



# Cultural Adaptations

## Ghent Transnational Meeting Report

February 2021

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# The Cultural Adaptations Project

[Cultural Adaptations](#), a project co-funded by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, seeks to find creative, innovative and place-based responses to climate change impacts, equipping cultural organisations and cities with the knowledge and skills they need.

## Paired Partnerships across Artistic and Scientific Divides

Leading cultural organisations in the Glasgow, Ghent, Gothenburg and Dublin city regions were paired with local municipal sustainability partners to host transnational knowledge-sharing, drive change by embedding artists in strategic processes, co-create advice for adapting to climate predictions, and develop resources to widen the impact of the project and enable international replication.

## Cumulative Learning from 2018 – 2021

Over a period of 30 months (October 2018 – March 2021) these paired partnerships have been working together to find innovative ways to explore the intersection of culture and adaptation to climate change.

In each country, action-research projects took place, exploring how cultural organisations in each specific city region can adapt to the local area's expected climate change impacts, and how artists embedded in adaptation organisations and municipal governments can support and shape these efforts. Projects were staggered to enable pan-European learning to shape the future iterations, and project writing, reports, videos and other insights were captured through a developing digital resource. Formative and summative evaluation ensured project learnings were interwoven in processes as they emerge.

## Transnational Meetings in Partner Countries

Over the course of the project, each country partnership was to host a 'Transnational Meeting': a series of meetings, events and workshops to develop the learning of the project and plan future activities. Due to Covid-19 the meeting in Dublin had to be curtailed and the Ghent meeting had to be reorganised and rescheduled into a virtual meeting. This report details what took place during the Ghent Transnational Meeting, which took place online on 2 and 3 February 2021.



Co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union



# Ghent: Culture & Climate Adaptation



## Ghent: Culture of Sustainability & Sustainable Culture

With around 280.000 inhabitants, Ghent is the second largest municipality of Belgium. Its history dates back to roman times and there's even evidence that humans have inhabited the region since the Stone Age. The city also has a rich industrial textile history, but has undergone significant post-industrial regeneration in the latter 20th Century, [becoming known for its many environmental sustainability initiatives toward becoming a climate neutral city](#). In recent years, the city council has implemented a radical mobility plan successfully reducing motorised transit traffic and making the city centre car free. And in 2019 the city received the Global Climate Action Award for its sustainable food strategy. Many citizen projects and co-operatives are equally working on creating a more sustainable city, by focusing e.g. on solar and wind energy, on food strategy, greening front gardens, green roofs and on improving the quality of water and rainwater collection. Ghent is also a member of the [Covenant of Mayors](#) and [Mayors Adapt initiative](#).

The city is known for its vibrant cultural scene filled with festivals, museums, art centres, concert halls, theatres, theatre and dance companies etc. Ghent has a strong history of socialism and social consciousness, and the city houses many organisations with a socio-artistic focus. So it is not surprising that in the early years of the 21st century, an awareness for sustainability started to grow within several cultural organisations. Some of them teamed up in 2012 to create a network of cultural organisations who wanted to share their knowledge, experience and experiments in sustainability and who wanted to contribute to the transition to a socially just and sustainable society. Together they founded [Greentrack Gent](#) which started with 20 members in 2012 and now counts over 50 members from the cultural sector in Ghent. Over the last few years, the city of Ghent has supported the network, as Greentrack Gent has become a valuable partner in their climate and transition plan.

*"Planning is not enough. We need the entire society to be involved. We need everyone on board. And that's why we are so happy to have Greentrack in Gent. They are motivating the entire cultural scene here to incorporate climate change into their organisations, their infrastructure, their internal culture. The cultural sector is an important ambassador for climate action. You reach a lot of people, you are a trendsetter in so many ways. If cultural institutions set the example by taking positive climate actions, and tell about it, many people will follow."*

*(Tine Heyse, deputy mayor of Environment, Climate, Housing and International Solidarity in her opening speech)*

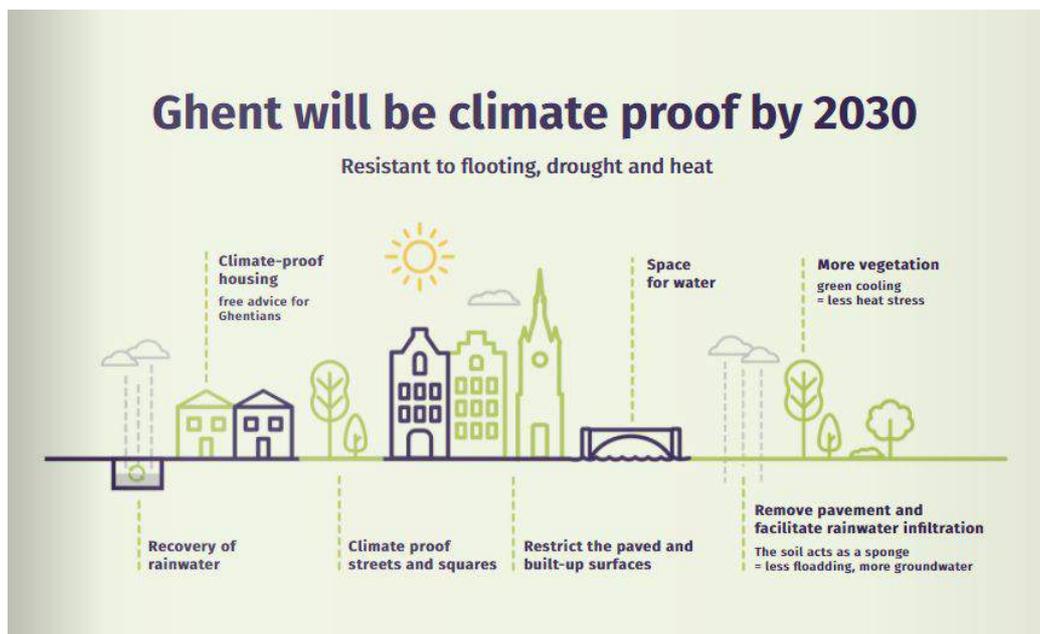


## Climate Change in Flanders and Ghent

The global effects of climate change are becoming more and more disruptive, with more extreme weather conditions and serious calamities. Thanks to its moderate climate, the weather conditions are generally less extreme in Flanders. However, the average annual temperature has already increased significantly in Flanders (+2.5°C since 1850) and the hottest years on record have all occurred recently. Tropical days and heat waves have been recorded more frequently in the last few years, and heat waves have become more intense (they last longer and are characterised by higher temperatures). Average annual rainfall has increased, with wetter yet snowless winters, while thunderstorms have become more frequent and intense in summer. Large amounts of rainfall are produced in a very short time, while periods without rain are becoming longer. The last four summers were among the driest on record, and rain shortage increased consistently. Even if we are reducing CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions drastically over the coming years, temperatures will rise and we need to adapt to the changing climate.

### How does Ghent adapt to climate change?

Ghent wants to be 'climate proof' by 2030. This means that the city has to be designed in such a way that it becomes resilient to both flooding as well as droughts, and that it has to be a pleasant place to live and work in during hot summer days as well.



A city, its demography and economy, is constantly changing. In order to become a climate proof city, Ghent has to find support amongst all its citizens, to reduce the amount of pavement, to increase the density of living and expand the greenery in planned projects. A climate adaptation plan cannot be carried out by the administration alone, but needs the support, commitment and initiative of its residents and businesses as well. Finding that support and raising awareness is therefore also integrated in the [Action Plan on Climate Adaptation for 2020-2025](#).

# Summary of Event

## Purpose of Transnational Meetings

As part of the continuous learning and reflection of the Cultural Adaptations project, and to test new ideas developed by the project, all of the four country partnerships were brought together at regular intervals in a series of transnational workshops in each city region. Sharing the progression of their own projects and experiences, and learning from the encounters, discoveries and knowledge of others, this cumulative learning informed the work of all involved, ensuring robust methodologies and resources could be developed.

## Event Planning and Design

The original outline was that each country partnership would plan and host a meeting taking place in their country. The Ghent Transnational Meeting was to take place on 13-14 May 2020. Just as the partners had arrived in Ireland for the Dublin Transnational Meeting in the middle of March, many countries including Ireland and Belgium went into lockdown. It was soon clear that the Ghent meeting could not be held live in May but there was no clear prospect yet as to when a live meeting would become possible again. After the summer it was thought wise to hold all future meetings - including the final conference - online.

This required a completely new design of the event and learning new skills, such as video making and editing, running digital platforms and hosting an online event. Because screen meetings are intense and require a high level of focus, we chose for two half days and went for shorter sessions with many breaks. As the success of online workshops is vulnerable to attendees or connections dropping out, we decided to hold only one workshop in that format: that of day one, which was organised with actual breakout sessions and questions to be discussed in small groups. The workshop on day two was more a combination of processing information gained from videos followed by an in-depth Q&A session. Other sessions consisted of presentations followed by a few questions and short videos to watch together or in your own time.

*"Despite all the difficulties, despite lockdowns and despite the uncertainty of what the future will bring for the cultural sector, the people behind Greentrack have done a tremendous job in organising this event."*

*(Tine Heyse, deputy mayor of Environment, Climate, Housing and International Solidarity in her opening speech)*

The online event was organised by Greentrack Gent with the help of one of its member organisations [Handelsreizigers in Ideeën](#), whose director Filip Standaert was the host of our meeting.





Foto: Karin Borghouts

[Vooruit Arts Centre](#), the venue that was to host the original live meeting in May 2020, was now the physical host for the digital Transnational meeting.

Eva Naessens, who works for our adaptation partner the Department of Climate and Environment, and the artist Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert, who was embedded in this department and joining one of their de-pavement projects, contributed their valuable knowledge and experience to this meeting by several presentations and talks. Some of these talks were specifically Ghent-oriented to make up for the fact that the partners could not get acquainted with the city in person. Equally, the planned visits for partners to projects in the city were replaced by short videos and a written interview of several local climate adaptation projects.

- [Wij\(k\)water](#) - collecting rain water from church rooftops
- [De-paving Désiré Toeffaertstraat](#) - empowering citizens to de-pave their front gardens
- [Beesphere](#) - an artist-run project working with bees and biodiversity in a local community
- [Roof Food](#) - growing food on rooftops
- [Vooruit by the Leie](#) - supply of locally grown vegetables for Vooruit's kitchen by waterways
- [Water in the City: A Living Creature and a Teacher](#) - interview with Elina Bennetsen of Waterland



*"I realise what a great opportunity lies in linking up between climate adaptation priorities and giving people their own front gardens!" (Kit England, Sniffer, Scottish adaptation partner)*

*"By creating a really vibrant and real, living example of an idea (such as the de-paved garden spaces here) you can make a very strong argument for scaling up. Starting small, delivering well and thinking big as a structure for work generally." (Maeve Stone, Irish embedded artist)*

Other parts of the meeting were aimed at bringing the experience and knowledge of the partners to local participants. The [videos](#) with interviews about embedded artists projects and the Q&A session on the second day were organised with this motivation in mind.

## Summary of Activities

Bringing together international project partners, local cultural organisations, art schools, local governments, and those key to adaptation to climate change in Ghent, a series of sessions and DIY activities took place, aimed at practitioners and organisations, both local and international:

- One online workshop for local cultural managers, developing adaptation strategies for the sector
- One online workshop for local arts/adaptation practitioners on learning from the embedded artist projects
- One online administrative meeting of the partnership
- Virtual visits to local cultural and adaptation initiatives
- One session about climate adaptation in historical cities for local and international governments



Green roof Vooruit  
Foto: Michiel Devijver

## Transnational Meeting Time Schedule

### DAY 1 - Feb 2: Climate and Culture - How Do We Adapt?

- 9.15**            **Welcome** by Greentrack Gent and host Filip Standaert
- 9.30**            [Video](#) about the de-pavement of front gardens in the Désiré Toeffaerstraat
- 9.35**            **Welcome by Tine Heyse** (deputy mayor of Environment, Climate, Housing and International Solidarity)
- 9.45**            Ben Twist (Creative Carbon Scotland) about the project **Cultural Adaptations**
- 9.50**            **Climate Change Impact in Ghent and the Climate Adaptation Plan of Ghent**  
By Eva Naessens (Department of Climate and Environment)
- 10.15**          **Examples of How Cultural Organisations Adapt to Climate Change Today**  
With Evi Swinnen (Timelab), Dominique De Braeckeleer (Bijloke Muziekcentrum), Marieke De Munck (Vooruit), Catriona Patterson (Creative Carbon Scotland)
- 10.45**          **Break**
- 10.50**          **Sharing round** of own experiences and questions from the chat
- 10.55**          **Climate Adaptation in Historical Cities: Challenges & Opportunities**  
By Eva Naessens
- 11.15**          **Break**
- 11.20**          **Workshop: Reflection - How Do We Adapt?**
- 12.41**          **Rounding up day 1**

## DAY 2 - Feb 3: Creative Potential - Involving Artists in Change

- 9.15 **Welcome** by Greentrack Gent and host Filip Standaert
- 9.25 **Video** '[What is an embedded artist project?](#)'
- 9.31 **Video** by Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert [about her embedded artist project](#)
- 9.40 Short **presentations and panel discussion** about the embedded artist project in Ghent  
By Eva Naessens & Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert
- 10.15 **Break**
- 10.25 **Three videos** of the three other embedded artists presenting their practice  
[Maeve Stone](#) (Ireland)  
[Ulrika Jansson](#) (Sweden)  
[Lesley Anne Rose](#) (Scotland)
- 10.37 **Individual viewing** of one of four videos with interviews about embedded artist projects
- 11.00 **Q&A** with all the partners about embedded artist projects
- 11.30 **Rounding up day 2 and goodbye**



Embedded artist project Ghent, Paul De Smet De Naeyer Park

*'Cultural Adaptations has been great, really well managed with a clear focus both on the process and the outcomes. I think that everyone involved has taken their involvement so seriously and been enthusiastic both in exploring together as well as in trying to find ways to make real change in society.'* (**Ulrika Jansson**, Swedish embedded artist)

### Attendees

Some 80 participants and speakers attended either one or both day/s of the Transnational Meeting. 21 of them work for member organisations of Greentrack Gent.

Not counting the project partners, participants came from different sectors. There were both cultural organisations present (32 cultural professionals, 10 artists and architects) as well as organisations from the perspective of sustainability, such as governments and governmental organisations, and ngo's (some 15 people).

# Climate & Culture: How Do We Adapt?

Ghent online, Belgium  
2 February 2021

# Climate Change Impact in Ghent & Climate Adaptation Plan of Ghent

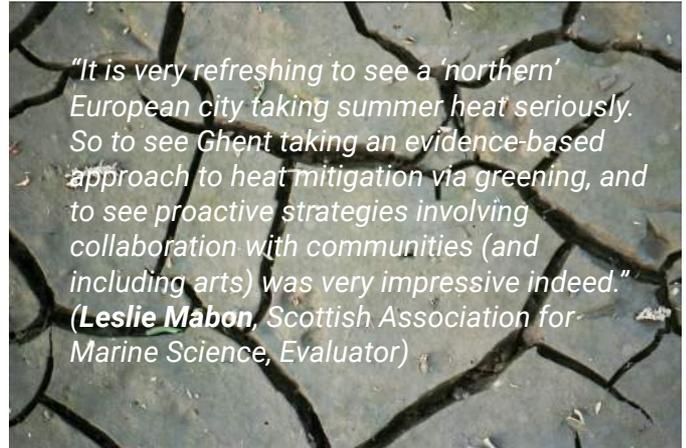
**Speaker:** Eva Naessens (Department of Climate and Environment and adaptation partner in Cultural Adaptations)

Ghent is getting warmer. After hot summer days it is up to 8 °C warmer in the city center compared to the countryside. This has an impact on the quality of life, on health, on infrastructure and on the operation of companies. At the same time, the winters are getting wetter and we're seeing more intense showers in summer. Forecasts indicate that the flood level of 20% of the roads, 12% of the cycle paths and 3% of the buildings will be more than 15 cm after an

extreme rain shower. Even today we are seeing events having to cancel due to flooding, and flooded gardens. Nevertheless, the groundwater level continues to decline. And this has a strong impact on agriculture, green management, but also on shipping. We urgently need to adapt to these changes in a thorough way.

Climate adaptation however also offers opportunities. We want to re-organise Ghent in such a way that it adds to a higher quality of life in the city, creating attractive outdoor spaces and valuing the benefits of an improved local climate and a richer biodiversity in the city. The focus lies on combining 'green and blue' natural solutions that will make Ghent more resilient to both droughts and floods and will keep the city enjoyable in days of heat. The subsoil of Ghent has to act as a sponge and open waterways and greenery will cool the city during heat days.

The goal of the city is to be 'climate proof' by 2030, creating a liveable, healthy, attractive and biodiverse city. This has led to an [ambitious climate plan](#) for the period between now and 2025.



Implementation and activation in streets, squares, parks, neighbourhoods, waterways, buildings



# Cultural Organisations & Climate Adaptation

The impact of climate change in Ghent can be felt more and more each year. Especially heat stress and fresh water shortage have become harder to ignore over the past years. However, the effects are not yet overwhelming enough to threaten entire parts of the city or the functioning of a large group of companies and organisations. Nevertheless there are some organisations which are already looking for solutions for heat stress or anticipating water shortage. And other organisations are specifically paying attention to topics like climate adaptation in their artistic programme. To give participants an idea of how cultural organisations can tackle climate adaptation, we invited a few of our members and Creative Carbon Scotland to speak about their practices.

- **Evi Swinnen, [Timelab](#), first maker space in Ghent**

Timelab has been renovating a 1800 sqm old factory over the past few years. One of the opportunities they are now looking at is dealing with rainwater, as they have a large roof. How can older neighbourhoods collect rainwater? Questions like these are often challenging for a city government who sometimes tend to focus on new developments because adaptation is easier to handle there.

Timelab started a partnership to collect, filter and store rainwater and share it with the neighbourhood. The water will also be used for working on vertical gardens and a smart garden.

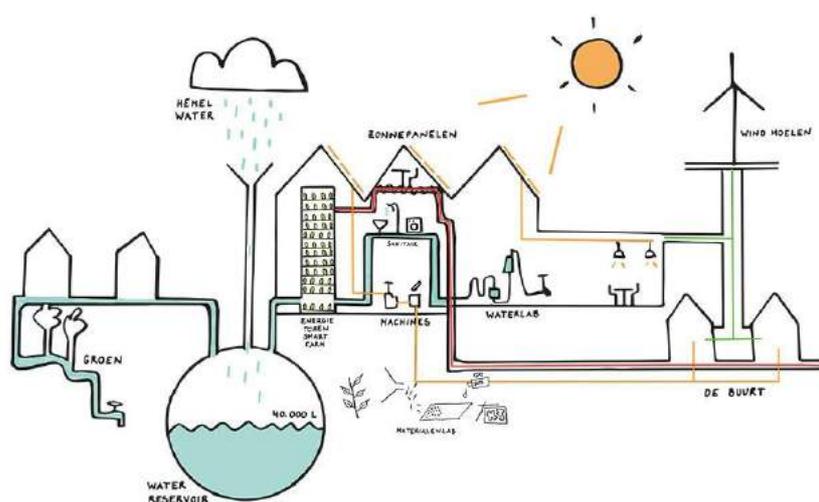


Image: Evi Swinnen

*“Timelab seem to be very well connected with their local community and have strong connections with other organisations which enables them to go further in their environmental work than if they were just doing it on their own. I liked the idea that they might structure their future arts programme around times of growing and harvesting from the vertical wall!” (Gemma Lawrence, Creative Carbon Scotland)*

- **Dominique de Braeckeleer, [Music Centre De Bijloke](#), housed in a historic building**

This 13th Century former hospital was renovated in 2006 with new additions to the historical building. Large parts of these additions were built with spider glass and stainless steel, but no blinds were added. In summer, temperatures in these parts of the building can reach up to 50°C and more. Apart from a thermal discomfort, the heat also damages the electronics of the elevators. To make it bearable, a very intensive cooling system is used during the summer, which not only consumes vast amounts of energy but also causes damage through condensation. The solution they are looking at now is to redesign this part of the building, replace the glass with natural materials, and improve where possible, e.g. by adding a green wall and vines that cover the facade.



- **Marieke De Munck, [Arts Centre Vooruit](#), artistic programmer City & Transition**

In 2019 Vooruit together with Greentrack Gent organised a programme of 4 sessions with 4 artists exploring and sharing their experience of climate adaptation.

[DRIFT - The art of climate adaptation](#) consisted of 4 performances/ workshops each linked to its own nature element and corresponding consciousness: air (mind), water (emotion), fire (action), earth (perception). The artists Peter Aers, Maria Lucia Cruz Correia, Gosie Vervloessem and Ruben Nachtergaele each invited around 15 participants to approach climate adaptation not from their ratio but from other domains of consciousness.



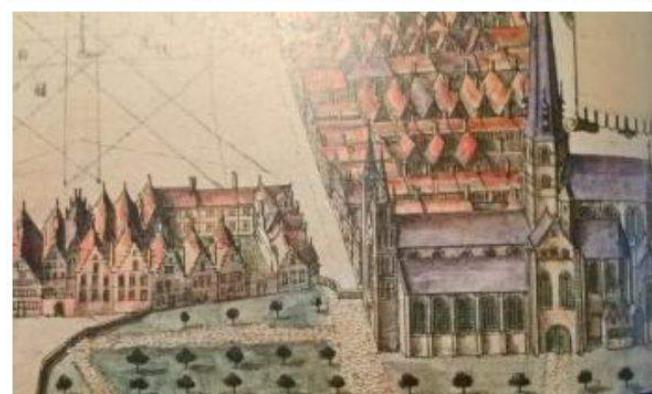
Foto: Maria Lucia Cruz Correia

- **Catriona Patterson, [Creative Carbon Scotland](#), guided us through a few examples of Scottish organisations and how they adapt to climate change:**
  - Edinburgh Printmaker and Stills Photography studio floors (flooding)
  - Hogmanay staging (wind) and Grid Iron (sun) more outdoor events (also Covid safe)
  - National Galleries of Scotland (disaster kit)
  - National Theatre of Scotland (suppliers)

# Historical Cities: Challenges & Opportunities

Ghent is a beautiful historical city with narrow streets and more than 600 listed buildings from different eras dating as far back as the early middle ages. Much of this historical character is preserved in the city centre, and protected, which makes it challenging to make changes in its urban infrastructure. When a city chooses to protect its heritage, it means that adapting this city to climate change has to go hand in hand with respecting all kinds of heritage rules: city view, materials, ...

Climate adaptation in Ghent focuses on adding more permeable surfaces, more greenery and trees, creating space for water - a general 'green and blue network' throughout the city. The city is reopening old waterways and is looking at squares and larger public spaces that can be de-paved and added green into. The city has to take into account the multiple and diverse use of public spaces and it can be trial and error before the right balance and solution is found. Sometimes it can be a delicate discussion with the heritage department as adaptation can mean drastic changes to a historical city view. One of the constructive strategies however can be to decide how far to go back in time. E.g. the Sint-Jacobs square was a paved square in the 19th century but was more of a pasture in the 17th century.



**Speaker:** Eva Naessens

# Workshop: How Do We Adapt?

*What can we learn from the adaptation to Covid-19 in this past year that we can apply in climate adaptation?*

## Aim of the workshop

This workshop was for cultural organisations that want to adapt to climate change, and/or contribute to climate change adaptation. We wanted to look at what they have learned from adapting to Covid-19 and how that can help them in adapting to climate change.

*'Climate change is a pandemic in slow motion. Covid is climate change in a pressure cooker. And there's a lot we can learn from that.'* (Rob Wijnenberg in [De Correspondent](#))

The pandemic has forced every organisation, company, government and individual to adapt to a new reality very radically with often rapidly changing measures and restrictions. Some of them have been beneficial to our carbon footprint (e.g. travel restrictions), others are encouraging the use of single-use plastics and giving rise to more waste (e.g. face masks, plastic cups, paper towels, ...). But what is clear in this crisis, is that as a society we *are* able to radically change course if our existence is threatened. Covid-19 has been an advanced exercise in radical adaptation.

A few days before the start of the Transnational Meeting, participants were sent three questions. These questions focused on how they dealt with adapting to Covid-19:

1. What are the **main challenges** that Covid-19 presented you in the past year?
2. Sometimes challenges also make us come up with **creative solutions** that we would otherwise never have been able to think of. At best, they take us to another level. Have a look at your list of challenges again and see if you can find 3 challenges that led you to a solution or a project that you are proud of.
3. Which **ingredients** led to the success of each of these 3 solutions or projects? Which people, which typical characteristics of your organization, which elements in your environment and in the context in which your organization is active, ...?

The workshop started with break-out rooms with 4 people in each room discussing these questions and sharing the highlights in the chat.



The second part of the workshop then continued with the underlying question of what you need to adapt to climate change. Participants were presented with another three questions that they discussed in their break-out rooms:

1. Earlier during the first day we got an overview of some of the challenges related to climate change that we are and will be facing. Which five climate change effects do you see that will put pressure on your organisation and its way of working?

## CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

- Possible reduction in crop yields (drier soil, diseases, damage, salinization,...)
- Greater incidence of foodborne infections
- Mismatch in foodchain
- Reduced availability of fresh/ drinking water
- Increased risk for large public & outdoor events (extreme weather)
- Increased risk of flooding
- Increased risk of forest fires/ roadside fires
- More risk of damage to buildings
- Reduced operability of infrastructure
- Increase in corrosion (heat, humidity)
- More frequent power outages and IT failures
- Higher energy consumption (refrigerating, air-conditioning,...)

2. Choose one that you are eager to start on as as soon as possible, if not today. What could you do right now to adapt your organisation to that reality? Give three possible ways of doing that.
3. What or whom do you need to do this (people, resources, knowledge, context, skills, other organisations, ...)? Maybe you can find some ingredients in your Covid era success stories that you can use here?

37 people registered for this workshop. The workshop - like all other sessions - was kept short to be able to keep the attention of attendees. The break-out rooms were pre-assigned to ensure the workshop could run smoothly and within the assigned time frame. Online attendance however can enhance a loss of focus and especially in online workshops this can quickly disrupt the whole flow. For attendants to come to deeper lying conclusions on what we can take from adapting to Covid-19 in our climate adaptation plans, a live workshop and more time would be recommended.

After the Transnational Meeting, all the participants in this workshop were sent a [digital reflective journal](#) with these and more questions guiding them through a thought process about adaptation to Covid-19 and climate adaptation.

# Creative Potential: Involving Artists in Change

Ghent online, Belgium  
3 February 2021

# Embedded Artist Projects

From a series of interviews with a few partners and artists in Cultural Adaptations, we made a [3' video](#) about what an embedded artist project is.



## Creative Approaches to Difficult Problems

Artists, designers and other creative practitioners who live and work through creative and cultural practices often [work in a different way](#) to established institutions in other sectors. These cultural approaches to dealing with climate change, adaptation and sustainability, can therefore bring a new perspective, new skills, and new knowledge to such 'wicked' problems.

Placed within local governmental and established institutions, '[Embedded Artists](#)' can help drive a systemic, integrated approach to issues of adaptation, ensuring that environmental and social sustainability are considered alongside economics and other pressures, facilitating wider participation and breaking down professional, departmental and disciplinary boundaries.

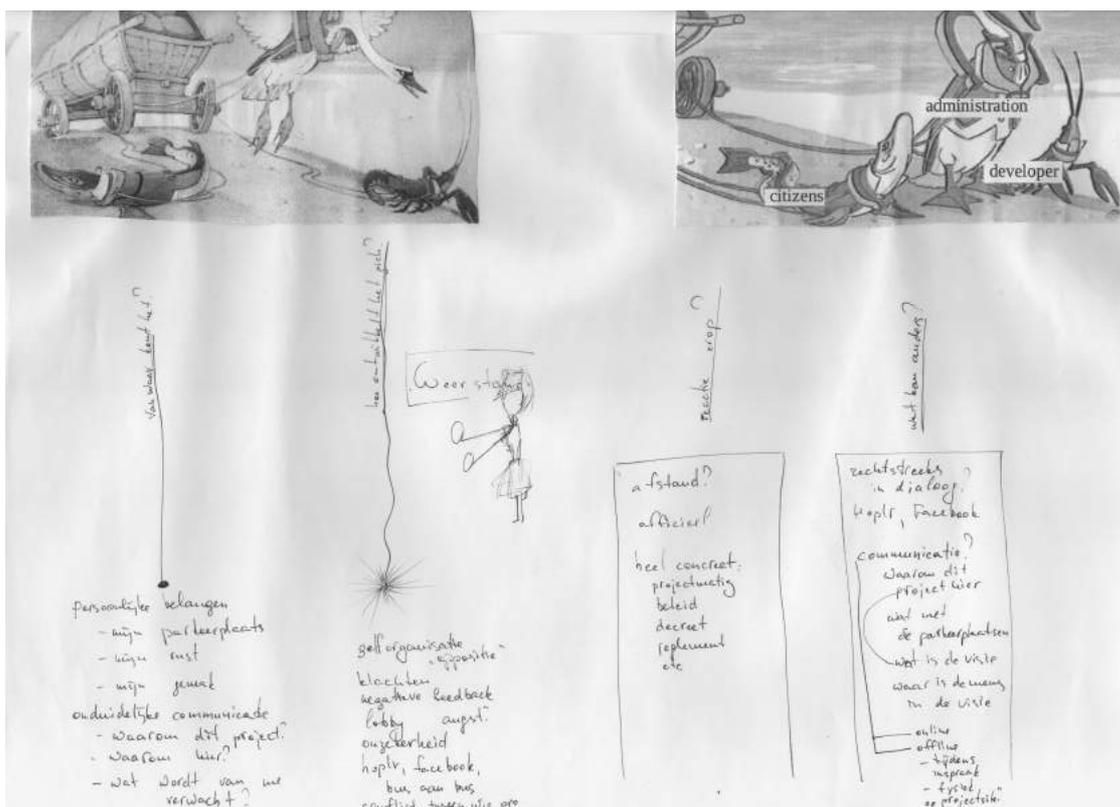
## Four Embedded Artists Working on Adaptation to Climate Change

The Cultural Adaptations project has embedded one artist in each country within a partner organisation working specifically on climate change adaptation, providing new ways of thinking, fresh perspectives and different approaches to the complex and seemingly intractable challenges that climate change presents.

These four Embedded Artist Projects provide a core element of action research: demonstrating practical examples of how cultural actors can contribute to wider climate change adaptation work. With varying external political and cultural contexts, varying physical environments and climate change impacts, and different art forms and approaches, the diversity of embedded artist projects has been explored throughout the project.

## The Cultural Adaptations Process

1. The Adaptation Partner identifies an appropriate project to work on which presents them with particular challenges which are not being successfully addressed by their current standard approaches. With their Cultural Partner they identify desired outcomes for the project.
2. The Cultural Partner identifies and recruits an artist with appropriate skills and techniques who can help to unlock the particular challenges through interdisciplinary approaches and fresh perspectives to achieve the desired outcomes.
3. The artist is commissioned to work with the adaptation project to achieve the project's aims, not by making a work of art but, for example, by helping to reinvigorate tired ways of working, providing new ways of bringing diverse stakeholders together or finding ways around barriers to progress. Projects vary in duration: from 3 months to 15 months.
4. All the Partners and Evaluators review the work to date at Transnational Meetings, enabling formative evaluation and learning to evolve the projects throughout.
5. The Cultural and Adaptation Partners jointly manage the Embedded Artist Project, each applying their sectoral knowledge, expertise and contacts to it, and each learning from the other.



© Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert



# The Embedded Artist Project in Ghent

Anyuta walked us through the Paul De Smet De Naeyer Park talking about her embedded artist project in this [7' video](#).

## Panel Discussion with Adaptation Partner and Embedded Artist

**Speakers:** Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert (Belgian embedded artist), Eva Naessens

We listened to the perspectives of the adaptation organisation (Eva Naessens) and the embedded artist (Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert) in Ghent. Eva first talked about how they embarked on this project. In her department, they had never worked with an artist before so it was very important to them to feel a connection with the artist. And in choosing a project, they wanted one that was limited in time so that the artist could be involved in a large part of it, and one that wasn't largely a technical project. Paul De Smet De Naeyer Park was perfect in this sense. From the start, Anyuta was given a lot of leeway to take part in meetings and talk to people involved following her own judgement.

As a socially engaged artist who often works in participatory and community projects, Anyuta was very eager from the start to contribute to the Department of Environment and Climate. She used the first months for observation and understanding the logic of the different city departments that were all involved in this project. One of the most challenging things was not to narrow down too soon, but to keep the possibilities open as long as needed. Only after that first period, Anyuta together with the Department decided to focus on one specific project: de-paving the Paul De Smet De Naeyer Park.

## Update Paul De Smet De Naeyerpark the alternative for the drain grates!

- two asphalted passages in the depaved zones: bikers, firemen, ...
- problematise & discuss & elaborate on lower levels: we want to take asphalt out yet we do need it
- durable placement



The underlying challenge for the city in this project is: How can we communicate better with citizens in projects like these? How can we communicate our vision to the residents in such a way that it becomes a shared vision? As a participatory artist, Anyuta wanted to inspire the city to open up the dialogue with local residents even more and in doing that, how you can shift the focus from frustrations on both sides to empowerment. She thought out a series of workshops to enhance different kinds of participation. And in the final stage of her project, she invited the greenspace department to think of how to translate the vision of the city on climate adaptation in a visual way in the park. She designed a series of guest lectures, a poetry workshop and DIY activities for residents in order to co-create a poem with them that will be applied onto the remaining hard surface in the park.



- Was it easy to find your position in this co-creation process? What were the key factors that helped you do so?
- Has the nature of your artistic work been important to this process? Did it interact with the assignment as an embedded artist?
- Did you only give input into the project, or did you also receive new insights in return?
- Did your own mindset or way of thinking change during the project?
- What characteristics/ factors were decisive for you in choosing your embedded artist?
- How did you introduce Anyuta within your team? How did you create support for her presence within the different levels of the project/ the organisation?

# Workshop: Working with Embedded Artists

After almost two years into the project, and all the embedded artist projects already finished or coming to a close, we interviewed some of the partners about how they would describe an embedded artist project. What is an embedded artist project exactly? How long does it take? What are the benefits, and what are the challenges? How do you find an artist?



## [20' Interview](#) with Ben Twist (Creative Carbon Scotland)

*"Sometimes just being there as an artist allows other people to behave in a different way."*

## [11' Interview](#) with Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert (embedded artist Ghent)

*"An embedded artist project is like swimming in an open sea, where there are many possibilities and you want to avoid choosing one of them too soon."*

## [14' Interview](#) with Lesley Anne Rose (embedded artist Scotland)

*"An embedded artist increases the organisation's capacity in a unique way. They've got both an insider and outsider perspective."*

## [17' Interview](#) with Jens Thoms Ivarsson (City of Gothenburg)

*"I see it as an investment. It's not an extra cost, but a different way of thinking that we're adding."*

*"Artists can bring new ways of supporting communication between citizens, stakeholders, city authorities etc. which can help to empower communities and organisations to work more collaboratively to adapt and make a better city."  
(Gemma Lawrence, Creative Carbon Scotland)*



## Q&A

### Aim

To give people more insight in how working with embedded artists worked during the project and to offer them the opportunity to ask direct questions to all the people involved in Cultural Adaptations.

Participants were given 20 minutes to watch one of the four interviews and write down questions they had about embedded artist projects and the experience partners gained from Cultural Adaptations. Project partners and artists were put 'on stage' in this session to answer questions from the chat.

How do you build trust? How do you deal with possible resistance of the adaptation partner in the early stages of a project? What is the value of an intermediary organisation, and is it necessary? How can artists help people think in a different way?

Questions from the chat were thoroughly answered, sometimes by several partners. But it needs to be noted that an online platform (in this case Hopin) makes it difficult to have a 'real' notion of all the participants, and genuine contact between speakers, project participants and attendees is limited.

# Partner Meeting

We rounded off the second day of this Transnational Meeting with a partner meeting evaluating this Transnational Meeting and taking stock of how far we each had come and how this tied together during the Ghent Transnational Meeting. We asked everyone to reflect on a few questions.

## What did you learn from this TNM that was new to you or that added something to already known insights?

“It was interesting to see how the pandemic has really brought the idea of ‘adaptation’ from a theoretical space to a reality.” *(Mark O’Brien, Axis Ballymun)*

“Taking care of old city areas and transforming them into sustainable places resilient to climate change instead of being hooked on idea of constantly creating new places.” *(Maria Mebius-Schröder, Tillt)*

“During the meeting, some of my ideas were linked up and confirmed, e.g. the importance of walking and deep listening, the role of the artist as ‘incidental person’, the value of anything that disrupts stable patterns of interaction, ...” *(Chris Fremantle, evaluator)*

“It was inspiring to see the city of Ghent making a real effort to offer space back to nature; it feels different thinking about the benefits to people but acknowledging that nature in its messiness and efficiency works best when given space and left to do its own thing. It was interesting to see how this can be democratised with the example of de-paving gardens.” *(Maeve Stone, Irish embedded artist)*



“It can be much harder for organisations to embrace failure (and the learnings from failure) than to reward and glorify ‘success’.” *(Leslie Mabon, evaluator)*

“The importance of the leadership in the commissioning organisation being supportive of the project and the process. It strikes me that the challenge of this is because it is about letting go of power.” *(Ben Twist, Creative Carbon Scotland)*

## What could you take away from the Belgian context to your own context? Is there anything you can use from the things that you heard during our two days?

“I was very struck by how Eva Naessens unpacked the complex dimensions and dynamics of the city of Ghent and adaptation. But also by the variety of cultural organisations’ challenges and the built environment aspect of it... The city has one set of challenges around heat, flood, drought, etc., and the cultural organisations have another set around specific buildings.” *(Chris Fremantle)*

“That by creating a really vibrant and real, living example of an idea (I’m thinking of the de-paved garden spaces here) you can make a very strong argument for scaling up. Starting small, delivering well and thinking big as a structure for work generally.” *(Maeve Stone)*

## In what way did this project answer your expectations?

“My expectations were of a journey and that’s what it has been. A very productive one and I think one that will have legacy both within our organisation and through our developing work in this context with the wider cultural sector.” *(Mark O’Brien)*

“What I didn’t expect was the richness of engaging across countries personally, professionally and in terms of practice. I didn’t expect approaches between the artists to be so similar.” *(Lesley Anne Rose, Scottish embedded artist)*

“I found it extremely rewarding to be able to compare and connect my experience with those from the other artists and I only got an extra confirmation of the value of such projects.” *(Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert, Belgian embedded artist)*

“The importance of arts and culture not as outputs but as ways of thinking have come to the fore.” *(Ben Twist)*

“I was most looking forward to – and feel I have got a lot from – seeing the different adaptation plans and strategies, and approaches, in each of the cities. It has been very rewarding and enriching to learn how the different cases learn to negotiate and work with the embedded artists.” *(Leslie Mabon)*

“All projects also touched on breaking down definitions of power and failure. All projects seem to have brought the ‘public’ and ‘end user’ into positions of power and voice, thus also spreading out the responsibility for success and failure.” *(Lesley Anne Rose)*

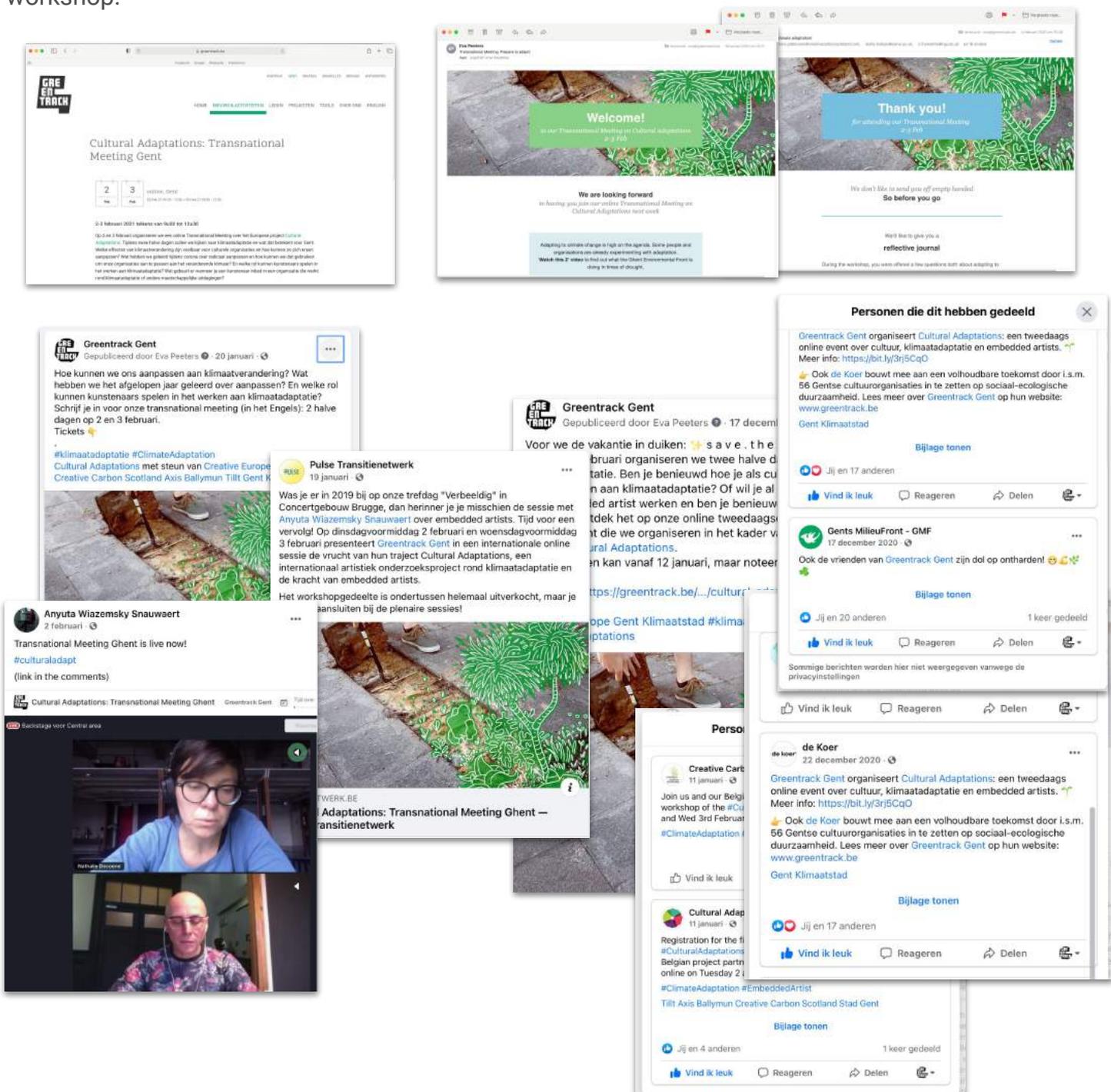
“It was so great to create embedded artist projects with a common view in different countries. It offered such rich learnings and possibilities to share ways of working.” *(Ulrika Jansson, Swedish embedded artist)*

# Project Communications and Dissemination

# Email, Website and Social Media

Participants were recruited by direct email, Mailchimp newsletter, social media (Facebook) and word of mouth. Registration for workshops and information about the project was hosted online via the platform [Hopin](#).

Registered participants received both before and after the event a newsletter with one of the videos as a teaser and a pdf with the [reflective journal](#) that was developed for the workshop.



# Participants

## Local

Anthuenis Els, MSK  
Baert Séverine, MSK  
Banken Eline, NTGent  
Blommaert Guy  
Boonen Lies, Tourism Flanders  
Boto Maria, KASK School of Arts  
Bremer Wieneke, artist  
Cruz Correia Maria Lucia, artist  
De Beukelaer Elke, Avansa  
De Braeckeleer Dominique, Bijloke Muziekcentrum  
De Clercq Tom, NTGent  
De Jonge Steven, Miramiro  
De Keersmaecker Ann, artist  
De Munck Marieke, Vooruit  
De Schepper Elisa, KASKcinema  
De Smedt Valery, LUCA School of Arts  
de Somere Sophie, Onbetaalbaar  
De Wilde Jochen, vzw Anamma  
Dusoleil Christel, De Nieuwe Opdrachtgevers  
Gansemans Joris, City of Ghent  
Habraken Greet, Flemish Community Commission  
Hammenecker Leen, Toneelhuis  
Hanna Phil  
Heymans Gudrun, EU Desk  
Heyse Tine, City of Ghent  
Huigens Els, Fris in het landschap  
Huyghe Charlotte, Handelsbeurs  
Janssens Thomas, atelier GRAS  
Laga Mattias, artist  
Lagae Magalie, Kunstwerkt  
Lattré Sofie, Nucleo  
Malfait Nathalie, Manoeuvre vzw  
Mariën Lore, OVAM  
Matthys Joachim, vzw Anamma  
Melis Kathleen, Sociale Innovatiefabriek  
Negocito Rogé, Citadelic  
Petillion Emma, Republiek Brugge  
Provoost Liesbeth, Avansa  
Quintelier Aurike, Artist & architect  
Raes Barbara, Beyond the Spoken  
Rasheed Saira, NTGent  
Real Catarina, Cargo  
Reybroeck Eva  
Rotsaert Chris, Manoeuvre vzw

Sioen Frederik, Gents Kunstenoverleg  
Stroobants Tim, Wisper  
Swinnen Evi, Timelab  
Temmerman Dominique, Design Museum  
Gent  
Tyskens Hannelore, Rikolto  
Vaes Wim, Handelsbeurs  
Van Cauwenberghe, Thomas  
Van den Brande Pieter, Gents Milieufrent  
Van Dinter Finn, Pulse  
Van Meulder Liesbeth, Rikolto  
Vanderhoydonks Willem, STUK  
Vannieuwenhuysen Toon, B'Rock  
Verhenne Jo, City of Ghent  
Vromman Steven, Low Impact Man  
Wellens Nikol, Flanders Arts Institute  
Willemsen Ann, Muzische Workshops  
Wouters Hanne, Leuven 2030

## Project Partners

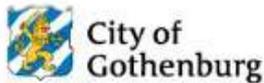
Mark O'Brien, axis Ballymun  
Nathalie Decoene, Greentrack Gent  
Katherine Denney, Cultural Adaptations  
Kit England, Climate Ready Clyde  
Chris Fremantle, Robert Gordon University  
Jens Thoms Ivarsson, City of Gothenburg  
Ulrika Jansson, TILLT  
Gemma Lawrence, Creative Carbon Scotland  
Johan Lundblad, TILLT  
Maria Mebius-Schroder, TILLT  
Eva Naessens, City of Ghent  
Catriona Patterson, Cultural Adaptations  
Eva Peeters, Greentrack Gent  
Lesley Anne Rose, Creative Carbon Scotland  
Maeve Stone, axis Ballymun  
Ben Twist, Creative Carbon Scotland  
Gerry Wardell, Codema  
Anyuta Wiazemsky, Greentrack Ghent  
Alexis Woolley, Creative Carbon Scotland



# Project Partners and Supporters



ClimateReadyClyde



More information about the Cultural Adaptations project can be found on

[www.culturaladaptations.com](http://www.culturaladaptations.com)

The project team can be reached by emailing

[EUCAN@creativecarbonscotland.com](mailto:EUCAN@creativecarbonscotland.com)

This report was prepared in March 2021 by Eva Peeters, Co-ordinator of [Greentrack Gent](http://Greentrack Gent).

Greentrack Gent vzw is a small ngo, supported by its 56 member organisations and by the City of Ghent.

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