

ON
THE
MOVE

Cultural Mobility Funding Guide

Greening Artistic Residencies

Focus on

Creative Europe

Countries

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MOTOVILA

CENTRE FOR THE PROMOTION OF COOPERATION
IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

On the Move is the international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 88 members from 32 countries. Since 2002, On the Move provides regular, up-to-date and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions and funding, and advocates for the value of cross-border cultural mobility. Co-funded by the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture, On the Move is implementing an ambitious multi-annual programme to build the capacities of local, regional, national, European and international stakeholders for the sustainable development of our cultural ecosystems.

On the Move regularly commissions researchers to investigate different themes closely related to the network's activities and the work carried out by its members. Reflecting on transversal concerns and key areas of artistic and cultural mobility, the network tries to establish a clearer picture of the current movements and trends while formulating policy recommendations.

On the Move is part, together with 15 other cultural networks, of the SHIFT eco-certification for networks.

<http://on-the-move.org>

<https://on-the-move.org/about/sustainability-policy>

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Suggestions for reading this guide: We recommend that you download the guide and open it using Acrobat Reader. You can then click on the web links and consult the funding schemes and resources. Alternatively, you can also copy and paste the web links of the schemes/resources that interest you in your browser's URL field. As this guide is long, we advise you not to print it, especially since all resources are web-based.

Table of contents

Introduction	4
Part 1: A List of Resources for Funding Green Residencies	
A Patchwork of Funding	8
Part 2: Digging Deeper into Ways of Working	
Developing Conditions for Greener Artistic Residency Programmes by Claire Rosslyn Wilson	19
Greening Artistic Residencies: Good Practice and Considerations By Bojana Panevska	26
Greening Island Residencies By Toni Attard	34
The power of networks: how to gain the support you need to green your residency By Jaana Eskola	44
Part 3: Case Studies	
Greening Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Programmes - A focus on Slovenia by Nika Mušič (translation in English provided by Culture.si)	54
Finding Green Residencies with Res Artis	57
Green Travel as an Opportunity to Find Different Rhythms by Martyna van Nieuwland	59
Cycling as a Practice by Martyna van Nieuwland	62
About the Authors	65

Introduction

This Cultural Mobility Funding Guide is part of On the Move's recent endeavour to focus on a topic with a complementary geographical scope. This guide's focus for this 2025 edition is on **'green artistic residencies' in Creative Europe countries**¹. Greening artistic residencies was chosen in part because 'residencies' is one of the largest types of opportunities listed on the website (at almost 50% of all open calls listed in 2024) and sustainability and environment is one of the largest themes (with 13.8% of calls labelled as such in 2024).

The main objective of this topic-based Cultural Mobility Funding Guide is to provide an entry point to a list of funding opportunities for green artistic residencies. Through in-depth articles and case studies, it also aims to provide culture professionals, residency managers, stakeholders and artists with ideas, reflections and guidance on how to collectively make artistic residencies more environmentally friendly at various levels (topic, artistic work, venues and local connections, travels, etc.).

On the Move enlisted the help of its data analyst, Claire Rosslyn Wilson, to identify a selection of funding programmes and initiatives that are relevant to this guide, as well as the specific conditions necessary for green artistic residencies. On the Move also commissioned culture professionals to write specific focused articles on good practices, islands' connections and the power of networks respectively with Bojana Paneveska, Toni Attard and Jaana Eskola. Four specific case studies finally enrich this guide with a focus on Slovenia with Nika Mušič and on (music) travel experiences that could be inspiring for residencies' organisations, with Martyna van Nieuwland.

This Cultural Mobility Funding Guide is intended to inspire those responsible for public policies and mobility funds at local, regional, national and European levels, as well as private donors and mobility stakeholders. As will be discussed later in the guide, although the 'green' topic and the issue of environmental sustainability have gained visibility in mobility support over the past five years, funding patterns that address the issue from a holistic perspective have remained limited. This guide aims to address this gap by providing access to inspiring initiatives that require additional support to have a longer-lasting impact on the arts and cultural sector, with a particular focus on artistic residencies.

1 The Creative Europe countries include the 27 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden) and Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo*, Liechtenstein, Moldova (from 1 January 2026 for the Cultural strand), Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Ukraine.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe>

How to navigate this guide?

You can read this guide while using different entry points:

- **Part 1** includes a **selection of organisations and initiatives that have funded opportunities** over the past five years, identified through On the Move's database. These organisations can be relevant for your own (green) mobility or as a residency's manager and/or professional to identify funding or inspiring examples.
- **Part 2** proposes four in-depth articles related to how to approach this issue of greening artistic residencies, each of them providing in their conclusion **key takeaways for consideration** (on definitions, greening practices, islands' connections and the importance of networks).
- **Part 3** introduces some **practical case studies** focused on one country (Slovenia), multiple countries (through the RES ARTIS database) as well as experimentations in more sustainable travel.

The Guide is intended to support both artists and cultural organisations at various stages of the creative development. **Cultural organisations delivering residencies** can use the examples and case studies provided as models for ways of working (through programme design, gaining ideas and practical steps of how they can green their residency spaces, and being pointed towards good practices in this area). **Artists** can use the guide to explore green residency spaces and projects.

This can be through the list in Part 1, or through the more extensive contextual detail provided in Parts 2 and 3. It is important to note that while these organisations and initiatives have funded green residencies in some way, they might have irregular open calls. Therefore, it is worth keeping an eye on their activities or contacting them directly about possible collaborations. This is intended as the starting point for research in this area, through which each cultural organisation, residency space and artist can develop their own approaches to sustainable practice.

The mapping and analysis process and its limits

This research for this guide took place from July till October 2025. One of the key challenges faced by On the Move's team and commissioned researchers was to define the concept of 'greening artistic residencies', especially in an ever-changing landscape. Therefore, it was decided to move beyond a list of funding opportunities towards a more in-depth approach which combines data analysis, different complementary perspectives and takeaways and lessons learnt. Funding linking mobility support, and greening practices in the artistic residencies' ecosystem is rather scarce, hence the proposal in **Part 1 of this selection of funding sources** that can be both useful for artists and culture professionals but also to policy makers and funders to be inspired for future changes in existing or to-be-built funding support.

This is however by no means an exhaustive list. Given the ever-changing nature of funding in this field—that artistic residencies and cultural organisations are continually applying for different funding schemes and adapting their programmes—**such lists are rather a snapshot of a moment in time.** However, it is heartening to see the varied organisations that are building sustainable projects over time, offering both opportunities for artists and models on ways of working from which others can gain inspiration. The lists, examples, and case studies here are intended to be a starting point to build on this work and they can be read in conjunction with the increasing literature in the field.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the guide is as accurate as possible, individual listed projects or funding schemes may be outdated, inaccurate, or incomplete. Therefore, it is advisable to refer to the websites of the listed funds, projects and initiatives for the latest updates. If you find any errors while reading this document, please send your comments, suggestions, and corrections to info@on-the-move.org

Continuing the journey

If you have any questions regarding mobility funding schemes in other countries, we suggest consulting the other [Cultural Mobility Funding Guides](#) published on the On the Move website.

For environmental sustainability resources, you can also refer to [On the Move's website](#) (under Environment and Sustainability).

For regular and one-off calls for projects, collaborations, and other opportunities to fund international cultural exchange, we invite you to subscribe to our [monthly newsletter](#).

Part 1: A List of Resources for Funding Green Residencies



A Patchwork of Funding

Finding the funding to support greener residencies can feel like putting together a puzzle that includes national public funding, short term project funding, private organisations and ad hoc opportunities. This Guide explores the diverse projects that organisations and residencies have developed within this complex funding context. Providing the examples and models is intended to both inspire and inform creative practices. However, before jumping into the details, it is worth taking a step back to explore some of the funding frameworks and opportunities available both to residencies spaces and artists looking for green residencies.

To give some context, on the On the Move website between 2020 and 2025, there were over 200 organisations listed in open calls related to residencies and environmental sustainability, sometimes working in partnership and at others working individually. There are several organisations that have between three to seven open calls listed in this time period (see the list below for those who were most active in this area). Although these were not all ongoing programmes, they are organisations that have shown their engagement and interest in sustainable practices and are worth investigating further.

Of the open calls listed, 108 of them (almost 39%) were funded by the European Union. These were under programmes such as the [Creative Europe](#) European cooperation projects, European networks, European Platforms, Culture Moves Europe, or the Horizon Europe research and innovation funding programme (which has a cluster ‘Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society’—as well as ‘Climate, Energy and Mobility’—under the Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness pillar). Funding from Horizon Europe is particularly relevant for cross-

sector and cross-discipline projects (see ‘[Greening Artistic Residencies](#)’ in this Guide for examples of some of these types of projects).

Of these 108 open calls funded with European Union funding, there were 44 open calls funded by the Culture Moves Europe programme, a mobility scheme that supports individual mobility and residency projects across Creative Europe countries, territories and regions. This funding scheme is interesting as it is open to individuals or small organisations, which the other European Union funding schemes listed above are not. Although the scheme is focused on giving grants for artists and culture professionals to travel and carry out a project in another Creative Europe country, it also provided a top-up fund for those travelling by more sustainable means.

It is worth noting that the calls published on the On the Move website, as well as many that are referenced throughout this Guide, are short term projects. They might be funded for between one to five years, or they might be projects that happen sporadically when the organisers can obtain the funding. In some cases, such as the focused and well-established S+T+ARTS programme, the organisations regularly produce open calls and support many residency projects even as the open calls change their central theme or conditions. But for many organisations and residencies, the projects are often changing, and it is challenging to create a definitive list of funding opportunities for residency spaces and/or artists seeking sustainable residencies. It is important that programmes that centre sustainable practices in artistic residencies have access to stable funding, as it allows for security and clarity for the residencies, as well as the ability for artists to identify ongoing residency spaces that align with sustainable good practice.

Beyond the European Union-level funding, there are many ways residency spaces combine a patchwork of funders for their projects, including through national and local funding, private foundations, partnerships with educational institutions or top-ups through approaching embassies for specific travel support. It is also worth investigating university programmes, including PhD programmes, as there might be short term funded residencies, fellowships or PhD programmes with a specific focus on environmental sustainability.

Knowing about sustainability schemes in funding for the arts can sometimes be evident at the national policy-making level. In other cases it requires an analysis of each funder and their eligibility criteria to understand how to budget for costs related to environmental sustainability.

There can be some positive changes seen in funding for sustainable projects. For example, On the Move's [Cultural Mobility Yearbook 2023](#) highlighted that in 2022 16.9% of environment and sustainability themed opportunities were organised directly by funders, reflecting desire to shift institutional priorities and a will to effect top-down change. These included a number of large initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus (and festival), Goethe-Institut's Touring Green programme, the new MusicAIRE fund focused on a 'green, digital and just Recovery' for the music sector, and Allianz Foundation's Climate Cultures strand. There was also a shift seen in institutional priorities, such as the Fondation Thalie (Belgium), which aimed its 2023 research residency for the first time at artists with an 'ecological dimension in their practice', and at the same time adopted four overarching commitments for the foundation's mission, including one to '[encourage] dialogue

between artists and scientists concerning the climate emergency'. The Kone Foundation (Finland) is a leader in this respect. Their steps towards more sustainable practices started in 2019 with an evaluation of its environmental impact² and in 2023 they were awarded the EcoCompass certification³.

However, there is a risk that a thematic interest in environmental sustainability is not backed up by concrete support for the practical challenges. As John Ellingsworth argues in the 2023 Yearbook, 'A "green transition" then will be measured not only in the visibility of the topic of sustainability, but also in actual changes to what motivates our mobility, how programmes operate, and where money is spent, as well as by an increasingly deep awareness of our mutual dependency.' In this context, and taking into consideration the funding structure, it is important to note that funding does not have to be earmarked for environmentally sustainable costs for it to be used for sustainable projects. Rather, a green approach to practices should come first. Residencies can ask questions such as: Are there processes that can be put in place that have low or no costs? Can a sustainability policy be established for the residency and the artists it receives? It can also include small changes, such as how recycling can be optimised. Having a strong foundation of sustainable practice then makes it easier to justify 'green' costs in project or organisational budgets—the costs are then part of a holistic approach that takes into consideration the overall operation and project implementation of the residency. Additionally, if a particular need is identified that has a high cost (such as retrofitting older or heritage buildings to make them more sustainable) then there can be a more targeted approach to sourcing appropriate funding.

2 The evaluation found that work travel accounted for 62% of grantees' emissions, with domestic flights alone making up 28% of the Foundation's total carbon footprint. Read the full report here: Kone Foundation, '[Kone Foundation measured its carbon footprint: grantees' flights for work purposes constituted more than half of the Foundation's emissions](#)', 2021.

3 You can read more here about the 10 criteria of the [EcoCompass certification](#).

Exploring the resources

This is a list of resources and organisations either listed in this Guide or sourced from On the Move's database and which have been engaged in initiatives that support green residencies. **This is by no means an exhaustive list and given the ever-changing nature of funding in this field it would be difficult to develop and maintain such a list.** Rather, this list is developed from the expertise of our researchers and contributors. It is also based on On the Move's work in the field (including through the extensive website database). This list is principally focused on Creative Europe countries.

Some of the organisations listed here are residency spaces, while others are organisations that fund or are involved with projects that centre sustainability. In some cases organisations are listed in the 'residency' section even if they do other work, as the residency element is a big part of their work and approach. Some of these organisations might not be exclusively targeted at sustainability topics, but they have in the past been involved in some 'green residency' projects or they might have worked in partnership

with other organisations to offer a particular open call related to environmental sustainability. There are also some short-term projects included in the list, as they have included residencies in the past, they have interesting partners, or they have extensive resources that can be used to think about different models and approaches. This list is intended as a starting point for investigating active organisations in this space.

Information platforms and resources

- [On the Move's Cultural Mobility Funding Guides](#): Divided into country and regional focus' these guides list the mobility funding available to and from different countries. There are over 60 national and regional mobility funding guides with more than 2,000 grants, scholarships, residencies, and other opportunities. Pay particular attention to the 'Other priorities' and 'Specific mentions' sections, as they often indicate if there is additional funding available for more sustainable means of transport. For each funding opportunity you investigate, check the conditions carefully; for national or local funding public funding, for example, there might be the possibility to include sustainable practices and their costs as part of the project.
- [On the Move's news section](#): For opportunities that support arts workers' mobility, including residencies, which is the main type of opportunity listed. Like for the guides, On the Move's news section lists only calls where travels are at least partially covered among other calls (see OTM editorial policy [here](#)).
- [Res Artis](#): A membership organisation which has 700 centres, organisations, and individuals in over 80 countries listed, from supported residencies to those with fees.
- [DutchCulture | TransArtists](#): Advises artists and cultural organisations about international artist-in-residence programmes and cross-border cooperation.

- [Creative Unites](#): This EU-funded platform active at the level of Creative Europe/European countries has a special focus on green issues including on funding.
- [Creative Responses to Sustainability Green Guide series](#): Initiated by the Green Art Lab Alliance (GALA) and supported by the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF), the series presents a list of cultural initiatives (although not only residencies) that are engaged with environmental sustainability. Currently there are 10 guides in the series published on ASEF Culture, with [an additional two published by GALA](#).
- [ASEF Culture360](#): This platform brings Asia and Europe closer by providing information, facilitating dialogue and stimulating reflection on the arts and culture of the two regions, and it includes a section on opportunities.

- [Julie's Bicycle](#): A non-profit organisation, mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate, nature and justice crisis. They publish many practical guides and examples, as well as having a [Creative Climate Justice Hub](#). They also publish opportunities in their [news](#) section.

There are also national, artform or thematic based information platforms that list the latest opportunities for artists, some of which might be to fund residencies, such as the [touring artists funding database](#) in Germany and others.

Residencies and/or artist-run initiatives

- [AlmResidency](#) (Germany): The AlmResidency is an artist residency in the Bavarian foothills of the Alps where artists gather annually for an intensive ten-day period of work and research in two secluded mountain huts.
- [ALTER- Residency](#) (Switzerland): A high mountain art and research residency programme responding to the impact of environmental crises on communities in the Swiss Alps.
- [ALTER](#) (Switzerland): A two- to three-month residency in a village at an altitude of 2,000 meters in the Val d'Anniviers. Residency themes include the growing environmental crises and their associated social, economic, and cultural shifts.
- [Áras Éanna](#) (Ireland): Áras Éanna supports artists through its Artist in Residence programme. They offer artists the time and space to develop their practice and show new work in the unique environment of this Gaeltacht island.
- [Art in Lov](#) (Finland): Art in Lov Residence is an artist's residency in Loviisa, Finland. The residency welcomes professional practitioners of all artforms from visual arts to music and dance, including curators. The majority of visiting artists are international and their focus is on collaboration with local partners, opportunity for participation, local activities and art in public spaces. Artists are invited both through open calls and as curated invitations.
- [Art Hub Copenhagen](#) (Denmark): The Art Hub Residency is both for newly qualified artists and other artists, where the residency programme can make a difference in relation to spreading and establishing a practice on a national and international level.
- [Artica Svalbard](#) (Norway): An interdisciplinary guest residency programme, primarily aimed at artists, but also welcoming writers, researchers, and others exploring the Arctic through creative and critical work. Through the guest residency programme and a range of events, they provide residents with time, space, and opportunities to engage with Svalbard and the Arctic.

- [Baltic Art Center](#) (Sweden): An internationally established residency in the Baltic Sea region, connecting artists and organisations from all over the world. As an artistic residency, BAC provides artists with the time, space and resources to work individually and collaboratively to develop new ideas and art projects
- [BIRCA](#) (Denmark): BIRCA is a laboratory for the new ecological performing arts, located in the middle of nature and fields on the island of Bornholm.
- [Casa d'Artistes](#) (Spain): A space for creation and thought located in Es Mercadal (Menorca), designed to carry out creative and production stays in all artistic disciplines and research in general in the middle of a natural environment.
- [Center Rog](#) (Slovenia): Center Rog is a modern production space, designed for everyone who enjoys creating with their hands, regardless of their knowledge and age. The nine production labs, which are the heart of the house, provide a space for learning and using both traditional and modern digital technologies. They also have a Designer in Residency programme.
- [Centre d'Art i Natura de Farrera](#), (Spain): A work residence for artists and researchers from all over the world in the heart of the Alt Pirineu. Located at more than 1,300 meters above sea level, CAN is a space designed for productivity and disconnection in a natural setting.
- [Cité internationale des arts](#) (France): The Cité internationale des arts is located on two separate sites; the first is in Paris' Marais district and the second in Montmartre. Every month, in partnership with 135 French and international organisations, the Cité's two complementary sites welcome more than 300 artists from a wide range of disciplines for residencies lasting up to 1 year.
- [Cultivamos Cultura](#) (Portugal): This is a platform for experimentation and development of shared knowledge in the theory and practice of science, technology and contemporary art. Cultivamos Cultura organises activities in the areas of production, dissemination, research, education and exhibition. They host resident creators for periods up to two months. During the residency, creators are encouraged to engage in activities with local communities, including schools.
- [Earthwise Residency](#) (Denmark): Earthwise Residency consists of two properties and 13 hectares of land: a farm from the 18th century and a house from 1963. Care is a core value for all practices in and around Earthwise and they strive for sustainable solutions and reuse in all aspects of taking care of the house.
- [Enclave Land Art](#) (Spain): A production and research artistic residency linked to the dialogue between human beings and the natural context where it is being developed. The starting point is Land Art, working towards a new interpretation of this dialogue through any kind of creative discipline linked with contemporary art.
- [FarmLab](#) (Austria): A rural creative hub for learning, innovation, and exchange which connects sustainability, nature conservation, traditional crafts, and digital tools.
- [Hangar](#) (Spain): An artist-run initiative committed to prototyping, updating, and sustaining the essential conditions for artistic production and research, understanding these activities as critical speculative practices that respond to and innovate within contemporary debates and urgencies. They also have a Wetlab, a place where living materials and scientific knowledge merge with artistic research.
- [HIAP – Helsinki International Artist Programme](#) (Finland): Provides opportunities for international arts professionals to undertake creative work, conduct research and engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue.

- [Interdisciplinary Art Group SERDE](#) (Latvia): Every summer SERDE residencies and workshops centre hosts international artists with different art backgrounds and projects. Many of them have an impact on the local environment and give input to the local community.

- [Jan van Eyck Academie](#) (Netherlands): The Jan van Eyck Academie is committed to exploring the agency, roles, and civic significance of art, design and other creative practices in relation to the climate crisis, environmental breakdown, and their manifold effects. Through the Future Materials Bank, Future Materials Lab, and the Future Materials Encounters, it promotes research, knowledge exchange, and experimentation on sustainable materials for the arts and design.

- [Krušče Creative Center](#) (Slovenia): An AiR programme for artists from a variety of fields. It operates according to a holistic approach to sustainability—from the renovation of estate buildings to everyday practices that include frugal use of resources, recycling and reuse, and the promotion of living in harmony with nature.

- [Kunstverein Global Forest](#) (Germany): The association's goal is to organise art and cultural events in the Black Forest-Baar district, to offer national and international artists a platform for exhibitions and presentations, and to provide the necessary financial and organisational infrastructure. To this end, Global Forest awards artist residencies, culminating in a high-profile event.

- [Kvitbrakka](#) (Norway): Located in the fishing village of Berlevåg in Northern Norway, Kvitbrakka offers a retreat for artists, writers, living artists and creative practitioners. Overlooking the Barents Sea, Berlevåg is known for its dramatic Arctic landscape, fishing traditions and local culture. Since its opening in 2012, Kvitbrakka has welcomed over 50 guests from Norway and abroad.

- [La Becque](#) (Switzerland): Located on the shores of Lake Geneva in La Tour-de-Peilz, Switzerland, La Becque | Artist Residency hosts artists of all

backgrounds and disciplines. La Becque dedicates particular attention to projects exploring the ever more intertwined notions of nature, the environment, and of technology.

- [Maajaam](#) (Estonia): Maajaam is a farm for art and tech situated in South of Estonia. It is concentrated on researching, experimenting with and reflecting on the relationships between people, technology and nature.

- [Meet Factory](#) (Czech Republic): The international Artist-in-Residency Programme was established in 2007 and is the largest studio programme in the Czech Republic. It offers creative residencies for cultural professionals—visual artists, curators, theoreticians and visual art theorists.

- [Mustarinda](#) (Finland): Mustarinda Association works for ecological reconstruction by combining contemporary art, boundary crossing research, practical experiments, education and community work. The activities are centered at the Mustarinda House, located next to the Paljakka Nature Reserve in the Kainuu region, Finland.

- [neimënster Abbey Heritage Site for Culture](#) (Luxembourg): The center has developed around four pillars of activities, including residencies. The artist residencies component, a major aspect of the center, was further expanded in 2020 and the team continues its development. neimënster's ambition is to give a real place to experimentation, whether in terms of disciplines or aesthetics.

- [Neither on Land nor at Sea](#) (Italy): A research project by UNIDEE Residency Programmes at Cittadellarte—Fondazione Pistoletto. It takes shape across a series of residency modules and an accompanying public online/on-site programme.

- [Polygreen Culture and Art Initiative](#) (Greece): PCAI is a cultural organisation focusing on increasing environmental awareness through an annual programme of commissions, contemporary art exhibitions, artist residencies, performances and workshops.

- [Rupert](#) (Lithuania): Rupert is an independent, publicly funded center for art, residencies and education, located in Vilnius, Lithuania. Rupert has been operating since 2012. Rupert's residency programme is suited to local and international practitioners working in the cultural field. This includes artists, writers, curators, cultural managers and academics.
- [Saari Residence](#) (Finland): Maintained by Kone Foundation, it is a residence located in Mynämäki, Southwest Finland, for artists of all disciplines and nationalities. The residence's long-term activities and thinking are underpinned by an ecological approach, which also covers social and psychological sustainability. Its keywords are slowness, insight and change.
- [Silba Environment Art](#) (Croatia): A platform for creative experiments on a remote Croatian island, offering immersive residencies that invite artists and practitioners into a deep relationship with nature and redefining everyday life, resources and sustainability. They are rooted in practices of slowness and deep listening.
- [Skaftfell – Center for Visual Art](#), (Iceland): Skaftfell Art Center hosts a contemporary art exhibition programme, an international artist residency, year-round arts education, the Prentverk Seyðisfjörður printmaking workshop, and a range of cultural events, public programmes.
- [Spreepark Art Space](#) (Germany): The Spreepark Art Space residency programme offers artists a space to explore the connection between art and the surrounding landscape in the context of the Spreepark and artistic research. The unique setting of the former Spreepark amusement park takes centre stage, as it enables the residents to engage intensively with this place of change and transformation and to develop their creative ideas.
- [Storytellers in Residence](#) (Ireland): This initiative develops and sustains community-led cultural resilience across the seven inhabited West Cork Islands in a long-term, meaningful way that supports the environmental, social and economic well-being of the place.
- [Valley of the possible](#) (Netherlands): A Residency for Regenerative Culture in the Chilean Andes and Lochem, the Netherlands. They invite and challenge artists, scientists and other creative thinkers and makers to envision alternative perspectives on the relationship with the natural world.
- [Valletta Contemporary Gozo Residency](#) (Malta): The residency programme aims to introduce artists and creative practitioners to Gozo as an inspiring creative environment set amidst a Mediterranean setting. Since its inception in 2001, the programme offers an experience of intercultural exchange among residents, self-directed professional development and opportunities for collaborative projects
- [VARES](#) (Estonia): An international interdisciplinary residency for spatial practice, whose main task is to seek, find and create alternative spatial practices that are not based on market logic, but rather on the desire to create spaces and places that enrich everyday life, empower the local community and town of Valga.
- [Verpėjos](#) (Lithuania): An artist-run initiative founded in 2017 by artist Laura Garbštienė to research and discuss rural traditional lifestyle and nature preservation, activate discourse on changes and processes, both local and global.

European projects and networks


- **CreArt** (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Croatia, North Macedonia, Lithuania, France, Italy, Latvia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany): CreArt 3.0 is currently a matrix composed by 13 European medium-sized cities that works from 2012 exchanging experiences and good practices to foster contemporary art, through a permanent transnational mobility programme for emerging artists, curators and cultural agents, in order to maximise the economic, social and cultural contribution that creativity can make to their local communities.
- **CYCLE UP!** (Slovakia, Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Germany): At the intersection of art, culture, and sustainability, the project explores how artistic processes can be made more environmentally sustainable, through local and participative models and by reducing the footprint of artist-in-residence programmes. Their vision is a future where art sparks conversation and action around bicycle culture and the climate emergency.
- **Island Connect II** (Denmark, Croatia, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy): From 2024–2026 it brought together seven island partners. The network invited artists-in-residence to critically engage with the themes of insularity, islander identities or island socio-political realities in a wider European context, comparing the similarities and difficulties that emerge from diverse island regions of the project.
- **PROSPER** (Greece, Serbia, North Macedonia, Germany): Peripheries are places of solidarity that partners in PROSPER aim to explore by creating connections between environmentally vulnerable regions, through a series of transnational cultural collaborations. PROSPER involves 5 partner organisations (LOOP, Eho Animato, Peripetija, Oyouun, and Ohrid SOS) and 6 associate partners. The project ended in September 2025 (for reference).
- **Rewilding Cultures**: A project that is centred around exploring innovative approaches to production, inclusivity, and environmental considerations at the intersection of the arts, science, and technology. With a strong focus on reflecting the evolving landscape of artistic research and production, the project aims to foster and reshape new perspectives on various aspects of artistic and creative processes, including research, production, presentation, and dissemination.
- **S+T+ARTS**: STARTS is an initiative of the European Commission, launched under the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme to support collaborations between artists, scientists, engineers and researchers. Since 2016, STARTS has organised, funded, and monitored numerous residencies through different projects, a total of 390 residencies with 18,420,000 EUR.
- **STUDIOTOPIA**: With 11 European cultural and science organisations, the Studiotopia initiative seeks to harness the creative synergy between artists and scientists to address one overarching theme: the Symbiocene. This concept, coined by eco-philosopher Glenn Albrecht, envisions a future where humanity lives in harmony with the Earth and all its inhabitants, fostering mutual flourishing and interconnectedness.

Associations, organisations and universities (including foundations)

- [Art2M](#) (Art To Machine, France): A company and a think-and-do tank exploring and supporting creative communities in the relations between art, design, education, technologies and science. ART2M produces art works, publications and events (workshops, residencies, conferences, exhibitions, festivals).
- [Art Inside Out](#) (Sweden): A nomadic art institution in Halland that works with contemporary art in new and unexpected locations, both in the city and in the countryside. It invites artists to art residencies and to create new site-specific art works, exhibitions and public programmes anchored in local environments.
- [Art Explora](#) (France): Art Explora is an international foundation that inspires new encounters between arts and audiences, locally, nationally and internationally.
- [Bioart Society](#) (Finland): Bioart Society is a Helsinki-based association working at the intersection of art, science and society. Established in May 2008, Bioart Society currently has over 150 members in Finland and other countries. The association is committed to developing, producing and facilitating activities around art and natural sciences with an emphasis on biology, ecology and life sciences. Amongst other multi-year partnership projects, ongoing collaborations include Ars Bioartica, an art and science residency programme with a focus on the sub-arctic environment with the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station, University of Helsinki and the Tokyo Art and Science Research residency with the BioClub Tokyo and The Finnish Institute in Japan.
- [COAL association](#) (France): COAL has been working on environmental topics since its creation in 2008 by professionals of contemporary art, ecology and research. The associations' goal is to mobilise artists and cultural actors on societal and environmental issues, while implementing concrete solutions. There are four different awards as part of the COAL prize, of which two incorporate residencies (one in association with the François Sommer Foundation, which implements a humanist ecology approach and the other in association with the Bondy regional forest).
- [Cultural Front – GRAD](#), (Serbia): GRAD organises exhibitions, conferences, debates, book promotions, workshops, music programmes, film screenings and many other events. Through all its programmes and activities, as well as cooperation that are established on regional and European level, KC Grad harnesses the power of culture and arts to contribute to the social cohesion, cultural participation, mobility of artists and cultural workers and promotion of human rights.
- [Green Art Lab Alliance](#) (Netherlands): An informal knowledge alliance of art organisations seeking to connect with each other over issues of climate justice and environmental sustainability through their creative practice. It started as an EU-funded project in 2012 and today networks institutions in Europe, Asia and Latin America.
- [La Volière](#) (France): A place dedicated to contemporary circus and aerial dance. They aim to meet the challenges of tomorrow by combining culture and ecology, reinventing production and distribution models, and promoting inclusion through art.
- [Narsaq International Research Station](#) (Greenland): An independent non-profit research platform with a focus on cultural and scientific research of benefit to the local population in South Greenland. The Research Station is located in a region of natural beauty and cultural heritage that is central for understanding some of the most urgent challenges the world is facing today.
- [PRAKSIS](#) (Norway): A transnational platform for art, research and learning, they connect diverse artists, thinkers and publics to Norway's creative ecology via thematic programmes that focus on urgent issues of our time.

- [Projekt Atol Institute](#) (Slovenia): Projekt Atol is a hub for research in arts, transdisciplinary production of art projects, tactical media, situation building, publishing, education, community platforms. They produce projects and artworks dealing with communication infrastructure and scientific and technological research.
- [Quo Artis](#) (Spain): Quo Artis is an international nonprofit organisation dedicated to fostering linkages among the realms of art, science, technology, and ecology.
- [Sonic Acts](#) (Netherlands): Founded in 1994 to present new developments in electronic and digital art forms, Sonic Acts has gained prominence through its public events, residencies, publications, commissions, and the Sonic Acts Biennial—an intensive (sound) art, theory and technology programme motivated by changes in the ecological, political and social landscape. A platform for international projects, research and the co-production of new artworks, Sonic Acts often works together with local and international partner organisations such as independent and institutional cultural incubators, universities and kindred festivals.
- [TaikaBox](#) (Finland): TaikaBox is dedicated to creating new ways to experience dance. They combine technology, movement, community, sustainability and creativity.
- [The Romanian Association for Contemporary Art](#) (Romania): A non-profit organisation founded in 2012 by Anca Poteraşu, dedicated to supporting and promoting Romanian contemporary artists at both local and international levels, ARAC's mission centers on creating projects with meaningful opportunities for artists through exhibitions, residencies, and collaborations with cultural institutions around the world.
- [Urban Futures Studio, Utrecht University](#) (Netherlands): The Urban Futures Studio explores sustainable and meaningfully democratic futures, and ways to get there. They investigate what they call 'futuring'—the social creation of the (imagined) futures that direct collective action. As a transdisciplinary institute, they collaborate with policymakers, activists, artists, and students to enable alternative futures.

Part 2: Digging Deeper into Ways of Working



Developing Conditions for Greener Artistic Residency Programmes

by Claire Rosslyn Wilson

Ways of working more sustainably

There are different ways to engage with sustainable practices in green residencies, either as a residency space or a practicing artist and by examining the open calls published on On the Move website (between 2020 and 2025) some of these ways of working can be identified. Of the 1,585 open calls related to artistic residencies published in that time, there were 277 (17.5%) that were related to environmental sustainability in some way. These involved calls that had environment and sustainability as a theme, either tagged as such in the website or identified through a key word search (using terms such as climate, sustainable, sustainability, or green).

In order to gain a sense of who these were targeted at, we can see that of the 277 open calls published

related to sustainability and artistic residencies, 67% were for individuals only, followed by 29% for both individuals, groups and organisations and 4% for groups and organisations only. Almost all of the open calls were open to artists (271 open calls), while others were also open to researchers and critics, and to a lesser degree curators and producers and managers. In terms of art forms, cross-disciplinary was the largest art form with 156 open calls, although it is common to find opportunities that involve more than one art form or discipline. Other key art forms included visual arts (with 76 open calls), the performing arts (with 41 open calls), and sound and music (with 25 open calls). This follows the trends that can be seen in the overall open calls published on the website.⁴

Environmental sustainability as creative investigation

One way of working in the context of 'green residencies', which is also explored in many of the examples in this Guide, is to engage in the topic of sustainability as a creative or research question within the creative practice, exploring it as the topic, way of working or structure of the project. It could involve sharing knowledge between creative practice and science,

raising awareness about key issues or engaging with a particular environment. There are many examples of how this might take shape (with more examples in chapters in this Guide) and can imply different levels of engagement with sustainability (ranging from tokenistic to a deep engagement throughout the whole methodology of the project).

4 See for example On the Move's Cultural Mobility Yearbooks for [2025](#), [2024](#), [2023](#), and [2022](#).

Green residency spaces

Another way of working is to analyse the space and practices of the residency. This could take into consideration, for example, sourcing green energy, improving the efficiency of the buildings, considerations of waste disposal and recycling or water management, or sustainable use of materials in creative practices.⁵ It could also take into consideration the practices of the residency; for example, the digital footprint of activities, the travel of residency staff, or how events are designed to make them more sustainable. In the case of events, there has been research that demonstrates that audience and artist mobility contributes the most to the carbon

footprint of events, when compared with the venue or energy use for example (particularly in the case of cultural organisations that organise large events).⁶ Audience mobility in the context of residencies might have less of an impact if it is targeted mainly at very local audiences or small-scale events, but, particularly in hybrid residency spaces that also run a lot of events or that are in more remote locations, it is worth considering. Whether it is about the physical spaces or the day-to-day practices in a residency space, this needs to be approached in a holistic way, taking into consideration all elements of operations.

Conditions for a sustainable practice

Another way of working is to consider the conditions provided to the artists, which specifically support more sustainable practices. This could be the financial support provided to artists (such as green travel top ups) or the design of the programme to encourage more sustainable approaches from artists (for example requiring that artists have a sustainability plan or use sustainably sourced materials). It is this way of working that will be examined extensively in this chapter—in what ways can residency spaces design and implement more sustainable programmes? A number of examples will be explored, however, this is by no means an extensive list. Rather, it can be used as inspiration for programmes that want to create a context in which finding ways of working more sustainability is an inspiring constraint, rather than an impossible requirement.

In each of these ways of working, it is important to approach sustainability in a holistic way. This might involve ecological considerations, as well as social and financial sustainability. Considering the ecological questions without taking a holistic approach can risk

excluding creative practitioners and make the green transition out of reach and unsustainable for many. Guides are increasingly taking this holistic approach, providing advice on easy-to-implement steps, as well as long term goals. But importantly, it begins with a reflection on an organisation's or artist's core values and principles.

Further reading:

CYCLE UP!'s [Sustaining Creativity: The Honest Guide to Sustainable Residencies](#)

Taikabox's [Artist Residencies and Sustainability](#) about how residency providers can help tackle the climate crisis

Nordic Alliance of Artists' Residencies on Climate Action's [Sustainability Toolkit for Artists' Residencies](#)

[Culture Moves Europe's sustainability checklists](#) for artists and residency hosts

5 See, for example, Julie's Bicycle's ['Waste Management in Buildings'](#), ['Water Management in Buildings Guide'](#), and ['Greening The Office Guide'](#), among others.

6 See for example, A [study](#) by the French AJC Association Jazzé Croisé, in collaboration with the Le Périscope club in Lyon, Julie's Bicycle's ['Audience Travel Guide 2015'](#), or the Kone Foundation report ['Kone Foundation measured its carbon footprint: grantees' flights for work purposes constituted more than half of the Foundation's emissions'](#), 2021.

Hybrid or online residency models

One decision that can be made about residencies is how to use digital spaces to facilitate exchange and mitigate the impact of travel.

Just over 90% of the residency open calls published on On the Move between 2020 and 2025 related to environmental sustainability were for in-person mobility only, with 5% for both hybrid and online only mobility. While some of these hybrid or online residencies were during the COVID-19 pandemic and the related travel restrictions, there were also some interesting examples of hybrid approaches in more recent years. One such example is the [Fluid Boundaries International Residency Programme 2025](#), which began with indigenous/ancient knowledge convenors, scientists, and curators working in their local territories in South Africa, Brazil and Switzerland, before coming together in person at the second half of the residency in Switzerland. This focus on one's local territory was a vital element of the programme, as embedded knowledge of place is central to the project, so using online exchanges was a way to make connections across these localities.

Another hybrid format that can be seen in various residency programmes is the use of the digital space before and after the in-person residency, to learn about the site or other important information (for example the [Transition To 8 Art Residency on Air Pollution](#) used the digital residency to meet the artists and partners and to start working with data on air pollution) in order to make the most of the time in the place. This can be used for shorter in-person residencies, but it can also enable those who are not able to undertake long residencies⁷ to participate. Other programmes start with the in-person residency and use the digital space for continued engagement or to take the time to produce artwork. In some cases the online space is also used as a way to present and communicate about the final outcomes or creative outputs (such as the [MATCH project](#) that used the online space for digital reflection and presentation). Other programmes used the online format to bring together people from distant places for mentoring or

collaboration (such as the Asia-Europe Foundation and Casa Asia's [Virtual Asia-Europe Residency on Arts and Climate Change](#) or the Ways of Repair [‘Loss and Damage’ Research Residency](#)).

However, these examples represent only 5% of the 1,585 open calls in this field. This small percentage could be related to the process and place-based nature of residencies, which is difficult to replace with online formats. Additionally, hybrid engagement needs to be considered carefully, so that it is not just an online meeting but rather a creative exchange. Facilitator or match-maker roles can be very important here, where they have the possibility to match interests and make intercultural translations between participants.

Putting into practice:

Travel can be a contributor to the environmental impact of a project, is there a way to design a residency to include elements of online sharing so that artists can make the most of their time in-situ? How can you help to match the participants around a shared topic or approach to ensure that the online exchange is valuable and interesting for everyone? Are there some activities that you are currently doing (such as international meetings) that can be done online?

Aside from the residency itself, there are other ways to use the digital space to rethink practices and day-to-day operations. One example can involve the in-person international meetings by residency staff. Can some of these meetings be conducted online? To help in this process, On the Move and The Green Room developed the [‘Decision making tool for the choice of locations of events and/or meetings attendance’](#) that can be incorporated into a sustainable travel policy. Low carbon travel options usually imply spending more time travelling

7 Such as those with caring responsibilities, with disabilities or those with competing work commitments.

and might present reliability and comfort challenges in some contexts and that the final choice needs to take into consideration one's well-being, availability and personal/professional life balance. The decision-making tool is designed to support the inclusion of travel impacts in the decision-making process about whether to attend a meeting or an event. It includes, among others, factors such as methods of travel to the location, what other meetings or synergies can be made through such travel, how sustainable the event is, and how often you travel to the same location. This is a tool that can be a useful starting point that can be adapted to each organisation or individual based on their needs and vision. While meeting in person is still important, it can be helpful to have a way of assessing the value of each travel opportunity.

However, it is also important to not forget the impact of the seemingly invisible 'digital space'. Our actions online have a real environmental impact—data centres, data transmission, and end-user devices all have a tangible effect, and the use of energy-intensive AI tools will only increase this. This digital use is not equally distributed and high-income countries represent the highest users.⁸ Although

changes need to be made at a policy level and with stronger regulations for industry, it is possible to make small changes towards a more considerate environmental approach. For example, people can review their online practices (such as reviewing how best and how often to share images and videos, listening to music without video, or revising the need to use AI tools for simple tasks), check websites' carbon footprint with the Carbon Calculator, or use devices as long as possible before replacing them. When considering the impact of social media and digital campaigns on audience reach and visibility, we can also include its environmental impact.

Further reading:

IETM's 2025 Berlin Plenary Meeting report
[‘Digital Doesn't Mean Dematerialised: Greening Our Online Practices’](#)

On the Move's [‘Decision making tool for the choice of locations of events and/or meetings’ attendance](#)

Wholegrain Digital's [Carbon Calculator](#)

Residency lengths and connecting with local opportunities

As has been observed by a number of authors in this Guide, longer periods in residency spaces, as well as making the most of the travel by doubling up opportunities that are in nearby locations, are ways to make the most of each trip. Additionally, longer travel and repeat visits can contribute to fostering more robust local knowledge and sustainable relationships. However, this is not always feasible for artists and arts workers. According to the 2019 [Operational Study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries](#) authored by On the Move, the majority of survey respondents focused on mobility periods of between

5 and 15 days. This length of stay could be influenced by many factors, but it could include job and caring commitments, or health considerations. In order to enable artists to stay for longer periods, some of these challenges need to be addressed: can the timing of the residency coincide with summer holiday periods so that families can travel together? Can childcare be provided as part of the residency? [Mophradat's At Home with the Kids Residency for Caregivers](#) in Greece is an interesting example of this, which was a summer retreat for artists and their families to live together, where artists worked and children played in an experiment of communal living. The format

8 'In 2018, every American owns an average of 10 digitally connected devices and consumes 140 Gigabytes of data per month while in India these ratios are of one device and 2 Gigabytes per month.' See The Shift Project, [Lean ICT: Towards digital sobriety](#), 2019.

allowed for shared childcare and affordable working space as well as paid travel for the whole family. Another example is [Suralitas' Massa Mare residency](#) in Spain for musicians and sound artists experiencing motherhood, which welcomes children and companions of the artist in residence and to cover their travel expenses. Similar adjustments could be made for other groups or individuals facing challenges in attending longer residencies.

Undertaking longer residencies also enables a deeper engagement with local communities and it can lead to more opportunities in the region (which is also highlighted in the chapter on Greening Island Residencies). The possible opportunities can be developed between the artists, the residency hosts, and other local organisations or in order to match the diverse objectives of each stakeholder.

Sustainability incentives, top-ups and requirements

Although green travel is necessary, it can be challenging to find the budget and time for this; what would make it easier for artists to choose greener travel?

One example of this is the [Culture Moves Europe](#) mobility scheme for individuals and residencies (2022–2025), which provided a 350 EUR top up for those taking more environmentally sustainable means of transport, in both the individual mobility and residency streams (which has been increased to 400 EUR in the second edition from 2025 to 2028). Culture Moves Europe reported that in the first edition of the programme more than half of the grantees travelled in a more sustainable way, using an alternative to airplanes. For the distances below 1,000 km more than 87% of the journeys were green.⁹ These top-up schemes are intended to cover the additional costs involved with choosing to adopt more sustainable practices. These additional costs can particularly be seen in the travel to or from the residency space. To give just one example, [a study from Greenpeace European Unit](#) found that in the summer of 2025 to fly from London to Barcelona it would cost 15 EUR, where the same trip by train would cost 389 EUR. (An analysis of 142 routes across 31 European countries found that flights are dominantly cheaper than trains on 54% of the 109 cross-border routes analysed.) According

to the research, cheaper train travel could more frequently be found in cross-border routes in Central and Eastern Europe—especially the Baltics and Poland—while in France, Spain and the UK trains were more expensive than flights on up to 95% of cross-border routes.

While top-ups are welcome, they also need to be matched with the actual costs of more sustainable travel. Additionally, even though covering the cost of the tickets themselves is important, the cost of time (travel that requires several days and hotel stops) needs to also be taken into consideration, especially in areas that have slower, less frequent and poorly connected transport options.¹⁰ A gap in these top-up costs can also be seen in travel to Europe from beyond Continental Europe. This includes for overseas countries and territories or outermost regions (which for the current Culture Moves Europe scheme has a top-up 175 EUR as well as a higher travel budget of 800 EUR since the distance is over 5,000 km) or for artists who are travelling from other parts of the world. This is particularly relevant for those in the majority of the world, who do not always have access to robust funding schemes in their countries. In these cases, more sustainable choices do not involve questions of transport (aside from trying to take the most direct flight), but rather it must be part of a more holistic approach. Not including

⁹ See [Culture Moves Europe awarded 7274 grants in its first edition](#) for more details.

¹⁰ See for example the interactive map of Europe [‘Where can you travel by train in Europe?’](#), which displays possible travel distances that can be reached in an eight-hour radius.

artists from other parts of the world simply based on questions of flights vs more sustainable green travel runs the risk of making regions increasingly insular as the international inputs shrink to a smaller

and smaller radius. In [the words of Mexican artist Gabino Rodríguez](#), ‘solving an ecological problem without considering social inequality is just another way to reinforce the colonial structure’.

Residency example: Over two editions, the [Climate Action Artist Residencies](#) invited artists from all artistic fields to complete three-month long residencies with an environmental research organisation. Artists from Germany and from the three V20 countries in the Asia/Pacific region—Fiji, Philippines, and Samoa—were selected. Artists from the V20 countries completed their residency with an environmental research organisation in Germany, artists from Germany completed their residencies with an environmental research organisation in the selected V20 countries. Each artist worked with their host institution to highlight aspects of the climate crisis that affect their host country and the V20. The focus of the programme was the artistic exploration of the globally intertwined and scientifically proven vulnerabilities triggered by the climate crisis in the V20 countries and in Germany.

Eligibility: Artists based in Germany, Fiji, Philippines, and Samoa.

Artform: Any art form

Dates: There were two open calls with deadlines on 31 January and 30 June 2024.

Countries involved: Germany, Fiji, Philippines, and Samoa

Support provided: A stipend of up to 2,500 EUR per month, up to 4,000 EUR for round trip travel costs between each participant’s country of residence and host country, costs to obtain a visa, with up to 10,000 EUR for material and production costs incurred to create their artistic work. Upon request, spouses and/or children could accompany the participant and could be supported with an additional stipend of up to 776 EUR per month.

Another approach related to conditions is when a funder or residency space makes sustainable practices part of the requirements in order to be accepted into the programme. For example, some residencies require artists to use sustainably sourced material in their creative practice. A few examples from On the Move’s database include:

- [Learning Materials Artists in Residence](#) in Finland, which investigates obstacles and solutions related to the use of sustainable materials,
- [Center Rog Designer in Residency Programmes](#) in Slovenia which explores how designers adapt traditional concepts, materials, and values to create relevant contemporary solutions that respect natural ecosystems and promote regenerative practices,

- [Maajaam’s ‘Wild Bits’ Residency](#) in Estonia, which encourages artists to consider energy-sustainable solutions, such as solar panels, or
- [FarmLab Residency](#) in textile, natural dyes and biomaterials in Austria.

Other residencies insist upon green travel, either as part of the residency or a condition of being accepted. Where some conditions might imply a reduced cost (for example, using recycled or shared materials might be more cost-effective but might require more assistance from the residency hosts) others can involve significantly higher costs (such as green travel). The residencies where travel is incorporated into the residency process provide some interesting examples of different mobility models, in which the residency does not outsource the travel solely as the artists’ responsibility, but rather creates a

programme where developing the travel plan is part of the process. Some examples of this include the [CYCLE UP! residency](#) (which took mobility by bicycle as the starting point, both for the time in the residency cities as well as travel to or from the residency) and [Tiny Spaces](#) (which facilitated connections between art spaces and the artists on the journey to and from the residency, making the most of the necessary overnight stops that long and slow journey require).

Artist Irene Melix explained in the CYCLE UP! report [Sustaining Creativity: The Honest Guide to Sustainable Residencies](#) that the cycling from the residency to her home country became an extension of the artistic and personal experience: 'I felt much more connected to these places after physically bridging the distance between Katowice and Dresden. They are connected through landscapes and histories, and even their mining histories share similarities. As I cycled, I became aware of these connections in ways that other kinds of transport would not have been able to provide.' Cycling became a method, giving her a chance to more deeply understand the in-betweens and have a better understanding of the distance, as well as giving her

time to reflect upon her residency experience and the things she learnt. 'It was a slower version of the typical life of the artist as a traveller moving from here to there, often without enough time to really listen and understand. It's about slowing down, paying attention to where I actually am, all the smells there, and what it takes to get there.' Melix calls for more residence programmes to support slow travel methods, potentially through 'flexible travel policies, extended journey times, or practical support for alternative transport methods that enhance rather than merely facilitate the artistic experience.' Designing a residency that involves travel as part of the engagement and creative process not only makes the most of longer journeys, but it can also change the way artists, arts managers and even local publics encounter place and environments.

This is an overview of some of the key ways of working that were identified in On the Move's database. By taking these as a starting point, and investigating the projects in more detail, it is hoped artists and residencies alike can gain further ideas, as well as potential models, to adapt to their own creative practice.

Greening Artistic Residencies: Good Practice and Considerations

By Bojana Panevska

In an era defined by permacrisis—climate emergency, social inequality, and geopolitical instability, to just name a few—artistic residencies occupy a dual position; they can serve as a refuge from the escalating crises on the one end, and on the other, as critical places where artists and cultural professionals can actively and critically engage with the realities of our world. The following text is focused on these kinds of residencies, residencies that function as laboratories for new ecological paradigms, transformative and regenerative artistic practices that are fostering

interdisciplinary dialogue and cultivating models of human and non-human coexistence.

Since the focus of this funding guide is on residencies in Creative Europe Programme countries, the examples shown here are just a selection of many inspiring initiatives and residencies. Many of them overlap in their ways of working, the thematic focus in their open calls, and of course by the funding they receive (mainly supported by the European Commission via its diversity of funding programmes).

Thematic response to the climate crisis

Among emerging thematic trends, water has become a central motif across numerous European residency programmes.

COAL awards the COAL Art and Environment Prize and the COAL Student Prize – Culture and Diversity every year and the [2025 edition of the COAL Prize](#) was dedicated to fresh water. It was a call to fight against the drying up of our sensitivities towards water, to elevate it to its place at the heart of general attention, to rehabilitate it in its symbolic and sacred prerogatives, to consider it as the ally, and partner of our existences.

There are four different awards as part of the prize, of which two incorporate residencies (one in association with the François Sommer Foundation, which implements a humanist ecology approach and the other in association with the Bondy regional forest).

[The COAL association](#) has been working on environmental topics since its creation in 2008 by professionals of contemporary art, ecology and research. The associations' goal is to mobilise artists and cultural actors on societal and environmental issues, while implementing concrete solutions. Among others, COAL is supported by the

European Union through the European cooperation programme ACT – Art Climate Transition. COAL is also informed by and involved in global processes addressing sustainable development. For example, in 2015 COAL implemented the Cultural Agenda of COP21, while in 2022—following the One Ocean Summit and the United Nations proclamation of 2021-2030 as the Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development—COAL, together with its partners, started to mobilise all artistic disciplines to weave a thread dedicated to the seas and oceans.

Another thematic example on water, is the 2024 call from the Artists Development Programme (ADP) on the theme of '[The Future of Water](#)'. This call was a collaboration between the European Investment Bank (EIB) in partnership with Cité internationale des arts (Paris) and neimënster (Neumünster Abbey Heritage Site for Culture, Luxembourg). The theme challenges artists to reflect upon the myriad ways in which water affects our societies. This includes both challenges—including pollution, scarcity and conservation—as well as water's application in future innovations and technologies.

Another relevant example is the STARTS4waterII consortium, which announced in [2024 the call for artists](#) for the second edition of the S+T+ARTS Residency Programme dedicated to water sustainability and innovation at the nexus of science, technology, and the arts. The programme specifically focused on the environmental challenges of ports, port cities, coastal areas, and waterways. The residencies are one part of the Science, Technology and Arts (S+T+ARTS) project, funded by Horizon Europe and coordinated by [Ars Electronica](#).

This open call offered 20 residency opportunities in eight countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Austria, Ireland, Slovenia, and Croatia). Each residency host institution defined its concrete challenge in close collaboration with its respective members and the STARTS4waterII consortium. The

selected artist had to directly respond in their work on the challenges described for their host location.

A distinct residency model (which is also funded by Horizon Europe and which investigates water) is the Sailing Lab for the PartArt4OW project. In a similar way to COAL, the project was developed in the context of the 'Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030' and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. It unites art, science, and civic engagement to tackle pressing ocean and water challenges across Europe. They had two open calls, in [2024](#) and [2025](#), and the residency is happening on a sailing boat that fosters connections between artists, scientists, civic society actors, and local communities. The lab cruises the western Mediterranean sea, visually documents ongoing activities, and connects coastal communities to document people's attachment to the sea and their engagement with ocean and water health, through artistic and creative elaborations.

The PartArt4OW project expects projects to be fully sustainable, including the use of sustainable materials, circular solutions and renewable energy. Proposals, if selected, must commit to a [Climate Pact](#) Pledge and should work towards full decarbonisation or at least carbon neutrality of the project and of all the proposed activities. There are more guides and pledge templates at the [European Climate Pact website](#) (launched by the European Commission as part of the European Green Deal).

Although the research question of water is important for ecological reasons, its choice is not a coincidence, rather it relates directly to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the funding available as a result of, for example, the [UN Decade of the Ocean](#).

Diversity of European Union funding

It is clear that the above examples (with the exception of the Artists Development Programme from EIB) are relying on European Union funding support. Quite a few consortiums came into existence thanks to the funding made available via the Horizon Europe Programme. This funding enabled a lot of experimentation and cross-disciplinary work (more about this in the next section) and opened up a variety of opportunities for artists and scientists. The challenge still remains in how to incorporate and acknowledge artistic research into Horizon Europe (2028–2034). The Artistic Research Alliance addressed this gap very well in [their statement](#), in which they argued that the ‘field of artistic research is optimally positioned to address today’s societal challenges, finding innovative solutions and increasing preparedness for green, digital, and fair transitions’ and therefore needs to be acknowledged and supported under various funding Pillars.

Additionally, with regards to confronting the political and ethical dimensions of knowledge production, inequality of access and resource distribution, it is important to mention that although countries in, for example, the Western Balkans are participating in the Creative Europe programme, they are not as represented in the consortiums as the rest of EU countries. In spite of this, there are some interesting projects supported by Creative Europe that bridge geographic divides.

- [Lakescape \(2025\)](#) is a one-year Creative Europe project, collaboratively implemented by partners from Sweden, Hungary and North Macedonia, representing three of Europe’s Great Lakes: Vänern, Balaton and Ohrid. It explores creativity based approaches to contribute to the regeneration of lakeshore ecosystems and communities, highlighting the role of art and culture in promoting sustainable and healthy lake ecosystems and communities across Europe.
- [PROSPER](#) is an international project co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union and led by five partner organisations (LOOP in Greece, Eho animato in Serbia, Oyouin in Germany, Peripetija, and LDA Struga in North Macedonia), which explores the theme of environmentally challenged regions of the Balkans by inviting artists, designers, researchers, cultural workers and thinkers of all disciplines to participate in a residency.

An example of how European Union funding can be used in a more variable way can be seen in two projects of the [EUNIC Cluster Fund](#). The EUNIC Cluster Fund is quite unique in that it is designed as the primary instrument to financially support EUNIC clusters worldwide in delivering cultural relations activities and close collaboration with key local cultural partner organisations and collaboration with the EU Delegation or European Commission Representation is encouraged.

One of the projects selected was [FLOWING STREAMS](#) from Romania, which aims to foster meaningful collaborations between artists, architects, anthropologists, hydrologists or community organisers and the local partnering organisations from Romania. The programme intends to create space for co-learning, mutual listening and exchange of knowledge and practices, centred around the theme of water.

The other project is [Zoöp Connections](#) from the Netherlands, designed to spark regenerative relationships and integrate more-than-human voices into our awareness with the larger goal of taking climate action. Zoöp Connections creates opportunities for European practitioners—artists, ecologists, architects, anthropologists, designers, and community organisers—to engage with five pioneering cultural organisations in the Netherlands.

Both these calls respond to EUNIC's ongoing commitment to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the optional focus of sustainability in all its different forms directly

through cultural activities, be it through addressing the UN's SDG framework, climate and environmental action, or projects with a sustainable impact on the local scene.

Exchanging knowledge between sectors and finding new ways of working

Many residencies are moving beyond the traditional conversations and just giving 'time and space' and instead are encouraging co-creation and fostering collaborations between art and science and/or art and education.

For example, [EMBracing the Ocean programme](#) (edition 2023-2024) was a co-creation of work between artists and their scientific collaborators. In this model, the artists and scientists are considered equal and each benefits and learns from the process. The goal of co-created art-science projects goes beyond making complex scientific topics more accessible to the public, rather it strives for the scientists to gain new insights into their work by collaborating with artists, and vice versa.

Following the same principle, the key question for the two artists-in-residence as part of the [Pathways to Sustainability in Utrecht University](#) was: What would a climate model look like if it was developed by artists? This was an eight-month art residency initiated by the Urban Futures Studio and supported by the Jan van Eyck Academie.

In the [Hydromedia: Seeing with Water](#) project, which ran from January 2023 to December 2024 and was funded by the Creative Europe programme, artists collaborated with environmentalists and scientists to develop new methods and tools. A total of 12 selected fellows participated in individual residencies at research sites in Antwerp (Belgium), Utrecht (the Netherlands) and Karlsruhe (Germany).

The first open call of the STARTS consortium was [European Regions \(GRIN\)](#)—a STARTS regional

centres preparatory action that aimed to develop effective solutions for the digital and ecological transition in Europe, with a focus on Upper Austria, Emilia-Romagna, Aveiro, Porto District, and North Ostrobothnia. Through 12 artistic residencies, the project aimed to increase the creation of multi-disciplinary teams of scientists, technology providers, engineers, designers, and artists, and foster the development of 12 new artworks and/or solutions in line with a human-centred approach to innovation.

As part of the [Sustainability by Design](#) transfer project, Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany offered two artists and/or designers-in-residence scholarships from 1 May to 31 October 2024 on the topics of bio-based materials and technology and sustainability. For the Biobased Materials residency, they were looking for an artist or designer to develop a new project that worked with biobased materials or sustainable production methods that used biological resources. For the Technology and Sustainability residency, they were looking for a person whose work addressed the tension between technology and sustainability.

In this context it is important to mention the [Nature Research](#) department of the Jan van Eyck Academie, whose aim is to nurture mutually beneficial relations between the arts, design, and the ecosystem, and to encourage the development of ecologically conscious artistic practices. The department supports the Jan van Eyck Academie participants in their investigation of interwoven links between their artistic practices and the natural environment. For this purpose, the department organises workshops, fieldtrips, and lectures, and offers advice to explore the ecological

significance of artistic practices. Through the [Future Materials Bank](#), [Future Materials Lab](#), and the [Future Materials Encounters](#), it promotes research, knowledge exchange, and experimentation on sustainable materials for the arts and design.

All the above examples of cross-disciplinary collaboration, namely science and education, demonstrate the potential for creating new imaginaries that challenge dominant narratives and offer new models, designed by artists and scientists for transformation and decolonisation of nature and knowledge. Many of these residencies are financially supported by the educational institutions involved, with some cases involving additional European Union funding.

The fact that many educational institutions (as seen in the above examples) are funding these residencies on a yearly basis, shows that even though these residencies may be experimental, they have the potential to translate into long-term, actionable solutions.

The [Future Materials Bank](#) is an archive of materials that supports and promotes the transition towards ecologically conscious art and design practices. By collecting information and samples from makers around the world, the archive aims to inspire research and disseminate knowledge about sustainable materials. The collection of the Bank is continuously growing, offering insights into how the concept of sustainability evolves in the fields of art and design and contributions are welcome. Future Materials was initiated in 2020 by the Nature Research Lab at the Jan van Eyck Academie and developed in collaboration with MA Material Futures at UAL Central Saint Martins, the Green Art Lab Alliance, Brightlands Chemelot Campus, and Chemelot Innovation and Learning Labs.

Finding ways to connect with rural spaces

Predominantly rural regions account for almost half of the European Union's area, yet they represent just over 20% of the total number of inhabitants.¹¹ While rural areas can provide a higher quality of life and a connection to the environment, they can also have fewer services, job opportunities and infrastructure, causing people to move to urban centres to seek out opportunities. Although not exclusive to regional areas, depopulation can be seen in the far north, south and east of the European Union.¹² On the other hand, many cities around the world are becoming gentrified and unaffordable for artists, encouraging

them to turn to regional areas—moving into empty spaces or developing residencies more connected to place and land. And while affordability may be one of the starting points, these residencies also seek to recontextualise the rural space and connect to the land, to actively participate in their surrounding and involve the local human and non-human factors. This interest in rural spaces can also be seen in the open calls related to environment and sustainability themes, published on *On the Move* in 2022; a total of 61.5% of environment and sustainability themed calls with a defined worksite involved a rural workspace.

11 See more at Eurostat, '[Urban-rural Europe - demographic developments in rural regions and areas](#)', 2024.

12 Ibid.

Additionally, 27.7% of open calls also involved working in response to a particular landscape or natural resource.¹³

One initiative that has been working for a long time in rural contexts is [INLAND](#), a project and collaborative agency connecting art, agriculture, and social change. Inland was initiated in Spain in 2009 by artist and agroecologist Fernando García Dory. It began with community projects, exhibitions, and events involving 22 villages across the country. Today, INLAND functions as a collective focused on land and community-based projects. Its activities include the establishment of a radio station, exhibitions, cheese-making, beekeeping, study groups, and a training school for herding sheep.

For the [2026 INLAND exchange programme](#)—part of the Pastoral Twilight project, developed in collaboration with ARE: Woods (Czech Republic) and BAU (Italy) and supported by the Creative Europe programme—artists, cultural producers and researchers explored how society can 1) have a regenerative relationship to the planet, 2) engage in human–animal activity on the land, and 3) activate experimental pedagogical methods involving people, plants, animals, and fungi.

The selected participant joins one of the existing lines of work of INLAND, which include pedagogical programmes around pastoralism, landscape analysis and dynamics through their sensory components (such as sound and edible elaborations), design and architectural experimentation, building for rural activations, and restoration of forests of mixed uses, among others.

In Slovenia, [Krušče Creative Center](#) offers an AiR programme for artists from a variety of fields—from architecture and music to cultural heritage, film, news media, performing arts, and visual arts, to name just a few. The estate, comprising six buildings in a remote natural setting near Cerknica, provides artists with the peace, space and time to focus on the creative process. Krušče Creative Center operates according to a holistic approach to sustainability—

from the renovation of estate buildings to everyday practices that include frugal use of resources, recycling and reuse, and the promotion of living in harmony with nature.

Another example is [ALTER](#), a two- to three-month residency in Chandolin, Switzerland, a village at an altitude of 2,000 meters in the Val d'Anniviers. The residency invites one transdisciplinary team of artists and researchers a year to rethink and respond to growing environmental crises and their associated social, economic, and cultural shifts. The people living in the village are experiencing these shifts directly and therefore active, inclusive and sustained engagement with them is essential to the residency. Depending on the focus of the project, the ALTER curators help to connect the participants to the right partners—dairy farmer, botanist, local historian, woodworker or similar. Each team spends nine to twelve weeks exploring the valley, learning from local villagers, developing work that will be publicly shared on a weekly basis, and presenting a final project.

The Maltings (Berwick) Trust, Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) and Institute for Creative Arts Practice have an [ongoing programme of commissions and artist residencies](#) that supports the exchange and sharing of knowledge between artists and researchers to inform critical responses to contemporary rural issues. The residency encourages an artist to research and explore themes around place and wellbeing, including the relationship between farmers and animals and its impact on wellbeing, the impact of cultural values, and the impact of seasonal work on rural people.

Another example that centres the farming experiences is from [Valley of the possible](#), Netherlands, which had two open calls in 2025. One was [RECONNECT - Research Residency at Gagel Farm](#), where they welcomed artists (of all disciplines) and other cultural practitioners to apply for a residency stay of a minimum of four weeks. Their second open call was [FARM](#), a unique call which was geared towards farmers. The residency welcomes two farmers for a

13 See On the Move, [Cultural Mobility Yearbook](#), March 2023: 32.

residency stay of a minimum of eight weeks between mid-September and mid-November 2025 at Gagel Farm. This residency includes (among others things) space, time, guidance and infrastructure to become a regenerative farmer, accommodation, a stipend, and connection to the European network of regenerative farmers and agricultural organisations. The selected farmers also have the opportunity to collaborate with cooks, artists and scientists.

A distinct example of a residency in a farm context is [FarmLab](#) in Austria, a rural creative hub for learning, innovation, and exchange which connects sustainability, nature conservation, traditional crafts, and digital tools. A couple of residences in 2025 were supported by the Culture Moves Europe programme, while from 2022 to 2023, FarmLab was

one of 18 labs selected to participate in SheMakes.eu, a Horizon 2020 project dedicated to empowering future female innovators in the sustainable fashion industry through inspiration, skills, and networks.

All these residencies located in rural or peripheral areas provide unique opportunities to investigate sustainable land use, regenerative agricultural practices and local ecological knowledge. Many residencies in this chapter include sustainability as part of their work, whether that is in using materials, circular design, or sustainable practices regarding housing, water usage, waste generation and similar. Some of them are supported by local and regional funding that directly encourages the revival of rural areas, while others have European Union funding.

What about climate justice?

Lastly, when discussing green residencies, decolonising knowledge and sustainability it is vital to mention the most affected area—the Global South. With restrictions of funding and visas, it has not been easy for residency organisers to welcome overseas artists. One good example that demonstrates that this is possible in face of such challenges is the call from [PRAKSIS](#), a residency in Oslo, Norway organised in collaboration with the Asia Pacific Artistic Research Network (APARN) with the title [R30 – Climate / Coloniality](#) (2025).

Applications were welcomed from local, national and international practitioners with relevant interest and experience although it was especially targeted to cultural practitioners, performers, critics and researchers seeking to explore questions of artistic practice and environmental change in relation to local knowledge systems and movements. The residency was intended to be a place of open exchange and sharing, in order to facilitate critical reflection on the geopolitics of environmental knowledge and the distribution of artistic resources addressing global issues.

Other ongoing residencies have also developed policies to try and include more participants from the Global South. An example of this is [Saari residence](#), Finland (supported by the Kone Foundation), which has been on the forefront for supporting ecological travel and offering extra grants specifically for this purpose. Saari Residence strives for sustainability, eco-friendliness and accessibility in all its activities. Yet this is implemented in a holistic approach and they recognise that sustainable travel looks different for different participants, especially for those travelling from the Global South. As part of [their social sustainability, diversity and accessibility policies](#), artists can apply for ecological travel support, slow travel support or support for travel from Global South.

🔍 Guidance for supporting green residencies

For funders:

1 Create long-term and flexible funding. Most of the examples in this text rely on short-term EU-funding frameworks. Longer funding models should be developed that allow flexibility. Offering extra grants during the funding period would be of extreme importance to achieve that flexibility.

2 Develop special funding with focus on cross-disciplinary experimentation and co-production of knowledge. Support both residencies and institutions that are willing to work in this way. In that way universities, research institutions, and others will embed residencies within their research frameworks, fostering shared learning and unexpected outcomes.

3 Create special funding for residencies that work with and re-develop rural areas, focusing on local communities and ecosystems, integrating traditional ecological knowledge, craft practices, and

regenerative land practices. Provide resources for creating a cultural infrastructure in rural areas and for developing long-term community impact.

4 Increase support for underrepresented countries, like Western Balkans in Europe, and include extra support for visas and for sustainable travel for artists coming from the Global South.

5 Create special funding to support training and exchange for residency organisers to learn about sustainable management and sustainable use of resources.

6 Encourage, require and support institutions to adopt a holistic approach by integrating (as much as possible) renewable energy, circular approaches to usage of material, waste management and more in their daily practices.

For residency organisers:

1 Choose your partners and artist with utmost care; see where you align and how you can ethically work together, actively involving non-human factors.

2 Choose a theme that is close to your locality and region. Actively engage the local communities, whether they are farmers, educators, or artists. Make sure the residency's activities are rooted in the local environment and are mutually beneficial.

3 Build partnerships beyond the arts sector, including universities, scientific institutions, municipalities and more. These cross-sector collaborations can open access to new knowledge and funding opportunities.

4 Diversify funding streams. Combine European Union grants (Creative Europe, Horizon, Erasmus+, or others) with local partnerships, private foundation funding, and crowdfunding.

5 Use consortium models to pool resources with other residencies or cultural institutions.

6 Try to integrate holistic sustainable practices in housing, usage of energy, food, transport, and material use. Encourage the same for the artists that you are hosting.

7 Strengthen your advocacy by documenting and publishing methodologies, artistic findings, and outcomes. It is important to show how artistic experimentation and/or cross-sectoral collaboration can generate new ecological insights.

8 Offer extra stipends for slow travel, visa support, childcare, and when possible, offer accessible facilities.

9 Create exchange mechanisms with residencies in the Global South to share practices and knowledge. These exchanges can be hybrid or online.

Greening Island Residencies

By Toni Attard

Europe's islands are microcosms of sustainability – small, interdependent systems where the relationship between people, resources, and the environment is visible and immediate. Defined by geographical limits, islands are compelled to manage and optimise resources while safeguarding ecological balance. They are rich in heritage and biodiversity yet remain vulnerable to climate, economic, and demographic pressures.

Europe's islands represent more than 20 million inhabitants – around 4% of the EU population (European Parliament, 2021). These territories vary widely: from small island states like Malta and Cyprus, to semi-autonomous regions such as Sicily and Corsica, and outermost regions like the Azores, the Canary Islands or Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin. Their diversity reflects the complexity of Europe's peripheries: from densely populated, well-connected islands to remote outposts dependent on seasonal travel routes. Despite their diversity, several European islands face shared structural challenges, including dependence on imported goods, the pressures of tourism, uneven transport and digital connectivity and outmigration of young residents. Environmentally, islands sit on the frontlines of the climate crisis, facing rising seas, coastal erosion, and water scarcity. Mobility, to and from, islands remain a structural barrier. Most islands rely on air and sea transport that is carbon-intensive and often oriented towards tourism rather than local needs. 'Mobility Poverty' is furthermore a concept that often characterises these islands¹⁴.

Island residencies across the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Baltic, North Atlantic but also the Caribbean are increasingly responding to these challenges and acting as agents of transformation, linking ecological goals with social and cultural renewal. Residencies are reimagining mobility as connections that foster practices rooted in local ecology, heritage, and community participation.

To 'green' an island residency is to redesign how artists move, stay, and relate within their surroundings, guided by collective responsibility, social justice, and shared ecological ethics.

Europe's island residencies embody both constraint and possibility. Their scale fosters innovation, their close-knit communities enable collaboration, and their exposure to environmental change adds a vital sense of urgency. Far from being peripheral, island residencies act as pioneering models of stewardship, where sustainability, culture, and creativity converge to inspire different ways of imagining mobility and cooperation across Europe.

14 Mobility poverty is typically connected to six core aspects: low transport availability, low accessibility to transport, low transport affordability, too much time spent travelling (i.e. time poverty), inadequate transport conditions, and high exposure to transport externalities. See [Transport and tourism in outermost regions: assessing mobility poverty and the effects of new climate policies](#).

The attractiveness of island residencies for artists

Islands hold a special allure for artists. They promise both geographical and psychological distance from the pressures of urban cultural centres, offering space for focus, experimentation and renewal. Residencies

located on islands often combine elements that appeal strongly to creative professionals including natural beauty, concentrated time, strong local identity, and a tangible sense of community.

Isolation as creative freedom

The remoteness of islands is frequently cited by artists as a catalyst for creativity. Distance from established art markets and institutional hierarchies can liberate artistic processes from expectations of productivity or visibility. In projects such as [Communities Between Islands](#) (2025)¹⁵ by Cherimus, Providenza, and Archipelago Network, funded under the Creative Europe programme, artists described the experience of ‘slowing down’ and ‘listening to place’ as transformative. The slower rhythm of island life encourages research-based, sensory and site-responsive practices, aligning with the broader cultural shift toward slowness and sustainable methodologies. [Áras Éanna](#), Europe’s most westerly arts centre located on the smallest of the Aran Islands, Inis Oírr, with a population of under 300 people, offers up to 40 residencies. The residencies provide artists with the time and space

to develop their practice and show new work in the unique environment of the island—‘a place of inspiration with its patchwork of fields and stone walls, dramatic Atlantic skies and a community steeped in culture and the Irish language’.

Similarly, the [Maison Édouard Glissant](#) in Le Diamant, Martinique, extends this philosophy to the Caribbean context. Opened in 2024, the residency welcomes visual artists, art curators and critics, writers, poets and musicians from around the world. Residents are encouraged to dedicate their time to research, writing, artistic creation, or meaningful exchanges with the local community without any production obligation. Facing the iconic Diamond Rock, Glissant’s former home, now recognised by the French Ministry of Culture as a *Maison des Illustres*, continues to serve as a place of inspiration.

Richness of place and cultural identity

Islands possess layered identities shaped by migration, myth, and coexistence with natural limits. This offers artists fertile ground for exploring themes of belonging, ecology and resilience. Islands residencies often combine access to tangible heritage with intangible heritage such as oral traditions, ritual, and soundscapes. The Gozo-based residency by [Valletta Contemporary](#) invites international artists to engage with the island’s rural landscapes, limestone quarries and seafaring folklore, linking tangible heritage to environmental fragility. Past residents have incorporated sound recordings and oral histories from local communities

into installations about resource use and resilience. Residency programmes can also build on this richness to foster cross-generational collaboration and community storytelling, positioning art as a medium for reinterpreting heritage in contemporary, environmentally conscious ways. The Cherimus / Providenza / Archipelago Network residency connected Sardinia, Corsica and Syros through a series of community-based workshops. Artists such as Elke Marhöfer and Amalia Vargas worked with local farmers and fishers, drawing on oral traditions, ritual and soundscapes to explore the relationship between land, memory and ecology.

15 For a practical guide for art collaborations between independent art initiatives based in European islands, see [Working Between Islands](#).

Embedded communities and interdisciplinary exchange

Because island societies are close-knit, residencies frequently evolve into immersive social experiences rather than detached studio retreats. For many artists, this embeddedness offers a rare opportunity to work *with* rather than *on* a community, turning artistic research into co-creation. Artists participate in local life, collaborating with artisans, schools and scientists. Projects like [A Sea Change](#) in Split or [ART4SEA](#) in Ustica in Italy, Alonissos in Greece,

and Gozo in Malta demonstrate how small-scale environments enable meaningful exchanges between art, science and community with ecology as the main narrative. For example, ART4SEA hosted a distributed residence programme, where artists drew inspiration from natural environments, the ancient maritime traditions and the interaction with the local communities to create both digital and physical artworks.

Inspiration through environmental urgency

Islands are at the forefront of climate change. The visible fragility of ecosystems – coastal erosion, water scarcity, biodiversity loss – gives artists immediate, tangible engagement with the global ecological crisis. Residencies on islands allow artists to connect environmental awareness with lived

experience, translating complex issues into human-scale narratives. As [EMBracing the Ocean](#) artist Maya de Vries observed, ‘Working at sea made me realise how tangible the consequences of warming waters are; they surround you every moment.’¹⁶ The risks of exoticising the island allure

The risks of exoticising the island allure

While islands exert a genuine creative appeal, this very allure can easily slide into exoticisation, whereby residency can become a tendency to romanticise remoteness, simplicity, or ‘authentic’ community life as an antidote to urban modernity. This narrative, inherited from colonial travel writing and 20th century

tourism, still shapes how some residencies are marketed and perceived. Islands are often imagined as untouched sanctuaries for self-discovery, yet this framing can reproduce the same extractive logic that cultural and environmental sustainability seek to resist.

Islands as aesthetic backdrops

Residencies sometimes position islands as scenic ‘laboratories’ or ‘paradises’ rather than living territories. When artists arrive briefly to ‘capture’ island life without long-term engagement, they risk reinforcing a gaze that treats place and

people as picturesque subjects. This approach, even unintentionally, can objectify local cultures and obscure complex realities such as economic precarity, migration, or climate anxiety.

16 European Marine Board. (2023). [EMBracing the Ocean Stories](#). Ostend: European Marine Board.

Cultural extraction and community fatigue

The repetition of short residencies and specifically those seeking community participation can lead to engagement fatigue among small communities. Without sustained reciprocity, islanders may feel

that artistic projects consume their stories or labour for symbolic capital elsewhere. This echoes broader critiques of ‘cultural tourism’ in peripheral areas.

Environmental contradiction

Exoticisation often normalises the contradiction of flying long distances to experience ‘nature’ or ‘slowness.’ The fascination with remoteness can thus perpetuate unsustainable mobility patterns that green residencies aim to change.

For island residencies to remain sustainable, in more ways than one, they must resist this narrative

of paradise and instead cultivate mutual learning, reciprocity and care. Artistic residencies should view islands not as secluded escapes, valuable though such reflection may be, but as spaces of interdependence, complexity and co-existence, where the ecological transition is actively experienced rather than merely observed.

Thematic saturation and narrative fatigue

A concern for island residencies is the risk of thematic saturation, in which the urgency of the climate crisis—though undeniably real—becomes the default and sometimes exclusive framework for artistic residencies. While islands are on the visible frontlines of the climate crisis, this visibility can unintentionally confine them to a single story of environmental fragility.

In some cases, this emphasis arises because project partners from non-island contexts, such as mainland cultural organisations or funders, perceive climate and sustainability themes as the most ‘optimal’ or ‘fundable’ angles for island residencies within contemporary European cultural policy. With sustainability increasingly embedded in programmes like Creative Europe, island residencies may feel pressure to exclusively align with environmental discourse, even when local contexts demand a

broader or different focus. To view island residencies solely through the lens of environmental urgency is to flatten their complexity and risk turning them into metaphors of crisis rather than living communities facing pressing issues such as migration, depopulation, the precarity of cultural work and the need to sustain artistic ecosystems beyond tourism seasons.

The Creative Europe project [Island Connect II](#) (2024–2026) illustrates the wider context of Island residency engagement. Bringing together seven island partners from Ireland, Denmark, Croatia, Greece, Spain, and Italy, the network invites artists-in-residence to critically engage with the themes of insularity, islander identities or island socio-political realities in a wider European context, comparing the similarities and difficulties that emerge from diverse island regions of the project.

Greening island residencies: beyond and within the theme of climate action

Greening artistic residencies on islands can take two distinct yet complementary directions. Some residencies embed sustainability as an operational principle, regardless of the theme or discipline of the hosted artists. Others centre ecology as a creative subject, using the residency itself as a site of artistic inquiry on climate action. Both approaches

are vital and valid to achieving a holistic ecological transition in the cultural field. Even when the residency's curatorial focus is not ecological, its management model can still embody sustainable practices. For islands, where resources are finite and transport costly, greening is both an ethical and logistical necessity.

Slow and local mobility adapted to island realities

For many island residencies, complete decarbonisation of mobility remains a structural challenge. Air travel is often the only viable means of access, especially for islands without regular ferry connections or during off-season months when maritime routes are reduced. In principle, travel to and from islands can be more costly and logistically complex than to mainland destinations. Seasonality compounds this, especially outside the tourism period; flights may require multiple connections or operate only a few times a week, forcing artists to plan longer journeys and incorporate higher costs.

In this context, the idea of 'slow mobility' must be understood not as a rigid rule but as a set of adaptive, realistic strategies that balance environmental goals with accessibility and fairness. Instead of enforcing a predefined mode of transportation or eliminating air travel altogether, residencies can encourage a shift in behaviour and structure mobility around efficiency, depth and cooperation.

In small-island contexts, where transport connections are limited and travel costs high, greening mobility is less a matter of perfection than of recalibration. Progress depends on recognising that sustainability must also adapt to geographical reality. By fostering greater understanding among policymakers and funders of the specific challenges faced by islands – from seasonal transport links to dependence on air travel – and by host organisations promoting longer stays, coordinated travel routes, and realistic

low-carbon options wherever feasible, island residencies can model mobility practices that are slower, fairer, and more meaningful. Such approaches acknowledge both environmental limits and the lived realities of islanders.

Practical approaches for island residency mobility

Overland routes to departure ports

When possible, artists can take trains or shared ground transport to main travel hubs before crossing by sea or flying to islands. Removing air travel entirely from island residencies can be very challenging but reducing emissions and encouraging more sustainable travel chains should still be integrated in greening practices. According to the European Environment Agency (2021) [Decarbonising European Transport: Trends and Challenges Report](#), replacing one 800–1,000 km flight segment with train travel reduces per-person emissions by nearly 90%, and when one or two segments are replaced in a longer journey, total trip emissions drop by roughly 30–50% depending on distance and connections. Therefore, even when a final flight is unavoidable, replacing one or two flight segments with overland travel can yield emission reductions. Beyond emissions, it also shifts the residency's ethos toward mindful mobility whereby artists are encouraged to slow down, connect the journey to the work, and align the residency experience with the values it seeks to explore.

Longer residencies and fewer rotations

Extending residencies from one or two-week formats to four to eight-week stays helps offset the carbon impact and financial cost of reaching remote islands while deepening local engagement.

Example: UNIDEE Residency Programme's 'Neither on Land nor at Sea'

The UNIDEE Residency Programme's '[Neither on Land nor at Sea](#)' modules, developed in partnership with Mediterranean institutions such as Cittadellarte - Fondazione Pistoletto, QANAT, and MAHAL, restructured their residency model to favour longer, concentrated modules of up to four weeks instead of brief project visits. Participants were encouraged to remain in residence for the full duration of each module, engaging in collective research and reflection around the Mediterranean as a shared ecological and cultural space. This approach reduced repeated travel between partner sites, offset the environmental cost of long-distance journeys (particularly for participants arriving from different parts of Europe or North Africa), and allowed more sustained collaboration with local communities. Artists cited the slower pace as essential to meaningful engagement, noting that the depth of exchange achieved during a month-long stay could not be replicated in shorter formats.

Shared travel planning and sequential residencies

For islands, where travel is often expensive, seasonal, and carbon-intensive, shared travel planning can transform a logistical challenge into an opportunity for collaboration. Instead of each artist or partner travelling individually to and from the same island multiple times, residency programmes can coordinate sequential or networked residencies, aligning schedules and routes so that participants move in sequence or collectively across partner locations. Sequential residencies can also respond to seasonality and transport constraints. On many islands, flights and ferries are limited during the winter months, making it difficult to schedule multiple short residencies. Instead, by clustering residencies in specific periods and sequencing travel along natural transport corridors organisations can optimise connectivity while lowering overall emissions.

Example: Communities Between Islands (Cherimus, Providenza, Archipelago Network, 2023–2025)

This [Creative Europe project connected Sardinia, Corsica, and Syros](#) - three islands that share cultural and ecological affinities but limited direct connectivity. Rather than flying back and forth between islands and their respective mainland hubs, participating artists embarked on a shared Mediterranean journey, travelling together by ferry and local transport. Each island hosted them for an extended residency period before they continued on to the next site. In this way, mobility became part of the creative methodology: the crossings themselves inspired research, encounters, and artworks that reflected on migration, insularity, and interconnected ecologies.

Green travel budgets and incentives

In line with the European Parliament's 2020 recommendations on "greening" Creative Europe and Erasmus+ programmes, residencies are encouraged to prioritise the least polluting means of transport, such as train, ferry, or shared mobility options, without stigmatising or excluding participants from remote or infrastructurally weaker regions for whom air travel remains the only viable option.

Supporting artists to travel sustainably to and from islands requires financial flexibility. For island residencies, where direct rail or ferry connections are limited, mobility costs can be higher and slower travel options less accessible. In this context, providing dedicated green mobility budgets becomes an act of fairness as much as sustainability.

Residencies can adopt 'green travel budgets' or 'carbon-conscious mobility grants' that recognise the extra time, planning and expense involved in choosing low-impact routes. These budgets can:

- Partially or fully reimburse overland and maritime travel, including additional accommodation costs *en route*, making ferry or train travel, whenever possible, a feasible alternative to short flights.
- Reward longer stays and fewer trips through fixed carbon budgets: the fewer flights an artist takes, the more resources can be redirected to research, local collaboration or community engagement.

Example: A Sea Change (Split, Croatia)

The *A Sea Change* residency, coordinated by [KONTEJNER](#), introduced flexible mobility stipends that covered train and ferry combinations where possible. Artists travelling from Western and Central Europe were reimbursed for the cost difference between air and overland travel, while international participants were encouraged to combine research trips to reduce multiple flights. The policy framed sustainable travel as part of artist welfare, not as an individual sacrifice.

Collaborative infrastructure partnerships

Greening mobility on and to islands cannot rest solely on the shoulders of individual artists or small cultural organisations. Given the structural dependence of islands on air and maritime transport, collaborative partnerships between residency networks, local authorities, and transport providers are essential to

enable systemic change. Rather than expecting each residency to negotiate its own arrangements, with artists left to make their own travel arrangements, collective action can leverage economies of scale and political influence to make sustainable travel both affordable and accessible.

Circular use of materials

On islands, especially small ones, where the importation of materials is costly and waste disposal infrastructures are limited, the principle of circularity becomes both an ecological and a logistical necessity. Residencies can play a vital role in operating systems that reduce waste, lower costs, and strengthen ties between artists and local communities. Circularity

promotes a culture of re-use, repair, and collaboration within the island's creative ecosystem. In practice, circularity within island residencies can take many forms: residencies can prioritise locally sourced and biodegradable materials, share production resources, use discarded resources from local industries and design modular exhibition structures.

Example: Valletta Contemporary Gozo Residency (Malta)

The [Valletta Contemporary Artist Residency](#) on Gozo provides a compelling model for how circular practice can be integrated into an island context. The residency maintains a materials library, where tools, paints, and hardware are catalogued, reused and shared between visiting artists. Rather than shipping materials from the mainland, the programme encourages artists to source or repurpose existing resources from the island, often in collaboration with local craft workshops and artisans, including carpenters, ceramicists, and stoneworkers.

Energy and resource efficiency

Energy and resource efficiency are among the most challenging yet vital dimensions of greening spaces that host artistic residencies, especially on islands, where electricity, water, and waste systems often depend on high-demand infrastructures and imported resources. Many island residencies occupy historic or repurposed buildings, whose preservation requirements make energy retrofitting complex. Such spaces have often taken the lead to successfully integrate renewable energy systems, becoming models of how cultural heritage and ecological innovation can coexist within the same architectural footprint.

When the cost or feasibility of retrofitting heritage sites may become prohibitive, sustainability can also be achieved through strategic site selection, as demonstrated by the [SEA AIR Off-Grid Residency](#) on the island of Silba, Croatia. The choice of a small wooden house located in a Mediterranean forest as a space for the residency embodies sustainability from the outset. Entirely off-grid, the residency is powered by solar energy and rainwater collection.

Food, waste, and water ethics

Food, waste, and water ethics are important for greening island residencies, where scarce resources, import dependence, and limited waste facilities make sustainability essential. By integrating ethical consumption and closed-loop systems – a sustainable design principle in which resources are continuously reused, recycled, or regenerated within the same system – residencies can reduce environmental impact and strengthen community ties. Beyond practical measures such as sourcing local and

seasonal food, adopting low-impact catering, conserving and reusing water through rainwater harvesting or greywater systems, and reducing waste via recycling and composting, this focus can also become a creative and thematic framework. Some island residencies now position sustainability not only as an operational practice but as a source of artistic process by inviting participants to experiment with circular design, material reuse, and the social dimensions of ecological responsibility.

Example: PCAI Tilos Artist Residency (Greece)

The Tilos residency by [Polygreen Culture and Art Initiative](#) aims to explore how the principles of upcycling, zero waste and circular economy can inspire creativity, collaboration and regenerative thinking in architecture, design crafts, materials and urban design. The Tilos Artist Residency is organised in the context of Polygreen's collaboration with the Municipality of Tilos. This innovative environmental project was launched in 2022 on the island aiming to develop solutions that promote circular economy and sustainability making Tilos the first zero-waste island in Greece.

Community reciprocity

Community reciprocity connects environmental and social sustainability by ensuring that artistic residencies give back to their host communities through shared knowledge, skills, and creative exchange. On islands, where resources and relationships are deeply interdependent, residencies

can strengthen local identity and resilience by involving residents in workshops, performances, and collaborative projects. This approach transforms residencies from isolated artistic retreats into shared spaces of learning and cultural engagement.

Example: Storytellers in Residence, West Cork Islands (Ireland)

The [Storytellers in Residence](#) programme across the seven West Cork Islands – Dursey, Bere, Whiddy, Long, Heir, Sherkin, and Oileán Chléire – illustrates how residencies can embody community reciprocity by giving back knowledge and creativity to local communities. Over a ten-month period, storytellers engage islanders through oral storytelling, folklore research, music, and participatory events that celebrate local identity and island rhythms. Supported by Creative Places West Cork Islands, the residency strengthens cultural continuity by connecting island life with wider artistic networks such as the Cape Clear International Storytelling Festival. By merging artistic development with collective experience, the programme ensures that creative practice remains rooted in the living culture, language, and community of the islands.

A differentiated focus on local artists and overseas artists

As there may be fewer professional opportunities available locally, artist residencies on islands may prefer to prioritise local artists and nurturing talent,

only supporting overseas artists on an exceptional basis when their projects are closely connected to the island's context.

Example: La Cité des Arts - SPL Territo'Arts (La Réunion)

[La Cité des Arts - SPL Territo'Arts](#) is the only cultural facility of its kind in La Réunion and the Indian Ocean. Since it opened in 2016, it has been a venue for cultural projects and a collaborative artistic platform for all disciplines, supporting projects from the early creation stages through to the moment they are made public. Priority is given to artists based in La Réunion. Applications from artists living outside of La Réunion may however be accepted on condition that they are involved in an artistic project led by an inhabitant of La Réunion or in an artistic research project focusing on the specific characteristics of La Réunion, such as its geography and its historical, cultural and sociological context.

The power of networks: how to gain the support you need to green your residency

By Jaana Eskola

In this chapter, we examine the role of international networks in making artist residencies more sustainable. What additional benefits can international collaboration bring? How can you make the most of the knowledge within the network, and how can you build strong collaboration across it? The text is based on interviews with Charlotte Hetherington, Director of Artica Svalbard (Norway); Curator and Researcher Ki Nurmenniemi; and Leena Kela, Director of the Saari Residence (Finland), as well as my personal experience working at the intersection of art and ecology, particularly in the context of artist residencies, over the past ten years.

Green residencies as safe havens for ecological thought

Artist residencies are uniquely positioned to explore what sustainability can mean in practice. What sets them apart is the way they combine living, working, research, and community engagement, blurring the conventional lines between work and leisure in ways that few other spaces can. At their best, artist residencies can become places where visions of more sustainable life are not only imagined but embodied and put into practice and where humans and other species can coexist peacefully within the Earth's ecological limits.

Ideally, a residency period can offer artists a chance to experiment with new ways of living and working more sustainably. By adopting a holistic approach to sustainability—which includes transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, reducing overall energy consumption, and switching to plant-based food for all events, while drastically reducing air travel and promoting low-carbon modes of transportation—the residency can serve as a testing ground for what sustainable living looks and feels like. By adopting

these measures, even one by one, the residency can make sustainability an integral part of its daily operations.

Extensive sustainability checklist for cultural institutions: the [Nordic Green Roadmap for Cultural Institutions](#), part of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Sustainable Living programme.

Moreover, the time spent in a residency can have lasting effects well beyond the stay itself; the networks formed and encounters made during the residency often generate ripple effects that influence not only the participating artists but also, ideally, their broader communities. All of the above embodies the essence of what is meant in this chapter by 'green residencies'.

In a time when resources are scarce and funding is uncertain, many residencies face challenges in developing and implementing their environmental programmes, not to mention embedding sustainability across all areas of their operations. When core funding is difficult to secure, sustainability often gets pushed down the priority list. In spite of this, those taking the lead in adopting more sustainable ways of working are likely to see lasting benefits, as funders are placing growing importance on sustainability across all levels of activity. [The Cultural Mobility Yearbook 2025](#) by On the Move shows that environment and sustainability were thematically present in 13.8% of all calls that appeared on the On the Move website in 2024. Residencies made up the largest type of calls (at slightly over half the calls), and a total of 31.6% of the calls in the environment and sustainability category were funded by the EU, with six Culture Moves Europe-funded projects (which provides additional funding for more sustainable travel modes). Those residencies that are leading the way in greening the sector are most likely to gain in the long run, when greener practices eventually become more than 'a box to tick' across the sector in the future.

One way to overcome the challenge of limited resources is through networks: alliances of residencies (or cultural organisations more broadly) that collaborate, share resources and knowledge, and push each other towards greener practices. Building networks with like-minded organisations can be both a strategic and practical response. There is no need to reinvent the wheel; adopting and adapting best practices from others is not only wise, but essential. One practical example of collaboration is how networks can make it easier to encourage slow, low-emission travel as a guiding principle by sharing information about easiest travel routes and best practices and by emphasising the importance of treating travel time as part of the residency experience.

Networking can also provide access to resources that might otherwise be out of reach. For example, several residencies working together might jointly hire an eco-coordinator to guide the development of environmental strategies and get sustainability work started.

The NAARCA network appointed an eco-coordinator to visit participating residencies and support the implementation of more sustainable everyday practices. A key objective of this role was to create [a sustainability toolkit](#) specifically tailored for artist residencies. By acting as a shared resource, the eco-coordinator facilitated collaboration between residencies, enabling the transfer of knowledge and best practices and supporting the adoption of greener approaches across the network.

To help share their knowledge, HIAP – Helsinki International Artist Programme has created an [Ecotravel Guide](#) with practical information on the most efficient travel routes and best practices for slow travel, available for all residencies. The guide has helped new organisations save time and resources while implementing measures to reduce their CO₂ footprint.

The added value of networks

When it comes to artist residencies, discussions about sustainability often focus on measuring carbon footprints, especially those related to international travel. While it is encouraging that discussions around how to reduce the direct environmental impacts of the cultural sector are becoming more mainstream, the most meaningful contributions residencies can make to addressing ecological crises go beyond just reducing emissions. **Their potential lies in fostering an understanding of the global nature of environmental crises and of the fact that we live in an interconnected world.** The perspective of climate justice is essential, and through partnerships international networks can support a deeper understanding of global interdependencies. They also help to concretely illustrate the impacts of climate change, which are already manifesting as acute crises both in the Global South and in Europe.

The climate crisis is among the key factors contributing to migration and forced displacement worldwide. In this regard, the international residency

networks [Artists at Risk](#) and [Ecologists at Risk](#) provide great examples of the power of networks as they offer concrete support by facilitating departure from countries of origin and enabling relocation to new places. This serves as yet another reminder that the strength of residencies does not lie in the volume—in the number of artists they host per year or in any other easily measurable impact—but rather in their capacity to function as testing grounds for new practices that can potentially generate added value for society at large.

International networks reinforce this role by offering structural support. With additional resources, residencies can offer artists extended stays and the possibility to return later to continue their work. Alternatively, the network can enable the artist to move between several partner residencies as part of one continuous project. Focusing on longer, durational projects and longer residency periods is at the heart of greening the residencies.

Would being part of a network benefit my residency?

- **What networks are already out there?**
Make a list of the networks or artist residencies that inspire you. What can you learn from them? What would be a fruitful way to collaborate with them to share experiences and knowledge?
- **Are you already part of an informal network?**
Which organisations are you currently working with that share your values and vision? In what ways do you collaborate? Networks are born from interactions between people, which is why informal networks are so important.
- **What can you bring to a network — and what would you hope to gain from joining one?**
Are your expectations realistic? Do you have enough resources and working time to allocate for developing and maintaining a network? How can you ensure that all network members contribute in ways that make the most of their strengths?
- **Do the network's core purpose and objectives align with your own goals? What additional value could the network bring you?**
Engaging in a multi-year project and keeping collaboration dynamic requires effort and resources. Can joining a network also bring you additional resources, such as funding or shared expertise via staff exchange?

Examples of cross-border networks

Frontiers in Retreat

Frontiers in Retreat was an international five-year collaboration between eight art organisations at the edges of Europe. With funding from the EACEA EU Culture Programme (2013-2018), the project focused on studying processes of change in sensitive ecological contexts within Europe, to reflect on them in relation to each other and to develop new approaches to the urgent challenges posed by them. Participating sites were [HIAP – Helsinki International Artist Programme](#) (Finland), [Mustarinda](#) (Finland), [Scottish Sculpture Workshop – SSW](#), (Scotland), Interdisciplinary Art Group SERDE (Latvia), [Cultural Front – GRAD](#), (Serbia), [Centre d'Art i Natura de Farrera](#), (Spain), [Skaftfell – Center for Visual Art](#), (Iceland) and Jutempus (Lithuania).

Frontiers in Retreat began with an ambitious idea: over the course of five years, each residency site would focus on a specific local community or an ecological issue within its own context. By facilitating the **exchange of experiences between the different residency locations**, the project aimed to deepen understanding of the complex nature of the ecological crises.

A central principle of the Frontiers in Retreat was to **support long-term artistic work in multiple locations**, and to bring artists and researchers into deep dialogue and collaboration over a

five-year period. The project involved seven residency organisations across Europe and 25 international artists, who worked in multiple countries with long-term local partners. The participating artists were given the opportunity to deepen their artistic thinking, incorporate research-based approaches into their practice, and engage in sustained collaboration with scientists and scholars throughout the project.

One of the core values of the project was diversity, understood within a European context. A central element of the Frontiers in Retreat was the **sharing of knowledge among partners and the commitment to mutual learning**. Operating across borders and within an international framework was essential, as environmental, climate, and biodiversity crises are inherently transnational in nature. Issues perceived as local are often found to recur in other countries and contexts, revealing their global nature and helping to frame them within a broader, transnational perspective.

Through this international network, residencies also gained access to new perspectives on how to work and how to engage with civil society. They were also offered **the chance to learn from different practices**, such as different national funding models that might not be accessible in one's own national context.

The Nordic Alliance of Artists' Residencies on Climate Action (NAARCA)

NAARCA was established in 2021 when seven artist residencies focusing on climate issues recognised the importance of developing more sustainable practices and sought to build stronger networks with others working towards similar goals. The founding members of NAARCA network were [Artica Svalbard](#) (Norway—see more about them in the case study below), [Art Hub Copenhagen](#) (Denmark), [Baltic Art Center](#) (Sweden),

[Cove Park](#) (Scotland), [Narsaq International Research Station](#) (Greenland), [Saari Residence](#) (Finland), and [Skaftfell Art Center](#) (Iceland).

From the very beginning, a holistic understanding of sustainability has been at the core of the NAARCA network. The member residencies share a commitment to **embedding the four interconnected**

pillars of sustainability into their work: *ecological, social, psychological, and cultural*. This vision translates into concrete action: lowering carbon emissions in day-to-day operations, measuring and reducing travel footprints, and fostering a mindset of continuous learning. Another key part of strengthening the network is **staff exchange and capacity building**, which make it easier for residencies to share knowledge and develop new skills and practices in their staff members.

The staff exchange programme enables residency staff to build their expertise by learning about other organisations, while partner organisations gain specialised skills to improve their own operations. This is especially useful for residencies that focus on a specific practice, such as Artica Svalbard, where printmaking is an essential part of the residency's activities.

During the first years of action (2021-2024), the work of NAARCA was organised in three subgroups: Art Commissions, Knowledge and Production, and Pedagogy. These groups facilitated and created **eight residency exchanges, two art commissions, seven texts, a podcast series, and two toolkits** ([‘Creative Climate Champions’](#) for young people and

a [Sustainability Toolkit for Artists’ Residencies](#)). From 2025 onwards, NAARCA with its current five member organisations will concentrate on supporting artists via residency exchanges, capacity building for staff via staff exchanges, the translation of toolkits, and sharing knowledge from the essays, podcasts, and toolkits.

While focus on ecological sustainability lies at the core of NAARCA's operations, **the social and cultural dimensions of sustainability have always been equally important**. Thanks to the stable funding NAARCA has received in recent years from Kone Foundation (2022-2025) and [Nordic Culture Fund](#) (2026-2027), participating residency organisations have been able to address also the social dimension of sustainability by supporting longer residency stays and ensuring fair artist fees for participating artists.

Establishing and developing a network and strengthening collaboration takes time. NAARCA's second development phase was made possible by funding from the [Globus FORWARD](#) programme by Nordic Culture Fund. The intention of the Globus FORWARD programme has been to give previously established collaborations the opportunity to further develop and consolidate their work.

How to better develop networks

- **Think about your goals and strengths.** What kinds of activities are you most interested in participating in? There are several ways to participate: sharing knowledge and learning, participating in staff exchanges and capacity-building activities, being part of a community of solidarity, developing resources or an environmental policy, or something else?
- **Bring care into the network.** Plan ahead: how often will you meet (monthly, every other month)? How will tasks be distributed among network members? Can the coordination role be shared evenly within the network, or will one partner take on the coordinator role—and have sufficient resources allocated for it? How do you take care of the well-being of the network members? For smaller organisations, fostering an element of care can be an added value, as it can allow the network to function as an extended work community.
- **Value in-person meetings.** Networks are made of people, not just organisations. Meeting your partners face-to-face is invaluable. Plan during the budgeting phase how you can secure resources to meet in person, at least occasionally. Choose a location that is the most accessible for all partners.
- **Engage with the local community.** As a residency, plan how you will connect with your surrounding community. How will you bring local perspectives and knowledge back into the network?
- **Decide how you will implement the outcomes of your work and measure their impact.** There are several ways to do this—for example, through podcasts, toolkits, series of writings or artist feedback—and it can also strengthen funding applications and advocacy efforts.

Green residencies as spaces for experimentation

Residencies can serve as drivers of change, drawing attention to more sustainable ways of living. Many green residencies are built around the idea of nurturing new social practices related to living, traveling, mobility, and energy.

The emergence of new ways of thinking and the enabling of more sustainable practices do not happen automatically. In many cases, residencies only manage to go halfway—there is still a long journey ahead toward the adoption of truly transformative, sustainable ways of operating and shifts in mindset. At the same time, there are numerous inspiring examples of residencies where **everyday life, artistic work, and ecological sustainability are woven together** in innovative and generative ways. One of the best examples is the [Mustarinda residency](#) in Finland. A pioneer among green residencies since 2010, Mustarinda

has inspired numerous organisations to shift toward more holistic and sustainable practices in response to a changing world.

Several artist residencies produce valuable knowledge on how to minimise the impact of everyday actions, but making sure the information gets shared widely is still a challenge. One of the key strengths of international residency networks lies in their **capacity for collaborative communication, helping to reach wider audiences**. Alumni networks are extensive, including not only artists but also researchers and activists. The reach of these networks extends across multiple levels of society, and for many professionals in the arts and sciences, time spent in a residency has been a formative, sometimes even transformative, turning point in their careers. Their work during residencies deserves greater visibility.

Mustarinda, located beside the Paljakka old-growth forest in the Kainuu region, Finland, serves as a benchmark for how an ecological residency can successfully integrate sustainable living, artistic practice, and ecological research within its daily operations and philosophy. Mustarinda brings together artists, scientists, and thinkers to explore the cultural and environmental dimensions of sustainability through practice-based research, education, and community engagement. The energy and logistics solutions, as well as the garden at the Mustarinda house in Hyrynsalmi, provide the preconditions for work based on renewable energy sources and minimal emissions. Moreover, all exhibitions, events, [projects](#) and the residency programme at Mustarinda actively support these goals.

Larger institutions can redirect resources toward smaller actors, while the flexibility and resilience of smaller centres provide valuable learning opportunities for larger, more institutional partners. Smaller partners operating through more unconventional structures can also serve as catalysts, encouraging larger institutions to embrace more ambitious climate and biodiversity goals.

At their best, residency networks have the potential to build global alliances and strengthen international solidarity and understanding of climate justice. They also amplify underrepresented perspectives, particularly from geographic regions where the ecological crisis is most visible and acutely present in people's everyday lives. In the face of climate and biodiversity breakdown, collaboration is our greatest tool and networks are where hope takes root.

The Frontiers in Retreat and NAARCA projects demonstrate that **asymmetry and heterogeneity among partners can, in fact, be major strengths within a network**. Such differences are not always immediately visible, yet collaboration often reveals the varying capacities, resources, and working cultures that exist among members, turning these differences into valuable assets for the network.

In the NAARCA network, two large residency organisations have taken a leading role in coordinating the network and contributing more resources during the early stages of the collaboration. At the same time, the network greatly benefits from smaller partner organisations located at the edges of Europe, in fragile Arctic environments, which provide first-hand knowledge of the impacts and the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises.

Five key things to consider when joining a network

- **Set realistic expectations** and make sure your collaborators have compatible goals for the partnership.
- **Be mindful of the time and resources** you can contribute; participation requires effort, but the rewards can be substantial.
- **Use networks to amplify impact.** International collaborations enable knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and staff exchanges, strengthening both ecological and artistic practices.
- **Seek partners outside your own region and with different scale organisations.** Collaboration can turn differences into strengths and partnering across sizes and capacities creates resilient systems and allows smaller and larger residencies to learn from each other.
- **Ensure that international networking also supports local engagement.** Building connections with local communities helps sustainability efforts stay socially grounded and brings networking benefits to the local community.

Focus on Artica Svalbard (Longyearbyen, Norway) and NAARCA

For Artica Svalbard, belonging to an international network has provided much-needed peer support, along with opportunities to collaborate with organisations facing similar ecological challenges in places such as Iceland and Greenland. As a small organisation of only three staff members who are based in a geographically remote location, Artica Svalbard has witnessed first-hand the concrete

benefits that network membership has provided over the years. At Artica Svalbard, involvement in NAARCA has directly contributed to **the creation of a [new environmental strategy](#) and to extending the average length of residency stays**. The support from the network, fresh ideas, and sense of belonging to a wider community have all been essential to sustaining and developing Artica's work.

Rethinking travel and time in residencies

Extended residencies make it possible for artists to carry out more in-depth research, develop stronger relationships with host institutions and local communities, and work without the constant pressure to produce tangible results within short timeframes. By prioritising longer duration of the residency period, residencies can become spaces for long-term growth, experimentation, and shared learning, where artistic processes are given the time they need to evolve. One of the main benefits of belonging to a network is the ability to host artists across several locations, thus facilitating even more extensive artistic research.

Sustainability is also built into the residency's application process. Applicants are asked to consider why their project needs to take place in Svalbard, whether the same outcomes could be achieved remotely, and if travel to the Arctic is truly necessary. This reflection often encourages artists to arrive with a more grounded and realistic understanding of the region, moving beyond purely romanticised and exoticised notions of the Arctic.

Capacity and care

Artica Svalbard's experience offers valuable lessons for others looking to establish international networks of green residencies. Defining a shared mission, while **being realistic about the varying capacities of different partners**, is crucial as equal contributions are not always possible, nor necessary. Networks often bring together organisations of very different sizes and with uneven resources. Regular monthly meetings with partners help distribute the workload more evenly, and provide smaller partners

with a sense of support and belonging to the wider professional community. To build a resilient and effective network, it is equally important to **allocate resources for in-person gatherings** that allow partners to meet face-to-face. These encounters not only build trust but also foster creative exchange in ways that are difficult to replicate online. Ultimately, caring for the people who make up the network is just as essential as supporting the artistic outcomes themselves.

Community engagement

Artica Svalbard's distinctive location and geopolitical context have made community engagement a central part of its sustainability work. Locally [anchored initiatives such as the monthly Coffee Club and community workshops](#) have grown into important meeting points where Longyearbyen residents, visiting artists, international professionals, and

members of the scientific community come together. Over time, these gatherings have become valued and much-anticipated occasions for dialogue and exchange in the local context. Developing strong relationships with the local community enables a better understanding of the local impacts of global environmental issues.

The importance of networks

Until 2021, Artica Svalbard had no formal connections to international networks. Joining NAARCA immediately changed this by creating links with peers across seven countries, attracting additional funding opportunities, and raising Artica's international profile. Being named among Artnet's top 35 residencies in the world in 2024 led to a fourfold increase in applications, further underlining the visibility gained through international collaboration.

Artica Svalbard's experience offers valuable lessons for others seeking to establish international networks of green residencies. Defining a shared mission while remaining realistic about different partners' capacities is crucial. It is important to acknowledge that partners contribute in different ways, and this diversity can strengthen the network.

Prioritising care and ensuring resources for in-person meetings strengthens collaboration, while a broad understanding of sustainability—embracing ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions—helps create resilient frameworks. Collecting evidence of impact, whether in the form of podcasts, toolkits, or artist feedback, further strengthens funding applications and advocacy efforts.

The NAARCA network demonstrates that international collaborations can transform residencies working in isolation into resilient, sustainable ecosystems. In doing so, they can generate lasting benefits not only for artists and organisations but also for the communities in which they are rooted.

Part 3: Case Studies

An abstract graphic consisting of two overlapping squares. The squares are filled with a pattern of small, light red dots. The squares are tilted at an angle, with one square positioned slightly behind and to the right of the other, creating a sense of depth.

Greening Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Programmes – A focus on Slovenia

by Nika Mušič (translation in English provided by Culture.si)

This article is a slightly adapted version of an article published on the [Culture.si website](#). It was originally written in September 2025 as part of the public procurement project “Development and upgrade of information portals of the Ministry of Culture in Slovenia for the transition to the eKultura platform” in which the [Motovila Institute](#) is collaborating with [Ljudmila Art and Science Laboratory](#) as a partner. Motovila is a member of On the Move. Its director, Mateja Lazar, is an active member of On the Move’s Green Team, which has implemented [SHIFT eco-certification for networks](#), since 2023.

With an area of 20,273 km² and a population of 2,123,949¹⁷, Slovenia is one of the EU’s smallest countries, sharing borders with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia. Slovenia’s cultural and artistic scene is very dynamic, and it is one of the most successful countries with regard to Creative Europe granted cultural projects. Environmental sustainability in relation to the arts and cultural sector is also a

well-covered subject, as reflected in Motovila’s work. This article aims to reflect on how arts residencies address the subjects of environmental sustainability and climate change in Slovenia, connecting the dots to some of the key subjects addressed throughout this report, such as community-based approaches and cultural heritage, while adding some specificities on sectors such as literature and animation.

Ljubljana’s Model for Sustainable AiR

If you are looking for a green AiR programme in the capital, [Švicarija Art Centre](#) in Ljubljana’s Tivoli, Rožnik and Šiška Hill Landscape Park is an excellent choice. Managed by the [International](#)

[Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana](#), it offers various AiR programmes from the disciplines of literature, cultural heritage and visual arts, with participants selected through open calls, inter-residency

17 Data as of 2024: https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-countries/slovenia_en

exchanges and curator's invitation. Within the project *Sustainability is in the AiR* (supported through the Creative Europe programme), they are developing a model for sustainable management of residency centres to encourage sustainable artistic practices

and strengthen career opportunities for artists-in-residence. The project connects four AiR centres – in Ljubljana, Prague, Madrid and Athens – and strengthens their operational strategies.

Community-Based and Environmentally Aware

[GuestRoomMaribor](#), Maribor's only continuous NGO AiR programme, is celebrating its 14th anniversary this year. Through its international artistic-educational residency platform, the [Pekarna Magdalena Network](#) mainly supports projects that are tied to the local context as well as ones that are socially engaged, community-based, hybrid and experimental – with an emphasis on contemporary visual and interdisciplinary artistic practices.

The programme's sustainability focus is reflected in its sensible use of resources and energy, re-use of materials and choice of green mobility and vegan food, as well as more environmentally friendly paints and cleaning products. In addition, projects chosen for the AiR programme are often dedicated to greening themes, for instance the 2019 project *Can do more! Must do more!* by the Croatian artist Gildo Bavčević or Asja Trost's exhibition *Green Model*, in which she examined "green models" as Trojan horses of neoliberal capitalism.

A Holistic Approach to Sustainability

Are Ljubljana and Maribor too urban to allow you to immerse yourself in your work? Then the [Krušče Creative Center](#) offers an AiR programme for artists from different disciplines: from architecture, music and cultural heritage to news media, performing and visual arts, just to name a few. This estate with six buildings located in a remote natural

setting near the town of Cerknica guarantees quiet, space and time for artists to focus on their creative process. Krušče Creative Center operates in line with a holistic approach to sustainability – from the renovation of buildings to everyday practices that include the careful use of resources, recycling and reuse and encourage a lifestyle in sync with nature.

Reusing and Repurposing Heritage

If you would prefer to create closer to the capital but still be in quieter surroundings, the [Kamnik AiR Programme for Cultural Creators](#) and [Cultural Barutana](#) at the [Mekinje Monastery](#) offer ideal conditions. The Kamnik AiR Programme, run by the [Public Institute for Culture Kamnik](#), is intended for artists from the disciplines of music, performing arts and visual arts. Artists-in-residence are encouraged to use package-free food, grow their own produce in the orchard and garden, monitor their resource use and sort their waste for recycling.

The [Cultural Barutana](#) programme, run by the [Priden Možic Cultural Association](#), hosts artists from the disciplines of new media art, cultural heritage and performing arts. The programme's purpose is to connect and use the infrastructure in the northern part of Kamnik: [Kamnik Culture House](#), [Kotlovnica Youth Centre](#), [Mekinje Monastery](#) and the area of the former gunpowder mill. All these spaces form part of the town's cultural heritage, and reusing and repurposing the existing infrastructure are also in line with the principles of sustainability.

Green Principles in the Literary Field

Alongside green AiR centres that open their doors to artists from different disciplines and programmes that integrate existing infrastructure to enable the creation of numerous forms of art, in Slovenia, we can also find green AiR programmes that focus on only one discipline or are specialised for particular types of creators.

One of the greener AiR programmes for literary artists is the [Goga Literary Residency](#), hosted by [Goga Publishing House](#) in Novo Mesto. It offers authors a supportive and peaceful environment in which to work and research and provides them

with opportunities to connect with the Slovenian literary community and participate in literary events and presentations.

With the aim of reducing environmental impact, Goga takes green principles into account when organising residencies. They include various sustainable practices for their artists-in-residences: from offering green mobility options, responsible use of resources and waste reduction, to encouraging them to buy from local suppliers and artisans and to visit events that support the cultural and economic life of this regional Slovenian city.

Towards Green Animation Practices

Creators from the field of animated film can participate in the international AiR programme of the [Slovene Animated Film Association](#) (DSAF). DSAF offers its members two- to four-week research and preproduction residencies in Angoulême, France, while in Slovenia, residencies for international animators are available in Nova Gorica, Ljubljana and Maribor. The programme gives animated film creators the opportunity to focus on the development and preproduction of their projects and also facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experience.

DSAF's AiR programme promotes sustainable approaches to animated film production that align with the latest endeavours in the field of green animation practices. With educational activities and awareness-raising about sustainable living practices, it also contributes to the responsible treatment of resources and to reducing the carbon footprint. Key measures include reducing energy use, using environmentally friendly materials and means of transport, and sorting and recycling waste.

AiR Programmes as Platforms for Sustainable Innovation

Throughout Slovenia, from urban centres to more remote areas, AiR programmes address environmental sustainability not only through basic measures such as green mobility, careful use of resources, reuse of materials and recycling but also through their programming choices, content and technical approaches. These residencies are not only spaces for artistic creation but also platforms

for developing green practices. New concepts and methods can serve as models for other cultural organisations. Moreover, since several Slovenian AiR hosts are involved in European projects (e.g., under the Creative Europe programme), they are actively contributing to international discussions on our sustainable future.

Finding Green Residencies with Res Artis

Res Artis: Worldwide Network of Arts Residencies is a global association of arts residency operators that has been running for over three decades. The network includes 700+ vetted Members located across 80+ countries. It functions as the professional body for the field, supporting its sustainability and growth through capacity-building, in-person gatherings, and digital platforms. It strengthens and connects residencies, advocates for their relevance in contemporary society, and contributes to research and policy on cultural mobility.

The mission of Res Artis is to contribute to a thriving global arts ecology by leading best practice for the field of artist residencies through:

- promoting fairness / best practice for residency hosts, guest artists, and communities;
- providing leadership and learning that is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- focusing on connection, collaboration and exchange; and
- encouraging environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability.

Res Artis acknowledges that arts residencies are expanding and shifting in response to rapid global change. For this reason, the definition of an arts residency should remain adaptable and responsive to emerging contexts. Despite this flexibility, Res Artis identifies several core principles as essential to the definition and effectiveness of any residency model or scale.

According to Res Artis, arts residencies are:

- Organised and offer sufficient time, space and resources
- Enablers of the creative process
- Reflective of their lexical meaning as ‘an act of dwelling in a place’
- Based on clear mutual responsibility, experimentation, exchange and dialogue
- Engaged with context by connecting the local to the global
- Crucial to the arts ecosystem
- Bridging mechanisms between different arts disciplines and non-arts sectors
- Tools for inter-cultural understanding and capacity building
- Essential professional and personal development opportunities
- Catalysts for global mobility
- Encounters with the unknown
- Profile-raising with immediate and ongoing artistic, social and economic impact
- Important contributors to cultural policy and cultural diplomacy

Residencies listed in the Res Artis database align with this definition, though their structures and funding models differ widely. Levels of support for artists also vary, from fully funded opportunities to calls that require artist fees.

In terms of sustainability, Res Artis participates in the [SHIFT Culture eco-guidelines for cultural networks](#) (which are developed in the areas of management and policy, communication and awareness raising, travel, events, office and home office). They also have a list of [online residencies](#) for those unable or who prefer not to travel.



For the Guide, Res Artis has identified some of the residency spaces in Europe within their membership that centre sustainable practices. The following is a list of such residencies.

- [Artica Svalbard residency](#) in Norway, with a focus on sustainability and meaningful engagement that promotes longer residencies for deeper immersion in the Arctic environment
- [Art Print Residence](#) in Spain, which is an eco-friendly space that does not use any chemicals or solvents inside the studio
- [Artist-in-residence Slipvillan](#), Sweden, with a particular focus on ecology
- [Beatilla Art Studio Eco Design Holiday Farm](#) in Italy, which connects with the local environment.
- [Belgrade Artist in Residence](#), part of the Center424 non-profit artist-run organisation, in Belgrade, Serbia, centres sustainability, climate change, and ecology
- [DE PROEF Residency](#) in the Netherlands, which supports artist and maker who are eager to explore nature-related subjects
- [Electro-etching Residency-workshop](#) in Canary Islands, Spain, which is a workspace free from toxic emissions and respectful to the environment
- [ELPA Design and Sustainability Residency](#) in Latvia
- [Joya: AiR residency](#), based in five restored farmhouses made into one off-grid sustainably minded destination within the Parque Natural Sierra María – Los Vélez, Andalucía, Spain
- [The Museum of Loss and Renewal Residency Programmes](#) in the UK and Italy which is a creative vehicle that enables the consideration of the relationship between place, people and time
- [Mudhouse Residency](#) in Greece engages with the formerly deserted village and encourages its residents to consider the existential threat that climate change poses
- [Nocefresca](#), a sustainable hospitality network for international artists on the island of Sardinia, Italy
- [Paleohori Art Space](#) in Greece, with a range of residency and educational programmes that merge dance, sustainability, and artistic exploration within the landscape of Lefkada Island

For more opportunities like these, visit [Res Artis website](#).

Green Travel as an Opportunity to Find Different Rhythms

by Martyna van Nieuwland

Travel related to artists' residencies or other types of cross-border experience can form an integral part of the residency or project. This case studies' article focuses on two such projects which could inspire the development or adaptation of one's own residency programme. Both the artist's and the music touring perspectives are shared, along with some practical tips.

Residency example: Tiny Spaces (TISP)

In the [Tiny Spaces's project](#), travelling to the residency space becomes part of the process. All artists travel slowly, without taking airplanes. The journey is curated to include visits to art spaces that form part of the Trans Europe Halles network and other associated spaces. Each TISP studio is a recycled or repurposed space, and artists working there are encouraged to work sustainably. Project partners are expected to provide mentorship and opportunities to connect with local communities and other TISP artists.

Eligibility: Artists and creative professionals who are residents of the EU or Creative Europe countries and who focus on process-led and site-specific creation.

Art forms: All art forms will be considered, e.g. visual arts, text, mixed media, sound, audiovisual, digital, as well as actors, dancers, performers, musicians, writers, creative thinkers and designers.

Dates (for reference): There are two calls in 2025 (January and November), concluding with a possible exhibition during the project symposium in Oulu in 2026.

Countries involved: Greece, Finland and Germany.

Support provided: Each artist will receive a gross fee of €4,000 for the one-month residency, including travel time, plus travel costs depending on the journey.

Residency example: E75 Art Bus

The [E75 Art Bus](#) is an artistic exploration of the E75 road across Europe. The E75, also known as Europe Road 75, is a 5,639-kilometre route starting in Vardø, Norway, and ending in Sitia, Crete, Greece. An international group of artists, selected through an open call, is expected to spend two months in artist residencies in Norway, Finland, Poland, Slovakia and Greece, along the E75 route, during spring and summer 2025. Members of the public will be able to experience the resulting artworks during a six-week bus tour from the Arctic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea in April–May 2026. Events will take place in over 20 stops along the route, as well as on the bus itself. Events ranging from discussions to performances will be livestreamed from the bus and from stops along the route. The project is part of the Oulu2026 European Capital of Culture programme.

Eligibility: Professional artists who are residents of the regions along the E75 Art Bus route.

Art forms: Contemporary and cross-disciplinary art forms, with a strong emphasis on interactive and experimental approaches. Many of the works are participatory and will only take their final form during the journey itself.

Dates: The residency project runs from April to June 2025, with the presentation of works taking place during the E75 Art Bus journey (Oulu – Sitia – Vardø – Oulu, 9 April – 18 May 2026).

Countries involved: The E75 Art Bus route covers Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, North Macedonia and Greece.

Support provided: Travel expenses and some material costs, as well as the artist fee, will be covered by the E75 Art Vehicles project. The artist fee is €1,500 per person per month (this will increase to €2,700 per person per month if the project secures extra funding).

Eero Grundström's rhythm through travels

Eero Grundström, a Finnish musician known for his work with ensembles such as Sväng and Suistamon Sähkö, exemplifies a more sustainable and mindful approach to artistic travel. Instead of flying from Finland to Italy, Eero opted for a slower, more grounded form of travel by ferry and car. This was due to both practical and ethical reasons—his dog could not be transported in an aircraft hold, and the group was carrying over 100 kilograms of instruments and equipment. They opted for a slower, more grounded form of travel that prioritised environmental concerns and personal well-being.

Their destination was Cantoira, a small mountain village in Italy's Piedmont region, where Eero and his fellow musicians—including his experimental folk band Sähköpaimen—spent two and a half weeks. Though not formally structured as an artist

residency, the stay functioned as one in spirit. Hosted by folk singer Gigi Ubaudi and his partner Amanda Kauranne, a musician, the group stayed in a family-owned holiday apartment. This setting enabled them to combine professional activities, such as concerts, collaborations with the local choir Li Magnoutoun, and extensive field recordings, with a personal rhythm of rest, companionship and family life.

The journey itself became part of the artistic process. Eero incorporated stops along the way for performances, visits to natural sites, and relaxation, transforming the journey into a meaningful experience rather than mere transit. On the outward journey, they took a 30-hour ferry from Helsinki to Travemünde in Germany to minimise road travel. For the return journey, they took a shorter ferry from Tallinn to

Helsinki, followed by travel through Slovenia, Poland, and the Baltic countries. Despite the extended travel time, the financial costs remained lower than flying: €750 for a luxury ferry cabin or €600 for a basic cabin including the dog and car, compared to the high costs of air travel with heavy baggage.

Beyond the practicalities and environmental considerations, the trip offered something more profound: an opportunity to reconnect with a slower, more human pace of life. Spending five weeks on the road enabled the group to foster creative collaboration, nurture personal relationships and experience a different kind of artistic output. This

was shaped by shared meals, impromptu recording sessions and tranquil moments spent in nature. The journey had its challenges, requiring time, resources and detailed planning—things that can be difficult for independent artists balancing artistic and administrative duties.

Nevertheless, Eero's experience in Cantoria revealed a compelling alternative to fast-paced, high-emission touring. It showed that, with careful planning and support, artists can, based on their choice, balance creativity, ecological responsibility and personal well-being, choosing journeys that enrich their work and their lives.

🔍 Tips for artists

If you are an artist looking to invest in environmentally friendly travel for your residencies and incorporate travel time into your residency experience, here are some practical tips:

- Talk to **potential funders** beyond your host residency, such as local authorities and private sponsors, to secure financial support for your plans, emphasising the specific nature of your residency experience.
- If possible, gather **a team to travel with you** – this will provide extra support with technical, physical and mental tasks.
- **Plan well**, but be prepared to remain flexible in case of changes in external conditions (e.g. adverse weather, problems with public transport, changes to the route or personal circumstances, etc).
- Take advantage of the **slower touring pace to rest**, sightsee and add extra activities to balance work and leisure.
- **Seek advice** from personal trainers, medical professionals and psychologists when planning the trip, as green touring can present mental and physical challenges (e.g. injuries).
- **Document the process** and include it in your residency experience. This documentation can be artistic and/or technical and be a reference for your host residency and/or other peer-artists and culture professionals.

Cycling as a Practice

by Martyna van Nieuwland

This case study focuses on projects where biking is part of the touring process, including in the music sector. Can it become a source of inspiration that encourages the exploration of new forms of residencies? Some practical tips are provided after the presentation of the following lived experiences and projects.

ReCycling – On a Bike with Manu Delago (Austria)

An increasing number of artists are taking the lead in promoting sustainable mobility, recognising their influence as role models in shaping public attitudes. A prime example is the Austrian, Grammy-nominated drummer and composer, Manu Delago, who redefined eco-conscious touring with his innovative ‘ReCycling’ tour. For this tour, Delago and his entire production team travelled across Europe by bicycle alone, transporting all instruments and equipment in five bicycle trailers—a feat rarely attempted on such a scale.

The [inaugural tour in 2021](#) combined live performances with environmental advocacy, tracking sustainability metrics and sharing progress via daily video blogs. However, the intense combination of cycling, performing and constant documentation proved exhausting. For the [second edition](#), the team shifted their focus from gathering data to fully experiencing the journey. The result was the documentary [From the Alps to the North Sea](#), which is now available online.

Planning the tour was complex. Touring by bike required precise route planning and eliminated the geographic flexibility that most artists rely on.

The time investment was also significant, which presented particular challenges for artists with families. Despite the relaxed image of bike touring, the schedule was demanding: Eighteen concerts in 28 days, with only four days without cycling, which were often filled with interviews, media appearances and house concerts.

Financial challenges also loomed large. Many of the small, grassroots venues had limited budgets, and there was no dedicated funding for green mobility efforts from the venues themselves. While the tour was made possible through support from sponsors such as Hinterher, Vaude and KTM, as well as regional and national institutions, managing the tour’s logistics and finances required immense administrative effort. Furthermore, [TaikaBox’s carbon footprint calculations¹⁸](#) revealed that expensive hotels, particularly those without an environmentally sustainable approach, can increase a project’s carbon footprint.

Despite these challenges, Delago remains committed to sustainable touring. Even without a confirmed third ReCycling Tour, the experience has permanently influenced his practices: his hospitality

18 For more information on measuring the impact of arts activities, you can access [Julie’s Bicycle’s Creative Climate Tools](#).

riders are now fully vegetarian, his team carries reusable containers to cut down on food waste, and he frequently uses a bike-and-train hybrid model for travel. This method combines ecological responsibility with logistical feasibility, enabling equipment to be transported by motor vehicles while the team cycles or takes trains to performances.

Ultimately, the ReCycling Tour is more than just a tour; it can be seen as a visionary model for the music industry. It encourages artists and event organisers to reconsider how they travel, perform and engage with audiences in a climate-conscious world. Delago's approach shows that—although difficult—sustainable touring is possible and makes a powerful statement of intent.

Cycle UP – a contextualised approach to green travels

Cycle Up! is an EU-funded project that connected artists, decision-makers and communities concerned about climate change, with the aim of finding creative ideas and solutions to encourage more people to use bicycles. Five projects in five partner countries, mostly within cycling distance of each other, created space and opportunities in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany and Poland in 2024 and 2025.

Similar to Manu Delgado's ReCycling Tour, Cycle Up! uses cycling as a means of rethinking working methods and lifestyles; the project aims to evolve into a social movement, not just a residency. Nevertheless, the programme recognises that artists have the potential to effect real change. As the project introduction states, 'We believe that artists should play a role in envisioning the future to tackle the challenge of sustainable urban mobility. Through our now-completed residency programme, we brought together creative voices to develop artistic perspectives on bicycle cultures across six European cities in 2024 and 2025. This unique opportunity enabled artists to create interventions that had a real impact on local communities and decision-makers, inspiring them to reimagine bike-friendly, inclusive urban spaces.

The project coordination team in Poland (in the city of Katowice) stated that, although cycling was prioritised, there was flexibility to allow residents from Germany and the Czech Republic to travel by train if needed. However, some artists were able to complete the entire programme by bike, such as a German resident in the 2024 edition who travelled exclusively by bike between their place of origin and their destination.

Time and means of transportation were part of the complex planning to ensure the programme's total sustainability. This approach worked on several levels:

- Encouraging artists to choose sustainable transport options and restricting plane travel to journeys over 600 km, except in cases of disability, island locations, or *force majeure*.
- Prioritising artists who planned to reuse, share or rent equipment and supporting them with networks that advise on sustainable artistic practice.
- Sustainable networks: connecting artists with communities and decision-makers before their residency begins to foster relationships that extend beyond the programme period.

Katarzyna Nowak, from the local host organisation Katowice City of Gardens, observed that there were several challenges associated with green travel. Not everyone is physically, mentally or socially prepared for long journeys, changing conditions or the occasional unpleasant surprise, such as sudden rail strikes, train cancellations or long delays. Responding to such situations often involves engaging with local services (often in a different language), using a different currency and being flexible. Notably, green travel modes are being implemented most successfully in parts of Europe with good infrastructure and shorter distances to cover. Travelling by train in Norway or Finland, where journeys can span over 1,000 km within a single country, is very different from cycling across the flat terrain of the Benelux region, where cycle paths are clearly marked and well maintained. Similarly, travelling between Ljubljana and Zagreb requires a completely different approach.

🔍 Tips for residencies

If you are a residency organiser looking to invest in environmentally friendly travel for the artists or cultural professionals you invite and incorporate travel time into your residency experience, here are some practical tips:

- **Talk to your funders** (ministries, cultural agencies, local authorities, private funders, etc.) and argue for more adequate travel funding based on the means of transport used, travel time and the potential length of residencies.
- When human resources are sufficient, **train** a team member to work with you at every level, including programming, logistics, hospitality, and technical and creative assistance.
- **Plan ahead**, but be flexible if external conditions change (e.g. climate, HR, personal circumstances or external financing).
- **Adapt and contextualise** according to the geographies that your residency may encompass, from the European context to a more international one, based on the size of the countries and their topologies.
- **Seek advice** from professionals specialising in green initiatives in the cultural sector. Use training sessions to constantly upgrade your knowledge.
- **Think long term** and ask yourselves questions such as: What is the long-term value of your residency programme? How can you communicate this to funders? As a measure of ecological benefits of slower travel, could you maximise the artists' travel by collaborating with local partners or developing longer-term relationships with artists that result in concrete outputs?
- **Network** with colleagues in the field, share experiences and learn from each other. Develop partnerships with organisations that can serve as additional 'creative stops' for the artists/culture professionals you invite.
- **Promote** your actions to your audience and peers. It is important to share examples of what can be done while encouraging and/or inspiring others.

About the Authors

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