

A PART FOR THE WHOLE

REPORT OF THE SURVEY

*ECOLOGICAL AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES
IN THE PERFORMING ARTS IN PORTUGAL*

COORDINATION



UNIVERSIDADE DE
COIMBRA



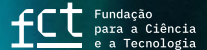
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This report represents the initial stage in analysing the data obtained in the survey *Ecological and Sustainable Practices in the Performing Arts in Portugal*. The survey is part of a broader research project within the Modes of Production – Performing Arts in Transition platform, specifically within the GREENARTS project, funded by FCT PTDC.2022.01609. This work is funded by national funds through the FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P., in the scope of the project UIDB/00460/2020.

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1.

INTRODUCTION



1.1. A PART FOR THE WHOLE¹ – PRESENTATION AND RESEARCH PREMISES

We borrowed the title because “a part for the whole” is an apt metaphor for various aspects underlying this document – aspects worth paying attention to before reading.

The most important caveat is that this document is produced as part of a broader research project, which is still ongoing. Carried out by a team from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (CEIS20) at the University of Coimbra, this study continues the research centre’s efforts to structure and consolidate research into the intersections between production and creation modes, as well as the **discursive and practical transformations of artistic production due to increasing calls for social and environmental sustainability**.

Specifically, the research is carried out within the framework of the “Artistic Practices: Imagination, Materialities and Transitions” Group, which promotes interdisciplinary approaches to artistic practices, understanding them in their aesthetic and cultural dimension, in their different temporalities, and their contexts of historical production and socio-political inscription. The ongoing research places artistic and cultural production at the forefront of crucial social debates, focusing on the inscription of the forms of production and mediation of the arts in the ecological imperative, and in the multimodal challenges raised by the global environmental crisis. It is part of the Modes of Production – Performing Arts in Transition in Transition platform and has its central axis in the FCT GREENARTS project (PTDC.2022.01609), which critically reflects on how the performing arts – especially theatre, dance and performance – perceive and act in response to the ecological imperative².

Therefore, this document represents an exploratory research phase and should be considered a work in progress³.

Although it is not yet “whole”, it is essential to share the ongoing research to start a conversation with a group of privileged interlocutors: artists, cultural professionals, institutions, and decision-makers.

The development of this report is also motivated by the support that the Directorate-General for the Arts (DGARTES) has given, from the outset, to this line of research, recognising its pertinence, topicality and relevance to the field of cultural policies. This support, granted within the framework of a Strategic Cooperation Agreement with the University of Coimbra,

1 “A Parte pelo Todo” [A Part for the Whole] is the title of a book of poems by João Luís Barreto Guimarães.

2 Closely linked to this research agenda is the Postgraduate Programme in Cultural Management and Sustainability (FLUC-CEIS20). The study’s coordinating team acknowledges and thanks the informal contribution of the postgraduate students, in the form of fruitful discussions on these topics, anchored both in the syllabus and in the extensive and varied professional experience of the 25 participants (artists, producers, cultural managers, programmers, technicians and central and local government officials, among other hybrid professional profiles, who make up a heterogeneous group from different regions of Portugal, with very different ages, backgrounds and experiences).

3 Over the coming months, more texts and scientific articles will be released that can give readers a better understanding of the progress made in this research.

enabled a comprehensive survey to gather input on the **positioning, practices and needs** of a section of the artistic community in Portugal, the (partial) results of which are disclosed and analysed throughout this document.

It is precisely because the universe of respondents (which we will discuss in more detail in a moment) does not encompass the extraordinary disciplinary, sectoral and organisational diversity of the performing arts field that – without wanting to overuse the metaphor – this part should not be taken for the whole. Despite this limitation, due to its exploratory nature, the study aimed to accurately depict the depth and diversity of the professional performing arts community in Portugal, specifically those receiving support from the Directorate-General for the Arts. In this sense, our primary goal was not only to obtain a substantial response rate, which would allow us to carry out a robust and scientifically significant analysis, but, above all, to ensure that the universe of study was relevant and plural. We sought to guarantee this by establishing minimum distribution criteria, cumulative, which corresponded roughly to the defined universe's features, making the data sufficiently comprehensive, representative and relevant in terms of territorial dispersion, disciplinary diversity, type of support or main attributes, between creation and/or programming entities, based in a building/venue or operating as projects, companies, with more territorial experiences and/or international circulation practices, among other aspects.

The context just described should be kept in mind when reading the following. Given that this is an **exploratory study**, it is prudent to avoid an overly directive or deterministic approach to what it might suggest regarding public policy. Indeed, this is a relatively pioneering study in Portugal, and its preliminary conclusions, although they shed light on several relevant aspects of the important intersection between the arts and ecological concerns, must be carefully framed and limited precisely by the initial nature of the study.

The complexity of the questions raised by this study and the implications that these questions suggest, make it clear that there is a need to continue research in this area, ensuring the conditions for longitudinal research that will permanently deepen and expand the process begun here. This report is the first structural step towards guaranteeing the desired virtuous interaction between independent scientific research and the formulation, adaptation and evaluation of public policies, and it is essential to ensure the continuity of these converging efforts.

Likewise, it is not insignificant that this was a relatively new subject even for the cultural agents who participated in the study, so the circumstances arising from their contributions must be weighed carefully. Throughout this enquiry process, and in other research formats we have organised, this almost “first contact” dimension with these issues is evident – something we will discuss later relative to the levels of knowledge/training considered desirable. As a matter of fact, in the answers given by the participants as in the contributions made by the authors of this report, one can sense the uncertainty and precariousness of the statements and reasoning. “Uncertainty” and “precariousness” are, in fact, unavoidable states through which those who explore the intersection of the arts and the environment pass, as Heddon and Mackey (2012) attest. It would, therefore, be prudent to interpret the clues and suggestions that follow from a “productive sensibility” that invites us to accept uncertainty: “of epistemology, of actions, of results, of futures” (Heddon and Mackey, 2012, p.169).

We could even defend the contributions of this report as the result of an **exercise in “radical uncertainty”** (Solnit & Lutunatabua, 2023).

Not being able to be in ‘may’ mode. It’s all so black and white. And it edits out something vital to our experience of ecology, something we can’t actually get rid of: the hesitation quality, feelings of unreality or of distorted or altered reality, feelings of the uncanny: feeling weird (Morton, 2021, p.2).

There are other meanings, which the expression “a part for the whole” illustrates quite effectively. This is the case of the ‘social desirability bias’ effect, a well-known tendency for individuals to show attitudes/positionings that are in line with socially desirable values (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Krumpal, 2013) – in this case, such a bias would explain at least part of the massive agreement on environmental concerns and the way they very positively evaluate the involvement of arts and culture in the global environmental crisis. The highly topical nature of the subject (the term ‘sustainability’ has entered mainstream public discourse and suffers from the corrosive effects of emptying and instrumentalising its meaning) suggests that the responses to this survey may contain a degree of social desirability bias. In addition, despite the absolute guarantee of anonymity, the fact that the survey was based on a partnership with the main funder of the performing arts in Portugal may have amplified the desire to present a positive public image (Ditlevsen, 2012). After all, as Lázaro Rodríguez said in his famous open letter to Jérôme Bel, “who wants to be that Donald Trump who stands against Greta Thunberg?” (Rodríguez, 2021). The metaphor is a powerful illustration of the trend towards publicly recognising the seriousness of the current environmental situation.

But is there a difference between recognising the seriousness of the environmental crisis in general and making a concrete link to the development of cultural policies? This is one of the cornerstones of this research, as we start from an ethically and epistemologically cautious reading of the plethora of “best practices” manuals, toolkits and how-to guides, especially those with a pragmatic vocation, which seem to take this link for granted, rather than problematising, debating and justifying it.

Placing the ecological question within the framework of debates on artistic practices and cultural policies requires more than a committed voluntarism with an operational slant, an alertness to the pitfalls of techno-optimism and “green capitalism”, and implies navigating, not without difficulty, a diverse set of questions: where does the relevance of art’s involvement in this matter really lie? In an activist/artivist vocation? In a belief in the transformative power of art, in the way it can influence audiences and be a catalyst for changing mentalities and behaviours? How much distance is there between mobilising the potential for the social impact of art and its institutions and a sophisticated version of self-instrumentalisation? How can the sector evolve towards more ecologically responsible modes of creation and production without becoming overly exposed to other economic and political forces?

The findings of this survey reveal the extent to which this connection (between recognising the environmental emergency and validating the involvement of the arts and culture field in the “fight” for the planet) appears in discourses as legitimate and even as a “given”.

We can detect in the resources and guidelines that have been published and disseminated, much from Anglo-Saxon contributions, the notion that environmental concerns are unavoidable and are already an objective element of consideration in the cultural sector – “most of our professional work and operations are already considered in the light of the principles of sustainability” (Lalvani, 2023, p.8), as well as the conviction that these principles should guide the actions of cultural professionals and arts organisations – “sustainability is the most pressing issue in today’s world and must therefore be at the heart of our missions, projects and objectives” (ibidem).

In short, while it is true that the results of this survey show an extraordinary willingness on the part of the arts to “fight” the environmental crisis, we argue that this should nevertheless be seen as only one part, perhaps the most visible, of this intersection between the arts and environmental sustainability concerns. Our work in this area, alongside cultural organisations and through dialogue with peers, and the nuances that this survey will ultimately uncover, require us to adopt a contextualised view and, above all, to recognise that, in Portugal, the sector has had few opportunities for in-depth reflection and debate on the contradictions that this issue provokes. As such, voices that relate the “size”, scale or economic dimension, and the specific responsibility of the sector to the systemic nature of the environmental crisis are sometimes noticeably absent (at least in terms of their statistical significance). In other words, the fact that this “part” (the arts and culture sector) is committed to contributing to the “whole” (the fight against climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, etc.) should not deceive us about the **systemic complexity** of the issue, nor hide the tremendous **contradictions** it casts us into – expressed in different individual, organisational and political stances. What’s more, the predisposition of the field of arts and culture to engage with this issue will overlap significantly with the sum of individual inclinations, fuelled by “carbon guilt” (Huber, 2022), which spreads the responsibility for planetary destruction among all people and all citizens, the roots of which, many argue, can be found more quickly in the concentrated production associated with fossil capital than in our everyday micro-decisions, at home or in the theatre, museum, festival...

In any case, it is true that if we consider the ethical-political articulation of Guattari’s “three ecologies” (2014) – the environment, social relations and human subjectivity – we realise that the field of the arts is strategically positioned to host this debate due to its power to generate encounters, nourish civic participation, promote dissensus and the imagination of “other worlds to come” (Danowski & Viveiros de Castro, 2023). The power of the arts lies in the convergence of purpose between the civic and the symbolic, in the way it can reconfigure **ways of doing things and ways of imagining the future.**

Many do not doubt that the arts have the potential to positively impact the environment, both through the reduction of their objective environmental impacts (material dimension) and from the point of view of their social repercussions (symbolic dimension). The recent report *Voices of Culture—Culture and creative sectors and industries driving green transition and facing the energy crisis*⁴ (VoC, 2023) corroborates the sector’s involvement in these two levels, stating that it is “evident” that the sector “must modify the ways culture is produced”⁵ while defending that it must “use all the driving forces of the professionals (...) to influence and translate and co-create imaginaries of a green future with the wider public” (VoC, 2023, p.12).

In the process of “ecological transition”, the arts have been challenged above all to raise awareness of the seriousness of the climate crisis since their ability to tell stories, to offer narratives that “make complex relationships between interconnected (eco)systems understandable” (Skolczylas, 2021, p.6) has been confirmed by behavioural sciences (Banerjee & Shreedhar, 2021). For this reason, this narrative capacity has been at the heart of public advocacy campaigns, with culture often portrayed as the “the missing link” to climate action (Julie’s Bicycle, 2021). This point is widely present in current debates, is the motto of national projects and international cooperation, and is dealt with in publications of various kinds. The work we want to embark on here – and of which this report is a first step – is of a different nature: it’s about better discussing and justifying the involvement of artists, cultural professionals and organisations in actions that can renegotiate our relationship with our “planetary host” (Latour, 2017). It is also about complementing the abundant pragmatic approaches with the **need for conceptual clarification, reflective analysis and socio-cultural contextualisation.**

Finally, it is important to say that the fact that the results of this survey are part of a broader research, committed to problematising the ecological transition in the arts, does not prevent us from making an immediate contribution, as far as possible, to pointing out useful and urgent forms of intervention and support.

4 This report will be referred to by the acronym VoC.

5 We should clarify, however, that—in this document as in others—the European Commission encompasses the cultural sector with creative activities, which it calls CCSI, bringing together in this expression a much more diverse myriad of cultural activities than those we are focussing on here. Specifically, they refer to areas such as architecture, events, music, etc., whose carbon emissions and other environmental impacts reach other heights when compared to the average size of the initiatives carried out by the type of organisations that took part in the study. This point is relevant, not just for the sake of terminological rigour, but above all because of the implications of opting for this aggregation.

1.2. FRAMEWORK AND RATIONALE

Every day, the urgency and impact of the environmental crisis and climate change become more apparent and tangible in all areas of society. The environmental degradation, the growing threat to territories, populations, lifestyles and cultures, and the political ramifications of the issue – inextricably linked to social and economic development models – make the environmental challenge potentially **the most mobilising challenge of our time**.

According to the recent report (March 2023) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), human activities, mainly through the emission of greenhouse gases, have “unequivocally” caused global warming (with the global temperature having risen by 1.1°C since 1850-1900 and continuing to rise). The data also point to an imminent rise to 1.5°C in the short term, which will mean an increase in the number and intensity of disasters affecting human and natural ecosystems and widening geographical disparities and global inequalities (IPCC, 2023). The topicality and relevance of this issue, as well as its urgency, has motivated various protests, demonstrations and strikes, starting in 2006 with the “Youth Climate Coalitions” in Canada and Australia and popularised by Greta Thunberg’s protest in front of the Swedish Parliament in 2018. These protests have multiplied and also reached Portugal: see the student strike in May 2023, which led to the closure of two secondary schools in Lisbon; the demonstration in September 2023 directed at the current Minister for the Environment and Climate Action, organised by the “Student Climate Strike” movement; the lawsuit by six young Portuguese against 32 states for “climate inaction”, which was brought before the European Court of Human Rights in September 2023; or the protest by the “Climáximo” collective at an exhibition at the Belém Cultural Centre.

It is also salient to refer to the legislation adopted in Portugal, namely the Climate Framework Law and the National Adaptation Strategy to Climate Change (ENAAAC 2020). From an implementation perspective, the Portuguese Environment Agency’s Action Programme for Adaptation to Climate Change (P-3AC) should be highlighted, which should monitor and systematise the work carried out in the context of ENAAAC 2020. It should be noted that these laws, mechanisms, and policies potentially involve and affect the cultural sector, even if they are not explicitly aimed at it. These are across-the-board lines of action, focussing on key vulnerabilities and impacts in the agricultural, chemical and abrasives industries, and municipalities (e.g. rural fire prevention, water efficiency, flood protection, soil fertility conservation and improvement, among others).

In this context, following repeated and substantiated calls from the international scientific community, governments, organisations and citizens are increasingly integrating environmental and ecological issues into their strategies, ambitions, decisions and desires for intervention.

Despite the diversity of their views and positioning, arts and culture are no exception to this panorama of growing concern and involvement. In recent years, in the European context (and beyond), there has been a proliferation of initiatives in which the desire for models of action more in line with the objectives of environmental and social sustainability has been

fully recognised; shows, performances, editions, associations and platforms have been created around these themes; in some cases, models of action and strategies to be implemented have been discussed⁶. At the political level, the inclusion of environmental sustainability criteria in European funding mechanisms for the sector, in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, is underway, and several countries are beginning to reflect these requirements in their public policy formulations, or are considering and preparing ways to adapt European and national legislation to the cultural sector, or are examining how the sector can be indirectly involved in the implementation of legislation that, although not clearly aimed at it, will inevitably affect it (Baltà & Bashiron Mendolicchio, 2022).

In the context of the European Union, the European Green Deal, a set of strategic measures to transform the EU economy into a more “efficient, modern and competitive” economy, is of significant political importance. This is a political and strategic positioning with a rhetorical and symbolic dimension, but it also earmarks EU investment and support mechanisms. In the cultural sector, it is already clear that initiatives and instruments are moving closer to the “green agenda”: see the New European Bauhaus, the missions and “destinations” of the Horizon Europe programme, or the efforts “to green”⁷ the European Commission's flagship programme for the sector, Greening the Creative Europe.

In the field of the performing arts – the particular focus of this study – the debate on the inclusion and involvement of cultural and artistic activities in environmental debate and action has intensified, opening up meaningful discussions on issues such as artistic mobility and international cooperation, artistic freedom and social justice, cultural policies and funding models, modes of production and management and institutional strategies, and opportunities for artistic and creative exploration, among many others. The perspectives on these discussions are many and varied, including **ethical uncertainties and practical doubts**: How effective or relevant can the cultural sector's contribution be? Should the magnitude of cultural initiatives be taken into account? Should we demand the same level of commitment from an independent theatre company as from a festival held in a large venue? How can we contribute to reducing our carbon footprint through our professional practices? What concrete measures can we implement? Where should we start? In the areas with the most significant environmental impact, or where it is most feasible in each organisation and territorial context? Or should priority be given to interventions that ensure greater public visibility in order to raise awareness?

- 6 By way of example, consider the manifestos “Culture Declares Emergency” or “Handle with Care: Envisioning a Culture of Care”, or the projects “Perform Europe”, “Eco-Shift Culture” or “STAGES – Sustainable Theatre Alliance for a Green Environmental Shift” and practical tools such as the “Theatre Green Book”, among many others, in different formats and sizes.
- 7 In its original version in Portuguese, we have tried to avoid using the expression “green” and its literal translation, recognising that in the Portuguese language there is no easy equivalent for using the word “green” in a phrase such as “making theatre greener”. Wherever possible, we have worked around the problem, aware that it's not just a matter of translation difficulties, but of positioning ourselves in favour of thoughtful and sensitive inclusion that helps us to make local sense of efforts to transform towards sustainability. We have kept this note to signal the importance of this issue.

All in all, regardless of the different positionings (which we will discuss below), it is safe to say that **the entirety of the modes of production in the artistic and cultural field is now being questioned and mobilised by ecological issues**, making this an area of debate, research, reflection and intervention of undeniable relevance.

In Portugal, the ecological transition is particularly challenging: artists, producers and decision-makers are currently faced with the need to reconcile the changes brought about by environmental awareness with the pre-existing difficulties and dysfunctions that the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and deepened. The challenge can be described and perceived as gargantuan: to articulate efforts to promote significant transformations towards a more ecologically responsible cultural and artistic sector, overcoming the structural weaknesses that shape and condition the possibilities for the development of the arts in Portugal, incorporating environmental issues into the necessary and pluralistic reflection on **environmental and social justice**.

Indeed, the need to promote significant change will have to be accompanied by measures to ensure that the economic, environmental and social costs of transition are mitigated. The European Just Transition Fund is one of the mechanisms in place in the European Union. But do these measures and subsidies take into account the characteristics of each country and each sector and consider their specificities? As an example, on the 30th of April 2021, a refinery was closed down, resulting in the collective dismissal of 137 workers, an episode that highlights the importance of the “just transition”. Are we really contributing to a just transition if the closure of a refinery (environmental impact) leads to collective redundancies (social impact)? How can these (re)balances be ensured?

In the case of the refinery, as in the field of arts and culture, it will be necessary to consider the “multiple realities” in which we live and to avoid limiting the debate on sustainability to strictly environmental aspects or technological adaptation. The centrality of “just transition” in the case of the arts and culture sector cannot be overemphasised and, indeed, will be a recurring theme throughout this document. “At the end of the day, solving an ecological problem without considering social inequality is just another way to reinforce the colonial structure” (Rodriguez, 2021).

1.3. DESCRIPTION

Having outlined and justified the theoretical and symbolic foundations on which this report is based, we will now describe the main technical aspects of the survey and study we present here.

The study was intended to be representative of the depth and diversity of the artistic community in Portugal, especially those currently supported by the Directorate-General for the Arts. The coordinating team, therefore, focused its efforts on achieving a significant response rate, not only to have the tools to carry out a robust and scientifically valid analysis but also to ensure the relevance and plurality of the survey population.

Notwithstanding a more detailed analysis, the main aspects relating to the universe of application and respondents and the methodological configuration are briefly presented here.

The universe analysed consisted of 597 entities (corresponding to 662 subsidies and 792 people). Given the type of survey we wanted to conduct, which was challenging because it was relatively long and had several open-ended questions, we set a minimum overall response rate of 20%, which equated to 120 valid responses. This percentage was effectively reached and exceeded, standing at 24%, corresponding to 140 valid responses.

Minimum distribution criteria that closely match the characteristics of the defined universe have been defined to ensure the **completeness, representativeness and relevance** of the data collected. These criteria can be considered fully met, as shown in the tables below, which display the degree of compliance with the minimum criteria and the final data.

Artistic field	Minimum no. of responses	No. of validated responses	Incidence on total no. of responses	Differential
Theatre	30	43	31%	+13
Cross-disciplinary	23	43	31%	+20
Music	18	26	12%	+8
Dance	5	17	19%	+12
Contemporary Circus and Street Arts	1	4	3%	+3
Other(s)	–	7	5%	–
TOTAL		140		

Table 1. Distribution of responses by artistic field.

Region	Minimum incidence in the total of valid responses	No. of validated surveys	Incidence on total no. of valid responses	Differential
Lisbon Metropolitan Area	35%	48	34%	-1%
Alentejo	5%	7	5%	0%
Algarve	2%	6	4%	+2%
North	25%	38	27%	+2%
Centre	15%	37	26%	+11%
Autonomous Region of Madeira	1 resp.	3	2%	+2 resp.
Autonomous Region of the Azores	1 resp.	1	1%	0 resp.
TOTAL		140		

Table 2. Distribution of responses by region.

	Minimum no. of entities	Incidence on the minimum no. of entities	Actual no. of entities	Incidence on total no. of valid responses	Differential
Sustained Support	60	50%	82	59%	+22 / +19%

Table 3. Distribution of responses by type of support.

	Minimum no. of entities	Incidence on the minimum no. of entities	Actual no. of entities	Incidence on total no. of valid responses	Differential
Creation	60	50%	82	59%	+22 / +19%
Programming	24	20%	53	38%	+29 / +18%

Table 4. Distribution of responses by area of activity.

The sample can, therefore, be characterised as consistent with the distribution by artistic discipline, region and type of funding, and reflects an even division between arts organisations based in performance spaces/cultural facilities and independent or project-based collectives.

This sample was complemented by a series of in-depth interviews with the same profile of respondents (artists, producers and arts managers). Some of the preliminary results of the survey were also analysed in a discussion group with a diverse socio-professional background, and were the subject of broader reflection with the international network of partners in the GREENARTS project.

The methodological choices reflect a relational and inclusive approach to the issues and problems, as well as the commitment to carry out the research in close proximity to the artistic community, with a particular emphasis on the way it interprets the proposed themes and how it frames its contributions, reflections and dilemmas. This is especially important given the complex nature of the research topic and the kind of transformations it points to. In fact, the ecological transition has been identified as a transformation that requires “action-oriented knowledge generation that is co-produced and interwoven with multiple knowledge(s)” and interested parties (Tengö et al., 2014; Pereira et al., 2019, cited by Biggs et al., 2021, p.138). Similarly, since one of this study’s by-products is the possibility of establishing links with the drafting and adaptation of public policies, it was essential to make the most of the process of listening to cultural agents (through a profusion of open-ended questions and repeated analysis in discussion groups, for example), to avoid top-down approaches and risk alienating the parties concerned (Freeth & Drimie, 2016).

The methodological layout of this study was based primarily on a qualitative approach, complementary to the statistical treatment of the data collected. Due to its flexibility and the possibility of an inductive analytical deepening, the qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate for an exploratory study. Procedures for coding the empirical material were used based on Maxwell’s (2005) recommendations on modelling qualitative research. Categories and subcategories of analysis were constructed and refined through interpretative exercises and confronted with emerging concepts from the dedicated literature.

2.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION



This report is intended as a problematising movement rather than a technical/descriptive guide. It seeks to strike a reasonable balance between **analysis of current expectations and needs, pragmatic guidance and reflective openness**.

Therefore, in this chapter, we will map, analyse and discuss the main themes suggested by the survey, having chosen to divide and interpret the data obtained into four main axes of analysis:

- (2.1) Discourses, representations and interpretations of 'sustainability', in which we reflect on the extent to which respondents are concerned about this issue, what their general understanding of the concept of sustainability is, and how it is appropriated and transposed into the field of culture and the arts;
- (2.2) Individual responsibility and sector engagement, which analyses how respondents view the allocation/distribution of responsibility and how they articulate this with the desirable positioning of the arts and culture field;
- (2.3) Positioning and obstacles, where the stances regarding the intersection of arts and environment, and the difficulties, challenges and fears it raises are explored in depth;
- (2.4) Measures and interventions which, in the light of the previous interpretations, explain the concrete needs expressed by the artistic structures, as well as the possible interventions of DGARTES from the respondents' point of view.

2.1. DISCOURSES, REPRESENTATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Overall, the respondents' discourses on the concept of sustainability tend to allude to sustainability in a **broad** sense, meaning it is not necessarily linked to the artistic and cultural sector, as might be expected given the wide spectrum of the question asked ("How do you interpret the concept of sustainability?").

The answers⁸ focussed almost entirely on the idea of **balance** and were expressed in various ways, such as:

THE BALANCE BETWEEN RESOURCE CONSUMPTION AND RESPECT FOR THE PLANET:

- R1 *Living in harmony with the planet's resources. Consuming in a regulated, objective and strategic way.*
- R4 *A sustainable cultural activity must be designed to conserve resources, reuse materials, reduce waste, produce using local labour and raw materials, consider energy efficiency and respect the natural, historical, material and immaterial environment.*

THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE PRESERVATION OF THE PLANET AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING:

- R8 *Sustainability seeks to balance economic growth with the preservation of natural resources and the guarantee of social well-being.*
- R51 *For me, sustainability is a form of social functioning/behaviour/organisation that allows human beings to live in a dignified way, taking into account their physical, emotional, mental and cultural needs without endangering the planet's ecological balance.*

THE NEED TO FRAME AND BUILD NEW MODELS of consumption, production and even thought, also suggesting a (im)balance between various environmental, social and economic domains:

8 As a means of anonymisation, the respondents'/interviewees' answers will be identified with [R]–Response and [I]–Interview, followed by a number assigned to each case.

- R10** *I believe that a sustainable practice is one that considers the resources at its disposal, questions their source, cost, lifespan, profitability, impact and renewal, and seeks to make efficient decisions in the management of these resources, from a perspective that also takes into account the place and time it is in, framing itself and reflecting on the past in historical terms, and capable of projecting the future in terms of time and geography.*
- R82** *The capitalist logic of unlimited growth is incompatible with the concept of sustainability. A concept of 'sustainability' that doesn't try to greenwash an expansionist and selfish system must always take this into account. Environmental and ecological sustainability requires the construction of a new model of production and consumption.*
- R133** *Reflection on our ways of life and natural and social resources exploitation. Harmony between the social, environmental and economic spheres.*

Given the breadth, ambiguity and polysemy of the concept of sustainability, we subsequently decided to classify the (open-ended) responses into three categories, seeking (even) greater clarity about the respondents' representations of this topic. We, therefore, divided the responses into Sustainability as **environmental sustainability**, which included answers relating to moderation and balance in consumption, and emphasised the necessary relationship between humanity and the planet; Sustainability as **social sustainability**, where the dimension of living conditions is evident and sustainability is unequivocally linked to the idea of a dignified life in terms of human and social rights; and finally, Sustainability as **sustainable development**, which includes allusions to the need to change the political and socio-economic models that determine our development matrix.

Sustainability **AS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- R105** *My perception of the term 'sustainability' has to do with the ideas of 'survival' and 'coexistence', with the possibility of the different forms of life in this complex system that is the planet living together in a way that suits their different needs. Minerals and other natural forms included.*
- R075** *Sustainability is about being responsible with the resources we have and being aware of others. We should only use what we need; we should reuse whenever possible and avoid waste. We should always think about the future.*

Sustainability AS SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- R2** *From a far wider angle, which goes far beyond the environment. In today's social context, I value more the dimension of human sustainability (social ecology), contributing to the (re)humanisation of professional contexts, re-establishing social habits in communities.*
- R13** *With the awareness of the climate emergency, it is becoming clearer [that] sustainability is not just about the issue of travel (footprint) or the measures we implement in our workplaces to properly manage resources and waste, but about the whole organisational model (working relationships included).*

Sustainability AS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

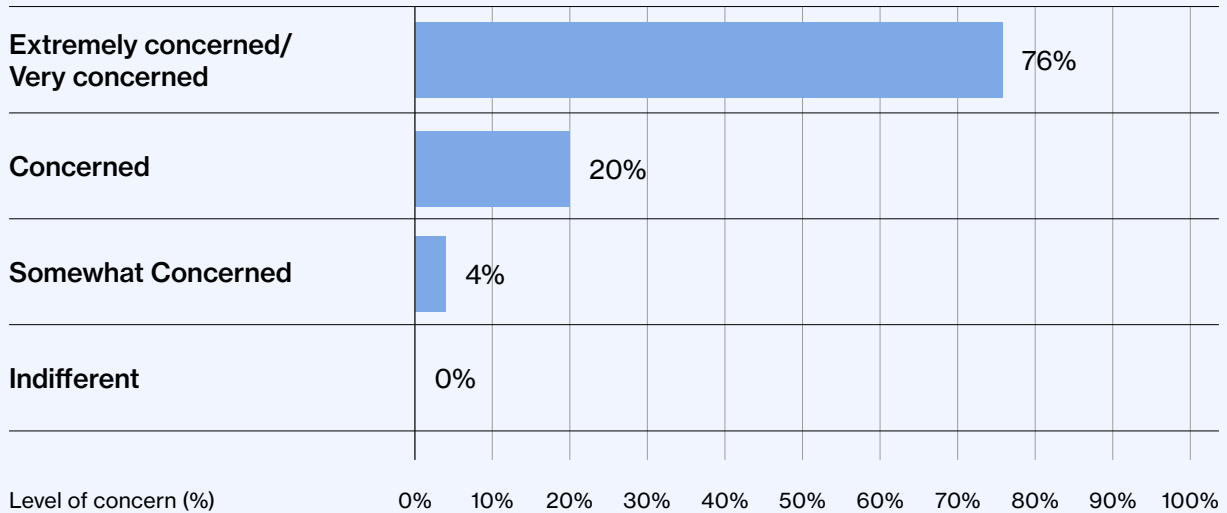
- R126** *Sustainability is also about avoiding social, economic and cultural inequalities so that the physical and human resources of regions are not wasted or abandoned. It is the opportunity to rethink and act for the common home we all live in.*
- R91** *When we talk about sustainable development today, we almost always relate it to environmental issues (problems with natural resources, ecosystems and the biosphere), but the concept is also intertwined with economic and social issues (social inequalities and poverty, lack of ethics, globalisation).*

The depth and range of interpretations proposed by the respondents thus reveal a clear understanding not only of the latitude of the idea of sustainability itself but also a conviction that it is unequivocally associated with living conditions, quality of life and social rights. A significant number of respondents also see the concept of sustainability as an ideal towards which aspirations for a social and economic paradigm shift converge.

Although we are still in the early stages of our analysis, it is already clear that there is a significant tendency not to subsume sustainability under environmental sustainability, recognising the profound interdependencies with other “sustainabilities” and how these interdependencies (when put into perspective) raise concerns.

Despite referring to a limited population (publicly funded arts organisations), our data seems to suggest that the environmental crisis is already a “shared concern” (Latour, 2005; Antunes, 2023) among arts professionals. In fact, when asked in the survey about the sector's level of concern about climate urgency and environmental degradation, we found that the majority of respondents (76%) expressed a high level of concern, considering the answers “Extremely concerned” (33%) or “Very concerned” (43%). Only 20% of those surveyed said they were “Concerned”, and a residual 4% admitted to being only “Somewhat Concerned”. By contrast, it should be noted that none of the organisations/people who answered the questionnaire selected the answer “Indifferent”.

Faced with climate urgency, environmental degradation and the growing threat to territories, populations, lifestyles and culture, I feel:



Graph 1. Respondents' level of concern (in %) about the environmental and climate crisis. Total responses: 140

It is, therefore, unmistakable that there is a high level of concern about the environmental and climate crisis among those surveyed, and the reasons for this concern can be broadly broken down into (a) concern about the harmful effects [of climate change] for life on the planet and for future generations; (b) perception of the need for a change in social and political paradigms; and (c) a perception of a lack of political action and insufficient or late measures at global and governmental levels. Around 20 respondents chose to emphasise the “lack of individual awareness and responsibility”. A small number (8) pointed out that the issue “doesn’t matter/there are other more pressing concerns”.

In some of the points listed throughout this mapping and analysis, and based on the suggestion made by Kate Power (2021), we have attempted to organise the respondents’ answers into a “trptych”, illustrating the key relationships between sustainability and the arts. It is an analytical grid developed in an investigation applied to a reality very different from that of Portugal (Australia) but which, in our opinion, summarises and allows us to distinguish, in a reasonably effective way, three interpretations of the idea of sustainability, when understood from the viewpoint of the arts:

- (a) sustainability **through the arts**, i.e. approaches that emphasise the narrative and communication capacity of the arts, and their potential to raise awareness and change behaviour (sometimes also referred to as socio-cultural sustainability);

R7 *The field of arts and culture can inspire change in the realms of ecology and sustainability through hermeneutic relationships with other fields of science.*

R9 *[We need to] raise awareness through the arts and education.*

R10 *I believe that the role of the arts and culture is, inherently, to question and offer resistance to any dominant narrative, so this will be no exception.*

R16 *Arts and culture have the ability to influence human beings.*

(b) sustainability **in the arts**, i.e. approaches that recognise the need to understand and reduce the environmental footprint of the arts and to integrate environmental sustainability into cultural practices and policies (which relate more directly to environmental sustainability);

R11 *Certain cultural events can be highly impactful.*

R53 *As our activities have an environmental impact, we can't keep pretending, and we must change our production methods.*

R82 *No professional sector should be exempt from implementing structural measures that can have a positive impact—even if it's minimal.*

(c) sustainability **of the arts**, i.e. approaches that emphasise organisational sustainability, the sustainability of artistic careers, of artistic projects in temporal and financial terms, and of the sector itself (also known as financial sustainability).

R40 *Due to the systemic lack of support and investment that the Portuguese professional environment suffers from, production choices are always made according to financial efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability rather than environmental concerns.*

R84 *I interpret the concept of sustainability as the capacity for permanence/adaptability and the acquisition of structural frameworks that allow for maintenance and/or growth over time. Often, and still, mostly concerning projects, the ability to create financing structures or financial autonomy...*

R114 *Because the budget is increasingly out of touch with reality, organisations have to submit robust proposals with numerous activities to stand out from others and secure funding. This autophagic competitiveness leads to a reduction in the amounts spent on each activity to the minimum, which will generate inefficiency in terms of sustainability.*

Considering that the three interpretations are obviously permeable to each other and cannot be regarded as mutually exclusive, we have nevertheless decided to use this analytical grid to go through the responses received in this survey and identify the most common or dominant interpretations.

Overall, in terms of the number of responses, we observed a certain predominance of arguments favouring sustainability **in the arts** over the other two categories, **through the arts** and **of the arts**, which would indicate that respondents attach greater importance to strictly environmental sustainability, and to how the arts can meet and reduce their own “ecological footprint”. We’ll have the opportunity to delve deeper into this first reading later on, but we can already see several explanations for this phenomenon.

For one thing, it is necessary to “deduct” the effect, common in research, that the survey itself may have generated by containing wording explicitly aimed at these issues. Likewise, it is important to remember the cautionary note we left at the beginning of this document (see page 07) regarding the “social desirability bias” effect that may have led respondents to strengthen the link between the arts and the environment, given the subject of the survey, the ubiquitous – and problematic... – media use of the term “sustainability”, and the desire to voluntarily signal their personal commitment to an issue they recognise as so serious and urgent. In the case of our survey, this tendency would at least partly explain the massive consensus on the environmental emergency and the generally positive reception of arts involvement in environmental and ecological issues, as we will see in the next point.

Notwithstanding the effects of social desirability bias and the others we’ve alluded to, the fact that cultural agents are acutely aware of the ecological urgency should not be ignored or diminished, nor should the crucial relationship they establish with the field of the arts be overlooked. But the purpose of this research leads us to go further than simply invoking this adherence to legitimise the intersection between the arts and the environment. We want to better understand the link between the expression of concern (and, in many cases, anxiety) about the current environmental challenge and ecological threat, and establish a connection with the field of intervention of the arts, from artistic practices to cultural policies.

2.2. INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

A significant number of respondents linked their concerns in one way or another to their sense of individual responsibility: moral, ethical, civic or professional responsibility, which appeared in their statements in an interrelated way.

The majority of respondents (87%) also agreed with the statement that responsibility for environmental and social sustainability should be assumed by all players according to their remit, scale and resources.

Considering the various agents in the arts and culture sector, who do you think should take on MORE RESPONSIBILITY for environmental and social sustainability?	
All agents must assume responsibility according to their remit, scale and resources.	87%
All, especially the Ministry of Culture.	4%
All, especially the Directorate-General for the Arts.	1%
All, especially public institutions.	4%
All, especially organisations that receive public funding.	1%
None of the above.	3%
All, especially organisations that receive public funding through Sustained Support.	–
All, especially the programming organisations.	–
All, especially the artists.	–

Table 5. Results (in %) regarding the attribution of responsibilities.

However, while it may seem surprising that respondents did not take the opportunity to hold DGARTES or the Ministry of Culture (MC) more directly responsible, some considerations should be made regarding the question's wording. Every response option to this question started with "all", which may have contradicted the aim of finding out who the respondents thought should take on more responsibility and thus separating responsibility at the individual (micro), organisational-institutional (meso) and governmental-systemic (macro) levels. The logic behind the question's formulation was the intention to recognise that, given the magnitude of the ecological transition, no one individual can take on all the responsibility.

Instead, the question was intended to point to sectoral leadership but apparently failed to do so. In addition, the second part of the first response option, where a “common sense” principle is introduced – stating that responsibility should be in accordance with each person’s “remit, scale and resources” – could have been eliminated.

This reflection can guide future research and is relevant here not only as a way of acknowledging the possibility of failure in the research process – and thus defending a feminist ethical code of research and radical transparency – but above all because it can reveal the extent to which this idea of “collective responsibility” is being pushed forward in public discourse.

Given that the environmental crisis is a clearly global issue with very discernible systemic implications, we find it surprising that the participants in the survey placed so much importance on individual responsibility. We believe it is necessary to interpret these results not only as symptoms that the ecological transition in the arts is considered “obvious” and “urgent” but also in light of one of the most poignant criticisms of the climate debate. This is a structuralist critique, arguing that this highly personalised understanding of environmental responsibility (with constant references to our own “ecological footprint”) is perhaps too close to a position typical of cultural workers as members of (in sociological terms) the “professional class”. The professional class, as defined by Huber (2022), “occupy more advantaged segments of the labour market” who perform cognitive or knowledge work – a “post-industrial form of work defined by its temporal and spatial distance from industrial mass production” (Huber, 2022, p.5). This social and professional identity, Huber argues, has consequences for climate policy: these individuals would tend to fixate on their “own relatively comfortable consumption (...) as the core driver of climate change” and ignore industrial production.

When confronted with the question of responsibility—the question of who cooked the planet—(...) the story of climate responsibility we hear is a story of millions of diffuse individual choices—millions of carbon footprints, adding up to a planetary impact (Huber, 2022, p.21).

The extent to which the cultural sector workers consulted in this survey attribute individual responsibility is, according to this argument, due to their tendency not to link climate change to industrial production, which is based on extractivism, and consequently show concern about their own “carbon guilt” (ibidem) and predisposition to recognise their share of responsibility. This would be another way of adequately contextualising the findings of this first nationwide survey and would explain why sustainability *in the arts* (Power, 2021) was largely the most recurrent sustainability concern in the respondents’ narratives.

We do not dismiss the value of this analysis, which we acknowledge and invite into our reflection. However, while we believe that this analysis is fundamental in order to keep in mind the macro-political implications of this issue (which will have an impact on the type of cultural policy recommendations we will make in the last chapter), we believe that it is ultimately insufficient as a basis for reflection from the cultural sector, at a time when publications produced in the context of arts and culture, or co-authored by cultural agents, already are recognising that the ecological transition must include a shift away from the “extractive and consumerist

economy that is at the root of the problems we face today” (VoC, 2023, p.15), and given that environmental concerns already seem to be an inescapable problem and an objective element of consideration in the sector, to a greater or lesser extent in different countries: “most of our professional work and activities are already balanced against sustainability principles” (Lalvani, 2023, p.8).

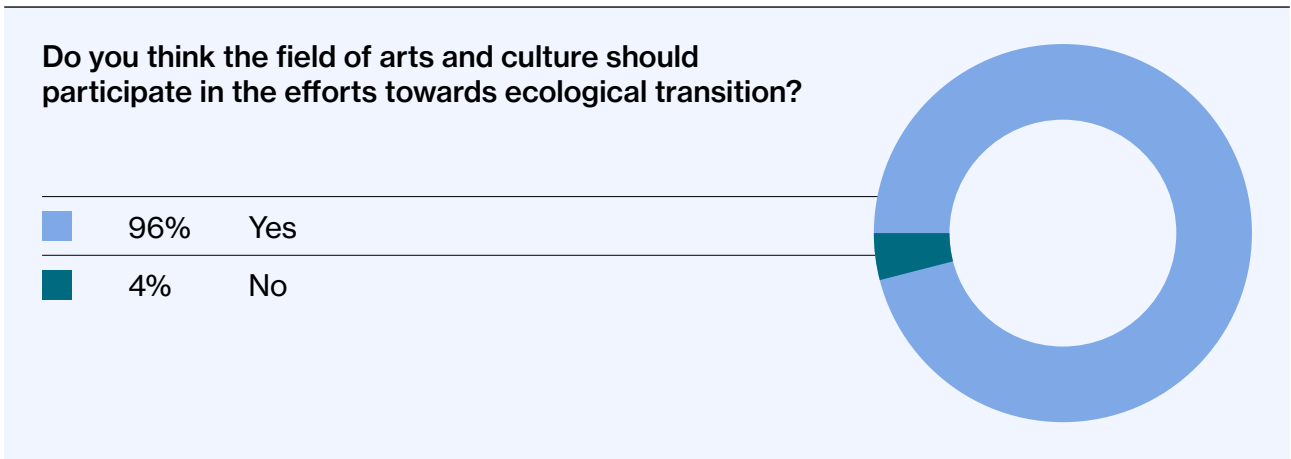
Perhaps by drawing a European “average”, we can say, as Lalvani (2023) does, that “sustainability is the most urgent issue in today’s world and must therefore be at the centre of our missions, projects and objectives”. In Portugal, the results of this survey do not allow for such categorical judgements, but the data indeed reveal a very strong adherence to the conviction that these principles should guide the actions of cultural agents:

R38 *Arts and culture have the capacity to help convey the values that we hope will lead to a reversal of the process of environmental degradation.*

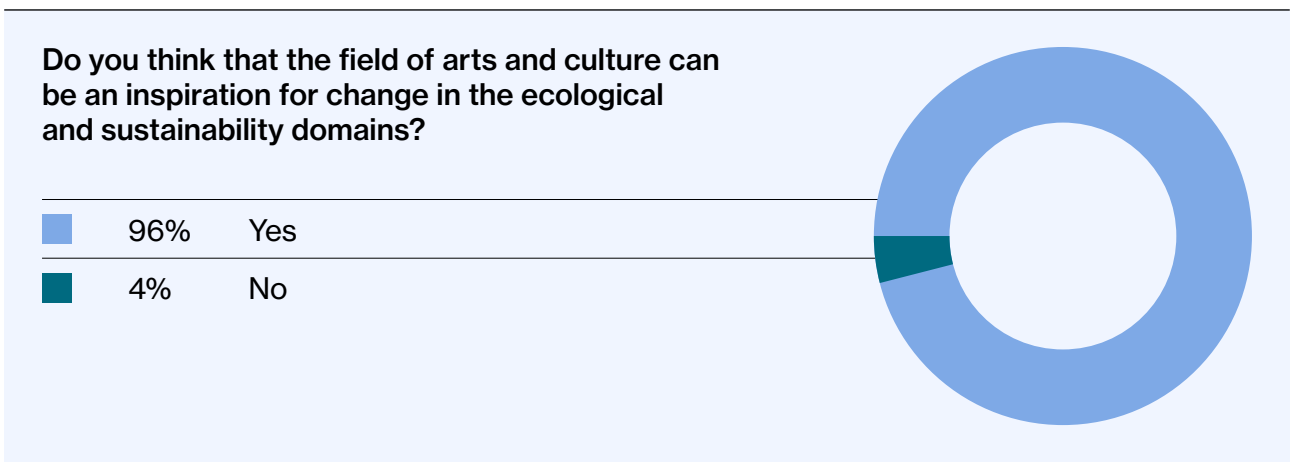
R111 *I think that the theatre and its agents, and culture in general, have a social mission that cannot be neglected and that can raise questions in the public in a surgical way.*

We postulate, therefore, that the recognition of the systemic, economic and political complexity (and controversy) of the roots of the environmental crisis, and the realisation that possible solutions will depend, above all, on states, corporations and major interests at a global level, does not, according to the results of the survey and the ongoing debates, seem to prevent the ecological imperative from being recognised as a central challenge for the future of the cultural sector. On the contrary, the cultural sector’s aloofness or detachment from the issue is clearly ruled out, and its non-involvement would be difficult to justify, given the respondents’ statements, positionings and even feelings. But is there a difference between acknowledging this fact in general and making a concrete link to cultural policy? To establish a more explicit link between the level of concern, the attribution of responsibility and the arguments for active intervention by the sector, we analysed the responses in greater depth.

96% of respondents believe that the arts and culture sector should be involved in efforts to achieve ecological transition, and the same percentage believe that it can inspire change in the field of ecology and sustainability.

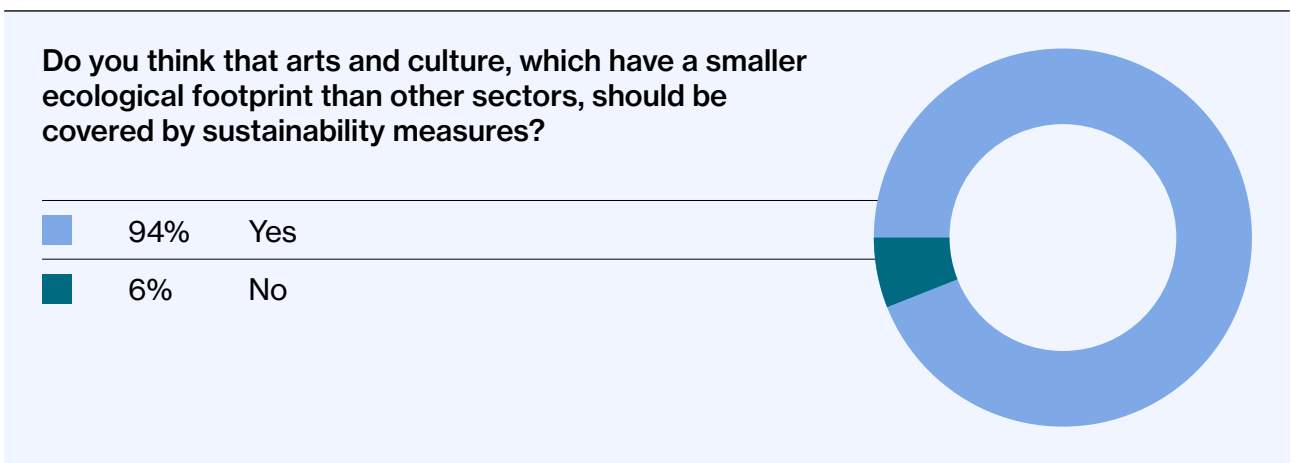


Graph 2. Level of agreement (in %) regarding the involvement of the arts and culture in ecological transition efforts.



Graph 3. Level of agreement (in %) on the ability of the arts and culture field to inspire change in the ecological and sustainability domains.

The majority of those surveyed (94%) also believe that arts and culture should be included in sustainability measures.



Graph 4. Level of agreement (in %) on the possibility of arts and culture being covered by sustainability measures.

This last result is particularly revealing, as the question's wording drew attention to the potentially smaller ecological footprint of the arts and culture sector (given the profile of the organisations targeted in this survey). As you can see, this aspect (alluding to the sector's scale) was not enough to decisively change the responses, which continued to expressively defend the involvement of the arts in environmental sustainability.

We insist that this does not mean that the respondents are unaware of the scale of their professional activity, its weaknesses and impact:

R93 *Can you ask a theatre to change its entire lighting infrastructure when [reference to a conglomerate of textile companies], with less effort, could have a greater impact?*

It is precisely these frictions, contradictions and obstacles that we are going to focus on next.

2.3. POSITIONING AND OBSTACLES

Over the course of our research, it became clear that the respondents' high level of concern translates into a sense of responsibility, at an individual, as well as organisational and sectoral level. However, while there is clear support for the idea that the arts sector has some kind of responsibility in addressing the environmental crisis, there is more ambivalence about how this responsibility should be implemented. In fact, a more in-depth analysis makes the frictions, contradictions and obstacles increasingly visible, which is bound to nuance the great statistical relevance of the initial positionings (as illustrated in graphs 2, 3 and 4).

In an attempt to critically analyse the responses regarding the positioning of the intersection between the arts sector and environmental issues, we have divided the reasons for this response into two vectors: **causality** and **conditionality**.

In the vector of causality, our aim was to understand in more detail the ideas and arguments on which respondents based their positions justifying the mobilisation of the arts in the ecological "struggle". Their responses can be grouped into four main arguments, as shown in the table below:

Intersection of Arts/Environmental Concern Analysing causality	Strength of the argument	Example
Contribution to changing mindsets/ Sensitisation of other sectors of society and the public	42	"Our field shapes behaviour and must lead the transformation" [R43].
This is an issue/concern that should run across all areas of activity	38	"All sectors will have to make a substantive effort in the ecological transition, and none should be exempt" [R9].
The sector has an environmental impact and must strive to reduce it	32	"I don't think [artistic production] has a small ecological footprint (...). The impact is much greater than you think" [R107].
Moral dimension/Individual responsibility	23	"We all live on the same planet. We all must respect it" [R23].

Table 6. Positioning (causality) regarding the intersection between the arts and culture sector, and environmental issues.

Note: Strength of the argument refers to the number of times a particular idea comes up.

It is important to note that although these categories of causality analysis are broken down into various subcategories, the main point is that there is a general understanding of the importance of the intersection between the two domains. The fact that respondents point to several causalities reinforces the problem and amplifies the need to solve it.

Those who focus on the impact of the sector itself (sustainability in the arts, as we have seen) tend to emphasise that the field of culture has a responsibility and must “do its fair share” to solve the problem:

R17 *As the arts sector is a pioneer of change and behaviour, I think there is an ‘obligation’ to reflect on its practices.*

R127 *Nobody, or no sector, can remain indifferent to climate change and must minimise its ecological footprint.*

Some respondents alluded to the fact that “theatre production is voracious in terms of resources” (Hassal & Rowan, 2019, p.149):

R7 *Arts and culture are very aware of sustainability, but I don’t think they have a smaller ecological footprint than other sectors, especially when they take on an international dimension and you have to travel constantly.*

R11 *Certain cultural events can have a high impact.*

Another set of discourses underlines the “unique and transformative power (...) of the arts (...) to touch people’s hearts and minds” (Taxopoulou, 2023, p.2), especially due to the ability of the arts (and specifically theatre) to tell stories. The logic behind this seems to be that we live “in a soup of stories” (Twist, 2020), so we need the potential of the arts to offer narratives that “make complex relationships between interdependent (eco)systems understandable” (Skolczyk, 2021, p.6), something that has been validated by the behavioural sciences (Banerjee & Shreedhar, 2021). For this reason, the storytelling capacity of the arts has been the main focus of awareness-raising campaigns, in which culture is often portrayed as “the missing link to climate action” (Julie’s Bicycle, 2021, p.8). This specific role/responsibility of the arts would align with Power’s conceptualisation of sustainability through the arts – a more or less openly instrumentalised role, or at least a deliberate use of the arts as a platform to communicate the urgency of climate change and environmental degradation.

R54 *Arts and culture have always been at the service of humanity. As such, they are forms of communication, training and education that promote citizenship. They are, and should be, a banner, a symbol of progress and well-being, establishing relationships between beings and the environment, thus contributing to sustainability.*

R55 (...) *The arts have an impact on those who participate and enjoy them, so we can think that these practices can contribute to changing attitudes and behaviours.*

R67 *Artistic language is endowed with a sensitivity capable of breaking down the barrier and distance of scientific discourse. An image or a metaphorical scenario has the capacity to generate questions and inner transformations, especially in the younger generation.*

The power of “an image or metaphorical scenario” to which [R67] refers is echoed in the idea that “theatre and performance have something special to offer in their engagement with ecology. They can alter reductive narratives and images, incorporating and representing contradictions, erasures and imaginative possibilities” (Woynarski, 2020, p.2). Haraway insists that we need not just “more stories” about the environmental crisis, but “other kinds of stories”:

We need other kinds of stories. We need to change the story. The story of the earth. We have to change the story of death (...). We need to write this particular story over and over again, not a story in general, but ‘this story’ (Haraway, 2016, 39’15”).

As [R134]’s statement illustrates, some even argue that these stories need to “challenge dominant narratives by representing alternative and critical perspectives on the **relationship between humans and the environment**” (R134, added emphasis). A similar argument is provocatively put forward by Jonathan Franzen, who argues that “to reach readers who are wholly wrapped up in their humanness, unawakened to the natural world, it’s not enough for writers to simply display their biophilia. The writing also needs to replicate the intensity of a personal relationship” (Franzen, 2023).

Finally, another line of thought, less prevalent, has linked the responsibility of the arts in the climate and environmental crisis to the specific contribution of the arts to the imagination, or more precisely, to the characteristics of **artistic thinking**. In this case, it is not so much about the power of the arts to communicate, convey a message or persuade the public, but about another “function” of the arts, albeit more difficult to grasp: their “aesthetic/eco-poetic” capacity (Sermon, 2017).

R58 *Art and culture tend to be a step ahead in ‘thinking’, addressing issues that are usually neglected by generalist thinking, so I think that artistic work can trigger change in ecology and sustainability.*

This capacity for aesthetic imagery has little to do with the building of social consensus or collective consciousness; rather, it is related to the arts' ability to **trigger reflexivity through disruption** (Dewey, 1980; Pelowski & Akiba, 2011), as well as the ability to act as an “antenna” through which collective attention to the problems of our time can be experienced and amplified:

R65 (...) [the] arts are spaces of visibility, influence and inspiration as levers for new disruptive forms of perception and action.

Attuning ourselves, through poetry, art, and description, to pay attention to other times; developing techniques to begin to think through the limits of our temporal frameworks, and then thinking beyond them—these are crucial practices; in fact, they are matters of survival (Davis & Turpin, 2015, p.12).

This reminds us that the advocacy of the involvement of the arts in the environmental crisis, which appears to have mass support in this survey, is indeed far from a univocal positioning. Furthermore, we argue that it is best understood through the metaphor of **ambivalence** since it combines multiple points of view and should not be confused with or reduced to an instrumentalist vision or use of the arts. On the contrary, for some of our respondents, as we have seen, and within the theoretical debate in which this issue is inserted, the environmental crisis or the context of ‘polycrisis’ is precisely a circumstance that can generate a careful appreciation of the social value of art. This implies (knowing) defending the ability of the arts – and artists – to work through interrogation, to be rebellious, to challenge given rationalities, “a rebellion that looks at reality or perceives things in a slightly different way, with a slight deviation” (Silva, 2023). This “slight deviation” is the artists’ “unique set of skills, processes and methodologies”, which include abilities such as being “lateral”, that is, able to “synthesise diverse facts, objectives and references” with “great intellectual and operational agility”, “understanding the language of cultural values and how they are incorporated and represented”, and “making the invisible visible” (Whitehead, 2006). It must then be possible to devise cultural policy models and initiatives that meet this kind of minimum requirement: that of thinking about the possible relationship between art and sustainability from a certain conception of the autonomy of artistic practice, which in itself contributes to (sustainable) social development.

To sum up, the role and possible responsibility – or, better put, perhaps the contribution – of the arts and culture in this domain is much more complex than the initial statistical data might suggest. Moreover, in our research, whenever this responsibility was questioned concerning **concrete practices and working conditions in the sector**, we again found a much more ambivalent set of attitudes and discourses.

Specifically, various stances in favour of involving the arts in the environmental struggle were expressed along with some form of conditionality(ies). The statements point to the difficulties arising from the fragility and precariousness of the artistic ecosystem in Portugal:

R10 *I believe that in an artistic ecosystem that is already fragile and precarious, the need to meet working criteria in the field of sustainability is sometimes a Herculean task and can make it even more difficult (or even impossible) for professionals to work, without them being really and significantly responsible for environmental and climate impacts.*

R28 *(...) adopting ecological and sustainable measures would increase the costs of a sector that is already very underfunded.*

Participants also expressed the need to ensure that the specific needs and quality of artistic projects are safeguarded:

R97 *Whenever possible [incorporate sustainability concerns] but taking into account the needs of the artistic projects and their quality.*

...and that the specificities of the cultural and artistic field are considered:

R51 *The right answer would be 'it depends'. If it's once again a question of handing over to artists responsibilities that should belong to the state: no, but it depends on the measures to be adopted.*

R112 *Tailored measures must be implemented in the sector to enable this transition.*

These conditionalities are crucial in demonstrating the plurality of arguments brought up by the respondents. Conditionalities add a level of complexity to this discussion, avoiding oversimplification driven by a sense of urgency or individual moral obligation. They also contain several warnings that should be considered when formulating cultural policies or initiatives in this area.

More specifically, the survey also sought to understand respondents' positioning on the inclusion of environmental sustainability, not only in cultural policy in general but specifically in arts funding mechanisms.

In the survey, when asked whether they agreed with the statement that various governments are "considering integrating sustainability concerns more explicitly into cultural policies", a clear majority (96%) responded positively.

Several governments, following recommendations from international organisations, are considering integrating sustainability concerns more explicitly into cultural policies. Do you agree?

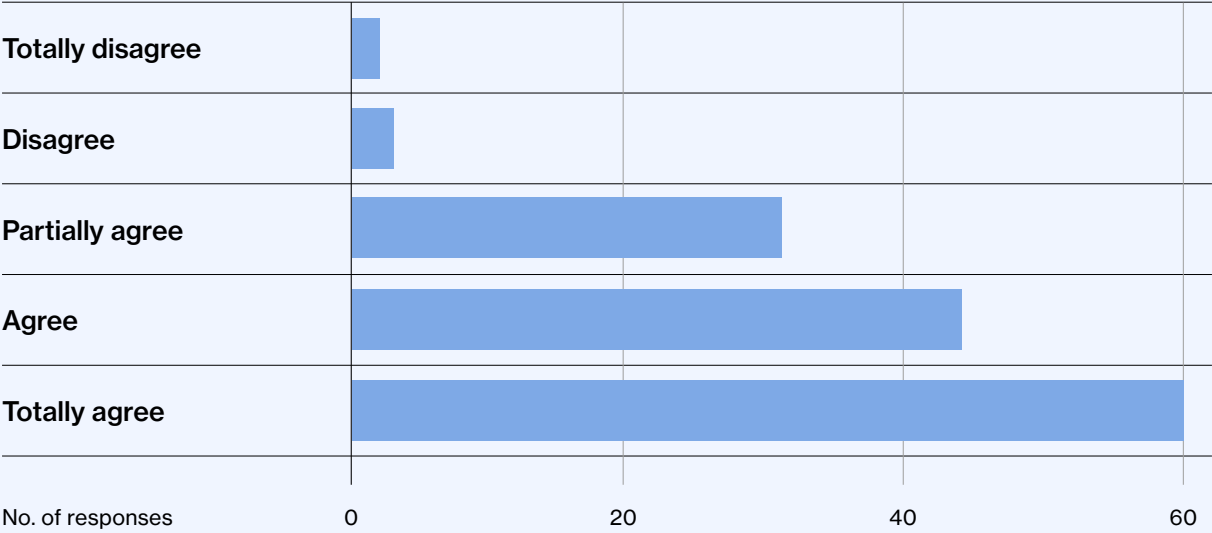
96%	Yes
4%	No



Graph 5. Level of agreement (in %) about the inclusion of sustainability in cultural policies.

However, when we tried to understand the level of agreement, we found more variability, which indicates that this apparent unequivocal consensus hides some nuances that deserve to be analysed more rigorously and that seem to escape the official discourse of the sector’s publications on the subject.

Several governments, following recommendations from international organisations, are considering integrating sustainability concerns more explicitly into cultural policies. Do you agree?



Graph 6. Level of agreement (in number of responses) about the incorporation of sustainability concerns into cultural policies.

The pattern was roughly repeated when the question more explicitly mentioned the possibility of including sustainability issues “in the criteria for public funding in the field of arts and culture”: 77% agreed.

Several governments, following recommendations from international organisations, are considering including sustainability concerns more explicitly in the criteria for public funding in the field of arts and culture. Do you agree?

■	77%	Yes
■	23%	No



Graph 7. Level of agreement (in %) on the inclusion of sustainability in the funding criteria.

However, although the general pattern of responses remains the same, the level of agreement drops significantly, by almost 20%.

Although the level of agreement on incorporating these issues into cultural policies remains high, a closer look will reveal that the topic is much more controversial than the quantitative results we have analysed so far would suggest. If this were not the case, how can we explain the various **conflicts** and **dilemmas** that arise in the discourses when they are analysed in detail, in addition to the quantitative responses?

In fact, when confronted with the potential transformations that the ecological transition could bring to the sector's working practices, the cultural agents voice:

(a) fears about the **instability and fragility of the national cultural policy framework**

R14 *If funding in Portugal continues to operate at a deficient level, we could almost say that it's ridiculous to make decisions based on such criteria at this stage. Only when we have a stable cultural scene and some financial security should we start demanding such criteria for funding.*

R56 *While we all have a responsibility for change, it cannot be imposed on the sector without visible measures of accountability and commitment from other sectors with a greater environmental impact.*

(b) **distrust about the suitability of sectoral approaches**, either national, top-down or one-size-fits-all

R37 *The question is always the format in which these policies are implemented. Whether they are mere copies of international models, or whether they consider the reality of the country.*

R99 *[It only makes sense] to apply similar rules to the public funding of other sectors of activity, namely tourism...*

(c) apprehension about potential **economic limitations or increased difficulties in accessing funding**

R111 *There will have to be a transition period and extra support so that cultural agents can carry out internal transformations, buy equipment, etc.*

At a second, less significant level of representativeness, respondents consistently raise issues related to:

(d) fears of **instrumentalisation** and/or threats to artistic freedom

R23 *I'm very worried about the consequences this could have for us artists. I feel it could harm us professionally and put us in even more precarious situations and with less artistic freedom...*

R100 *Instrumentalising public funding for cultural creation doesn't seem legitimate in democratic systems.*

(e) concerns with **equity and historical (in)justice**

E2 *It's up to us to think about artists who don't have the privilege of receiving support or having access to mobility (...) to think about compensating and confronting racial, social and cultural inequalities.*

(f) warnings about **infrastructure disparities**

R99 *I agree, provided that this process is coupled with an extraordinary effort to develop sustainable public mobility infrastructures throughout the country and where it intersects with international territory.*

(g) reservations about possible **tokenism**

R135 *It all sounds like a trendy agenda that can perhaps be deliberately created to secure funding.*

Next, we transposed these discourses and positionings to an analysis of the obstacles – respondents were asked directly to identify the main obstacles to a more sustainable artistic or programming practice and were asked to tick off a series of hypotheses (cumulative and not mutually exclusive). Here is the distribution of the 351 responses:

What do you consider to be the main obstacles to making your artistic/programming practice (more) sustainable?	Strength of the argument
Insufficient financial resources.	89
Lack of cultural policy objectives geared towards this area.	54
Prevailing social mentality.	44
Insufficient knowledge.	43
Lack of incentives from funding entities.	38
Lack of support and guidance from funding entities.	31
Shortage of specialised professionals.	28
Not enough time.	15
I do not identify any obstacles because I do not consider this to be a priority issue.	9

Table 7. Categories of analysis and strength of argument regarding obstacles to sustainable practices
Note: Strength of argument refers to the number of times an idea comes up.

The most mentioned obstacles were insufficient financial resources (89), the lack of cultural policy objectives geared towards this area (54), concerns about the prevailing social mentality (44), followed by three others: insufficient knowledge (43), a lack of incentives from funding entities (38) and a lack of support and guidance from funding entities (31). If we add the lack of cultural policy objectives in this area to these last two obstacles relating to funding entities, we have 123 responses indicating a need for greater intervention by DGARTES/MC.

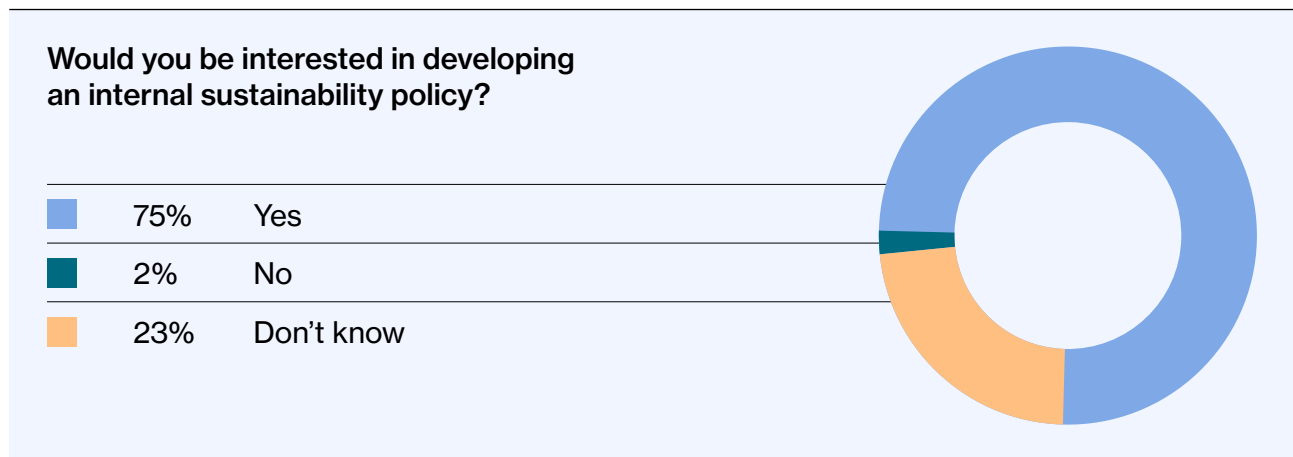
To get an even better idea of the nature of the obstacles indicated, we grouped them according to broad typologies, and what we realised is that the typologies of obstacles that stand out are:

- (a) **Economic and financial obstacles;**
- (b) Lack of **guidance and cultural policy objectives;**
- (c) **Lack of knowledge** or specialised professionals.

These three main obstacles underpinning the responses indicate that the sector's position is clear: funding issues, cultural policy and knowledge/skills are key to making progress in this area.

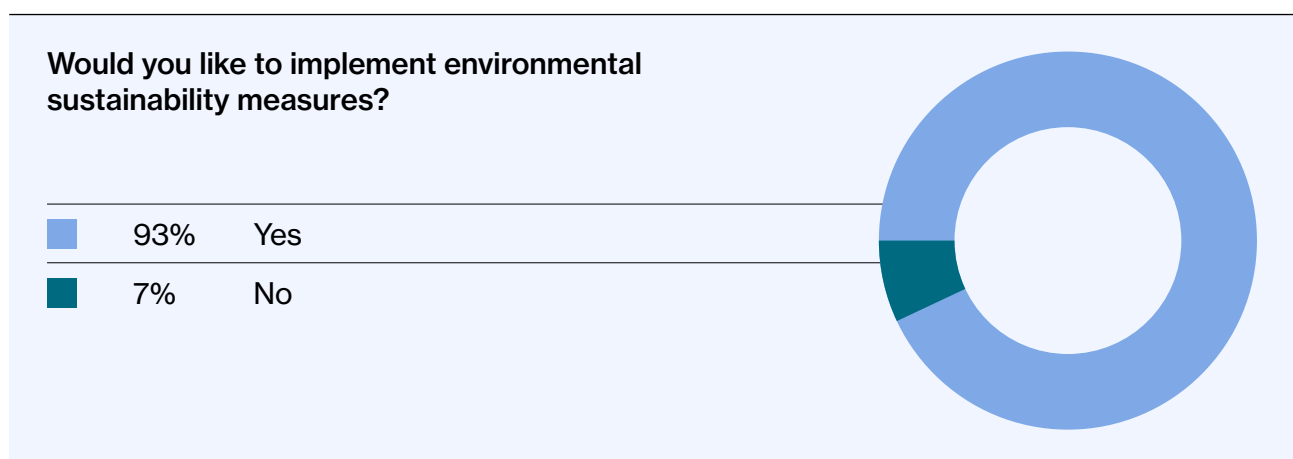
2.4. MEASURES AND INTERVENTIONS

In this final section, we look in more detail at the set of concrete practices and initiatives that the sector believes should be implemented, as well as what they think should be done on the part of the Directorate-General for the Arts.



Graph 8. Level of agreement (in %) regarding interest in internal policies on sustainability.

In fact, 93% of respondents answered “Yes” to the question “Would you like to implement environmental sustainability measures?” confirming the sector’s willingness and interest in implementing environmental sustainability measures in a more structured way.



Graph 9. Level of agreement (in %) regarding the intention to implement environmental sustainability measures.

When asked what kind of measures they would like to implement, respondents divided their intentions into several categories in an open-ended response.

In terms of consumption, food and waste, from a strictly environmental perspective:

- R5** *[We could] use recycled materials in packaging and other products produced or consumed by the association, reduce the consumption of non-recyclable materials, recycle paper, packaging and other materials used in its activities, raise awareness among all the teams of the importance of adopting more sustainable habits.*
- R23** *We could rethink the type of material used to make sets and costumes.*
- R88** *Reduce consumption, reuse resources, green energy.*

In terms of the modes of production and management of artistic structures:

- R1** *Improve human resources management.*
- R68** *Create healthier working conditions for teams and creation. Organise work schedules and tours in advance to reduce travel. Increase the lifespan and circulation of the works produced.*
- R130** *Reduce the number of artistic creations and the rehearsal period, thus promoting the profitability of materials, resources and content.*

Nos processos criativos e projetos de mediação:

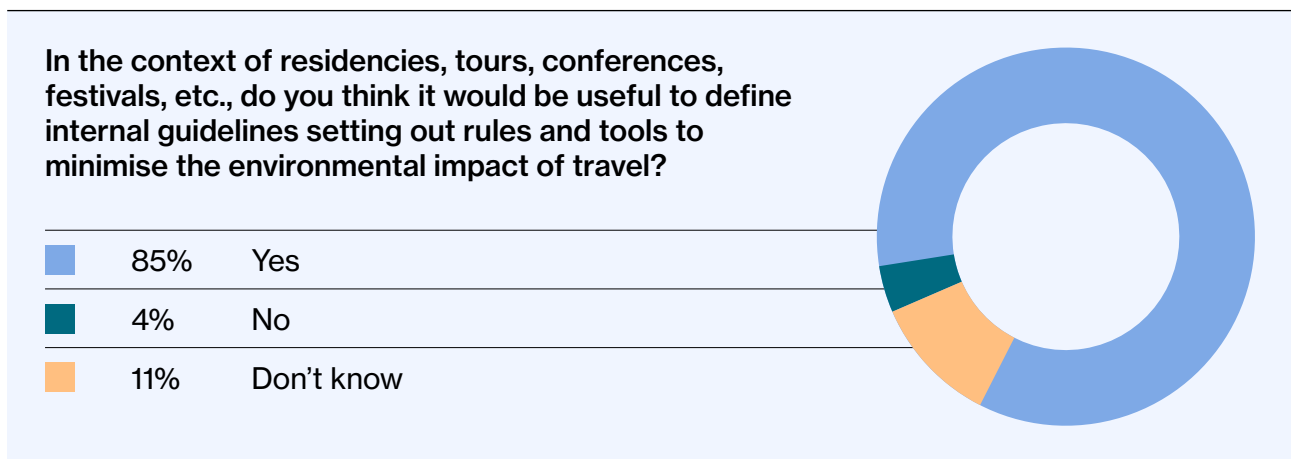
- R8** *Promote education and awareness of environmental issues through art and culture, creating opportunities for artists and cultural programmers to address these issues in their work.*
- R70** *Define methodologies and practices, community creations, artistic creation workshops and residencies with an ecocentric philosophy, artistic creations that contribute to a transversal and profound reflection on the collapse.*

...and in terms of the circulation of shows and the mobility of workers and audiences:

- R2** *Better international circulation practices are incompatible with the short planning times brought about by the instability of arts funding in Portugal.*

Once again, respondents highlight measures related to the “environmental” sustainability of their organisations, but there are also concerns about creation, production and management models, as well as the touring and circulation of shows, especially internationally, since “international circulation is a very important source of funding” for companies [15].

Regarding the circulation of shows, respondents were asked about the usefulness of possible environmental guidelines in the context of tours, conferences, festivals, etc., that could help reduce the environmental impact of travel. 85% replied that they would find them useful, confirming that this is an area that deserves future attention, both within and outside the context of established national networks such as the RTCP (Rede de Teatros e Cineteatros Portugueses [Portuguese Theatres and Cinemas Network]).



Graph 10. Level of agreement (in %) on the usefulness of guidelines in the context of touring.

Cultural agents considered it “useful” or “very useful” to have guidelines on “transport”, “accommodation”, “meals”, “number of activities to be carried out in nearby venues” and “length of stay in venues”. The only category with a difference (where the “useless” option is more than 15%) is “travel distance”, which can be explained by the fact that agents already consider such efforts for economic reasons.

When challenged to elaborate on the guidelines in the context of tours, festivals or residencies, the respondents divided their contributions into various arguments, all with a concrete action/transformation in mind:

Better structuring of residencies, tours and festivals:

R36 *As much as you can develop an environmentally friendly circulation strategy, it can cause a lot of fatigue for the teams involved. This means that rest days should be included in this type of circulation and that these days should be paid for, bearing in mind that they are dedicating this time to a tour.*

Reducing and optimising the number of journeys:

- R53** *Avoid long journeys with cargo transported in individual means for a single representation/activity.*

Providing information or creating a Good Practices Manual:

- R55** *The development of a set of best practices can be a handy tool for organisations to adopt more responsible behaviours and to clarify how these can be implemented in procedures and operations.*

Strengthening networking:

- R19** *Through real networking between organisations, the resources inherent in the tour can be minimised and shared by the different practitioners.*

The most emphasised aspect seems to be the great room for improvement that still exists in order to guarantee **more rationality, better structuring and optimisation of travel in the context of circulation and network programming**, although the responses were shorter and overall fewer proposals were made. This is understandable given the importance of the infrastructure issues underlying circulation: without a reliable and environmentally friendly public transport network, it is naturally difficult for the sector to adopt more sustainable modes of transport, and a “good practices manual” will not be able to remedy this type of objective shortcoming in Portugal.

Circulation and international cooperation was a more mobilising question, generating several comments and proposals:

Improving circulation planning and programming strategies:

- R1** *Having a networked planning strategy that allows for more logical thinking about circulation, thus avoiding one-off, one-person trips that are very aeroplane centric.*
- R36** *Given that the most environmentally friendly means of transport are often more time-consuming and expensive than air travel (when we're talking about international planning), we need to rethink what these concepts mean on a global scale. We can't think that all continents are the same. We know that for African or South American companies it is often leaving their countries and travelling to Europe that allows them to generate sustainability. So the best way to think about these concepts is to think about allowing artists to stay longer in a given territory so that their stay can unfold in different actions, while allowing them to create bonds that can be important for future relationships.*

Favouring more sustainable forms of transport:

R33 *One of the solutions could be to reduce the number of journeys in fossil-fuelled transport.*

Creating specific support programmes and access to funding:

R44 *Introducing some justice and balance into the equation could, in my opinion, mean, for example, in an international exchange project with countries in Central Europe, introducing some kind of increase in the amount to be allocated to travel costs, which in some way benefits peripheral countries (like ours).*

Using digital media and channels:

R95 *Investing in the digitalisation of certain processes could also help to promote more democratised access to artistic practices and cultural enjoyment, while at the same time reducing the ecological footprint.*

Considering environmental justice:

R134 *To promote environmental justice in international circulation and cooperation, it is important to consider the socio-economic and environmental inequalities between countries and regions, and to seek to establish partnerships and projects that promote the transfer of knowledge and technology to the most vulnerable countries. This may include promoting capacity building and training programmes for local artists and institutions, and integrating environmental and social perspectives into all our activities.*

Implementing material circularity logic:

R104 *Working towards circularity, particularly with material banks. Reusing scenery and costumes not only in each structure but also by giving them away or donating them. Promoting a culture of creation and sustained growth.*

Having pointed out the obstacles, expectations and needs, what remains to be seen is the respondents' opinion on the position DGARTES should adopt in general and the types of intervention it should undertake. They focus on three main areas: funding, support in the field, and awareness-raising and training.

FINANCING, IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SECTOR:

- R15** *Support the authors' projects financially so that they are feasible and dignified.*
- R24** *Support the ecological transformation of the sector, regardless of grant applications. This change must reach everyone.*
- R43** *Financial reinforcement and multiannual support for all professional structures with a proven track record. This is the only way to demand organised thinking for the future.*
- R49** *It's not enough just to define it as a strategic objective if the agents aren't equipped with the tools to understand and implement it in the medium to long term. Its implementation in the short term may have a small impact on localised, sustainable growth, but never on broad, sustainable development. And, of course, more tools will necessarily mean more budget funding to implement the measures and behaviours that the ecological transition requires, not all of which are inexpensive.*
- R49** *Create the conditions for agents to be able to make the ecological transition in a way that doesn't make it impossible for them to be economically and creatively viable.*
- R51** *Once we have the financial and technical means to make creation in Portugal sustainable from an artistic point of view, we'll be able to think about it.*
- R86** *Supporting structures so that they can implement the measures.*

On a second, less mentioned level, FINANCING, IN THE SENSE OF INTRODUCING SPECIFIC MEASURES AND CRITERIA:

- R8** *Green funding: DGARTES may consider sustainability as a criterion when granting funding, including energy efficiency issues, environmental impact and sustainable practices in artistic productions. Green infrastructures: DGARTES can support the construction or rehabilitation of green infrastructures, such as theatres, exhibition spaces and cultural centres, which promote a more sustainable use of natural resources. Partnerships with green businesses: DGARTES may establish partnerships with green and technology businesses to promote the integration of more sustainable practices and technologies in artistic productions.*

R44 *Introducing variables into the funding criteria that somehow encourage artists and companies to adopt more ecological and sustainable practices.*

R99 *Line of financing in partnership with the Fundo Ambiental [Environmental Fund in Portugal] to provide artistic structures with the resources and technical knowledge to operate in a more environmentally sustainable way.*

ON-SITE MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

R1 *The people who oversee should check that the structures are doing what they say they are going to do at this level.*

R4 *I think they can play a more active and present role in advising, sensitising and guiding the different agents.*

R10 *Analyse the impact of artistic projects/structures in terms of sustainability and help to find solutions so that this impact can be improved/reduced, depending on the scale and capacity of each project/structure.*

R53 *Develop an online carbon footprint calculator.*

R93 *A mechanism could be set up to monitor the environmental impact of the structures' activities. Only after knowing the real situation of each one can improvement solutions be implemented.*

R136 *Give concrete guidelines on how we could/should address these issues.*

AWARENESS-RAISING AND TRAINING:

R19 *DGARTES and the Ministry of Culture should adopt an initial formative stance, helping organisations to understand the real possibilities and ways in which their projects can become more sustainable.*

R46 *Support for training, support for implementation, support for awareness-raising.*

R86 *Training sessions on the subject by the Directorate-General for the Arts and/or the Ministry of Culture with experts in the field could also be a measure to be adopted to improve the system. Studies, surveys and experimentation with possible solutions to this problem. Support the structures so that they can also implement the measures resulting from the aforementioned studies.*

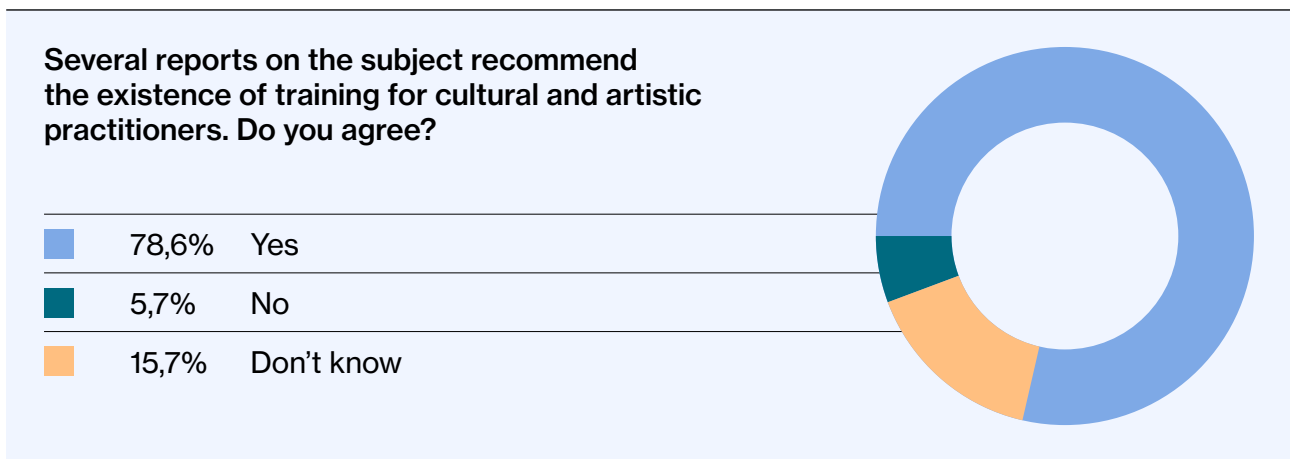
After the open responses, the survey asked cultural agents to make concrete choices (priorities) from a possible range of interventions. It should be noted that participants could choose one, several or all of the suggested interventions.

Which of the following concrete interventions or initiatives do you think should be prioritised?	No. of responses
Training.	74
Specialised consultancy services.	72
Resource centre/shared information/bank of good practices.	72
New lines of complementary support.	59
Specific support for the purchase of ecological materials and consumables.	49
Specific support for sustainable mobility in the context of national and international circulation.	48
Increased funding for the adoption of ecological and sustainable practices.	44
Support for hiring specialised professionals/producers or project managers specialised in sustainability.	36
Valorisation (as a tender assessment criterion) of the adoption of ecological and sustainable practices.	35
Systematised information on environmentally friendly services.	32
Direct funding.	32
Specific support for slow mobility.	23
Financing through reimbursement of 110% of verified expenses.	22
Interest-free lines of credit.	7

Table 8. Categories of analysis and no. of responses regarding the prioritisation of interventions or initiatives.

There is a clear predominance of three interventions, all with more than 70 responses: “Specialised consultancy services”, “Resource centre/shared information/bank of good practices”, and “Training”, all of which are somehow related to a **need for improvement, learning, skills acquisition or specialisation** in the sector when it comes to sustainability issues. In fact, 80% of respondents agree with the recommendation that cultural professionals should be trained in this area.

These measures are more strongly defended than a second group, although also with a high number of responses: “New lines of complementary support” with 59 responses, or “Specific support for the purchase of ecological materials and consumables”, “Specific support for sustainable mobility in the context of national and international circulation” and “Increased funding for the adoption of ecological and sustainable practices”, all with more than 40 responses.



Graph 11. Level of agreement (in %) regarding the provision of training on the subject.

Regarding the types of training, the responses were more or less evenly distributed, with a slight predominance in production and management processes.

Options	No. of responses
Training focussed on the production/management of artistic and cultural projects.	81
Training focussed on creative and/or programming processes.	70
General awareness-raising training.	62
Training focussed on adapting venues.	60
Training on the circular economy.	57
Ongoing coaching and support.	51
Training focussed on institutional change in cultural and artistic structures.	48
Seminars or workshops for critical reflection and sharing.	46
Training focussed on related operations (bar, ticket office, energy, waste, etc.).	44
Training on disaster and emergency response.	16

Table 9. Categories of analysis and no. of responses relating to types of training.

3. CULTURAL POLICIES VIS-À-VIS THE ECOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE



As this is an exploratory study, it is wise to avoid an overly directive or deterministic approach to what it might suggest in terms of public policy. In fact, at this point, it is worth recalling what was said in the introduction, and in a way expressed in the title of the document, a part for the whole: this is a relatively pioneering study in Portugal, whose conclusions, although shedding light on several relevant aspects of the important intersection between the arts and environmental concerns, must be carefully framed and circumscribed, precisely because of their prospective nature. Similarly, the fact that this was a relatively new question for the cultural agents who participated in the study is not insignificant. We have already had occasion to allude to the signs of the arts and cultural sector's lack of preparation in the environmental field revealed by the study, so it is appropriate to recall them here at a time when we are looking for clues to inform future cultural policies.

It should also be pointed out that the following considerations on cultural policy do not stem exclusively from analysing the responses to the survey but are also substantiated by an extensive bibliographical and documentary review; by the constant dialogue that the team has maintained with cultural agents and experts in this field, both national and foreign; and, above all, by the knowledge that the team has accumulated in leading an education and research agenda dedicated to these issues.

3.1. CULTURAL POLICY AND THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: CHALLENGES AND POSITIONINGS

The rationale for involving cultural policy in the ecological debate and the environmental emergency can be sought both **outside** and **within** cultural policy.

From the standpoint of the social and political relevance of the issue, there are numerous, constant and increasingly alarming calls from panels of scientists and non-governmental organisations for government intervention in this matter. We can and should trace the origins of a concern with sustainability *lato sensu* back to the United Nations Conference in 1972 (First Earth Summit) and, above all, to the famous Brundtland Report of 1987, which coined the most widely quoted definition of sustainable development: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Recalling this definition, which has been widely debated and updated, would serve to point out the need to assess whether, in the light of climate change and in the context of the environmental and ecological emergency, national cultural policies, as they are defined today, are designed to meet the overarching challenge of sustainability, that is, whether they respond to the needs of the artists, cultural professionals and citizens of the present as much as they create the conditions for those of the future. This is, of course, a far-reaching challenge that cannot be adequately addressed in a limited study of this kind. But we would be remiss if we did not begin by pointing out the broad scope of the challenge that the very idea of sustainability poses for the formulation of cultural policy. When we debate the balance between supporting the more established cultural milieu versus the “emerging” cultural agents (a problematic definition, as we know...), we are, in a sense, considering the sustainability and scope of cultural policy.

The profound impacts of the arts and culture, the current, existing and future audiences, the ideas of cultural democracy and the right to culture – all these axes can be (re)equated in the light of the concept of sustainability. This is culture as “an infinite task”, as referred to in the Porto Santo Charter: “Cultures are an infinite task that we receive as a legacy and on which we work on (conserving and innovating) in order to transmit it to the following generations (who will continue this process)”. However, the time horizon of this action has been dramatically extended by the current environmental crisis. Some environmentalist discourses even denounce our time as a “tyranny of the now”: an era of pathological short-term thinking, totally incompatible with the overwhelming temporality of the climate and environmental crisis. Let us (conveniently) dwell a little on this broader reflection in order to confront the **particular temporality of the ecological question**. Indeed, the ecological debate tends to oscillate between unfathomable horizons (apocalypse and extinction narratives) and the imposition of immediate sacrifices. The idea that we have to “pay today” for a future benefit is only partially accurate (many – if not all, to varying degrees – are already suffering the direct consequences of a suffocated and exploited planet) and also tends to make us less responsible for the future, either because it is unattainable, distant, abstract, or because it

has already been fatally decided/condemned. A fascinating and unorthodox view of time will, however, lead us to look at the future differently. How long is the long term? If humanity has “colonised the future”⁹, treating it as a distant colonial outpost, where it can deposit ecological degradation and technological risk, is this not a shocking equivalence with the colonial policy of “terra nullius”? This equivalence seems fully justified, given the tension between the designations “Anthropocene” and “Capitalocene” (Moore, 2016); or the reminder by Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, for whom the “apocalypse” or the “end of the world” (recurring metaphors in environmental discussions) would have arrived long ago for the “indigenous peoples of North America, the Incas or the Aztecs”, at the time of the European colonial invasions (2014, p.221). Decolonial thinking is, in fact, central to thinking about the ecological crisis: to place it properly on a temporal plane and on the plane of historical responsibility, and to counterbalance the ubiquitous messages offering simple, “green” solutions, invariably associated with the technical, technological or behavioural dimensions, emphasising individual agency rather than the responsibility of certain states, companies and economic-financial conglomerates, or segments of the population. Invoking the politics of “terra nullius” to reflect on the current environmental crisis would then lead us to consider “tempus nullius” – the future seen as nobody’s time. Since future generations cannot ask anything of us (because they are not yet born), their rights are not supported by the choices of the present. Is the “right to the future” outside the scope of cultural policy, or could it become part of it?¹⁰

Once again, this study cannot fully answer these questions, but it does not seek to avoid them. In reality, a cultural policy based on the idea of sustainability will necessarily have to position itself in terms of the timeframe in which it is planned, which is undoubtedly a difficult task in a field where the political horizon of a parliamentary term is sometimes a sufficient constraint on the interventions intended. But perhaps it is worth distinguishing between a policy that is concretely designed with present and future generations in mind – a policy that has an extended timeframe but acts in the present – and a policy that assigns to the abstract idea of the future a responsibility that it is unable or unwilling to accommodate in its current plans. Morton (2021, p.40) warns us of the “gravity well” in which we can trap politics and ethics if the future is the temporality chosen to start “being ecological” – we run the risk of neglecting the multiple forms of ecological coexistence that the present allows, and to some extent already contains, in favour of the seductive idea of a redemptive future in which an “ecological politics” is projected. (See the tendency of political rhetoric to name targets: by 2030, by 2050...).

At a theoretical and philosophical level, the question arises as to whether cultural policies should consider not only the gigantic temporality of the ecological emergency but also its **spatiality**. The (planetary) spatiality of the ecological question would no longer imply that cultural policy options are framed within the space of the European Union or

9 Expression by Roman Krznaric, *The Long Now*. Accessible at: www.longnow.org

10 At first glance, this may seem like an esoteric idea, but it is possible to detect some “weak signs” of this tendency to consider the future in the language of some official documents/manifestos (for example, the Pact for the Future of Humanity, by the United Cities and Local Governments), and in the profusion of calls for the creation of “Ministries of the Future”.

justified by “historical ties”, in the case of Portugal, for example, in the context of the CPLP¹¹. They would have to reflect a planetary vision that recognises the profound interdependencies of the globalised world, but above all, the inequalities in terms of environmental justice and the need to move away from the centrality of the human towards a reference to “Gaia” and an echo of concern for human and non-human ways of life. In this context, we recall a recent comment on the coverage of drought in the context of climate change underlining that each country “nationalises” its drought as if it were confined to the territory of a single state. This “spatial atrophy” leads to a dangerous closure to transcontinental climate disasters: “The sovereignist, nationalist, securitarian and reactionary withdrawal makes us live in an atrophied world, even if it is more than ever necessary to move to a planetary scale. Herein lies the fundamental reason for a striking impotence. (...) Planetary as a response to ecological challenges is a Copernican turn” (Guerreiro, 2023). We are not suggesting that the cultural dimension has been included or even suggested in this reflection. However, since cultural policy is a public policy, since it has considerable autonomy from European integration (in the logic of subsidiarity), and since it is a public policy with particular responsibilities in the interpretation and constant reinterpretation of democracy and imagination, it is exciting to speculate (and that is the right verb...) about what could be reconfigured in cultural policy if it reflected planetary becoming.

A concern with sustainability *lato sensu*, which we are addressing here, also stems, in a more prosaic way, from the critical transposition of the principles and guidelines contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in particular, in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Paris Agreement (2015) translated the principles of the 2030 Agenda into an actionable set from the governmental sphere and is widely considered one of the most decisive milestones in the field. Since then, the issue has been on the global media agenda, with peaks of visibility (such as the phenomenon of Fridays For Future, spearheaded by Greta Thunberg) and systematically highlighted as an area where citizens, especially young people, are demanding action from their governments. It is at this point that we focus on the challenges these developments pose for cultural policies, especially as we are already amid the European Green Deal, which aims to make Europe the first climate neutral continent by 2050. In a recent publication, the European Commission explicitly states that “the European Green Deal (...) highlights the importance of the inclusion of the cultural sector in the implementation of specific and systematic efforts” towards the desired reality of a “zero carbon” Europe (VoC, 2023, p.12).

However, while it is true that, since the United Nations first produced a report on the state of environmental law (in 2019), there has been a significant increase in the creation of laws in this area (with more than 5,000 climate policies in force around the world, according to the [Climate Policy Database](#)), it is no less true that culture was not one of the sectors

11 The Community of Portuguese Language Countries, also known as the Lusophone Community is an international organisation and political association of Lusophone nations across four continents, where Portuguese is an official language.

initially identified as central to the transition¹². In other words, while awareness of climate change in particular and the ecological emergency in general has increased, this has not had an immediate effect on the formulation of policies for the cultural sector. This is borne out, for example, by the article Culture: The Ultimate Renewable Resource to Tackle Climate Change. Although this is a complex problem situated at the intersection of science, ethics, society, education and, of course, culture, the latter remains an undervalued dimension. Luderer (2021) confirms that the **Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations do not “make cultural issues visible”** and that “they are barely present in public policy measures in Portugal”. More recently, the report “Reshaping Policies for Creativity” (UNESCO, 2022) again emphasises that **culture is underused in climate action and that its role in the ecological transition is systematically undervalued**. Specifically, at least since the “D’Art Report – The Arts and Environmental Sustainability, an International Overview” (2014), we have known that, globally, very few governments and arts and culture funding bodies explicitly stated environmental concerns, and of those that did, the initiatives were mainly thematic or campaigns to reduce energy consumption. The ecological issue and the environmental emergency were largely absent from the scope of existing cultural policies, and there was no explicit commitment to change this situation in the formulation of future policies. However, according to Iphigenia Taxopoulou, there was “one notable exception”.

In 2012, the Arts Council England, England’s national agency for creativity and culture, became the first government cultural body internationally to include environmental accountability and policy as part of its funding agreements (...). This pioneering intervention required arts and cultural organisations regularly funded by Arts Council England to submit annual environmental impact data and [led to the adoption of] relevant policies and action plans. The programme’s ambition was to help the sector reduce its carbon footprint and to do so while enabling arts and culture to play a leading role in society concerning sustainability and climate change (Taxopoulou, 2023).

We will have occasion (in separate publications) to discuss and problematise the role of the UK, Arts Council England and some of the pioneering independent organisations in this field in disseminating this defence of the direct involvement of the arts sector in the ecological crisis. For now, we are only interested in contextualising their role by pointing out the arrival of this important intersection in the sphere of government and, more specifically, in the sphere of action of an entity comparable to DGARTES.

Also, according to Taxopoulou, and based on data collected within the framework of the partnership established between Arts Council England and the reference organisation Julie’s Bicycle, the programme launched by the body responsible for supporting the arts has already enabled the participating organisations to collectively reduce energy consumption by almost 25% and cut carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by 35%.

¹² The sectors prioritised were energy, transport, agriculture, forestry, industry, construction and waste management.

Today, it is safe to say that “there is an emerging consensus among government ministries and national arts bodies: that culture policy must be linked to environment policy” (Julie’s Bicycle, 2021, p.2).

The concrete (albeit limited) impact in the fight against climate change, the opportunities offered by a temporal and spatial reframing, and the challenges set out in various guidelines and legislation in this field are all factors that strongly favour the involvement of cultural policies in the ecological and environmental issues. To these reasons we must add the **greater legitimacy that comes from listening to the positionings and discourses of the sector**, which we analysed in the previous point, and which (even if they express some reservations and fears that are perfectly understandable in the Portuguese context) patently support a more explicit and robust link between cultural policies, artistic practices and the multiple challenges of sustainability.

DGARTES/MC’s intervention in this area raises concerns stemming from the fact that culture remains a structurally weak area of public policy in Portugal compared to other sectors with greater political, economic and mediatic power (Ferrão, 2015), and with relatively little influence on the macro-political ‘agenda’ (Barbieri, 2012). This structurally weak place that culture occupies at the governmental level and on the political agenda should lead to a weighing up of interventions that can and should be carried out from within the sector, and those that, with the sector in mind, should preferably be based on a transversal strategy shared with other areas of society and governance.

These concerns can be justified in two ways. On the one hand, we must recognise the debatable history of “macro” arguments (economic, for example), with a strong instrumental slant, in legitimising public investment in culture; on the other hand, we must understand that this is, in fact, a motivation outside the field of arts and culture, so that any cultural policy that wishes to intervene in the field of environmental sustainability must do so with sufficient caution to avoid the sector being invaded by objectives that are (intrinsically) external to it. This is an important point, given the discussions and fears of instrumentalisation and conditioning of artistic freedom that we mentioned earlier. Basically, it is about ensuring that such an intervention is carried out while mobilising **sufficient resources and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating government action** and, above all, that it is **complementary to other cultural policy measures anchored in the intrinsic value of culture and its social essentiality**.

Beyond all these aspects, which are of varying degrees of importance, we wish to suggest that the intersection between the field of arts and culture and the ecological issue is also justified by reasons **internal** to the field of culture itself.

This justification is based on the recognition of the opportunity to confront the ecological imperative with cultural policies. Firstly, because this encounter/confrontation is taking place at a “pivotal point” in cultural management (Rodrigues, 2024), which is particularly favourable to rethinking the ethical premises and professional practices on which all cultural intermediation is based; a point which, given the dilemmas and challenges of environmental sustainability, invites a review of the (expansionist) assumptions and processes (high mobility, constant creation of the “new”, for example) on which the field has been based. Finally, it is a point at which there is an increasing desire to question paradigms inherited from the 20th

century, which coexist with new discourses on cultural policy and with demands for “shared policies”, that is, cultural policies that are co-constructed between government, experts and knowledge, as well as artistic and social organisations.

The ecological issue and the environmental emergency can thus be seen as a major **disruptor** of the *modi operandi* of the arts and culture sector, challenging the assumptions of cultural policies, funding mechanisms, creation, production and dissemination practices, and related management models. Indeed, the ecological imperative can be seen as challenging these *modi operandi* on at least three levels:

- (a) in the **mobility** practices on which the sector largely depends (mobility of artists and cultural professionals; mobility of programmers, curators and audiences; circulation of works and shows; dynamics of internationalisation and transnational collaboration, etc.);
- (b) in the suitability and adaptation of cultural **infrastructures** (energy behaviour of existing and projected buildings, connection to the surrounding environment/territory, use of resources, waste management, etc.)
- (c) in the **processes of artistic creation** and the means and **modes of production** (design practices, selection and use of materials, energy and resource consumption, means of communication, working rhythms, organisational and leadership models, etc.).

To consider the possibility of reviewing the ethical premises and practical processes underlying these three levels is to recognise the potential for change or, in other words, to welcome the possibility of **innovation** in cultural policy. We do not wish to gloss over the difficulties that such a possibility will entail. Firstly, because there are still several well-known barriers to innovation in the cultural sector (Bonet & González-Piñero, 2021), such as the culture of short-term funding, the persistence of conservative power dynamics, or the fragmentation of the sector itself into a myriad of micro-organisations. But also because cultural policies in Portugal have proven to be mainly “continuous, the result of processes that are more cumulative and reactive than transformative, uncritical and hardly up-to-date” (Quintela & Rodrigues, 2020). Actually, in Portugal, “the conception and structuring of public policies, historically indebted to the French model, is still deeply traditionalist”, and its responses have been somewhat “blocked by a lack of human and financial resources” (ibidem).

At this point, our analysis reveals a paradox: whilst highlighting the opportunity of the ecological crisis as a lever for designing appropriate and ambitious cultural policies – capable of responding to the multiple and diverse dilemmas and challenges posed by a crisis of such dimensions – it also reveals the difficulties of adopting this perspective. It is important to note that we do not intend here to repeat “the tired mantra of ‘crisis as an opportunity’”, nor do we intend to use the transformative arguments of the environmental and ecological movements in favour of an “optimistic – and naive – overvaluation of the crisis as a chance to redeem capitalism, if not as a revolutionary opportunity (Badiou, 2020)” (Rodrigues, 2024). Nevertheless, it seems to us that it would not be extravagant to relate the ecological crisis to some of the faint signs and emerging discourses that project possibilities and desires for change, for another “world to come” (Danowski & Viveiros de Castro, 2023).

We are not the only ones who see the ecological transition in this way: several voices (echoed in our survey) have pointed out that in the case of the environmental crisis, it is less a transition than a profound transformation, “which requires openness to different understandings, epistemologies and practices” (Hirvi-Ijäs, Kanerva and Mäenpää, 2022, p. 23).

We believe that the public debate on the ecological transition has focussed disproportionately on operational aspects (which energy sources to use, how to manage water and waste, etc.). Yet, as we now know, this debate is only seemingly about operational aspects: it is linked to the value systems that guide modern societies and challenges the very notion of modernity since it was largely built on a belief in the ideas of humanism, individual freedom, unlimited growth and progress. Humanity’s technical prowess seemed to legitimise total control over the environment/nature, an idea still appearing today in techno-optimist discourses on ecological transition. Opening up spaces for reflection, debate and work on ecological transitions in the context of the arts means, among other things, resisting the dominance of an instrumental rationality that sees technical and technological progress as a panacea for all problems and that can suggest “shortcuts” for adaptation with little impact on what is really at stake when we talk about transition/transformation. In other words, a cultural sector that does not change the way it works but starts reporting on its carbon emissions will be a cultural sector that is **more compliant than transformative**.

We need a comprehensive approach to the climate issue that leads to deeper levels of thought and action, at the risk of embarking on an energy transition strategy dictated by the matrices of capitalism and reducing the theory of change to a superficial interpretation incapable of making the necessary shift. The discussion thus goes beyond the mere replacement of resources with green alternatives to question the sustainability of the processes and modes of operation inherent in the new cultural policies.¹³

Embracing the challenge of environmental sustainability in cultural policy also means – and we hope this document will contribute to this – broadening and deepening the discussion, moving away from preconceived notions that sustainability means reducing, sacrificing or even ending certain cultural and artistic activities.

Embracing the challenge of environmental sustainability in cultural policy would also mean making the most of the current circumstances and challenges to **renew the political legitimacy of this area of governance**, which has been significantly affected by the erosion of the social contract that has publicly justified public funding of culture since the post-war period. Finally, given what has already been said about the cultural rights of the future and the particular temporality of the environmental issue, updating cultural policies in line with these challenges is an opportunity to align them with the major civic concerns of our time and to offer a mobilising response to the concerns of younger people in particular.

13 Ana Carvalhosa, a postgraduate student in “Cultural Management and Sustainability” at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Coimbra.

If we accept the idea that this is an opportune moment to introduce innovations in cultural policy, we need to reflect on the different positionings that the Directorate-General for the Arts and the Ministry of Culture could adopt. Based on the types of innovation defined by Xavier Torrens (2021), there are two possible paths: one with a **reformist** orientation, which would seek to incorporate ecological and sustainability concerns into the existing cultural policy model in general and the support mechanisms for the performing arts in particular; the other with a **disruptive** orientation, which would seek to introduce significant changes in the premises and processes on which public cultural policy in Portugal is based.

The table below effectively summarises the different degrees of change – and consequent scope for innovation – of each option listed above.

Scope for innovation	Reformist policies	Disruptive policies
Minor	Updated policies	Emergent policies
Major	Reinvented politics	New policies

Table 10. Typologies of innovation in culture. Source: Torrens (2021).

In short, Torrens defines reformist policies as either updated (less far-reaching) or reinvented (more far-reaching). Updated reformist policies would be those that build on a pre-existing cultural policy and introduce less far-reaching reforms. In this case, there is no paradigm shift but rather an incremental adjustment. By contrast, reinvented reformist policies build on a previous cultural policy and introduce a major reform. This would lead to a renewal or mutation of its foundations, a change of paradigm or conceptual model. On the other side are disruptive policies, which are divided into emergent (less far-reaching) and new (more far-reaching). Emergent disruptive policies, as their name suggests, break with established paradigms and propose new/different models based on an agenda adopted by the government. If Torrens admits that they are less far-reaching, it is because they have not yet reached sufficient maturity in the emergence phase. This would be the next stage: a new disruptive policy would be the consolidation of a truly new cultural policy in relation to the existing ones. An additional hypothesis, perhaps more in line with the historical characteristics of Portuguese cultural policy, would be the introduction of “discontinuous incremental innovations”¹⁴, which could allow for a compromise between the lifecycle of policies, their stability and the introduction of differentiating elements.

The schematic nature of this distinction is typical of theoretical and analytical discourse and should not prevent us from considering it relevant. This issue presents DGARTES/MC with the need to decide on the scope and dimension of the intervention it wishes to introduce

14 In the wise words of Lluís Bonet (in an oral address to the 31st Congress of the ENCATC in Helsinki on the 13th of October 2023).

into Portuguese cultural policy. In this sense, we believe that this study, carried out in partnership with CEIS20 – University of Coimbra, is a first step to inform this decision on the part of DGARTES and to suggest the next steps and actions (which will be materialised in the next point), but it does not exhaust the possibility of adopting further measures in the future (also following developments on the ground) and of drawing up an Action Plan for this sector, with a defined timeframe, methods of public scrutiny, among other aspects. It should also be emphasised that the objectives to be achieved in this area will also depend on the **additional financial investment** that DGARTES/MC may decide to make. The European Commission itself recognises that “great part of the responsibility” for the cultural sector’s ability to contribute to an “endeavour as gigantic as the one all societies face today” lies “in the political will of those who determine how culture is financed” (VoC, 2023, p.16). They even call on the Member States to rise to the challenge: “Will the leaders of EU Member States follow the initiatives of the European Commission (...) and financially support the cultural sector, to be able to develop its forces for this ambitious, unprecedented effort?” (VoC, 2023, p.23).

Disregarding the aspects relating to future financial investment, this should not prevent DGARTES/MC from leading, training and investing to ensure that the sector has the scale of intervention needed to meet the challenge of the ecological transition, bearing in mind the warnings that “small, fragmented steps” will not be enough (VoC, 2023, p.14). In truth, by establishing the partnership that made this study possible, DGARTES has, in a way, already set itself on the virtuous path of “transparency and clarity in the sharing of responsibilities” and “the involvement of cultural professionals”. This would be a similar path to that followed by other countries, but with important updates resulting from the decade that elapsed between the first initiatives in the countries considered pioneers in this field. For example, it is now known that there was an excessive focus on “data” and “practical advice”, sometimes poorly substantiated and insensitive to the contexts/territories of application. At that time, about a decade ago, the first interventions consisted of commissioning a series of practical guides. The aim was to raise the environmental ambition of the cultural sector by producing data, sharing information and offering advice on how to reduce emissions. One of the first guides was published in 2008 – “Green Theatre: Taking Action on Climate Change”, and involved several partners, including Arts Council England. The success of this guide led to others being produced, with different sectoral focuses, visual arts, music, fashion, etc. Julie’s Bicycle’s involvement dates back to this time, initially specialising in music and then becoming increasingly active in all cultural sectors. Today, it is one of the most respected organisations in the field, operating globally and providing consultancy services in the UK and internationally. Only after this initial phase did Arts Council England decide to make a major commitment to the environment, launching its first environmental action programme in 2012, more than a decade ago. The Arts Council’s experience is only one of many that have followed, and it takes place in a political, economic and social context that is very different from Portugal’s, so caution is needed in the unreflective transposition of apparently well-established “good practices”, a path that this report does not necessarily follow. As has become clear from listening to the positioning of the practitioners, the constraints, fears and conflicts they have identified, it is **absolutely essential to adapt any policies and measures to the Portuguese context**, taking

into account the specific historical, geographical and economic circumstances and reflecting on the different structuring of artistic ecosystems in different countries. Nevertheless, we should not ignore the learning opportunities offered by this pioneering leadership. To this end, we would like to propose a series of reflections more than ten years after the first measures and initiatives mentioned.

It is worth noting, for example, that in the UK, it was initially decided to include new reporting requirements in the support mechanisms, as well as obligations to produce action plans, requirements that are still in place today in the National Portfolio Organisations support system (the closest thing to Sustained Support in Portugal). However, the results of this study, combined with the evolution of the international debate, do not support the idea that this necessarily has to be the first step. In our view, it would be highly inadvisable for DGARTES initiatives in this area to start or focus on introducing new requirements in the application process for funding, which is already so unstable and in need of consolidation. As will be explained in the next section (typologies of intervention), it would be more prudent to consider that the introduction of specific sustainability criteria or reporting requirements (reports and data) on the part of the beneficiary organisations could be a second phase of DGARTES intervention. It is perhaps difficult to reconcile the urgency of intervention with the suggestion that measures should be progressive over time. This is another of the paradoxes introduced by the ecological issue: the need to **balance the urgency of ecological/environmental/climatic intervention against the duty to avoid hasty or reactive measures**, whose impact on the (fragile) Portuguese artistic and cultural ecosystem could be very significant. It will not be difficult to introduce individual initiatives or measures based, for example, on the actions of other governments in the European context. But the scale of the intended innovation, as we have seen, and the demand for new logics of intersectoral cooperation, solidarity and articulation between cultural agents and government action depend on a reasoned, contextualised, concerted, informed and progressive approach:

- **Reasoned** action: anchored in listening to the positionings, needs and expectations expressed by the sector and described in this study;
- **Contextualised** action: that shows an effort to adapt to the national context, to the specificities and weaknesses of the performing arts sector in Portugal, respecting its historico-geographical circumstances, its historical responsibilities and its economic and structural constraints;
- **Concerted** action: incorporating contributions and dialogue with organisations representing the sector;
- **Informed** action: recognising the relative volatility and speed of the information and technical and scientific evidence that underpin action in this field and, in this sense, establishing the means and mechanisms for its constant updating, namely by updating this study and evaluating and monitoring the interventions to be implemented;
- **Progressive** action: reconciling environmental urgency with a timescale for intervention and change that can be accommodated by cultural practitioners working at different scales and with different resources.

3.2. CULTURAL POLICY AND THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS: AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The cultural sector has the right mindset but lacks tools, competencies, data and transparency as well as financial resources (adapted from VoC, 2023, p.17).

Here, we will list some initiatives or measures that could be adopted in the near future by DGARTES without prejudice to the broader reflection that has been made here on the opportunity for innovation in cultural policies based on the ecological challenge.

An interpretation of the survey's conclusions, albeit with the mentioned caveats, allows us to propose several typologies of intervention, which translate into different possibilities for positioning and action on the part of DGARTES and/or the Ministry of Culture. These are presented here in no predetermined order since their relative hierarchisation is a matter for decision-makers and is beyond the scope of this work. Nonetheless, we will not fail to point out those areas of intervention that seem to us to be priorities or to be more consolidated according to the results of the study and the international debate, namely:

- A. Training/Capacity-Building;**
- B. Research, Information and Data Collection;**
- C. Monitoring and Evaluation;**
- D. Funding;**
- E. International cooperation and environmental justice;**
- F. Innovation, experimentation and pilot initiatives.**

A. TRAINING/CAPACITY-BUILDING

Training and capacity-building is one of the most obvious areas in which DGARTES could intervene, directly and/or indirectly. It is justified primarily by the data revealed by this study, where lack of knowledge appears to be one of the main barriers to more sustainable practices and organisations. It is also one of the areas in which there is a clear expectation that DGARTES will intervene, and it is an objective requirement for drawing up internal sustainability policies, which more than 90% of arts organisations say they are interested in implementing (see pages 38 and 39). Another justification for investing in improving knowledge and providing specialised training is perhaps more difficult to quantify but was also evident in this survey: the relative lack of familiarity with environmental sustainability beyond a superficial knowledge of its topicality and relevance, the recurrence of misconceptions and the persistence of misunderstandings (for example, the ease with which some respondents cite replacing paper with a digital device as an “environmentally friendly” measure).

International experience and recent recommendations also suggest that investment in knowledge and training is essential to address the environmental challenge. In the case of the UK mentioned earlier, Arts Council England “has invested in a vast programme of workshops, webinars, research, guidance and free resources that has taken the form of a sophisticated support system” (Taxopoulou, 2023, p.20). In neighbouring Spain, Catalonia has excelled in moving the debate forward, in a similar format to Portugal – the authorities (regional, in this case) have begun to establish partnerships with universities and research centres that can help government officials and the sector think about the issue, and then draw up an action plan. In Environmental Leadership in the Catalan Cultural and Creative Sector, the reference to the importance of promoting knowledge and training is unequivocal and quite identical to the one we present here: “25% of respondents say that a lack of knowledge in this area is the main reason for their cultural organisation’s inaction. If we add to this figure the 35% who say they have not even considered it, it is easy to conclude that encouraging knowledge will make it possible to exponentially increase action in the environmental field and generate new skills in the sector’s workforce” (Martinez, 2020, p.54). The VoC report explicitly recommends to “invest in training cultural professionals in climate literacy” and to “build competencies in sustainability and greening in culture” by creating and supporting “interdisciplinary training programmes” on the ecological transition (VoC, 2023, p.30).

Regarding formats, scope, themes and typologies, the survey revealed particular needs in the production/management dimensions of artistic and cultural projects, and in the creation and/or programming processes.

To summarise, a comprehensive training/capacity-building strategy should take into account:

- the distinction between information and knowledge, not mistaking or conflating the dissemination of practical guidelines, the provision of resources/guides/tools, with artistic and intellectual exploration, reflection and debate. As we have seen through this study, the ecological and environmental crisis raises dilemmas and contradictions of an ethical and political nature, which question not only the modes of doing things in the cultural field but also how they are justified and presented, so the exclusive or predominant focus on the dissemination of toolkits and “actions” does not cover the spectrum of needs that the issue raises in terms of knowledge and skills, nor does it adequately inform the complex deontological options that artistic creation, cultural management and cultural policy face;
- the need to promote different entry points and levels of specialisation. Thus, there is a need both for awareness-raising initiatives of a more general nature, of short duration and with a high potential for replication, and for more in-depth training strategies, developing other types of reflexive skills and adapted to different professional segments (artists, technicians, communication and mediation professionals, producers, managers, among others) and levels of responsibility (direction, administration, production, mediation and execution). It is considered useful to have different formats, durations and recipients, and to explicitly include training aimed at artistic and executive directors, professionals linked to the production and management of cultural facilities, to strengthen the capacity and quality of leadership and governance in cultural organisations.

B. RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND DATA COLLECTION

Another area/dimension in which DGARTES could intervene is the promotion of research and data collection, ideally combining support for independent research with its own systematic data collection, mutually reinforcing activities that contribute to decision-making and indirectly expand the range of knowledge in the sector. These activities should include the involvement of cultural professionals themselves, in a way that does not lead to an excessive workload for them, taking into account the small size of teams in the sector, which is known to be mostly made up of micro-organisations. If necessary, the organisations' size should be considered in the processes of sharing data collection efforts.

The tasks of information (support to the sector) and research (mediation between the sector and public policies) should ideally be permanently linked, so it might be interesting for DGARTES/MC to consider setting up an initiative similar to the one recently announced by the German government, that establishes a "Green Culture Contact Point" for ecological transformation, ideally by assigning a dedicated team (internal and external) and linking information efforts with data collection and research, thus saving time and resources and optimising synergies between these fundamental activities.

DGARTES could also make efforts to share data, information and research with its national and international partners, increase its participation in European projects, conferences and debate forums, and expand the team of experts who regularly represent the country internationally in initiatives such as the Compendium (Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends | Culture Policy Database).

C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DGARTES could strengthen and legitimise its leadership role by positioning itself as an active body in the ecological transition. To this end, it could conduct an environmental diagnosis of its own activities and actions as a public organisation, which would form the basis for the subsequent development of an action plan.

DGARTES could develop specialised monitoring teams, possibly external or with external partners, which would work closely with the beneficiary structures in the sector, constituting simultaneously support points and a coherent data collection, monitoring and evaluation network, which would hopefully inform and fine-tune DGARTES' strategy in this area. The establishment of this network of experts (possibly after training – see section A) is crucial as it is now recognised that “the mechanisms for measuring and reporting carbon footprints are complex” (VoC, 2023, p.49), and it is known that providing information is not enough; mediation and support are needed. DGARTES could also support initiatives to implement tools that already exist in other languages and promote their adaptation to the Portuguese context. However, it is known from some foreign case studies that the experience of small structures in using practical guides/guidelines and/or data collection and reporting mechanisms has been less relevant to organisational change in these structures than participation in awareness-raising activities and sharing of practical skills in workshops. This empirical evidence, although limited, cautions against collection and reporting requirements, especially when they are targeted at micro-organisations, as mentioned in section B.

D. FUNDING

As stated on page 58, the level of financial investment that DGARTES/MC are able to mobilise for this area is critical towards a sector better prepared for the ecological transition, given the pre-existing vulnerabilities that have been exacerbated by the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The document produced within the framework of the Structured Dialogue with the sector, which we have referred to, even highlights the paradox that the economic fragility and vulnerability of the cultural sector coexist with the fact that it has been “nominated as key drivers for economic growth and job creation” (VoC, 2023, p.22). DGARTES must pay attention to these discrepancies between the formulation of objectives, the rhetoric associated with the EU's political positioning and the Portuguese reality, bridging gaps and working towards social cohesion. The results of this survey, due to the pluralistic understanding of sustainability and the interdependence between environmental and social sustainability, are a constant reminder of the need to articulate social protection, funding levels and new objectives, demands or initiatives. We are not exaggerating: adequate funding for the sector is undoubtedly an indispensable basis for supporting the transition and is even made a requirement in certain documents, recognising that the ecological transition in the cultural sector needs “courageous, competent funding” (VoC, 2023, p.14). But the level of funding is not the only point we want to emphasise. There are other complementary recommendations and lines of intervention:

- Ensure flexibility in funding formats and mechanisms so that environmental sustainability requirements do not introduce unnecessary rigidity or bureaucracy into existing or future support mechanisms; support should be based on trust and flexibility rather than control and restriction. The strengthening and refinement of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (see point C) will be an ally in this regard;
- Consider the importance of long-term funding and project lifecycles to avoid the vicious circle created by the constant demand for new projects/creations (VoC, 2023, p.49);
- Training those involved in the entire funding cycle to raise awareness of the importance of innovation and risk in the face of the climate emergency, preventing current methods of categorisation and evaluation from having a “bottleneck” effect;
- Create new support mechanisms in the form of incentives for multisectoral and/or intergenerational artistic and cultural projects that include objectives or components associated with environmental awareness;
- Create new support mechanisms in the form of incentives for artistic and cultural projects based on collaborations with scientists, science communicators, educators, etc.;
- Progressively co-construct and define criteria and guidelines for reducing energy consumption and the negative environmental impacts of cultural facilities and activities;
- Improve the support mechanisms for domestic circulation, in particular through the established networks such as RTCP, in which we see a very relevant potential from the point of view of environmental sustainability. Ensure more rational travel throughout the territory, acting on the basis of density/proximity rather than dispersion, actively combating exclusive programming strategies, promoting audience development and citizen participation;
- Monitor the inclusion of environmental sustainability criteria in public procurement processes for services and products, ensuring that they are appropriate for the cultural sector.

Finally, it is advisable for DGARTES/MC to actively seek out opportunities to obtain funding for this area, specifically through European funds or interministerial/intersectoral cooperation.

E. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

International and transnational cooperation and the mobility of artists and cultural professionals is one of the areas most directly involved in the demands for environmental sustainability and fair practices. It is also one of the areas where cultural policy initiatives most clearly extend beyond national territories, requiring understanding and attention at the symbolic (historical, cultural and diplomatic relations), political (migration policies, visas), social (social rights and working conditions), ethical (environmental justice, historical reparations, global imbalances and inequalities) and professional (access to markets, networks and platforms) levels. Finally, this is one of the areas where the broader sustainability debate in culture most clearly needs rigour and contextualisation. What is needed is a sophisticated, contextualised and socially sensitive reflection that does not necessarily accept as valid (for everyone) ideas that are defended as “good practice” (by some), regardless of their degree of international diffusion or popularity. By way of example, if in certain contexts and for some people “sustainability” is synonymous with “degrowth”, for others it is (still) about the right to show/share their work, to travel, to embark on the processes of exchange, knowledge and discovery embodied in exchange programmes, tours, residencies, etc. This is why this section is only brief (in this document), although it has ample space on this team’s research agenda.

Nevertheless, it is recommended:

- That DGARTES adopt measures to protect the idea that mobility is an integral aspect of cultural rights, as defined in international human rights treaties, the guarantee of which must be ensured and assumed as a public responsibility;
- That DGARTES promote and support transnational cooperation programmes, projects and initiatives, not only intending to internationalise the careers of cultural professionals but also given that mobility contributes to freedom of expression, artistic freedom and cultural diversity;
- That DGARTES progressively incorporate in its international cooperation programmes and support mechanisms the advocacy of lasting cooperation based on trust, reciprocity and fair exchange;
- That DGARTES deepen strategic cooperation in the context of the CPLP, relations between Portugal and Brazil, relations between Portugal and various African countries through programmes such as Iberescena and others;
- That DGARTES create a climate justice grant/residency programme, especially aimed at countries outside the EU or, if within the EU, countries that have demonstrably benefited less from international exchanges in terms of cooperation and circulation and are particularly vulnerable in the current context of environmental and climate emergency.

F. INNOVATION, EXPERIMENTATION AND PILOT INITIATIVES

This section outlines a number of options for intervention, not all of which are directly related to the current scope of action of DGARTES, but rather to its sphere of influence (and that of the Ministry of Culture).

- Promote a permanent dialogue and reaffirm its capacity for influence and political action, liaising in a systematic, concerted and consistent manner with other ministries that are fundamental to the consequent dynamics of the ecological transition, namely the Ministries of Science, Environment and Climate Action, Territorial Cohesion, Infrastructure and Education;
- Contribute to the visibility and effective participation of the cultural dimension in climate emergency statements and other political documents that address climate change and the environment;
- Contribute to make the cultural dimension visible and genuinely involved across the board when developing national plans and strategies for sustainability;
- Promote integrated measures between arts, heritage and territory, that is, link cultural management more decisively with sustainable and integrated territory and landscape management, which could be reflected in medium and long-term planning instruments, in partnerships between municipal associations, municipalities, local development associations and other organisations active in territory development and planning;
- Cooperate with municipalities and local agents in the development of initiatives (training, information, data collection, local intervention, etc.);
- Launch or establish national or international partnerships to initiate open calls, using the speculative and imaginative qualities of the arts to propose other futures in common/community, “with a focus on alternative narratives beyond technological solutionism, green-washing and arguments for delayed transition” (VoC, 2023, p.27). The theme-based lines of action complement the other strategies outlined in this document and should be weighed particularly against the risks of instrumentalisation, also clearly articulated throughout this document;
- Establish a “Cultural Policy Laboratory” to act as a permanent forum for debate and experimentation on cultural policies, using methodologies that encourage experimental approaches to the design of cultural policies. The laboratory may host pilot initiatives, leading to their implementation and evaluation.

TECHNICAL DATA SHEET



DESCRIPTION

The study was fundamentally based on the analysis of the results of a survey applied to the universe of organisations receiving support from DGARTES. The study aimed to be representative of the density and diversity of the artistic community in Portugal, particularly those currently supported by DGARTES. The reference universe consisted of 597 organisations (corresponding to 662 grants and 792 people). Given the nature of the survey, which was challenging due to its relatively long length and several open-ended questions, we set a minimum overall response rate of 20%, or 120 valid responses. This rate was achieved and exceeded, reaching 24%, or 140 valid responses. The data analysis itself was organised into categories of analysis, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. The categories of analysis were subdivided into sub-categories, illustrating the topics listed here in more detail, with the possibility of using explanatory tables/graphs for a schematic understanding of the argument. The survey consisted of 49 questions (68 if you take into account the sub-questions). Of this total, 18 were optional, 29 were open-ended (10 with the possibility of an audio response), 33 were selection/choice questions, 2 were on a Likert scale, 1 was a ranking question and 3 were numerical.

The questions were divided into 3 blocks, namely: 1. PROFILE, which aimed to collect data to characterise the organisation and the respondents; 2. DISCOURSES AND POSITIONINGS, in which the respondents were invited to reflect on the interrelations between the field of arts and culture and the issues of sustainability and ecology, and their translation into the positioning of public bodies in the sector; and 3. PRACTICES AND MEASURES, in which the needs of arts organisations and the expectations of their actions in this field were analysed in more detail, as well as possible forms of intervention by DGARTES.

IMPLEMENTATION

This implementation period was longer than initially planned because adjustments had to be made according to the needs identified in direct contact with the organisations, taking into account aspects such as the deadlines for DGARTES' own calls for tender (a fact that even led, at times, to the temporary suspension of the sending of surveys and follow-up work in order to preserve as far as possible the independence of the study). The response schedule was also adjusted according to feedback from agents, taking into account some busy periods due to show premieres, for example. As might be expected with a long and demanding survey, around half of the organisations did not respond spontaneously, so the team had to contact them directly to ensure their cooperation, which proved to be a very intensive follow-up and clarification exercise. After the survey was sent out, contact with the organisations (follow-up and assistance with completion/clarification of doubts) was made by e-mail (in most cases) and by telephone (in cases where personal assistance with completion and clarification of doubts was needed).

The average time to complete the questionnaire was approximately one hour, which partly explains the high number of incomplete questionnaires, given that this was a long and complex survey instrument that was demanding to complete.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological design of this study was based primarily on a qualitative approach, which complemented the statistical treatment of the data collected. The qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate for an exploratory study due to its flexibility and the possibility of inductive analytical deepening. Procedures based on Maxwell's (2005) recommendations for modelling qualitative research were used to code the empirical material. Categories and subcategories of analysis were constructed, which were then refined through interpretive exercises and confronted with concepts emerging from the relevant literature.

DETAILED RESPONDENT SOCIOGRAPHICS

The universe of respondents is balanced in terms of gender, with a slight preponderance of female respondents (51%). The year of birth of the respondents ranges from 1948 (the oldest) to 2000 (the youngest) and are mainly concentrated in an adult age group, between 40 and 59 years old (62%). Almost all respondents are Portuguese (94%). The foreign nationalities present (6%) are Brazilian, Spanish, Polish, Belgian, German and French. In terms of qualifications, the study reflects the high level of qualification in the sector, with 90% of respondents having higher education, including 61% with postgraduate education. Regarding their employment situation, the vast majority are working (90%), of which just over half have an indefinite contract (52%). "Other" includes answers such as student, pensioner, fixed-term contract and occasional work, among others. Concerning the profession of the respondents, given the wide variety of answers, they were grouped into four main categories in order to facilitate the interpretation of the data. Of these, the "artists" group is the most represented (42%), followed by producers and managers (34%). By way of example, the professions mentioned include director, cultural manager, entrepreneur, artistic director, anthropologist, musician, architect, executive director, researcher, dancer and programmer, among others.

The responses regarding the functions performed showed an even greater dispersion than that of the professions, in line with the well-known characteristics of this subsector, which is strongly characterised by functional diversity and pluriactivity, as well as by the transversality of fields and functions, as shown by the recent Survey of Independent Arts and Culture Professionals, in which more than 55% of respondents reported more than one professional activity (Neves et al., 2021, p.5), and almost 60% claimed to perform three functions. In this study, this diversity is only indicative of the relevance of this sample, which does not focus on one group of professions to the detriment of others but rather represents the complexity of places and voices active in the performing arts ecosystem.

CHARACTERISATION OF THE ORGANISATIONS

For this study, an applicability universe was defined that was representative of the diversity and density of the artistic community in Portugal, with particular attention being paid to artistic organisations/structures supported by the Directorate-General for the Arts¹⁵. In this sense, all respondents were or had been recipients of DGARTES support, with the majority receiving Sustained Support (59%) and 31% receiving Project Support. Of the organisations that reported having received Sustained Support, the majority (60%) received biennial support, while 40% received quadrennial support. Of the organisations that received Sustained Support, 78% indicated that this was their main source of funding, while 22% also received other types of public and/or private support. Of the organisations that received Project Support, 84% reported that this was their main source of funding, while 16% also received other types of public and/or private support.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES BY FIELD OF ACTIVITY, ARTISTIC AREA AND REGION

In line with the minimum criteria defined for the distribution of responses, they correspond to organisations working in the field of creation (59%) and programming (38%). Theatre and cross-disciplinary are the most represented fields in this study, together accounting for 62% of the responses. This is followed by music (19%) and dance (12%). This distribution corresponds to the criteria used to characterise the sample. Artistic structures are mainly located in the Lisbon metropolitan area (35%), followed by the North (29%) and the Centre (24%). This distribution is in line with the criteria used to characterise the sample. About the location of the headquarters, more than 60 different places are listed in the country, both on the mainland and on the islands, from Tavira to Bragança, passing through locations such as Funchal, Santa Maria da Feira or Joane, Vila Nova de Famalicão.

15 In 2021 and/or 2022.

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