

Communicating Sustainability

Pilot Project – September 2025 – September 2026

Indigo's Act Green research in 2022, 2023 and 2024 showed consistently that **cultural audiences really care** about the environment

86% of cultural audiences are worried about the impact of climate change

They **expect** cultural organisations to be taking a far greater lead on it than we are currently doing

72% think we have a responsibility to influence society about the climate emergency, but only 16% think that we place great importance on doing so

Perhaps your organisation IS doing a lot around sustainability, but the same research shows that at least **25% of audiences** don't know about anything you are doing in this area.

Perhaps you know that one of your biggest carbon impacts is how your audience travels to your venue, but you don't seem to be able to persuade people to make different choices?

62% of respondents expect you to be providing them with information on how to travel more sustainably to your venue.

One of the biggest barriers for organisations is therefore communicating their sustainability efforts in a way that will cut through with audiences and help reassure them of your efforts and impact as well as potentially nudging them to make more sustainable choices when they visit you.

But that isn't straightforward. You may feel concerned that you will be accused either of 'greenwashing', or of straying into areas that aren't your core purpose; or you've tried telling your audiences about your new production practices, but they don't seem interested.

So we have developed a programme called 'Communicating Sustainability', funded by Arts Council England, to tackle some of these issues with the sector.

The project will:

- Develop and test a toolkit for communicating sustainability - to be rolled out across the sector in 2026
- Gather and learn from best practice in our sector, and others
- Listen to organisations' challenges and work on them together

Indigo is looking for **five** organisations to join the pilot phase

Do you want to

- build your team's **confidence in communicating** sustainability?
- Have a clear sustainability **communications plan** that is understood and adopted across the organisation?
- Develop key messaging that cuts through for audiences and is effective?
- Understand and learn quickly from a small peer group of organisations working together?
- Be a leader in the sector in helping to develop and test a toolkit?

What the **Communicating Sustainability Project offers you and your organisation:**

- Initial **in-person kick-off meeting** with a member of the Indigo team to discuss your project expectations and to prepare an audit of current organisational sustainability communications in order to prepare a bespoke set of recommendations based on our **Communicating Sustainability** Toolkit.
- Access to the pilot **Communicating Sustainability Toolkit** which is grounded in the findings from Indigo's [Act Green Research](#), works in tandem with the Theatre Green Book standards, and is structured around the communications pyramid below:



The toolkit will offer your organisation a structured approach to communicating your environmental sustainability strategy and activity, including templates, content and checklists covering all customer touchpoints. Plus advice on measuring and evaluating impact. The toolkit will be updated throughout the programme with case studies and innovative real-world examples to support you to create and implement your sustainability communications strategy.

- **Six bi-monthly action learning sets** facilitated by Indigo with representatives from all five organisations to work together and learn from each other to build confidence and experience in communicating sustainability.
- **Six bi-monthly venue support sessions with Indigo** to discuss your organisation's individual challenges and opportunities for communicating sustainability including identifying a potential sustainability 'hero' project to focus your communications strategy on. This could be something like a big push on sustainable audience and artists' travel, a biodiversity project on your premises, a creative output such as a festival or series of events: one big idea that you can galvanise communications around over a period of time.
- **Evaluation and feedback** to inform future sustainability communications decisions, including audience perceptions and engagement with trialled sustainability content on digital channels; assessment of progress on identified 'hero project' aligned closely with Julie's Bicycle's [reporting metrics](#) and levels of awareness and confidence among staff – both Communicating Sustainability Project Group and wider staff team.

- **A subscription to Indigo Share¹** for the first 12 months, to support tracking audience engagement. More information [here](#).

What we require from you and your organisation:

- Commitment from **three members of staff** to the project including a *Project Champion* from your senior or executive team, a *marketing/comms lead* and a representative from *operations or production* – together they will form the Communicating Sustainability Project Group for your organisation.
- To be using or working towards Theatre Green book sustainability standards in at least one area
- At least one member of this group, ideally the *marketing* lead, **attends the six action learning sets** held bi-monthly from September 2025 (not including August 2026). These will be 2-3 hours each session and will be held online.
- All three members of this group attend **six bi-monthly venue support meetings** to discuss progress and offer feedback on how to best use the toolkit. Timing tbc with venue - 1hr per session and will be held online.
- Action learning sets and venue support meetings will both have **agreed actions to implement and report back on** at the next action learning session.

Essential:

- Access to your own customer data

Desirable:

- Your venue has taken part in one or more [Act Green](#) Surveys
- You are a middle or large-scale venue

Next Steps

If you are interested in taking part email ellie.oates@indigo-ltd.com and catrin.john@indigo-ltd.com to book a time to find out more prior to applying to take part. If you are not successful for the pilot phase, there will be two further cohorts starting in January 2026 and again running for twelve months.

About Indigo and Act Green

Indigo's award-winning team is passionate about helping creative organisations bring the audience's voice into their decision-making. We know that those who do are more likely to grow and thrive. We love helping you find out who your audiences are, how they behave and what they think, then using this insight to create strategies that connect with them for long-term success. We pride ourselves on our collaborative, consultative and pragmatic approach, providing sensible solutions to give you the confidence to move forwards.

¹ For organisations not currently using Indigo Share Audience Tracker surveys

Our team has years of experience in the creative sector. We have worked in-house in senior insight, marketing and communications roles, and we've worked across a vast range of Indigo clients. We bring that experience and expertise to every project we work on.

Act Green is an Indigo Share Hot Topic aimed at building our understanding of audience and visitor attitudes towards the climate emergency and the role of cultural organisations in tackling it. It has run for three years to date and you can read the reports or listen to the webinars from 2022-2024 [here](#).