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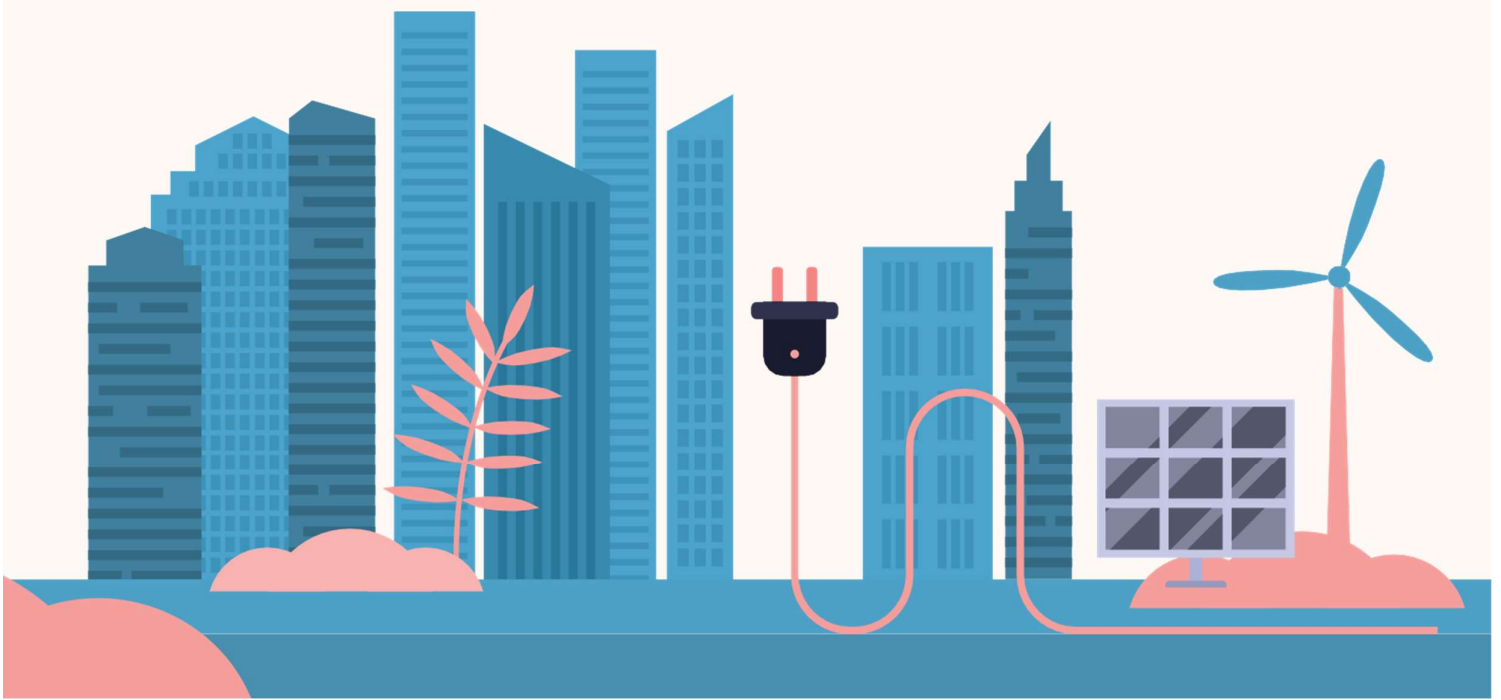
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D1.6.1 REPORTS ON CULTURAL EVENTS AND FESTIVALS AS PLATFORMS FOR DEVELOPING DECARBONISATION AWARENESS.

DELIVERABLE 1.3.1 BY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK HYBES TEAM:

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Content

1. OVERVIEW.....	4
1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	6
1.3 SNAPSHOT POLICY CONTEXT.....	7
1.4 IMPLEMENTATION, DOCUMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION	8
1.5 SNAPSHOT OF CASE DEMONSTRATORS	9
1.6 CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMERGING GUIDELINES	11
2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS AND POSITIONING FRAMEWORK.....	13
OPERATIONALISING LINES: PAUSE-ENCOUNTER-REIMAGINE-REPEAT FRAMEWORK	15
PAUSE	16
ENCOUNTER	19
REIMAGINE	20
3. A CO-CREATION METHODOLOGY:.....	21
3.1 LIVING LABS AS SITUATED EXPERIMENTAL SPACES	21
3.2 CASE DEMONSTRATORS AS TYPOLOGIES	22
3.3 DATA COLLECTION	22
4. CASE DEMONSTRATORS.....	23
4.1 CASE DEMONSTRATOR OVERVIEW:	23
5. KEY LEARNINGS.....	27



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

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1. Overview

This deliverable is written in parallel with *D151 Report on Implementation of Three Co-Creation Cafés* both of which are due within delivery period 5 of the HYBES project. Each of these deliverables share commonalities such as mutual learning, co-creation and capacity building through place-based activities. They support the refinement of the HYBES Living Lab Model (HLLM), testing tools and practice knowledge that will be embedded within a final HYBES toolkit. This Report on Cultural Events and Festivals deepens practice learning on the potential and role of arts, culture and creativity in co-creation activities as spaces of encounter that emphasise the value of Mutual Learning theory as a pedagogical model for learning from and with others and is particularly suited for practice-based learning. Mutual Learning approaches are central to the wider framework of the HYBES Living Lab Model (HLLM) as stated in deliverable D131 Living Labs Model as a Tool to Facilitate Behavioural Change for Decarbonisation.

1.1 Executive Summary

Deliverable *D161 Reports On Cultural Events and Festivals as Platforms for Developing Decarbonisation Awareness* outlines a comprehensive overview that demonstrates how arts, cultural events, and festivals plays a role in creating spaces for encounter that does and can enhance engagement with other actors and build awareness for decarbonisation. This deliverable is due at the end of Period 5; month 25 – 30 1st February to 31st July 2025.

This deliverable explores the role of arts, cultural events and festivals as spatially situated platforms for public engagement, behavioural change and collective mobilisation in relation to awareness building efforts around decarbonisation. Drawing on the HYBES Living Lab Model (HLLM) as first proposed in HYBES Deliverable *D131 Living Labs Model as a Tool to Facilitate Behavioural Change for Decarbonisation*, this deliverable exemplifies case



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

demonstrators from three HYBES local context to examine how arts, cultural events and festivals can serve as real-world test beds within the framing of living labs as spaces in which stakeholders can effectively co-create solutions for just and low-carbon futures. Arts, cultural events and festivals are uniquely positioned within the HLLM due to its holistic qualities that draw stakeholders into relation with one another. This is enacted through embodied and spatial ways intensifying affective, social, and imaginative dimensions of climate innovation which might not be similarly experienced in virtual or typically more formalised LL environments. Building on insights from *D131 Living Labs Model as a Tool to Facilitate Behavioural Change for Decarbonisation* and *D141/D142 Report On Stakeholder Workshops and Key Recommendations for Policy* as well as wider project ambitions and specific partner activities in Cork, Bodø and Umeå as case demonstrators, this deliverable represents an initial working research paper by authors, and includes a working framework ‘*Pause-Encounter-Reimagine- repeat*’ (PERr)¹ for examining how arts, cultural events and festivals can theoretically, methodologically and practically contribute positively to transformative change, raising awareness around decarbonisation. This deliverable draws from cases within the scope of the HYBES project focusing on three events across Bodø, Cork and Umeå which engage QH stakeholders in a cultural event or festival context building awareness around decarbonisation and wider research and literature. Within this deliverable, these events are translated into typologies for informing replication beyond the scope of the HYBES project. Within the proposed PERr framework arts, cultural events and festivals are conceptualised as effective place-based decarbonisation ecosystems and as co-creation methodology that can be operationalised along emerging thematic lines. This is informed by practice-led data collection and literature progressing research on how arts, cultural events and festivals contribute to long-term transition pathways through their social, spatial, and creative infrastructures.

¹ The PERr Framework is a working theoretical model and academic contribution of Jedda Desmond as part of PhD currently underway.



1.2 Goals and Objectives

Led by University College Cork, this deliverable uses the Living Lab concept of mutual learning to evolve practice-based learning that demonstrates how arts, cultural events and festivals can and do demonstrate and build awareness for decarbonisation. This activity engages with three cultural events in Bodø, Cork and Umeå – two of which align with significant cultural events; Bodø as Capital of Culture in 2024 with events rolling into 2025, and Cork as a significant context which celebrates 20 years of the promotion of Irish Arts worldwide by Culture Ireland (Cultúr Éireann) and Creative Ireland. This is significant as Cultúr Éireann “Works to build relationships and networks with arts and cultural organisations, relevant public bodies, state agencies and Government departments at home and abroad to advance the global impact of Irish artists”² which may be leveraged to create public platforms that create awareness around low carbon societies. Creative Ireland is an all-of-government culture and wellbeing programme established with the ambition to inspire and transform people, places and communities through creativity. Creative Ireland operate a highly successful and Creative Climate Action Fund (€6.5m expected in 2026-2029 programme) that supports artistic engagement with communities.

This deliverable focuses on the implementation, documentation and dissemination of the three cases of exploring cultural events and festivals as platforms for developing decarbonisation awareness with a central focus on the potential of arts and artistic thinking to accelerate this. The dissemination of this working paper emphasises the value of engaged research and open innovation in learning communities and cities through modes of co-learning, co-creation and co-design where knowledge is co-created through a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down prescription of knowledge by experts.

² <https://www.cultureireland.ie/about/>



1.3 Snapshot Policy Context

The European policy landscape around arts and culture is undergoing significant transformation. Arts and culture are no longer solely framed in terms of heritage preservation or creative industries but are instead increasingly recognised as vehicles of inclusion, transformation and governance particularly in relation to the current climate crisis. This paradigmatic shift is reflected within several EU policy frameworks such as the New European Agenda for Culture (2018), the New European Bauhaus (2020), and Creative Europe (2021–2027) which foreground arts and culture as vehicles of transformative change. Additionally, broader cross-sectoral initiatives such as the European Green Deal (2019), Horizon Europe, and Interreg EU (2021–2027), celebrate arts and culture in enabling transformative public engagement, sustainable innovation, and place-based transition strategies. At national and regional levels, programmes such as Creative Ireland demonstrate how EU member states are aligning with European approaches to prioritise and promote cultural, creative and community-based participation. Increasingly, arts and culture are framed as infrastructural necessities which support sustainable innovation and policy providing in rethinking governance, fostering civic belonging, and negotiating shared futures. Within this evolving landscape, cultural events and festivals have emerged as critical platforms with a holistic focus on participation, experimentation, and collective imagination. One such initiative which exemplifies this is the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) which has evolved since its inception in 1985. Initially focusing on heritage and prestige the ECoC now serves as a broader mechanism for supporting place-based cultural development and cultural economy, increasingly aligning with strategic EU agendas such as the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus, prioritising cultural rights, social cohesion, creative innovation, and participatory governance. The ECoC is now widely understood as a policy instrument as much as a cultural celebration, facilitating structural change through visibility, experimentation, and civic imagination. This is particularly significant for the HYBES project. Bodø, one of HYBES' partner regions and case



demonstrators, was appointed European Capital of Culture in 2024. The cultural event discussed in this deliverable emerged directly from Bodø's designation, shaped by the city's engagement with the ECoC's emphasis on inclusive participation, cultural infrastructure, and climate-conscious creativity. In this context, the event functions not only as a localised cultural moment but as an example of the broader European cultural policy agenda, aligning place-based action with transnational frameworks for democratic, cultural, and ecological transformation. Additionally, there is a cross over between some project partners (UCC and UmU) with another Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) project Bauhaus Goes North (BGN) 2024-2027 which leverages a living lab model with partner regions in BGN include Bodø, Cork, Oulu, Umeå and Reykjavík. This cross over is especially significant as Oulu has been designated as a European Capital of Culture for 2026 and as such, there is opportunity to leverage cultural events and festivals through the framework proposed in this deliverable for sustained open innovation beyond the life-cycle of project funding and exploitation of HYBES project work.

1.4 Implementation, Documentation and Dissemination

This phase of work began by identifying opportunities for cultural events and festivals specific to several HYBES partner regions. From the beginning of HYBES, there was a clear emphasis on Bodø as a European Capital of Culture in 2024 to leverage existing cultural events and festivals and to contribute to this deliverable. Cork and Umeå were identified as two additional partner regions that held the capacity to host events or festivals that could be similarly leveraged to build awareness around decarbonisation. In the contexts of Umeå and Bodø, the municipality engaged in local activities embedding living lab thinking and methodology where possible. In Cork, an event scheduled within this current delivery period had to be rescheduled for delivery period 6 due to some unforeseen limitations within the municipality and was adapted to being led by University College Cork. These limitations created opportunity to reconfigure the originally planned event in Cork and demonstrate the importance and value of strategic partnerships for responsive, flexible and iterative working



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

within living lab approaches. The significance of the event in Bodø which engages with indigenous artists and artistic thinking around decarbonisation prompted us to think about deepening engagement with artists for the Cork event and better understanding the potential for art and culture as vital brokers and agents for decarbonisation. The event mobilised and engaged with local artists and QH stakeholders. Key learnings and feedback inform the revised version of this report. This deliverable, therefore reports on the implementation, documentation and dissemination of these events and speaks to a wider framework conceptualised building on the practice-led mutual learning arising through the implementation of these events.

1.5 Snapshot of case demonstrators

This deliverable discusses three cultural events and festivals that took place in 2025 in Bodø, Umeå and Cork. The focus of the events are as follows;

Bodø: Education, natural materials, and indigenous knowledge and culture set against Capital of Culture activities (Over multiple days in January/ February 2025)

Umeå: Circular economy, building materials, engaging the QH and local placemaking (One-day event in May 2025)

Cork: Co-Creation Café on artists act as intermediaries to cultural activities and events

It is also informed by inter-regional mutual learning between partner regions contributing to this as a joint-solution making activity. This was predominantly advanced during the dedicated mutual learning co-creation activities that took place at the Cork in person partner meeting. It was complemented by additional online and desktop collaboration and data gathering towards the development of this paper.



Fig 01, 02 (above): Co-Creating Key learnings- Partners Co-Creation MLE, Cork, March 2025.



Images: Arts, culture and festivals: Cork Workshop and Umea Festival.



1.6 Contributions to emerging guidelines

The co-created learnings arising are presented as emerging guidelines, which can be later developed for the HYBES Guide to Living Labs for Decarbonisation which aims to be suitable for wide dissemination and as a tangible product for living lab practitioners. This is one of the final outputs led by UCC which positions some guidance for setting up a living lab in regions using common principles; place-based approaches and working with different system levers. Building on this work, arts and culture are included as a key dimension and lever.

As discussed, the need to reconfigure the Cork event opened up the opportunity to collaborate with experts external to the HYBES project and build relationships between the HYBES Living Lab and research practitioners within the arts. The project team collaborated with Dr Brice Catherin, artist and Postdoctoral Researcher at University College Cork whose research examines art-methods and how they can be applied in other fields of research and knowledge, including the public and corporate worlds. Brice was invited to contribute to this deliverable, offering valuable insights into the value and expansive nature of artistic thinking in addressing complex and abstract issues. Brice also contributed to the planning and execution of the Cork event which to engage artists as mediators for decarbonisation.

Based on his research Brice notes that art methods offer powerful tools for involving communities in the complex challenge of decarbonisation. Unlike traditional approaches that often present data and solutions in technical language, artistic methods invite people into the process through visuals, movement, storytelling, sound, and co-creation. These methods can engage citizens not just at the end of a project, but from the very beginning: helping to surface concerns, identify overlooked problems, frame the right questions, and generate diverse, grounded knowledge. Art-based workshops, performances, installations, or participatory mapping can reveal how people feel and think about green energy in ways surveys and reports often miss. They help transform abstract issues—like emissions or grid



resilience—into tangible, lived experiences that people can relate to and take part in shaping.

Artistic thinking also brings a different kind of problem-solving to the table. It embraces ambiguity, improvisation, emotion, and imagination, which means it can reveal new pathways when traditional methods hit a wall. Engineers and policymakers benefit from these fresh perspectives, while researchers gain access to rich, layered insights that numbers alone can't provide. Meanwhile, citizens are seen, heard, and valued as co-creators, not just passive recipients of policy. Art methods can turn public engagement from a dry exercise into a space of trust, creativity, and shared ownership. In short, they don't replace science or engineering—they expand the conversation, making room for innovation that's not just smart, but human, with all its complexities.

We therefore position the value of arts and artistic thinking in relation to living labs and decarbonisation and conclude some key learnings. These act as a setting out point to begin to inform the positioning of arts and artistic thinking within the final HYBES Guide to Living Labs for Decarbonisation.

As relatively new instruments, living labs are primed by design led approaches with aspects such as co-creation and participatory practices but do not necessarily or effectively enact these. They typically engage with socio-economic and political systems i.e. cities, regions, spaces, however more deliberate tools to move beyond silos and work in the liminal or in-between spaces are needed to effectively work in these spaces and systems. There is a need to expand modes of knowledge within living labs including artistic research itself. Artistic thinking however is also an enabler of incorporating other modes of knowledge such as indigenous knowledge which can be particularly critical within climate discourse.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings and Positioning Framework

This deliverable configures cultural events and festivals in relation to the HYBES Living Lab Model (HLLM) with the central positioning of arts and artistic thinking as vehicles of positive social transformation. To leverage the potential of arts, cultural events and festivals for building awareness around decarbonisation, a *'Pause– Encounter– Reimagine– repeat'* PERr holistic framework is presented and which is envisioned as being operationalised through 12 thematic lines (discussed in detail below). This framework and operationalising lines have emerged directly as a result of the three HYBES case demonstrators located in Bodø, Cork and Umeå, and with consideration to wider social, political, cultural, and ecological considerations surrounding cultural events and festivals.

The framework positions cultural events and festivals in the context of the HYBES Living Lab. This framework draws from scholarly work on Living Labs, on cultural event impacts and sustainability such as the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) along with European policy concepts around innovation and inclusion such as the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus. By articulating these foundations, we not only ground it within existing theory but also make new theoretical contributions through the proposed PERr framework that may be replicated elsewhere to accelerate decarbonisation efforts. Within the proposed PERr framework, *Pause- Encounter- Reimagine* act as three primary settings with *repeat* conceptualised not as a fourth setting, but as a temporal rhythm that acts across all three phases. This framework is applied across the three-level macro, meso, micro model first proposed by Schuurman (2015), and later adopted by the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) This is used to analyse how transformation can unfold through arts, cultural events and festivals building awareness around decarbonisation. This positions arts, cultural events and festivals as iterative, participatory, and place-sensitive infrastructures for engaging QH



HYBES_D1.6.1_V2.0

stakeholders around decarbonisation and sustainability transitions. Arts, cultural events and festivals are therefore framed as Living Lab environments that foster co-creation, co-learning, and participatory experimentation. They bring together diverse publics across the QH in shared spatial and temporal contexts, to build collective knowledge production and activate cultural imagination.

The proposed framework borrows from Homi Bhaba's (1994) and Edward Soja's (1996) concept of *Thirdspace* which in the context of Living Labs (LLs) supports hybrid knowledge production, transformative spatial practice and situatedness, and boundary-spanning collaboration. The theoretical potential of this framework speaks to a wider proposition of the HYBES Living Labs Model (HLLM) which in relation to arts, cultural events and festivals conceptualises Living Labs as relational infrastructures which support a reorientation of LLs from mere technical testbeds to critical social infrastructures. This also aligns with cultural events and festivals conceptualised as temporary 'mini societies' (Dijkstra et al., 2024, P. 96) which foster radical inclusion, reflexivity, and socio-political engagement and challenge the depoliticisation of climate and urban innovation. This *Thirdspace* logic is central to how arts, cultural events and festivals are conceptualised within the HYBES project. This allows for the foregrounding of arts, cultural events and festivals as relational infrastructures which assemble resources, people and processes around iterative and repetitive cycles i.e 'Pause- Encounter- Reimagine- repeat' which nurtures a sensitivity to place-based knowledge, cultures and values aligning with broader ambitions around decarbonisation. This framework is supported through recent living lab related literature. Winkler et al. (2021) and Franz & Tausz (2023) for example have developed the idea of "festival-based Living Labs" as ephemeral yet intensive environments in which innovation can be co-created, tested, and evaluated in real-world cultural settings. These events are uniquely positioned to combine artistic exploration, civic dialogue, and urban experimentation, allowing stakeholders to encounter decarbonisation challenges in sensory, symbolic, and

participatory ways. Unlike conventional Living Labs, which may operate in technocratic ways, event and festival-based labs are embodied, affective, and spatially situated as effective vehicles of sustainability transitions.

Operationalising Lines: Pause-Encounter-Reimagine-repeat framework

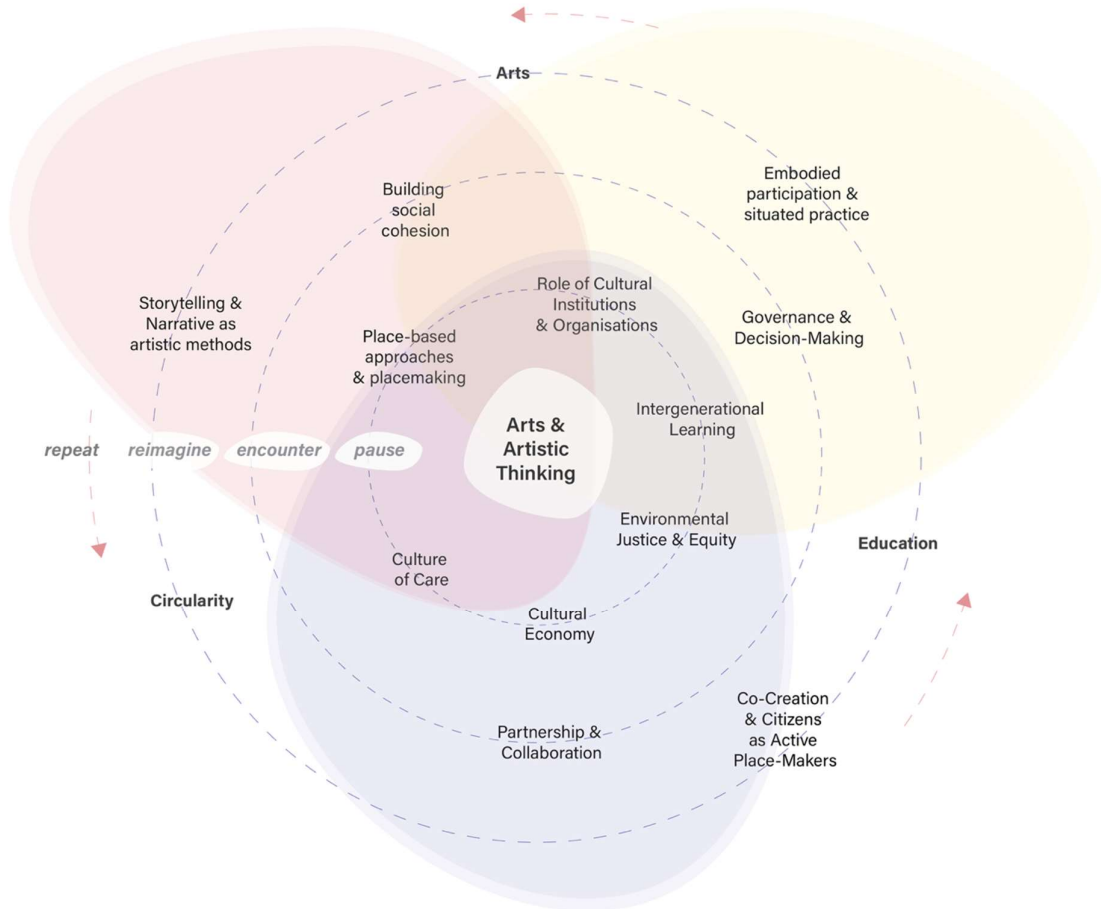


Fig 03 (above): PERr Framework part of PhD Research by Jedda Desmond, UCC



Pause

1. Role of Cultural Institutions and Organisations

Cultural institutions and organisations (museums, galleries, theatres, libraries, cultural centres etc.) play a central role in driving decarbonisation and sustainability awareness. Cultural institutions and organisations can serve as anchors in centring decarbonisation activities having built long-standing trust-based relationships within local contexts. In relation to arts, cultural events and festivals, cultural institutions and organisations offer valuable physical event space, expertise in communication and engagement, and often hold a mandate for civic value such as community engagement. These are therefore central actors in contributing to the cultural economy within local contexts, leveraging resources such as public and private partnerships, access to funding streams, and positioning within society to centre cultural and heritage narratives around the climate crisis.

2. Place-based approaches and placemaking

Place-based approaches and placemaking are central to understanding how cultural events and festivals effectively function as temporary ‘mini societies’ (Dijkstra et al., 2024, P. 96) for sustainability transitions. Reiterating the value of place-based approaches within the context of LLs as discussed in deliverable D131 (P. 13); ‘A place based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community.’ (Place Based Approaches | Our Place, no date), arts, cultural events and festivals have the potential to centre sustainable and creative placemaking strategies enacted in real life experimentation through a place-based approach. With consideration to this, placemaking as a complimentary strategy supports the dynamic, participatory process of co-creating public spaces that foster social interaction, cultural expression, and community resilience. Together, place-based and placemaking strategies, frame how cultural festivals become both responsive to place and active in reshaping it. Within the context of arts and artistic



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

thinking in cultural events and festivals, place-based approaches ensure that interventions such as performances, exhibitions, and workshops are situated within local histories, identities, and environmental challenges. This is clearly evident in Bodø's reciprocal engagement with Sámi knowledge grounding and strengthening the value of indigenous knowledge. The Rebuilding festival in Umeå highlights the value of physical interventions for dialogue, imagination, and low-carbon practices. Through the co-created approaches, citizens may become active place-makers increasing agency around local decarbonisation strategies, aligning closely with Living Lab principles of experimentation, iteration, and inclusion.

3. Environmental Justice & Equity

With relation to arts, cultural events and festivals environmental justice and equity is highlighted through culture and artistic means. This is exemplified within arts, cultural events and festival settings which prioritise green procurement and low-carbon activities.

4. Intergenerational Learning

As affective spaces, arts, cultural events and festivals create space for reciprocal knowledge exchange between different demographics, fostering mutual learning and understanding across the QH. This opens up spaces for intergenerational learning exemplified in the Bodø case demonstrator where children at primary level education engaged with indigenous Sami artists and culture around materials in nature. The value of intergenerational learning in building awareness around decarbonisation is rooted in the temporality of the climate crisis, with each generation drawing on unique perspectives on how we might address these grand societal challenges.



5. Cultures of care

Underpins the necessity of ethical approaches to decarbonisation, applying to immediate QH stakeholders while also extending beyond to include a culture of care to future generations. Cultures of care propose moving from exploitative and extractive practices that underly current neoliberal systems moving toward responsible stewardship and mutual support. While LLs can often rely on technocratic solutions to decarbonisation, the HLLM supports socio-technical solutions, foregrounding inclusive practices through an ethics of care which supports all across the QH including marginalised people and voices seldom heard in participatory and policy spaces.

6. Cultural economy and Creative and Cultural Industries

Arts, cultural events and festivals have the capacity to generate a specific place-based economic value, while strategically infusing the economy with culture. Evidence based literature such as literature developed by the ECoC shows culture-led regeneration can boost economies but cautions about over-reliance on single, large events. The HYBES Living Labs addresses this by linking the potential of arts, cultural events and festivals to longer-term capacity building sound decarbonisation. Equally the creative and cultural industries as a sector are drivers of wider innovation and analysis finds evidence of positive spillover benefits from the creative industries onto the innovation of wider firms³. From a policy perspective, the EU and national bodies are increasingly noting that cultural and creative sectors should drive the green transition. A thriving creative and cultural economy that is sustainable contributes to overall decarbonisation because it proves cultural, economic development and climate action can go hand in hand. It also means cultural actors are more financially resilient and thus able to keep promoting climate awareness through their work.

³ Frontier Economics (2023) "Creative spillovers: do the creative industries benefit firms in the wider economy?" co-commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre



This theme intersects with governance (e.g., funding criteria requiring sustainability), and role of cultural institutions (often drivers of local cultural economy).

Encounter

7. Governance and decision making

The HYBES QH approach was designed to directly influence decision-making and policy development. Living Labs operate in the space of participatory governance where public and private actors co-steer initiatives. This ensures that LLs do not operate within an isolated bubble but are connected to modes of formal governance that can promote the democratisation of climate policy. Cultural events and festivals in this sense have the potential to act as non-hierarchical spaces, with a high-level of transparency around participatory practices aligned with LLs such as power structures, production of knowledge, distribution of resources etc. capable of accelerating awareness around decarbonisation.

8. Partnership & Collaboration

Decarbonisation efforts must move beyond siloed working, instead approached from trans and interdisciplinary perspectives requiring broad participation and collaboration across the QH. By incorporating arts, cultural events and festivals which often leverage the involvement of a wide range of actors and institutions, there is a clear opportunity to strengthen Communities of Practice (COP) around decarbonisation. By documenting and facilitating these collaborations, Living Labs can act as a network hub. As such there is a clear value of partnerships within arts, cultural events and festivals in addressing complex challenges such as the climate crisis which requires joined-up solutions. Partnerships also help to pool resources and knowledge, making interventions more effective.

9. Building social cohesion

Arts, cultural events and festivals that embed living lab theory and praxis may cultivate social cohesion through shared practices of pause and reflexivity, deepened through embodied



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

encounters and activated through collective imagination toward just decarbonisation goals. As discussed more explicitly in thematic lines such as intergenerational learning, arts, cultural events and festivals offer unique settings which can capitalise on co-creation and participatory practices that nurture relational engagement and strengthen social cohesion and mutual learning. When executed effectively, arts, cultural events and festivals may offer low-stake non-hierarchical and equitable encounters based on shared values that may be replicated to nurture a community of practice around ongoing engagement.

Reimagine

10. Embodied participation and situated practice

When enacted in real-world settings such as cultural events and festivals, knowledge and praxis are embodied and situated. Arts, cultural events and festivals act as prime settings in which stakeholders come into physical relation with one another through embodied participation and context specific situated practice. This emphasises the pedagogical goals of social living labs which emphasise learning-through-doing approaches/ in-situ participation. Aligning with the experiential approach of the New European Bauhaus (NEB), and initiatives such as Capital of Culture or Creative Ireland can advocate for on innovative, ground-level cultural engagement for climate action where appropriate.

11. Co-creation and citizens of as active placemakers

Formalised within the HYBES LL model, co-creation is a central approach enacted through democratic participation and QH empowerment. Arts, cultural events and festivals capitalise on this acting as effective co-creation spaces, becoming demonstrations of participatory governance in action. Co-creation as a place-making strategy emphasizes citizens as active placemakers within their own local contexts, capable of co-creating place-based solutions.

12. Storytelling and Narrative as artistic methods

Storytelling and narrative are used as powerful artistic methods especially in the context of the decarbonisation. Historically, arts, cultural events and festivals are effective contexts for building social cohesion and kinship through practices of storytelling and narrative.

3. A Co-Creation Methodology:

This co-creation methodology positions cultural events and festivals as experimental infrastructures for Living Labs, operationalising the *Pause– Encounter– Reimagine– repeat (PERr)* framework within a three-tiered model of micro, meso, and macro engagement. It draws from Living Lab methodologies (Schuurman, 2015; ENoLL), situated research approaches, and mutual learning theory, to frame festivals as both research environments and transformative civic spaces. It prioritises spatial, relational, and temporal dynamics, with a strong emphasis on embodied participation, co-creation, and iterative prototyping across diverse publics and sites.

3.1 Living Labs as Situated Experimental Spaces

Within the context of living labs cultural events and festivals are understood as affective, *situated, and temporal real-world laboratories* where decarbonisation and social transitions can be made tangible through QH participation and artistic intervention. Building on Soja's (1996) and Bhabha's (1994) notion of *Thirdspace*, these events are treated as hybrid environments, often part-institutional, part-communal, where experimental engagements can unfold across local contexts. The proposed PERr framework enables cross-cultural actors to emphasise interventions that are cyclical rather than linear, emphasising collective reflection (Pause), embodied engagement (Encounter), speculative transformation (Reimagine), and repetition for learning and scaling (repeat).

3.2 Case Demonstrators as typologies

The development of this living lab co-creation methodology is informed by three local cultural events and festivals in Cork, Bodø, and Umeå, each of which offer a distinct cultural and geographical context.

Art: Cork mutual learning between the QH and local artists as for arts and artists build relational and practice know-how for arts as intermediaries to cultural activities and events in town and community settings.

Education: Bodø leverages its European Capital of Culture 2024 status to foreground pedagogy and indigenous knowledge, creating engagement between cultural institutions and schools around Sami history and culture.

Circularity: Umeå emphasises the necessity of circular economy principles, creating intergenerational engagements and local placemaking across the QH in which mutual learning dynamics are focused on the re-use of building materials.

3.3 Data Collection

With consideration to the nature of this deliverable, data collection is considered as qualitative data on practitioner experience, knowledge and expertise drawing from the three case examples. As such, we do not rely on specific data collection from each event, rather a practitioner-led view, where each local context or case demonstrator is imagined as a platform for practice-based research, collaborative ethnography, and reflexive participatory observation. We also recognise that these modalities provide for a wide range and typology of artistic, qualitative and quantitative data which can be collected in cultural event and festival modalities. The replicability of cultural events and festivals also enables iterative data collection that over a sequence of events that may build up bigger picture of each local context and as one such typology.



4. Case Demonstrators

As discussed, within HYBES, three cultural events and festivals were identified as appropriate case demonstrators to demonstrate and build awareness for decarbonisation. These include events in Bodø, Cork and Umeå exploring three distinct themes; arts, circularity and education. The events in Bodø and Umeå took place earlier this year (2025), with the event in Cork scheduled for Autumn 2025.

Bodø: Education, natural materials, and indigenous knowledge and culture set against Capital of Culture activities (Over multiple days in January/ February 2025)

Umeå: Circular economy, building materials, engaging the QH and local placemaking (One-day event in May 2025)

Cork: will illustrate how artists act as intermediaries to cultural activities and events (scheduled for Autumn 2025)

4.1 Case Demonstrator Overview:

Bodø: Focus on education, natural materials, and indigenous knowledge and culture set against Capital of Culture activities (Over multiple days in January/ February 2025)

Throughout January and February 2025, 5th grade classes (11 year olds) from all primary schools in Bodø were organised through Bodø Kommune to visit an art-based Sámi exhibition, which centres Sámi culture and the cultural values embedded in Sámi artistic expressions. The theme of this exhibition is use and re-use with a central focus on engagement with natural materials, how to leverage what is available and accessible, and what can be effectively and efficiently reused, along with fostering connection with Sámi artists, culture and indigenous knowledge. The exhibition is part of the wider Bodø Capital of Cultural 2024 programme. Some aims and objectives of these events were to bring into relation students with Sámi artists and culture, equipping the students with actionable knowledge around the reasonable use and re-use of materials in nature in line with



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

decarbonisation and circular economy principles in HYBES. These events centred Sámi perspectives demonstrating how art and creativity are interwoven with environmental stewardship and sustainability. The project is structured to move students from awareness to action, using participatory approaches to encourage lasting behavioral change. Methodologically, the planning of this engagement began with a workshop modelled on the living lab model bringing into relation the municipality and Sámi artists and institutional partners to nurture dialogue about Sámi arts, values, and visions of 'the good life.' This Utopia-inspired method helped surface insights and shared perspectives useful for later engagement. By positioning children as active participants and linking sustainability with Sámi art, the living lab model produces immediate educational benefits as well as methodological insights for future art-based interventions. Lessons learned will directly inform future pilots, in particular, the development and scaling of co-creation workshops in the field of arts and sustainability. Ongoing analysis of both qualitative and quantitative feedback will support the production of final reports and new educational resources that can be disseminated regionally and used in subsequent HYBES and related initiatives.

Umea: Focus on the circular economy, building materials, engaging the QH and local placemaking (One-day event in May 2025)

Construction Recycling Day (Byggåterbruksdagen), Umeå was a one-day community festival held on May 17th 2025, dedicated to advancing circularity, sustainability, and the creative reuse of building materials. Hosted at Byggåterbruket and Returbutiken with support from Umeå Kommune the event brought together a diverse QH demographic with the intention to make principles of circularity visible, actionable, and enjoyable. Some aims and objectives of this event include showcasing innovative uses of recycled building materials and inspire their wider adoption, to foster public interest and literacy in circular economy principles within the construction sector and to provide accessible, practical advice and creative demonstrations centered on sustainable building and energy efficiency amongst citizens,



HYBES_D1.6.1 _V2.0

expert energy advisors, institutions and government. The event reflected living lab principles which emphasise collaborative, real-world experimentation. participated in the co-creation and testing of circular construction solutions. Key methods included interactive engagement with hands-on engagement with quality-checked building materials, co-creation aligned activities employing practical demonstrations, workshops, and competitions to encourage direct public participation, and expert dialogue with energy experts. Inclusion driven activities ranged from children's games (e.g., a fish pond and Fairtrade sweets) to building workshops, expert sessions, and creative displays using recycled materials. Feedback reported that the event exceeded participation expectations, drawing over 500 attendees and engaging a diverse public in sustainability practices seeking to shift perspectives around circularity.

Cork: Will illustrate how artists act as intermediaries to cultural activities and events (Autumn 2025)

Initially, an event was due to take place in the designated Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) of Macroom in the spring of 2025 led by Cork County Council with support from University College Cork (UCC). However, as is the case with real-world implementation, some internal matters emerged from within Cork County Council which made this no longer possible. Initially, the event was planned to engage with members of the public around raising awareness for decarbonisation in the DZ of Macroom. Initial planning had been conducted via several in-person and online discussions by Cork County Council and UCC with consideration to location, type of stakeholder engagement, and co-creation activities that may be employed to engage the public around raising awareness for decarbonisation. As the planning of this event had to be cancelled due to internal restrictions within the County Council, a new direction for the event was conceived in which arts and artistic thinking relating to decarbonisation could be explored. This was informed by Bodø's engagement with Sami artists and culture, supported by inputs by Brice Catherin based in UCC who



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attended the online ENoLL webinar: [Using the Living Lab Approach to Develop Socially Innovative Energy Communities](#) on 27th March 2025. This webinar was hosted by the ENoLL [Energy and Environment Working Group](#) and chaired by Fiona Zimmermann (HES-SO)⁴. From this webinar, Brice reported that discussion identifies that there was a need for guidance for living labs on engagement with artists. The HYBES workshop aimed to support discussions on how we might address this, taking the opportunity to plan a new event in lieu of the initially anticipated Cork event. The Cork event therefore focus on engagement between the QH and local artists building local relational and practical knowledge on enhance the opportunity for arts and artists as intermediaries to decarbonisation through cultural activities and events. The engagement with these stakeholder will also be sustained through another project PROSPERO which is just beginning. The workshop was therefore were positioned to support the development of the planning for sustained living lab for decarbonisation in Cork, working with arts as a key dimension. The co-creation workshop 'Arts, Culture and the Energy Transition: The Role of Artistic Thinking for More Sustainable Futures' included presentations on the HYBES project, artistic methods and an early introduction to the future project. The event was attended by artistic researchers, arts practitioners, community organisations, and municipal staff involved in relevant programmes and activities. Discussions considered the collaborative infrastructures supporting the intersect of environment, publics, artists, identified local examples of good practice and explored how this could be further supported. The data and learning from the day will contribute to the work underway to sustain the HYBES living labs work in town regeneration. These three case demonstrators present a diverse range of engagement approaches, aims, objective and outcomes. Identifying commonalities or common ingredients amongst these case demonstrators allows for their reconfiguration as typologies, and as such allowed to identify the 12 thematic lines that are discussed in PERr theoretical framework.

⁴ Throughout this period of deliverables, efforts have been made to leverage expertise from outside the HYBES project space. This includes collaborations Brice Catherin (UCC) as mentioned above, and Fiona Zimmermann (HES-SO) who participated in the Solar Energy Co-Creation Café and presented during the Education and Circularity Co-Creation Café, activities of this reporting period held in May 2025



5. Key Learnings

The learnings emerging from this activity will be complemented by desk research on the policy space and will be incorporated into the final guide. This will allow us to build a holistic picture of these integrating this insights and consider arts, cultural and creativity as a lever for systems change in the wider context of the HYBES living lab approach. These cases effectively demonstrate diverse typologies and inform the evolution of the proposed framework. They support the proposition that arts, cultural events and festivals serve as powerful contexts for the acceleration of awareness around decarbonisation with consideration to the HYBES Living Lab Model (HLLM). Conceptualising cultural events and festivals as “temporary ‘mini societies’” (Dijkstra et al., 2024, P. 96) or *Thirsdspaces* is considered particularly useful for leveraging the creative power of culture with the innovative ethos of living labs

From the theoretical and methodological approaches and insights presented in this deliverable we draw several conclusions that may contribute to building awareness around decarbonisation through conscious engagement where arts, cultural events and festivals hold the potential to;

1. Acts as powerful catalysts in building awareness around decarbonisation
2. Act in non-hierarchical ways to support inclusivity and justice
3. Influence policy, especially relating to replicability (Challenges in Measuring Direct Decarbonisation Impact)
4. Shift normative behaviour and systems through creative framing and narratives
5. Contribute to behaviour change and mutual learning
6. Act as sites of interdisciplinary capacity building
7. Co-creating shared value and empowerment