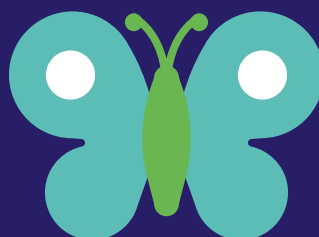


The Climate Connection

Our strategy to address climate change to 2026





Our response to the climate crisis

Climate change is the biggest challenge the world faces. And with its impacts set to intensify over the next decade, it will test the resilience of every part of society and every sector we work with. It will also profoundly affect the way we operate.

This strategy sets out the British Council's response to the climate crisis. It defines how we will address climate change by engaging with people globally through arts and culture, education and the English language. It also demonstrates how we will continue to meet our commitment to operating in an environmentally responsible manner.

Climate change is a paramount priority for young people worldwide, and governments are recognising the pivotal role of education and culture in shaping effective climate responses. Education provides the skills people need to address climate change and adapt to its challenges, while arts and culture can communicate its effects and inspire new ways to respond. Our global presence in 100 countries, reach of 600 million people and growing networks of young people place us in a unique position to make a real difference.

Lastly, climate change exacerbates global inequalities, disproportionately affecting developing countries that have contributed least to global emissions. Vulnerable and excluded groups, including women and girls and indigenous communities, bear the brunt of these impacts. Our approach bridges cultural divides, brings diverse and underrepresented perspectives to climate dialogue and embeds respect for cultural diversity.

How we will address climate change

We will deliver an ambitious portfolio of climate projects through our work in arts and cultural heritage, education and the English language. And we will explore new partnership opportunities to extend our impact across the globe.

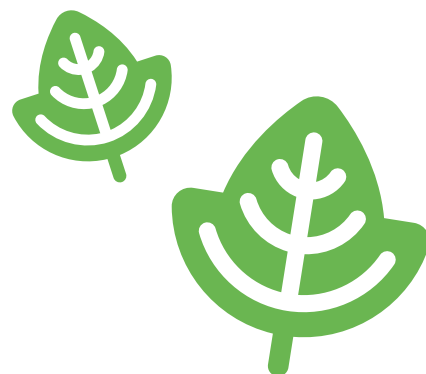
We are also committed to operating in a more environmentally responsible way. That means reducing our carbon emissions by 33 per cent by 2026, from a 2017–18 baseline, and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040.

Our work will strengthen global connections and build understanding and trust with the UK and young people and partners worldwide. It will contribute to a more sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world and support the UK's international leadership in climate change.

We will focus our resources on low- and middle-income countries and will ensure representation in our programmes of those most at risk from climate change, including women and girls, young people and people with disabilities.

Our climate ambitions are informed by UK and devolved government objectives and international agreements and declarations.

Our strategic objectives to 2026



Climate and sustainability education

We will strengthen climate and sustainability education and research, and we will help to build the resilience of education systems to climate impacts.

We will achieve this by:

- empowering teachers through professional development and resources to build knowledge, skills and agency for climate resilience and action in schools and further education
- enabling global climate research collaborations between the UK and the world, with a focus on early-career researchers
- exploring ways we can support education systems to better prepare for continuity of teaching in the event of climate-related school closures
- exploring ways English teaching can enhance the resilience of those displaced by climate change and include more voices in the climate debate.

Young people and future climate leaders

We will support young people and future leaders to build their skills and knowledge to respond to climate change and empower them to be part of the just transition to a more sustainable future.

We will achieve this by:

- empowering young people and excluded groups to tackle climate change in their communities through networks and local and global partnerships
- helping young leaders contribute to national and international climate platforms through our support to United Nations global youth organisations and training delivered by the Climate Youth Negotiator Programme
- developing a climate network and grant scheme for international alumni of UK universities, led by appointed Climate Ambassadors.

Artistic and cultural responses to climate change

We will protect cultural heritage at risk from climate change, and we will raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss through arts and culture and support the sector to adopt more sustainable practices.

We will achieve this by:

- developing partnerships and projects that protect heritage at risk due to climate change, supporting social and economic development
- supporting artistic and cultural responses that raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss
- building capacity and supporting knowledge exchange in relation to environmental practices within the arts and culture sector to support sustainable economic growth.

Environmentally responsible organisation

We will decarbonise our activities and operations and be environmentally responsible.

We will achieve this by:

- reducing carbon emissions through initiatives such as strengthening our Global Travel Policy
- continuing our journey to net zero, by improving our understanding and reporting of our carbon footprint, setting an interim carbon reduction target and plan for 2030 and piloting an innovative carbon budget approach
- embedding climate impact as part of our ethical assessment process for partners and funders.

Learning and sharing knowledge

We will build our organisational capacity and capability to deliver our climate ambitions and share knowledge and best practice.

We will achieve this by:

- participating in the United Nations climate change conferences – the Conference of the Parties (COP) and the Conference of Youth (COY), which support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- advocating for the role of education and arts and culture in addressing climate change, working with strategic partners and young people and sharing learning from global best practice
- developing and piloting carbon literacy training to empower our staff to deliver our climate ambitions
- commissioning and sharing research that will explore the role of arts and culture, education and youth engagement to address climate change.

How we will measure our progress



We will monitor the delivery of our strategy to 2026 through a set of key performance indicators with a primary focus on the six below. We will also evaluate our climate-focused activities through programme evaluations and qualitative case studies and highlight ways we need to adapt our approach.



Ambition	Key performance indicator
Supporting the UK's leadership in climate change	Percentage of external stakeholders reporting positive commitment of the British Council to tackling climate change
Building global connections with the UK and impact of our climate programmes	Total meaningful engagement in our climate programmes
	Percentage of young people that have gained knowledge, skills and connections to act on climate change and sustainability issues
	Percentage of teachers reporting an increased awareness of climate change and how to include it in their teaching and training
	Number and value of grants awarded to support sustainable practices in the arts and culture sector, raise awareness of climate change and protect cultural heritage at risk
Reducing our carbon emissions	A 33 per cent reduction overall by 2026, from a 2017–18 baseline

