PDP strand presents opportunities to demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable and ethical international working, and extends the legacy of this best practice to the next generations of:

- curators
- artists
- architects
- other cultural practitioners

“I think there is massive capacity [in the PDP], the people who take part are often very dynamic, highly motivated”

Former Design Team Member,
Scotland + Venice (Architecture)

The PDP programme would be the most suitable area of delivery to implement a full ‘no fly’ policy, as student’s timescales could, in the main, more easily accommodate train travel. Train travel can prove more expensive than flights, particularly within the UK. Therefore, costs for this will need to be ring-fenced in the budget.

⁶³ <https://themarketingden.co.uk/the-environmental-impact-of-digital-technology/>

⁶⁴ This research could form part of the research commissioned in establishing an accurate baseline for carbon emissions of the project.

⁶⁵ Both in this research and the previous review commissioned by Creative Scotland into Scotland + Venice 2009–2017. This Review was commissioned by Creative Scotland and undertaken and written by Tessa Jackson OBE and Annabel Jackson Associates in 2017–18.

⁶⁶ from aforementioned review

“Cost [is the single biggest barrier to working sustainably], closely followed by time. Between being awarded the opportunity and the delivery time, there isn't a lot of opportunity for the Scottish curator, producers and technicians to travel by train, but absolutely, in the case of the PDP participants, it could be really useful learning time for them, but they would need to be paid for that time.”

Former Creative Team Member,
Scotland + Venice (Art)

If travel is planned well in advance, savings could be made. There's an opportunity to use this time for project related purposes – team meetings, familiarisation, bonding etc.

The project could consider offering a number of PDP opportunities to students or persons living in Venice. Although this is likely to require additional time for preparation and relationship-building. This would be a good opportunity to grow local networks and have a positive influence on the local community. It would also benefit the Scottish PDP participants, who can face language barriers and problems with the local particularities.

The current model develops these opportunities through art schools, colleges and universities throughout Scotland. This includes financial support for the students.

While there's no doubt this is a hugely successful aspect of Scotland + Venice, it should be highlighted that it is important to ensure people from a variety of backgrounds, including less affluent backgrounds, are able to take part. This needs to be sufficiently supported and financed.⁶⁷

PDP participants could also be tasked with some sustainability responsibility. They could be asked to research better practices on the ground such as:

- recycling
- waste management
- local supply chains

This could be allocated to one person at a time or shared collectively across the team.⁶⁸ This role could even come from other specialisms, other than art. This would further support cross-sector pollination, as it would involve making new partnerships with students in material science, environmental management or other specialisms.⁶⁹

Alice Rose Archer, the conservator that worked on the disaster planning for the 2022 edition, highlighted the need for those working on the PDP to be familiarised with local suppliers so that they can source items needed at short notice locally rather than ordering from Amazon. This could simply be incorporated into the PDP handbook and included in the commissioning brief set by the partnership.

⁶⁷ not been art school trained.

⁶⁸ For example, you could advertise a role as a sustainability research placement

⁶⁹ SPG had a Marine Engineering graduate on placement with us who proved to be extremely valuable and efficient. This was largely due to their different skill-set and perspective from SPG's existing team. This was supported by Step Up to Net Zero/Glasgow Chamber of Commerce. Niall McGrath designed us a bespoke carbon calculator (which we have made available to share) plus many other useful tools.

There's a role for the invigilators to play here in terms of capturing data for carbon measurement, such as the audience's country of origin and method of travel. It's also recommended the delivery team and PDP leaders undertake specially delivered training sessions by We are here Venice – familiarising them with:

- > Venetian life
- > the unique ecology of Venice
- > areas those participating in the biennale must be most mindful of.⁷⁰

Their unique local perspective and expertise cannot easily be replicated in Scotland. However, Scottish organisations such as Creative Carbon Scotland could also provide training in sustainable working, as part of the PDP participants' advanced training.

2.12 Evaluation and monitoring

As highlighted in section 2.1, some issues with the governance pose challenges in terms of evaluating, monitoring and making improvements for future editions.⁷¹ In relation to sustainability, carbon emissions will need to be monitored going forward, and measured against a baseline and a budget which reduces yearly towards net zero in 2030.

Reporting on Carbon emissions is a requirement for current Regularly Funded Organisations and will be a requirement for future Multi Year Funding recipients. This work is underway and will be expanded on to include carbon budgeting.

To date, Scotland + Venice has not formally captured data that would establish a carbon emissions baseline for the project. In 2022, the Producer informally captured information that has allowed SPG to establish a rough baseline to be recorded. This report bases a number of its assumptions and recommendations on this data. SPG has been participating in Creative Carbon Scotland's carbon budgeting learning set, and has fed this data into both a carbon calculator and a carbon budget forecasting tool, informing a plan for reduction to net zero by 2030.

Creative Scotland have been capturing Carbon Emissions data from Regularly Funded Organisations for the last 10 years. This can support and inform the carbon management of Scotland + Venice.

While this research has used the 2022 data to produce a baseline, this does contain incomplete or estimated data in places.⁷² However, it does contain very accurate data for team travel and shipping. It is therefore the best tool available at present to quantify Scotland + Venice's carbon emissions. Carbon Management will become a vital tool in monitoring and evaluating Scotland + Venice's environmental impact and progress towards net zero.

In the absence of a permanent role across both art and architecture projects, these data sets and monitoring requirements would need to be maintained, managed and handed over across editions by the Scotland + Venice Steering Group, or partnership.

⁷⁰ We approached them about costs and they can tailor workshops to your budget <https://www.weareherevenice.org>

⁷¹ In particular this was in relation to a lack of continuity across both Art and Architecture editions and from edition to edition,

⁷² Such as audience travel, waste

2.13 Re-evaluate metrics of success

Aims as stated by Scotland + Venice:

- 1 **International:** To make a critically relevant contribution to international discourse about art and architecture and generate international opportunities for Scotland's creative sector.
- 2 **High quality work:** To make a strong, globally relevant and distinctive contribution to La Biennale which showcases the best of Scottish art, architecture and design.
- 3 **Raising profile:** To strengthen Scotland's reputation as an ambitious, innovative connected centre for the arts and architecture, internationally open to new ideas and partnerships.
- 4 **Public Engagement:** Strengthen public interest in and engagement with contemporary art and architecture internationally and in Scotland.
- 5 **Development:** To support the creative and professional development of students, artists, architects, curators and producers.
- 6 **Equalities and sustainability:** To maintain and develop a proactive and progressive approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion and sustainability across the project.
- 7 **Governance:** To develop Scotland + Venice to achieve best value for money with clear governance, management and reporting structures.

The visitor numbers to La Biennale have increased by 207% since 2003.⁷³ There are many positive aspects to this growth, such as

- more people to having memorable and impactful engagement with art and architecture
- many more countries being included⁷⁴

But we must acknowledge that continued growth is what's threatening our existence on the planet.

"We do this every year. This is a very resource intensive project... When you say it out loud – we design and build a new exhibition every 6 months and then tear it down, on this cycle. It's really hard to square the sustainability circle."

Sevra Davis, Commissioner for Architecture, British Council

⁷³ Based on tickets sold to the main exhibition, 2003 = 260,000; 2022 = 800,000

⁷⁴ Particularly from the global south, who are experiencing the effects of Climate Change most acutely.

Scotland + Venice provides Creative Scotland with the ideal opportunity to model and demonstrate an exemplar of best practice in relation to sustainable and ethical practices.

‘Post-growth’ is a worldview that sees society operating better without the demand of constant economic growth. It proposes that widespread economic justice, social well-being and ecological regeneration are only possible when money inherently circulates through our economy.’⁷⁵

We would suggest that Scotland + Venice engage with the post-growth conversation, to consider how the principles of a post-growth approach could:

- apply to the project
- frame any big shift in approach to Venice⁷⁶

2.14 Incentives and funding requirements as drivers of change

In order to get people to change the way they work and to adopt new practices, leaders need to:

- be specific about what actions should replace current ones
- lead by example

Another tool is to offer incentives. One area that incentives have become common for is Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Most organisations and individuals would now expect EDI requirements for any funding or project they undertake and would expect to report back on these areas.

As part of the research for this report SPG spoke to Inge Ejbye Sørensen, Lecturer in Media Policy at the Centre for Cultural Policy Research at the University of Glasgow. Part of Inge’s research examines the progress made in EDI through incentives and funding requirements and whether the same approach could be applied to sustainability. Inge is part of the Sustainable Screens Scotland Network that works closely with the events and music sectors in Scotland.⁷⁷

In Inge’s experience funding requirements are a key component in enabling or disabling certain behaviours. A model employed in the Danish Film Industry to incentivise responsible approaches to EDI ties reporting on this area to final grant payments. Those production companies that cannot prove they’ve delivered in these areas do not receive their final grant payment.

SPG acknowledges it’s already a requirement of Regularly Funded Organisations to report on carbon emissions. However, this mechanism could be ratcheted up in terms of monitoring organisations progress towards net zero or mitigation of the Climate Emergency. While this could be perceived as a barrier for some participants, several interviewees expressed the view that behaviour will only change when legislated for, or strongly incentivised.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ <https://www.postgrowth.org/about-post-growth-economics>

⁷⁶ <https://www.creativecarbonscotland.com/event/green-tease-launch-of-the-creative-degrowth-network-scotland/>

⁷⁷ https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/research/interdisciplinaryresearchthemes/sustainability/researchupdates/headline_899683_en.html
We acknowledge that the delivery challenges of screen, music and events are not the same as large-scale art and architecture events. However, there are many commonalities across these sectors including: transport, storage and materials.

⁷⁸ Kate Hendry also shared her experiences of sustainable practices within the construction industry vastly improving once legislated for.

Inge was keen to note the governing group should take responsibility to set the agenda for addressing sustainability and should not rely on individual members of the delivery team. This means artists should not be made responsible for this and where extra requirements do occur, they should be afforded additional time and money to fulfil these.

Creative Scotland has acknowledged its unique position in its Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan:

‘As well as working on our internal plans, we will use our funding, our policies, our development role and our influence to help the culture and creative sectors reduce their own emissions and adapt to climate change.’

2.15 Best practice in Venice

“In a city in which lagoon and ecosystem are already in a fragile balance – impacted by human activity on the urban and natural environment of Venice and its lagoon, physically and in terms of behaviour, perception and wider demographic trends – we, as the commissioners of the National Participations, agree that the sustainability of how we organise exhibitions cannot be an afterthought, but has to be taken into consideration

every step of the way. This has to be coordinated between exhibition makers, but also with local experts and then be implemented consistently. Issues such as waste disposal, transport, and tourism brought to the city by the exhibitions, all have to be addressed and we need to feel responsible for doing so jointly.”

Sandi Paucic, Project Leader Venice Biennials, Pro Helvetia

The impact made on Venice by tourism in general is self-evident. The mainstream media and organisations such as We are here Venice⁷⁹ have produced many reports about the environmental, economic and social impact. Although it’s recognised that the Biennale is a lesser contributor than other types of tourism, such as large cruise ships, it does bring over 800,000 people to Venice each year and its negative impact on the climate cannot be denied.

“What happens when you remove an industry from a community, it normally collapses, that’s what the just transition is about. If you took the biennales out of Venice, what would that mean for Venice? Why isn’t that a topic for one of the Biennales. How do we create a sustainable future for a community that relies on a single income.”

Karen Ridgewell, Climate Emergency & Sustainability Lead, Creative Scotland

⁷⁹ https://www.weareherevenice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Whose-city-is-it-anyway_digital_en.pdf

The impact of a sudden halt of the Biennale would have a catastrophic impact on the economy of Venice, and this should be considered carefully as nations decide on their own position in relation to participation. However, Scotland alone not participating would not have much of an impact on the Venetian economy. It would have a more significant impact at home in Scotland. As Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Lead suggests in the previous quote, it could be a question which is explored through the next few Biennales.

"It's Venice that has to look after itself, but the International community needs to recognise that you can't have Venice without the Venetians. The living community, not the structural remains of the glorious history of Venice."

Jane da Mosto, founder of We are here Venice

Employment practices around the Biennale are problematic. This includes peaks in demand at one point in the year and short term, unreliable contracts. This leads to a lack of trust on both sides which needs to be overcome to get the best results for the project, and for Venetian contractors and freelancers.

"Local labour is another resource which is sometimes not used sustainably; poor contractual conditions do exist, and we need to have transparency when selecting contractors – ask about this when procuring services."

Towards the Green Lion paper

If Scotland is committed to participating and acknowledges all of the benefits that participating in the Venice Biennale brings, it must commit to fair and transparent employment of local people.

SPG suggests that appointing an independent fixer should be a fundamental part of every edition, ideally someone who Scotland + Venice has worked with before. If this can become a yearly agreement, it provides a reliable source of income for that person, as well as a necessary point of continuity and contact for the delivery team. This work can be promised in principle, until funding is guaranteed, but with the expectation the fixer will be hired for the next edition.

"I love art, I love Venice, and I love the Biennale, but it's hard to see a city so rooted to the Biennale but be so distanced from it. Exhibitions are dropped off for 7 months, people leave, come back to pick it up, and then they are off again, with teams changing every year... I appreciate the positives that come with changing groups but it's challenging to work with temporary teams to then start from scratch next year. I believe the Biennale offers a great platform for participating projects to invest and engage with Venice and think there is real scope for cross-collaboration with residents and other exhibitions from all over the world. If you are not engaging with the community you are profiting off, it's not fair. But that isn't to say I don't think people should participate, rather I would like to see more community engagement and social investment. In that way, the Biennale can have a sustainable positive impact that goes beyond the 7 month period."

Alice Rose Archer, Venice resident and conservation specialist for 2022 art edition.

These parties should be contracted as early as possible to avoid peak demand time and the team should expect to pay more for this than at home. The 2022 edition has already tested working with a local install team. The outcome was extremely positive with the timescales met and a good quality of work. This success should be built upon and refined in future editions, rather than reinvented or reversed.

The Scotland + Venice partnership must instil directives for delivery teams in relation to these higher costs. This includes ring-fencing budgets or clearly stating funding requirements. If these are not stated, upfront delivery teams could revert back to more cost-effective methods which have negative environmental impacts and do not contribute positively to the Venetian community and economy.

“Working with a local firm meant that the cost was high, more expensive than it would have been in the UK. There were also anxieties about the reliability of the firm and not great communication, but this could have been avoided had the relationship been established earlier in the process and there was a constant on the ground. However, they couldn’t have been better and the quality of the work was really high.”

Producer, Scotland + Venice 2021/22

2.16 Acting Responsibly in Venice

Scotland + Venice delivery teams must make sustainable and ethical decisions about where to stay and how to behave in Venice.

There’s a well documented housing crisis in Venice, and there are now more short-term let beds available than long-term ones. SPG initially thought that AirBnB lets should be avoided. However, local residents have informed that this often provides vital income for residents – especially those with fluctuating employment cycles due to peaks in tourism or the Biennale cycles.

If using AirBnB lets, they should be procured from actual residents and not commercial landlords.⁸⁰ It’s more sustainable to stay in Venice itself, rather than travelling from Mestra for example, as it saves on Vaporetto journeys, and also supports the economy of Venice itself.

We suggest Scotland + Venice distribute guidelines as to how to stay in Venice ethically and sustainably for:

- audiences
- staff
- PDP participants

It could also signpost to existing guidance such as Venezia Authentica.⁸¹ These guidelines could be developed in consultation with existing Scotland + Venice contacts and Venice residents.⁸²

⁸⁰ The AirBnB listings clearly state whether the host is an individual or a business

⁸¹ <https://veneziaautentica.com/guide-stay-responsibly-venice/>

⁸² Such as Alice Rose Archer (Adviser to 2022 art edition), Alberto Lago (adviser to The Happenstance and and 2023 architecture edition A Fragile Correspondence), and with an organisation such as We are here Venice.

In terms of audience behaviour, Scotland + Venice has an opportunity to demonstrate best sustainable and ethical practice, communicating this prior to editions, via the newsletters and invites.

The current venue is advantageous in terms of accessibility, however more could be done to make use of other accessibility tools and techniques such as:

- BSL interpretation
- hearing loops
- support for visitors with mobility issues⁸³

There could also be support for people who have not been to Venice before to attend, for example:

- people within the sector who face financial hardship
- encouraging people who have fed into the project in collaborative roles (such as part of outreach in generating the work)

Previous bursary schemes by organisations such as a-n and Wales in Venice offer a precedent for this work, as does Forma's support of some of Alberta Whittle's collaborators.



PDP team 2022.
Photo by Matthew
Arthur Williams

⁸³ In terms of travelling to Venice in general, rather than specifically within the venue.



Installation view,
Spite Your Face,
2017 by Rachel
Maclean. Photo by
Patrick Rafferty.
Courtesy of the
artist and Scotland
+ Venice

Part 2

Conclusion

The current model for delivering Scotland + Venice has successfully achieved many of the aims of the partnership, as outlined in section 2.13. However, it presents a number of challenges which prevent the implementation of sustainable and ethical practices at a delivery level.

These challenges need to be addressed in full, in order to meet the changing priorities of the Climate Emergency and Creative Scotland's net zero ambitions. It's possible for Scotland + Venice to make significant improvements to the current model to achieve carbon savings and have a more positive impact on the Venetian communities and economy.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Carbon forecasting exercise (see appendix 2) shows that a reduced version is feasible in 2024/25, but involving significant reductions in flights (from 73 staff flights in 2022, to 14 in 2024/5, and from 120 guest flights to 5) with the remainder of these journeys replaced by train, and with a reduced guest list to 5 travelling by air and 70 by train.

This includes:

- establishing time to allow for sustainable transport methods such as sea freight
- keeping installations and project builds to a minimum
- non-artwork items (walls, furniture, soundproofing) being fabricated and supplied locally
- additional lead-in time to save carbon emissions on shipping and team travel
- not returning the venue to its original state between editions
- more cross-edition sharing of built assets
- establishing a permanent role to have more continuity across editions
- better frameworks for knowledge exchange and accumulation
- forming an entity to hold contact information, contracts and budgets
- reducing those invited, encouraged or required to travel to Venice as part of the project
- not holding a prestigious opening event in Venice, to avoid people travelling primarily to attend that event ⁸⁵
- holding a prestigious event for sector professionals in Scotland, which could be live-streamed to/from Venice, or to coincide with the return leg of the exhibition
- only holding an opening event in Venice as a moment to celebrate the artist and team and maximise networking opportunities with other Biennale attendees ⁸⁶

This approach would involve improvements to each stage of delivery, achieving significant carbon reductions and less environmental impact in Venice. These recommendations are achievable and would result in a high-quality end result. To achieve the desired outcomes, Scotland + Venice would need to implement and embed change from the point of commissioning. This means sustainable ambitions and ethical delivery considerations included as contractual points and highlighted within the brief. The biggest shift is the responsibility for sustainable and ethical delivery sitting at the partnership level, rather than with the creative team.

“It’s for the commissioning body to understand their power and position with regards to dynamics [in relation to the creative team], and if they want to introduce [carbon budgeting] that I think is actually incredibly important, they have to provide a template that’s easily usable for anyone that wants to apply.”

Former Design Team Member,
Scotland + Venice (Architecture)

⁸⁵ The guest list for the 2022 art edition included around 100 guests, many of whom will have attended multiple editions and similar events in the past. Not only are these invites limited and favour people in positions of power, it has by far the largest carbon footprint of all the activities associated with delivery, and therefore should be limited in any way, proportionate to other changes in delivery.

⁸⁶ This could be held in a local restaurant, mitigating the need for infrastructure to be brought to the venue and supporting local businesses. Or, it could be held at the venue but in an informal way, such as a buffet of locally supplied, plant-based food, avoiding single-use plastics.

Using a baseline calculated with data from the producer of the 2021/22 Art edition, and a net zero target of 2030 in line with Creative Scotland's target, SPG has shown it's possible to continue to participate but only with radical reductions in emissions – in particular in:

- > air travel
- > guest numbers
- > road shipping⁸⁷

Travel accounted for 98% of the 2022 project carbon emissions. When inputting the 2022 data into the forecasting tool for the next edition, the staff air travel alone exceeded the whole projects' carbon budget for 2024/25.

This table shows the journey allowances to adhere to a carbon budget forecast based on 2021/22 emissions and a 2030 net zero target.

Year	Flights Staff	Flights Guests	Train Journeys Staff	Train Journeys Guests
2021/22	73	120	–	–
2024/25	14	5	60	70
2026/27	0	2	40	23

At the Towards the Green Lion workshop, the French team gave the example that the creative teams for the Architecture editions submit a carbon plan and budget as part of the proposal submission. Artists selected for the Arts editions are supported via the delivery team to put together a carbon plan for the project delivery at the planning stage. Scotland + Venice could also adopt this approach. This should not necessarily be a prerequisite for winning the tender, as, in some cases, this could be a barrier for entry. However, it could be developed after appointment and Scotland + Venice could appoint Creative Carbon Scotland to work with the artist and creative teams to deliver this.

“One of the strengths of the Scotland + Venice project is that it is an open call, for anyone despite background to enter. Carbon counting can be a useful way to better understand the sustainability of a project but there are many tools out there and ways in which this can be measured. It is important that if this is integrated as part of the required tender documents then a standardised, easy to use process is developed by the partnership to ensure carbon is measured consistently and to mitigate a decreased inclusivity of narratives”

Former Design Team Member,
Scotland + Venice (Architecture)

⁸⁷ Attached in appendix 2 are the carbon calculations and budgets, however it must be noted that this data set is incomplete, we do not have data for events, hospitality, travel in Venice, digital or print emissions.

These are the modifications required to be made to the current model in order to be ethical and sustainable. However there are other models which may offer more flexibility in responding to these changing priorities.



The Happenstance
by WAVEparticle,
Architecture
Biennale 2018.
Photo by
Brian Hartley



SaF05 Installation
view, Charlotte
Prodger, Art Biennale
2019. Courtesy
of the artist and
Scotland + Venice



Part 3

The alternatives

With the project on pause, it is the perfect time to explore the possibilities of how the project could be delivered in the future. The next section outlines a number of ways in which the project could move forward.

3.1 Do nothing – no participation in the Venice Biennale

The obvious answer when asked how to be more sustainable and make less of an impact on Venice and the environment, is not to participate in the Venice Biennale at all. This is the only truly sustainable solution and would mitigate any negative impact on Venice itself. However, given the many positive impacts that the project has for individuals and organisations within Scotland, many people may find simply not participating hard to countenance.

“Very little can match Venice in terms of making Scotland visible on the international stage – in communicating and maintaining an international presence. It reverses the trend of artists having to leave Scotland to have a career. We’re able to present Scotland as diverse and relevant, forward thinking with good opportunities, infrastructure and funding – which is made visible at Venice as the tip of the iceberg, providing a focus to the art scene which is usually more dispersed.”

Simon Groom, National Galleries of Scotland

There are many pros of participating in the Venice Biennale, it's:

- one of the few opportunities for Scotland's Art and Architecture sectors to be showcased on an international stage.
- the highest profile Biennale on the planet
- has seen Scotland show itself to be a worthy contributor ⁸⁸

"It is vital in terms of soft power – particularly post-brexite. It gives Scotland an independent voice with which to communicate internationally. It helps our reputation and profile internationally. It is viewed as action research and we learn from what we bring back which is shared widely throughout the sector."

Helena Ward, Creative Scotland

By withdrawing from the event, Scotland will miss a unique experience to participate in the very best of the world's Art and Architecture. This could be seen as a regressive move, particularly post-Brexit.

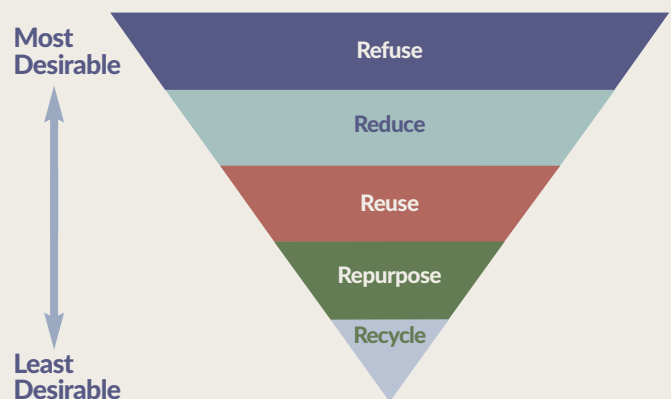
Scotland does have an opportunity to offer positive experiences for the people of Venice too, by providing:

- reliable and fair work opportunities for local people and companies
- vital income through short term lets
- tourist-related economic activity
- meaningful contributions, ensuring any leftover resources are passed on ⁸⁹

The Biennale will almost certainly continue, and Scotland's withdrawal could arguably make very little impact to Venice or the Climate Emergency. So the gains could be negligible in the broader context.

By continuing to participate in Venice and radically changing how it is approached, Scotland could become part of a move towards sustainable international exhibiting. This would be an impactful stance and the benefits could outweigh the environmental impact. ⁹⁰

3.2 Circular practices



There are opportunities for second life of materials and equipment, which could be better explored across all aspects of delivery. Whether reusing the venue installation elements across editions, or redistributing any furniture or materials to local charities and communities. ⁹¹

⁸⁸ Having received numerous press accolades and critical acclaim for several editions, from both the Art and Architecture sectors.

⁸⁹ As demonstrated within The Happenstance (2018) and deep dive (pause) uncoiling memory (2022)

⁹⁰ For SWOT analysis on Scotland's participation see appendix 4

⁹¹ Installation materials such as: walls, soundproofing, paint.

Scotland + Venice could consult with organisations such as Rebiennale early on in the process to make the most of these opportunities. Rebiennale are experts in reuse and second life within the Venetian context. They can:

- make recommendations in terms of design, build and materials
- help with the installation, take down and materials
- offer advice to maximise the potential of reuse

They're also best placed to identify recipients for any leftover resources, being well networked with:

- local social housing groups
- community orgs
- charities⁹²

The cost for this will need to be factored into the project budget.

It's accepted that the best reuse and second life opportunities arise when they've been designed from the start. An excellent example of this approach from Rebiennale was their work with Rural Studio for their project 'Theater of the Use-full', featured in the Architecture Biennale, 2016.⁹³

Using and then reusing materials as close as possible to their original state is more sustainable. It eliminates much of the labour and energy required to strip down built walls, furniture etc and make the materials good for reuse. In the Rural Studio example, materials are transitioning from their manufactured state directly to their reuse purpose with minimal intervention.

“Second life’ projects are one way to reduce the environmental impact of the Biennale and return something positive and permanent to the city. The goal is to include more and more national participants in a cycle of using existing materials where possible and returning these materials for re-use at the end, reducing landfill, transport, and storage.”

from Towards the Green Lion paper

“There’s not been an easy way to share materials across pavilions or editions, and that’s probably one of the single biggest issues to face for the Biennale going forwards.”

Sevra Davis, commissioner for Architecture, British Council

There have been good examples of maximising the reach of the work commissioned for Scotland + Venice through tours of the work. For example: Alberta Whittle’s film ‘Lagareh – the Last Born’ toured across Scotland and was screened in:

- Glasgow
- Inverness
- Shetland
- Aberdeen
- Skye

The project should plan touring and multiple showings of work in Scotland from the start. While this is easier to facilitate with film work, a similar approach can be taken with other formats. This will also enable many more people to see the work, including those that are not able to travel to Venice.

⁹² <http://Rebiennale.org/en/call-for-second-life-a-sustainable-challenge/>

⁹³ Which is discussed as a case study in Appendix 1

Again it's critical this aspect and potential for acquisitions of the work must be planned from very early on in the commissioning process to allow ample time for planning and to follow acquisition protocols, which would necessitate adopting a commissioning-to-collect model from a collecting institution, where one does not currently exist.

SPG is developing a Legacy Planning Tool which aims to make it easier for project teams to plan for a sustainable approach to:

- exhibition making
- redistribution of materials and equipment
- the long-term care of works

Achieving a sustainable and ethical exhibition in Venice requires strong leadership from the Scotland + Venice partnership. This would include establishing the measures to be taken to address the Climate Emergency and achieve net zero by 2030. This should be planned early and manifest across all aspects of the project including:

- the brief
- tendering and contracts
- pre-appointment discussions with the artist(s) ⁹⁴

3.3 Do something different – opportunities for new models

The Venice Biennale offers an opportunity for countries to share knowledge and best practice in relation to addressing the climate emergency. It could be argued that finding ways, or indeed leading the way, to working sustainably and ethically within the context of the Biennale would be a more positive approach than the negative gesture of withdrawing participation.

Scotland could be exemplary in their approach to sustainable international cultural participation. Scotland + Venice could become a great example, but those involved will need to:

- be bold
- take risks
- address any pushback

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a break with tradition which allowed for the breaking of many existing models. This climate should set a precedent and increase the appetite for alternative models which are now much more tolerable and readily accepted.

A good example from the visual arts is the Turner Prize 2020, which instead of staging its usual 4 artist shortlist and exhibition, gave out 10 bursaries of £10,000 each. ⁹⁵

Although a number of high-profile cultural events radically shifted their model in response to the pandemic, most of these formats have reverted back to their original models, including the Venice Biennale.

⁹⁴ Again, see a full set of Recommended Actions on P50 at the end of this report

⁹⁵ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-52806844>

Despite the widespread return to 'business as usual', there's increased tolerance for breaking with tradition, compared to pre-pandemic. As demonstrated with Wales in Venice⁹⁶ and Scotland + Venice's recent pauses in participation, the public and sector professionals are aware that change is necessary and justifiable for environmental, economic and ethical reasons.

A number of different models tested within or in response to the Venice Biennale are outlined below:

Welsh model 2022: Similar to Scotland + Venice, Wales in Venice has taken part as a collateral event since 2003. In 2022, the decision was taken to pause Wales' participation in the Venice Biennale to 'be using this time to rethink our approach to the Biennale and what it means to Wales.'

This decision was taken to give time to consider 'working internationally, about responding to the climate emergency, and to our commitment to widening engagement'.⁹⁷

In lieu of the collateral event, a Fellowship Scheme was launched to offer 10 artists a 6 month paid opportunity working within the visual arts, including a £15k bursary to cover their:

- > time
- > research expenses
- > travel

This was alongside a programme of international professional development managed by Artes Mundi and Disability Arts Cymru. The Fellowship offered the successful candidates the chance to:

- > reflect on their practice internationally
- > make new connections with the other Fellows, international artists and organisations
- > explore the opportunities and challenges the biennale offers
- > overcome barriers to progressing their international ambitions⁹⁸

Scotland + Venice could consider implementing a similar approach which would offer benefits, including:

- > sharing the significant networking and professional development opportunities across a much larger number of artists⁹⁹
- > having much less of an environmental impact as it involves less materials and build
- > using less travel and not encouraging large numbers of people to travel from the UK to Venice¹⁰⁰
- > being inclusive and equitable in approach by including a larger number of artists from diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their careers
- > making broader and potentially more longstanding international due to the longer form nature of the engagement (6 months)

⁹⁶ <https://arts.wales/wales-venice-10-fellowship>

⁹⁷ <https://arts.wales/news-jobs-opportunities/arts-council-wales-every-success-venice-biennale>

⁹⁸ Wales Arts International Website <https://arts.wales/venice>

⁹⁹ 10 as opposed to 1 artist per year - and moves away from the 'winner takes all' approach that is prevalent within Arts, Screen and Creative Industries.

¹⁰⁰ Those that do travel can be encouraged or obliged to take sustainable transport modes.

“It was marking our 10th edition in a different way, and the challenge was making sure people didn't think we were removing ourselves from that platform. But being mindful that there's some difficult questions that need to be asked, about ambition, reputation, the Climate Emergency, the impact on Venice...That's where we are now... investing the money we had for the Venice programme in a programme that supports artist and curators and the wider visual arts ecology (and people with different lived experience) to focus on their International ambitions. We'll use the learning we get from these commissions to inform how Wales should be represented in 2024.”

Louise Wright,
Arts Council Wales/Wales in Venice

Estonian & Dutch model 2023: Just as Scotland + Venice does not have a permanent venue for the biennale, a few countries have no permanent venue or pavilion, including Estonia.

For the 2022 Art Biennale, the Netherlands handed over the Dutch Pavilion for Estonia's presentation, with the Netherlands project being presented in an offsite location – Chiesetta della Misericordia of Art Events.¹⁰¹ This approach shares resources and offers great opportunities for closer international development and support.

*“It's also a wonderful opportunity to bring the art worlds of the two countries into closer contact with each other”*¹⁰²

Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art

Inspired by this successful exchange, Scotland + Venice could explore collaborative and shared models across space and resources. There's potential to broker a relationship between Scotland + Venice and Wales in Venice to share a two roomed venue or participate in alternate years using a shared venue.

This would maintain both countries' presence in Venice but half the resources and environmental impact of each project. This could also allow for the extended lead-in times which we've shown elsewhere to be beneficial to both the work, creative teams and sustainability.

This approach would have to be discussed with La Biennale. SPG is aware anecdotally that the Dutch and Estonian collaboration was viewed as a controversial decision, but ultimately was allowed to go ahead.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ <https://cca.ee/en/news/dutch-pavilion-officially-handed-over-to-estonia-for-the-venice-art-biennale-2022>

¹⁰² Estonian Centre for Contemporary Art Website
<https://cca.ee/en/news/dutch-pavilion-officially-handed-over-to-estonia-for-the-venice-art-biennale-2022>

¹⁰³ Information shared by Estonia during Towards the Green Lion Workshop

Greater engagement with the British Pavilion

The British Pavilion represents all four countries of the UK and is an active supporter of both Scotland + Venice and Wales in Venice. There's potential for Scotland to engage more closely with the British Pavilion in place of delivering its own collateral event.

While this would undoubtedly mean less Scottish artists would be selected year-on-year, the project could retain many of the other benefits for the wider sector. If fabrication at home remains a preferred option it could present an opportunity to profile Scottish fabricators within the UK. The project could also retain PDP opportunities funded by Creative Scotland.

This relationship would need to be fostered between Scotland + Venice and the British Council team responsible for the British Pavilion. If all four UK nations pooled their resources it would undoubtedly lead to a better funded event which in turn could enable a smaller environmental impact.

3.4 More radical alternative formats

Although there are ways to reduce the current model's environmental impact and to improve ethical practices, augmenting the approach is perhaps not the radical thinking Creative Scotland and Creative Carbon Scotland have identified as necessary to get to net zero.

“Not much has changed (in terms of sustainability over the past 10 years). The problems are still the same- there's definitely a lot more buy in. Things are getting better but they are not radical.”

Kate Hendry, Architecture + Design Scotland

The research undertaken for this report showed there's an appetite for radical approaches to working sustainably and ethically. However, as expressed in the previous statement, very few radical ideas come through within the application process.¹⁰⁴

It's the creative teams and artists who are best placed to come up with the most radical ideas, but the selection process needs to invite and support these.

To do so they should be included in the challenge and should be represented in consultation about how Scotland + Venice is to change. They must also be supported to work in new and untested ways throughout delivery.

This is no doubt going to be challenging within the rigid delivery format of the Venice Biennale - but it can be done, especially with strong leadership from the partnership. Although the creative team are well placed to develop radical approaches to Scotland + Venice it must be stressed that the burden of responsibility for the development and delivery of a sustainable project should reside with the governing organisation.

Some examples of radical alternative models have been included here. Although not particularly radical within wider contemporary exhibition practices, they defy conventions of national presentations at Venice. Such approaches could form the basis of a commissioning document to encourage new ways of working that defy conventional models.

¹⁰⁴ As per the earlier quote from Neil McGuire, perhaps the open call process lends itself to conventional ideas being put forward

3.5 Examples of alternative models

Residency

Scotland + Venice's visual arts editions have settled into the format of a solo presentation since 2007.¹⁰⁵ While there's a clear curatorial rationale for this approach, consideration should be given to different approaches that can be delivered more ethically and sustainably.

Allowing for longer duration projects with artists working on the ground in Venice for prolonged periods of time, may enable more socially engaged approaches. This approach responds to the local context and acknowledges the impact and challenges for local people.

The Happenstance is a good example to look at with regards to this approach. Peter McCaughey explained when commissioned, WAVEParticle were focused on delivering a local project that gave something back to Venice.

Crucial to this, was establishing local connections, particularly their 'lynchpin' Alberto Lago and Venetian/Glasgow resident Daniele Sambo. Peter explained that Alberto carried the project on his back and that the project's philosophy of 'saying yes to everyone' was a very powerful medium to establishing good relationships with local people. The benefits of this approach paid dividends in terms of:

- delivery
- making the finances stretch
- the positive reception from locals

The project eventually ran for the full 4 months of the Biennale. They were supported through in-kind content. And invigilation support was provided by local people and the Armenian Monks that resided at the Palazzo. The Scottish Government provided additional funding as the reaction to the project was so positive. None of this would have been possible had a longer, socially engaged approach not been taken.

However, it does need to be acknowledged that this approach requires resources, such as:

- greater lead-in time
- financial commitment
- support from a fixer or member of staff with excellent local knowledge

While a socially engaged practice is not the only or best approach, for Scotland + Venice to be truly ethical, it should foster a commitment and engagement within Venice year round, not just during the duration of the Biennales.

Reverse model

At the moment a large exhibition takes place in Venice with a scaled back version toured around Scotland upon the end of the biennale.

Examples of this are the last three art editions by Rachel McLean, Charlotte Prodger and Alberta Whittle. All three projects involved film projections which were installed and screened in Venice. Upon their return to the UK, they toured venues already set up for screening.

¹⁰⁵ With the exception of 2013

To make the most minimal impact on Venice, the focus and presentations could be reversed. A large presentation could take place in Scotland with a distilled down version shown in Venice. This approach would minimise the requirement for specialist and extensive exhibition builds to take place internationally. The scaled back approach does not need to mean less ambitious work.

Information shared during the research carried out for this report demonstrated that some of the most impactful approaches have taken a very minimal approach to presentation.¹⁰⁶ This approach would also address some of the lead-in time issues associated with the current model. Aspects such as minimal weight and easily transportable works can also be built-in to the design and production of the artworks. More expanded or elaborate presentations could be made for the Scotland leg – and a bigger opening event staged.

Exhibiting existing work

Another option would be to use work that's already in existence. This is a similar approach taken within the Turner Prize, where the focus of the exhibition is on work that was made within the previous year.¹⁰⁷

The same approach could be taken to Venice. Works could be shipped over well in advance using less carbon intensive sea freight methods. This would involve a different approach to what Scotland + Venice has taken in recent years, where the project has used the opportunity as a springboard for artists to step onto the international stage, making their most ambitious work to date.

Presenting existing artwork would require the work to already exist, and would perhaps mean a shift towards showing more established artists already making artwork developed for world-class opportunities.

There are many artists working in Scotland that would be at this stage in their career and would substantially benefit from the international exposure this offers. New commissioning opportunities for early or mid-career artists could be developed at home to augment this and feed into future Venice selections.

Alternatives to venue-based exhibitions

We've highlighted one of the issues with having a permanent venue is the desire to fill that venue. If Scotland + Venice was to no longer have a venue, it would open artists up to a range of possibilities.

Working venue-free and reducing the project's impact on the environment is a much easier challenge than having to fill a venue while achieving these same ends. This will also open up the types of artistic practices that could represent Scotland. As it stands there's no opportunity for countries to take part in a digital format only and it's not known if this will change. Whatever is presented in Venice should wholly justify Scotland's presence in Venice.

¹⁰⁶ As with the Dualchas example discussed earlier in this report.

¹⁰⁷ Although we know a lot of Turner Prize nominees make or reconfigure these works, the brief of the Turner Prize is that it includes work that's already made.

AV tours of exhibitions and digital solutions

There have been several highly successful digital and AV based presentations in recent years. Although they've tended towards a tourist-attracting spectacle of famous artworks such as the Van Gogh Expo.¹⁰⁸

There are some useful techniques and lessons for enabling greater access, understanding and different experiences of artworks that can be learned from these projects. This could be adopted to encourage remote participation with Venice.

SPG saw the Sistine Chapel exhibit in Braehead shopping centre¹⁰⁹ and were struck by:

- its inclusivity
- the range of different engagement opportunities it afforded – audio guides, text panels. etc
- the non-art audiences it attracted by its location in a popular shopping centre

While these projects are largely regarded as being inferior to the actual experience with the artwork, it can be argued they make artwork much more accessible. And negate the need to travel to highly expensive destinations and contend with high footfall tourist sites.

They eliminate many higher impact aspects such as air travel, shipping and other factors such as expense, conservation, insurance etc. It should be noted that digital solutions also generate emissions, so their impact should be carefully considered.

¹⁰⁸ <https://vangoghexpo.com/london/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://chapelsistinecharlotte.com/glasgow/>

deep dive (pause)
uncoiling memory,
2022 Installation
Shot. Photographer
Cristiano Corte,
© Alberta Whittle.
Courtesy of the
artist, Scotland
+ Venice



Part 3 Conclusion

“This report needs to be very clear about the consequences of doing nothing, if we continue with business as usual, we will never address the status quo. There are so many other options. Do nothing, carry on as usual, do something different. Doing something different is the option that has a world of possibilities attached to it.”

Karen Ridgewell, Climate Emergency & Sustainability Lead,
Creative Scotland

We may be approaching a world where large events like the Biennale are considered completely unethical. While this may be difficult to imagine at the present time, enormous behavioural and societal changes like this do happen. For example, the successful work done to eradicate smoking in public places.

However, for the time being the Venice Biennale continues to take place and it's unlikely that any radical changes are likely to come from La Biennale itself.

To find a way forward, Scotland + Venice needs to:

- scope out a plan to net zero¹¹⁰
- establish a baseline and project Carbon Budget¹¹¹

Once these parameters are established it will become clear which of the proposed alternative approaches will work within these confines.

The development of a new approach should include:

- stakeholders with first-hand experience of the challenges faced
- artists and creative teams, who are the likely source of the most radical and innovative approaches

¹¹⁰ Most likely within Creative Scotland's own deadline of 2030

¹¹¹ Drafts of these have been provided in appendix 2 to this report



Birch trees of Ravenscraig – work on display in the Ravenscraig section of A Fragile Correspondence, Architecture Biennale 2023. Photo by Daniele Sambo.



Part 4

Report Conclusion

Change needs to be swift and impactful

There are 4 editions of Scotland + Venice left before the 2030 target that Creative Scotland has given itself to reach net zero.¹¹²

If Scotland + Venice is to resume and continue then change needs to be swift and impactful. We're now facing the very real impacts of climate change and Venice is a location where the impact is hugely apparent.

¹¹² 2 art and 2 architecture editions remain before 2030, not including 2024 where the project is paused

The Scotland + Venice partnership should use the current pause for reflection to determine what's best for:

- the Arts, Screen and Creative Industries in Scotland
- Venice and Venetians
- the individuals undertaking the opportunity

The opportunities available to the project are to:

- no longer take part
- take part and improve the current model
- design an entirely new approach which does not cause emissions

Without radical change, there are many aspects within the current model that would pose a significant challenge to reaching net zero.

Changes that can be made

There are many changes that could reduce the emissions caused through delivery of the Scotland + Venice project. The greatest reductions in emissions could be achieved immediately through:

- a significant reduction in flights taken by artists and staff working on the project
- discouraging people from travelling to Venice – OR –
- encouraging train travel amongst visitors
- providing other ways to mark the occasion without travel
- minimising build and shipping – rather than buying carbon offsets

It's also important to acknowledge the impact our presence has on Venice and its inhabitants, which is largely connected to Scope 3 category emissions. Within the existing model format this could be addressed by:

- issuing strong guidance on ethical and sustainable travel for visitors and those working on the project
- demonstrating best practice and committing to maintaining good relationships
- creating contractual agreements and meaningful employment opportunities in Venice

La Biennale unlikely to lead change

At the Towards the Green Lion workshop in Venice, SPG learned La Biennale has already achieved carbon neutral accreditation much of which has been achieved through off-setting.¹¹³

This means La Biennale is unlikely to:

- lead the way in terms of a radical overhaul of how the Biennale is delivered
- help facilitate cross-nation collaboration in terms of sharing resources

It's therefore incumbent on nations to:

- self-organise
- make internal changes
- support collaborative best practice and sharing

¹¹³ This is not SPG's recommended way forward for Scotland + Venice. (Carbon Neutral certificate was analysed by Creative Scotland's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Lead, Karen Ridgewell on behalf of SPG) It also does not comply with the Scottish Government or Creative Scotland's position on offsetting. we're sceptical of the ethics and efficacy of buying carbon offsetting as a way of achieving carbon neutrality. (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/may/30/delta-air-lines-lawsuit-carbon-neutrality-aoe>)

This could also include nations collectively lobbying La Biennale to take more forthright action regarding sustainable and ethical participation.

The fact that Scotland + Venice has commissioned this report, puts Scotland at the forefront of thinking about sustainable and ethical practices in relation to the Biennale. It should now convert that thinking into positive action.

Creative Scotland's role in driving change

It's recommended that Creative Scotland take responsibility for assuming carbon reporting responsibilities.¹¹⁴ By aligning Scotland + Venice's carbon reduction ambitions and approaches with that of Creative Scotland's, the partnership can be an exemplar of best practice within the wider arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland.¹¹⁵

It's clear that it's not possible to participate in the Venice Biennale without having an impact – both in terms of carbon emissions and on the ground in Venice. However, short of not participating at all, there are a significant amount of changes that the Scotland + Venice partnership could make which would demonstrate a considerable commitment to ethical and sustainable delivery.

The Scotland + Venice partnership can realistically reconcile it aims to retain presence on this significant international stage with its sustainable and ethical ambitions, if:

- a significant number of these recommendations are implemented
- carbon management is accounted for and budgeted in line with Creative Scotland's own Climate Emergency and Sustainability Plan¹¹⁶

Scotland + Venice can lead the way

Alternatively a radical and innovative approach could be taken, a new project designed with the reality we're now experiencing in the face of Climate Change.

Any new approach adopted by Scotland + Venice could become a model for international working more generally. In doing so, it can help Scotland lead the way in exemplary sustainable and ethical cultural production.

Scotland + Venice has been recognised as being one of the flagship moments when art and architecture can be showcased on an international stage. This opportunity to be part of an international conversation, and to represent Scotland in this context is highly valued by both the Art and Architecture sectors.

Establishing a sustainable and ethical Scotland + Venice will require significant behaviour change from both individuals and organisations in their approach to the Venice Biennale, whether that be as an audience member or as part of the delivery team. All stakeholders and audiences will need to commit to this change and much of this will involve letting go of things that they enjoy and value.

¹¹⁴ As discussed with Karen Ridgewell

¹¹⁵ Targets in line with Scottish Government and Creative Scotland: <https://www.eif.co.uk/about/sustainability>, and other international events such as Edinburgh International Festival

¹¹⁶ With a plan for reaching net zero by 2030

Given that participating in Venice is valued and considered as a pinnacle of Scotland's International cultural profile, it presents an opportunity for Scotland to be at the vanguard of sustainable and ethical exhibition making.

"If we can't address the Climate Emergency through a small, focussed global gathering of the greatest innovators in Architecture and Art, then humanity is doomed, as is the rest of the planet. The Biennale is a platform for bold progress, if we do that symbolically through what we commission and how we work, then that is a win. We can only do that by tackling it together"

Matt Payne, Senior Project Manager,
Venice Biennale, British Council

Rural Studio,
The Theatre of the Usefull. Architecture
Biennale, Venice,
2016. Photo by
Timothy Hursley



Recommended action list, based on current model

Governance/organisational structure/funding

You should:

- commit to maintaining a working knowledge bank/ archive of docs and resources from one edition to the other through appointing a dedicated staff role or other means
- make Scotland + Venice an exemplar in terms of using definitive language around sustainability and ethical practices
- carefully consider sources of funding and their environmental credentials
- request longer term funding arrangements from the Scottish Government, or 'in principle' agreements to maintain current levels of funding for this project that enable early commissioning
- continue to engage with Towards the Green Lion working groups
- make contact and learn from work being done within other sectors including Festivals Edinburgh, Scottish Screens Network, Events Scotland
- enshrine climate requirements within all governing and commissioning documents – make it a fundamental requirement of all applications
- make a legacy commitments for works made for Venice
- make it a funding requirement for visitors from Creative Scotland funded organisations to use sustainable transport methods

Commissioning and briefing

You should:

- commit early to sustainable and ethical practices, ensuring all appointees also are aware of these commitments
- set ambitious net zero targets, SPG recommends 2030 in line with Creative Scotland
- set a Carbon Budget, reducing year on year to net zero in 2030 ¹¹⁷
- give sustainability equal weighting as other criteria such as EDI
- impose maximum distance rule to source/transport materials ¹¹⁸
- minimise journeys/impose limits for number of site visits
- ensure teams have completed Carbon Literacy Training
- provide specific training on sustainable and ethical practice for PDP, delivered by related org in Venice (We are Here Venice, Rebiennale) or in Scotland (Creative Carbon Scotland)
- consider incentivising action on sustainability through phased funding payments
- refer to sustainable materials list (or local charity 'need lists') when building new elements
- ask for sustainability to be addressed in proposal from creative team
- ask questions in the interview about sustainable and ethical approaches with similar weighting of questions such as equalities

¹¹⁷ a baseline has been set from information provided by the producer for 2022 art edition, and a draft carbon budget has been set in line with CS' net zero commitment, these can be expanded and adopted by Scotland + Venice

¹¹⁸ Known in construction as a 'Resource Radii'

Project Planning

You should:

- work with what's already there in Venice from the last edition
- use design principles such as 'design for disassembly' or solutions which minimise or eliminate waste
- establish and share local suppliers lists and ethical practice guides (Link to Venezia Authentic – or commission a specific one)
- fabricate early to allow for sustainable freight options¹¹⁹
- commission early
- include scope 1,2 and 3 emissions in your carbon calculations and budget
- forge relationships with other pavilions with a view to sharing resources and best practice
- weigh up pros & cons of having a long-term venue (see Appendix 4 SWOT analysis)
- agree with landlord reasonable storage and not require venue to be 'made good' between editions (if continuing with Cantieri Cucchini Docks)
- consider and develop realistic budgets for sustainable delivery
- consider ring fencing budget lines that promote sustainable practice
- appoint installation teams and fabricators in Venice early and nurture relationships year-on-year
- transport the very minimum and impose volume limits in line with the carbon budget
- plan second life of artworks/exhibition and engage with Venetian organisations experience in this area such as Rebiennale
- identify local charities to benefit from reuse opportunities

¹¹⁹ See Gallery Climate Coalition

Hospitality

You should:

- avoid staging a dinner/opening event - saving carbon emissions associated on catering, guest flights etc
- minimise numbers of attendees, use an existing local venue, use different format (e.g. informal, buffet), meat/dairy free catering, no single use plastics (if you must stage an opening event)
- arrange events back home instead, consider patrons dinner event in Scotland, live stream speeches etc to event in Scotland
- consider who's being invited, refrain from repeat attendees or those who were not directly involved, support attendees with EDI criteria, ie with access bursaries, funded carers etc
- have improved options for participating remotely and encourage this (e.g. live streaming etc)

Project delivery

You should:

- appoint a local 'fixer' to liaise between the team and suppliers, provide contacts, local knowledge and guidance. (A fixer is a member of staff on the ground, who speaks Italian and knows Venice and the Biennale context)
- establish a team of local contractors to fabricate, build, install 'necessary' elements
- induct all staff with Climate Action Plan
- hire equipment locally rather than buy or build
- fabricate artwork locally
- limit the amount of artwork that is transported to small pieces that can be sent by sail ship (eg New Dawn Traders)
- ensure all team members stay in Venice, use of AirBnB should be carefully monitored

Communication and digital practices

You should:

- promote and communicate your sustainability efforts to the wider art and architecture sectors back home, and audiences to the exhibition
- carefully consider the emissions impact of print or digital media and tech for various scenarios
- include carbon reductions as part of evaluation and the 'story' of each edition
- encourage remote participation
- provide guidance for sustainable and ethical visiting
- avoid terminology which celebrates scale, such as 'most ambitious to date' and 'record visitor numbers' in promotional and evaluation materials
- provide a guidance handbook for ethical and sustainable travel to Venice and advice on how to treat the city while you are there

Accessibility

You should:

- enhance access alternatives such as large print, audio descriptions, hearing loops etc

PDP

You should:

- explore funding partnership for PDP that prioritises EDI
- task PDP with sustainability remit
- ensure that a number of PDP participants are Venetian, to extend opportunities to local students and help integrate Scottish PDP participants in Venice
- develop handbook for the team
- develop handbook for visitors

Monitoring and evaluation

You should:

- capture accurate carbon reporting data to inform future carbon management and reductions
- capture data for visitor numbers and modes of travel, calculate carbon footprint of Scotland audience



The Choir is waiting at the threshold and (pause) – deep dive (pause) uncoiling memory, 2022.
Photo by Cristiano Corte, © Alberta Whittle. Courtesy the artist, Scotland + Venice.



