



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2022

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INTRODUCTION

This 4-month programme of Research & Development was designed to lay the foundations for *We Live Here*. From May 2023 – April 2025, *We Live Here* will commission and present public realm projects by UK-based and international artists that build deeper connections between communities and the natural environments around them. It will seek out new ways of imagining, exploring and celebrating our shared and individual relationships with the natural world and ask how the arts can serve as a catalyst for conversations between communities, locally, nationally and internationally, about the environmental challenges that face our planet. It will nurture collaborations and conversations between artists, communities and many other organisations and agencies that maintain, protect and increase our understanding of the natural world.

At a time of ecological crisis, *We Live Here* will be rooted in personal and local reflections on far-reaching, global issues: How should we respond, individually and collectively, to the degradation of natural habitats, the loss of biodiversity and the threat of climate change? Who has access to, and control over natural landscapes, physically, culturally and emotionally? How can we better understand and maximise the benefits of engaging with nature and natural environments for mental health?

We Live Here has been developed by independent producer, curator and consultant Tim Harrison (TH). As Co-founder and Creative Director of SICK! Festival, Tim has been at the forefront of socially engaged arts practice in the UK for the past decade, connecting and combining deep-rooted engagement in local communities with issues of far-reaching national and global significance. His practice forges ambitious collaborations with partners from a range of sectors including charities, community groups, educational & academic institutions and government agencies. As well as drawing on creative collaborative practices honed in his time with SICK! Festival, *We Live Here* will also draw on Tim's experience of strategic organisational development and management that helped build SICK! into a robust organisation with a sound financial base and infrastructure.

AIMS

The R&D was designed to:

- Enrich the understanding of art & ecology of the project lead and consortium members
- Identify a shortlist of artists that could potentially be commissioned for We Live Here
- Identify potential international partners (Funders and commissioning organisations)
- Identify community partners working in the localities where We Live Here will be delivered
- Develop environmentally responsible touring models for community-based co-production

1. CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

Six partner organisations took part in the R&D process and committed to being part of the *We Live Here* Commissioning Programme subject to funding and finalising Partnership Agreements. These are:

- Lancaster Arts
- Freedom Festival, Hull
- Norfolk & Norwich Festival
- Metal South End
- Inbetween Time
- Activate Arts

These consortium members will provide the context for the development, creation and presentation of the commissioned works. A detailed description of the context that each location offers is provided in **Appendix A: Consortium Members' Dossier**.

The organisation 2NQ, named as a provisional partner in the R&D Application, is confirmed as strategic development partners, looking in particular at how *We Live Here* can serve as a model for collaboration between regional towns and smaller cities within the UK and internationally. See section 7.1.

2. ACTIONS

2.1 NETHERLANDS RESEARCH



ACTIVITY	Oerol Festival Trip
DATES	15, 16, 17 June
PARTICIPANTS	Tim Harrison, Daniel Brine (NNF), Jocelyn Cunningham (Lancaster Arts), Mikey Martins (Freedom Festival), Thea Behrman (Metal Culture), Kate Wood & Bill Gee (Activate).
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Dutch artists for possible commissioning and building partnerships with Dutch potential co-commissioners.

The Oerol Festival, on the island of Terschelling off the coast of the Netherlands, provided a first opportunity for the consortium members to come together, see work by artists that might be commissioned and discuss shared approaches and interests. The group experienced the following artworks:

- Kaapdiegoeiekoop: Silbersee, Gouden Haas, Slagwerk Den Haag, Consensus Vocalis
- Acts of Citizenship: Via Berlin, Berlage Saxophone Quartet, University of Amsterdam
- SOUNDINGS: Listen to the Land, Theon Mosk
- Spuug van God: Likeminds, Willem de Bruin
- Human Time Tree Time: Klub Girko
- Oroonoko: Orkater / De Nieuwkomers: UMA
- De Streken: Marc van Vliet
- The Bell, Bouke Groen
- Exit, Piet van Dycke
- Presentation on NAU 0000/1000: Collectief Walden

The consortium took part in a 3-day international symposium programme focussing on site-specific theatre. Organised by Oerol, with support from Performing Arts Fund NL, the symposium brought together over 30 international artists and organisation specialising in public realm and site-specific work. A dense programme of provocation, presentations

and discussions concluded that there was a need to sustain the network and continue the discussion, focussing on two key areas, and the points at which they intersect. These were:

- Art & ecology
- Audiences, Access & Diversity

Key reflections on the trip

- Consortium members saw some interesting work, but the density of the symposium programme did not leave time to see some key artists' works, in particular, Collectief Walden and De Onkrudenier. It was agreed to follow up dialogue with these artists later in the programme.
- Whilst there was some strong work, the specific relationship of that work to the landscape, either in form or content, was not always apparent or particularly considered. The consortium members shared a desire for such connections to be fundamental to the works commissioned through *We Live Here*.
- Few works demonstrated a strong approach to collaboration and co-production with communities in their development. Conversations with a representative of Performing Arts Fund NL suggest that this is an area ripe for further development in the Netherlands.
- The desire of the network to focus on the areas of Art & Ecology and Audiences, Access & Diversity, and in particular, to undertake further events focussing on practice from these perspectives, represents an opportunity for *We Live Here*.

ACTIVITY	NL Desk research & online meetings
DATES	June – September 2022
PARTICIPANTS	TH
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Dutch artists for possible commissioning, building partnerships with Dutch potential co-commissioners.

Following the Oerol Festival trip, TH continued to research artists and organisations working with themes of environment and ecology in the Netherlands, drawing on recommendations from Performing Arts Fund NL, The Mondriaan Fund, The Cultural Participation Fund, The Dutch Embassy in London and Kunstinstituut Melly (Rotterdam).

A number of artists were identified through this process that were included in the long list that was reviewed by TH and all consortium members. These included:

- Waterlanders
- Deep Time Agency
- Xandra van der Eijk
- Embassy of the North Sea
- Annabel Howland

Details of shortlisted artists are included in **Appendix B: Artists List**

In addition to these artists, TH approached a number of arts organisations in the Netherlands in order to better understand the Arts & Ecology landscape, extend the *We Live Here* network and identify potential co-commissioners. These included:

- Radius CCA: <http://www.radius-cca.org/en>
- Waag Technology & Society: <https://waag.org/en/about-waag/>
- Stroom, The Hague: https://www.stroom.nl/index_en.php
- Theater Rotterdam: <https://www.theaterrotterdam.nl>

It is anticipated that over time this network presents opportunities for commissioned works to be re-presented.

This programme of desk research and online meetings demonstrated the wide range of practices employed by artists working in the areas of ecology and environment, highlighting the fact that there is a strong focus on gallery-based visual arts practice among artists with this thematic focus. There is some community-based participatory practice, but the collaborations that underpin much of this work are often with a small group of designated ‘experts’ such as academics, scientists and others with specialist knowledge. There is certainly interest among Dutch funders and cultural institutions in supporting works that are developed in collaboration with a wider community, and also works that are manifested in public spaces.

Narratives around participatory practice in the Netherlands are, broadly speaking, still often framed by a perceived distinction between ‘quality’ art and ‘community’ arts practice. In recent years, artists, cultural institutions and funders in the Netherlands have demonstrated an increased concern for inclusion, access and diversity in their work, often citing the example of the UK as an influence and model. A number of organisations stated a belief that this shift in focus will be followed by an increased interest in community-based and participatory practices, which are, at present, less developed in the Netherlands than they are in the UK, in the opinion of those organisations.

WHAT	NL Funding & development
WHEN	June – September 2022
WHO	TH
PURPOSE	Identifying potential funders for We Live Here Commissions

Meetings were undertaken with a number of Dutch Funders and development agencies, with further meeting planned for October. It is anticipated that that, rather than coming from a single source, the funding secured for We Live Here from the Netherlands will come from several different sources, reflecting the art forms, activities and types of practice that those funder support, as well as the amount of funds that they can offer.

Conversations have taken place with:

Performing Arts Fund NL

PAF NL have / will have a number of funds available including Grant for Dutch Presentations Abroad, International co-productions and funds for networking activities.

PAF NL will support the co-ordination of a combined approach to several Dutch Funders, whereby the funders will review a single document outlining the plans for working with Dutch artists and organisations, through commissioning, film programme touring and symposium / international conference activity. Funders will then liaise in order to assess the best way to position the project in relation to their various available funds.

Cultural Participation Fund

An International Collaboration Fund is available to explore or perform an international collaboration and exchange within or outside the Netherlands. Two meetings have taken place and there is a keen interest within the fund to support works that explore environmental issues.

Dutch Embassy

TH has a long-established dialogue with the Dutch Embassy in London, who are supportive of *We Live Here*. Funding to support cultural cooperation and exchange between the Netherlands and the UK is available via the Dutch Embassy in the UK primarily to cover travel and accommodation.

On the recommendation of, and with support from the Performing Arts Fund NL, TH will also approach the following to explore funding opportunities:

- Mondriaan Fund
- Creative Industries Fund

WHAT	Online consortium research trip: Collectief Walden & De Onkrudenier
WHEN	15 September
WHO	Tim Harrison, Daniel Brine (NNF), Jocelyn Cunningham (Lancaster Arts), Mikey Martins (Freedom Festival), Thea Behrman (Metal Culture), Kate Wood & Bill Gee (Activate), Helen Cole (IBT).
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Dutch artists for possible commissioning

The consortium undertook a series of 'Online Research Trips' in order to meet artists from across the UK, the Netherlands and Finland. For the Dutch-focussed element of the research trips, the group met with two artists that had been identified by the group as being of particular interest, having a strong correlation with the selection criteria for the commissioning process.

Jente Hoogenveen - Collectief Walden

Collectief Walden is a group of artists and thinkers who feel the urgency of the ecological crisis. They are a philosopher, a biologist, a dramatist and a scenographer. Rooted in substantial research with academics, scientists and communities affected by the themes they explore, Collectief Walden create installations, performances and meeting spaces on the borders of science, documentary and visual arts. They adopt an interdisciplinary approach incorporating images, poetry, lecture performances and music come together in collage-like performances and dynamic installations. Their works often take place in landscapes or public space.

The consortium was very impressed by the rigour and sophistication of Collectief Walden's approach, particularly around the research and development practices that underpin their work. However, a number of the works discussed in the presentation demonstrated a tendency to make works that have relatively low audience reach and, perhaps, a greater appeal to existing arts audiences or audiences with an existing interest in ecology and the environment. Nevertheless, subject to addressing these concerns, they present a strong possibility for We Live Here commissioning.

<https://www.collectiefwalden.nl>

De onkruidenier

De Onkruidenier was established in 2013. The current team members, Jonmar van Vlijmen, Rosanne van Wijk and Ronald Boer, met during their residency at the Van Eyck Academie, a post academic institute in Maastricht. They like to call themselves ecosystem futurists using speculative tools to explore various forms of entanglement with our living environment. With their practice they reveal possible interpretations on the changing relationship between human and nature. Their proposition is that we ourselves can adapt to our environment not only from a technological point of view, but also physically and biologically. Instead of constructing the landscape towards our own human needs, how can we learn to adapt in a changing landscape? Using various artistic and interactive methods, the collective creates playful and eco-hopeful work. Their new exhibition *Grassroots — Seeds for (x)change* has just opened in Rotterdam.

De Onkruidenier presented many of the same strengths as Collectief Walden in terms of community engagement and participatory practice, and their concern with ecological themes. Their particular experience of working with communities around urban green spaces was particularly appealing to the consortium. Again, if the company were to be commissioned, there may be a need to be prescriptive when determining the public audience-facing outcomes of any proposed project.

Appendix C: Artists' Online Talks Programme

2.2 FINNISH RESEARCH



WHAT	Helsinki / Turku / Mustarinda research trip
WHEN	12-19 August 2022
WHO	TH
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Finnish artists for possible commissioning, building partnerships with Finnish potential co-commissioners.

In August TH undertook a research trip to Finland funded by Finnish Institute. Meetings were held with a number of artists, during which video documentation and images of the artists' works were viewed. Prior to each meeting, TH read artists' statements, descriptive texts, reviews and analysis of their work. Meetings were held with:

- Antti Laitanen
- Erich Berger
- Mari Keski Korsu
- Tuula Narhinen
- Arja Renell
- Jussi Kivi
- Aino Johansson
- Oona Leinovirtanen
- Liina Alto Setla

In addition to these meetings, TH experienced the work of:

- Antti Laitanen, Flexible Landscapes: Major exhibition at Wäinö Aaltonen Museum
- Emilia Tikka, Mnemonia: Exhibition of video work at Sola, Helsinki (Gallery of BioArts Society)
- Aino Johansson: Performance, Mustarinda Foundation
- Vaara Collective, Metsä Meissä: Performance, Mustarinda Foundation
- Oona Leinovirtanen: Performance, Mustarinda Foundation
- Liina Alto Setla: Performance, Mustarinda Foundation
- Mārtiņš Grauds & Anna Ķirse: Tree Opera: Film Screening

During the Finnish research trip, TH met several key organisations that commission and present work with an environmental focus, or offer residencies and other forms of support to artists working in these areas:

- **Mustarinda:** ‘The Mustarinda Association is a group of artists and researchers, whose goal is to promote the ecological rebuilding of society, the diversity of culture and nature, and the connection between art and science. At the centre of our activity lie contemporary art, boundary-crossing research, practical experimentation, communication, education and events. The Mustarinda Association reaches towards a post-fossil culture by combining scientific knowledge and experiential artistic activity. The Mustarinda Association is active both internationally and locally. Our activities are rooted at the Mustarinda house at the edge of the Paljakka nature reserve in Kainuu; the house has versatile spaces for artist and researcher residencies, and is also the location for exhibitions and various events. Some of our activity also takes place in Helsinki.’
<https://mustarinda.fi/info>
- **BioArts Society:** Bioart Society is a Helsinki-based association developing, producing and facilitating activities around art and natural sciences with an emphasis on biology, ecology and life sciences. It runs SOLU Space, an artistic laboratory and platform for art, science and society in Katajanokka, Helsinki, and – together with the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station of the University of Helsinki – Ars Bioarctica, an art & science program with focus on the sub-arctic environment. Bioart Society was established in May 2008 and it currently has over 130 members from Finland and other countries.
<https://bioartsociety.fi>
- **Bios:** BIOS is an independent, multidisciplinary research unit which studies the effects of environmental and resource factors on Finnish society – on economy, politics, culture – and develops the anticipatory skills of citizens and decision-makers.
<https://bios.fi/en/info/>
- **HIAP:** Helsinki International Artist Programme is an international artist residency organisation which was established in 1998. The HIAP residency programme offers time and space for developing new work in dialogue with the local art scene. The goal is to support experimental, cross-disciplinary art practices and to actively contribute to topical debates within and around the context of art. Since 2019 HIAP is also responsible for managing the Villa Eläintarha artist residency which focuses on short term production residencies. HIAP also actively initiates and engages in international projects and collaborations, such as Frontiers in Retreat(2013-2018) and HIAP Pavilion at Gwangju Biennale(2018).
<https://www.hiap.fi>

- **Helsinki Biennial:** Helsinki Biennial is an international art event that brings outstanding contemporary art to maritime Helsinki. HAM Helsinki Art Museum is responsible for producing the biennial. In 2021, the Biennial focussed on ecological concerns through a programme entitled On The Shores of the Same Sea, commissioning 41 artists to make works on Vallisaari Island near Helsinki. <https://helsinkibiennaali.fi/en/on-the-shores-of-the-same-sea/>

The research trip to Finland demonstrated a high number of artists and arts organisations exploring issues of ecology, in particular engaging with the very specific environmental concerns of the country. This said, some further research was required in order to identify artists whose practice and track record match with the aims of We Live Here. The trip to Mustarinda was inspiring in terms of the beauty of the landscape and the work that had been undertaken there previously. However, the artists who were in residency and presenting at the small festival that I attended were making work targeted at a very niche arts audience, in several cases focussing on workshop-type practices for other artists and activists. The meeting with BioArts Society was very productive, identifying some other artists to research, offering access to a wide network of artists working around ecological themes in Finland and internationally and also raising the possibility of collaborating on a co-curated programme of artists video works to tour as part of We Live Here.

HIAP and the Helsinki Biennial were both valuable in making recommendations of artists, identifying possible residency programmes that could support We Live Here projects, and exploring approaches to commissioning and presenting work in green spaces.

Details of shortlisted artists are included in **Appendix B: Artists List**

WHAT	Finnish Desk research & online meetings
WHEN	June – September 2022
WHO	TH
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Finnish artists for possible commissioning, building partnerships with Finnish potential co-commissioners.

Following the Finnish research trip, TH continued to research artists and organisations working with themes of environment and ecology in the Netherlands drawing on recommendations from The Finnish Institute, Helsinki Biennial and BioArts Society.

A number of artists were identified through this process that were included in the long list that was reviewed by TH and all consortium members. These included:

- Samir Bhowmik
- Jenni Laiti
- Annette Arlander

- Wauhaus
- Emilia Tikka
- Pekka Niittyvirta

In addition, TH met with IHME. IHME is a contemporary art organization that situates its activities in a dialogue between art and science. Its core activity is the annual staging of a new artwork, together with an artist and Finnish and foreign partners, in public space in Finland and abroad. Their approach combines the worlds of art and science to create a vision of our planet's crisis of sustainability while increasing hope. IHME's goal is to promote eco-social education, a sustainable, democratic society, and a good life on many levels. IHME has already spent ten years courageously producing new, previously unseen art. Now, as the climate crisis accelerates, we are focussing on art's power to create impact and bringing agents of art and science together around eco-social, environmental issues.

As IHME produces one new project per year, with forthcoming commissions confirmed, opportunities to collaborate are limited. However, the organisation occupies an important position in relation to arts & ecological practice and the meeting with Director Paula Toppila was valuable in extending the networks of We Live Here.

In collaboration with Helsinki University, IHME developed a six-part online course in Art & Ecology, featuring presentations and discussions with some leading environmental artists including Katie Paterson, Antti Majava, Samir Bhowmik and Jana Winderen, along with scientists and others with whom they have collaborated.

TH undertook this course as part of the R&D process.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLtzjA2DABwA-hCRT4GdIGQ2J7JLSDmig4>

WHAT	Online consortium research trip: Tuula Narhinen & Arja Renell
WHEN	15 September
WHO	Tim Harrison, Daniel Brine (NNF), Jocelyn Cunningham (Lancaster Arts), Mikey Martins (Freedom Festival), Thea Behrman (Metal Culture), Kate Wood & Bill Gee (Activate), Helen Cole (IBT).
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Finnish artists for possible commissioning

The consortium undertook a series of 'Online Research Trips' in order to meet artists from across the UK, the Netherlands and Finland. For the Finnish-focussed element of the 'Online Research Trips', the group met with two artists that had been identified during the research trip to Finland and in response to an interest from several consortium members in their work.

Tuula Narhinen

Tuula Narhinen is a visual artist and researcher based in Helsinki, Finland. Re-adapting methods and instruments derived from natural sciences, Närhinen facilitates the visual rendering of natural phenomena. Alongside tracings and recordings, her installations showcase the processes of inscription and the DIY instruments implicated. The poetics of the practice arise from the corporeal enactment and the exposition of the material process. Närhinen has exhibited widely both in Finland and abroad. Tuula Narhinen makes work that has strong thematic connections with *We Live Here*, exploring waste materials and the ways in which fall-out from human habitation impacts on natural landscapes and biodiversity. The results of her work are engaging but her practice is mainly gallery-based and her process is built on engagement with a small number of ‘experts’ rather than with communities. Development of a new participatory project for presentation in a public space would be a significant departure for her.

www.tuulanarhinen.net

Arja Renell

Arja Renell is an artist and an architect based in Helsinki. Her artistic work evolves mainly around ecological and environmental issues. She works with video, installation, events, performance and public sculpture. Arja Renell also makes works that connect well with the thematics of *We Live Here*, but, following an initial meeting with TH in Helsinki and an online presentation, the group was left unclear about the precise nature of the public outcomes of her practice and also regarding the specific purpose of her engagement with communities affected by the subjects.

<https://www.arjarenell.com>

Both artists are possible commission recipients subject to these concerns being addressed, but proposals will also be sought from other Finnish artists engaged with through the R&D Process.

Appendix C: Artists’ Online Talks Programme

WHAT	Finnish Funding & Development
WHEN	September 2022
WHO	TH
PURPOSE	To identify sources of funding for the We Live Here Commissioning Programme and associated artists’ video programme

Following the research trip to Finland, TH met with the Director of the Finnish Institute in London to report on the research outcomes of the trip, and to provide an up-date on the plans for *We Live Here*. The response was enthusiastic and a TH has presented an outline of a proposed Finnish Programme within *We Live Here*, alongside a request for £42,000 over the two years of the commissioning project. There was also considerable enthusiasm for the co-curated artists video programme.

2.3 ENGLISH RESEARCH



WHAT	Consortium Member Research Trips
WHEN	July - September
WHO	TH meeting Directors of Consortium organisations and other staff

TH undertook a series of research trips and meeting with each member of the We Live Here consortium in order to:

- Discuss consortium members' thematic interests and connections with We Live Here
- Gain a deeper understanding of the environmental and social contexts of each location
- Identify potential public realm locations for commissions
- Identify and meet with representatives of communities and organisations with whom there are established partnerships and potential for future collaboration on We Live Here Projects
- Meet potential cultural venues / presenting partners
- Discuss logistics, contributions of money and resources and what benefit partners would require in return for their contributions.

The results of these trips are collated in **Appendix A: Consortium Members Dossier**. The information contained therein will be digested and incorporated into the call out for proposals from artists, providing a detailed body of location-specific information to which applicant artists will be invited to respond.

WHAT	UK Desk research & online meetings
WHEN	June - September
WHO	TH
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying artists for possible commissioning and potential partner organisations.

Additional online research was undertaken into artists and arts organisations working on ecology & environmental themes in the UK. TH held meetings with the following:

- Invisible Flock
- Rebecca Beinart
- Jason Singh
- Kathy Hinde
- Breakwater Collective
- Chris Dobrowolski

Details of shortlisted artists, including all of the above, are provided in **Appendix B: Artists List**

TH also held meetings with the following:

Adam Sutherland, Director, Grizedale Arts / The Farmer's Arms / Lawson Park

Grizedale Arts is an arts organisation based at the historic site of Lawson Park farm, high above the Coniston valley in the English Lake District. Present director Adam Sutherland lives at Lawson Park, where visiting and resident artists are hosted by the organisation, and where creative and productive uses for the surrounding farm land are developed. The conversation with Adam Sutherland was hugely inspirational, offering some outstanding and radical approaches to participatory, community-led arts practice rooted in a profound engagement with environmental concerns on local and global levels. It re-emphasised the importance of continuity with communities, and the value of connecting communities through artistic practice.

<https://www.grizedale.org>

<https://lakedistrictfarmersarms.com>

<http://www.lawsonpark.org>

Alan Boldon, Dartington Trust

Alan Boldon is the Chief Executive of Dartington, which runs a Masters course on Art & Ecology. TH is developing plans with Alan to develop future collaborations with Dartington which may include:

- Research & evaluation partnerships, potentially including PhDs focussing on the work of We Live Here
- Contribution to existing MA programmes
- Possible residencies for We Live Here commissioned artists
- Expanding We Live Here's networks, particularly with regard to international development and climate justice

<https://www.dartington.org>

Emma Dunton, Programme Director, Season for Change

Season for Change was a UK-wide cultural programme inspiring urgent and inclusive action on climate change from 2020-2021. The project showcased the creativity and leadership of the UK's cultural sector on the most important issue of our time – the climate crisis – through 16 artistic commissions and an open programme where all artists

and arts organisations were invited to host events, artworks and actions across the UK to declare their commitment to the environment and inspire urgent and inclusive action on climate change. The conversation with Emma was very valuable, offering practical advice on the delivery of national partnership-based projects, and reflections on the diversity of voices represented in public debates and cultural projects relating to the environment and climate change.

<https://www.seasonforchange.org.uk>

WHAT	Orienteering
WHEN	13 September
WHO	Tim Harrison, Daniel Brine (NNF), Jocelyn Cunningham (Lancaster Arts), Mikey Martins (Freedom Festival), Thea Behrman (Metal Culture), Kate Wood & Bill Gee (Activate) plus guests.

Orienteering was a day-long programme of exploration and fresh air, of walking, eating and talking. It was designed as an opportunity for consortium members and a wide range of invited guests to reflect on a series of provocations exploring the question: 'At a time of ecological crisis, what could be the role of the arts in helping us navigate our relationship with the natural world?'

The programme incorporated provocations and presentations from:

- Pavlos Pauli: Volunteer, Fairfield nature Reserve
- Andy Smith: Theatre-maker
- Helen Cole: Curator & Producer, Artistic Director of Inbetween Time
- Steve Lewis: Activist & Musician
- John Angus: Artist & Curator
- Louise Fedotov-Clements: National Curator of Contemporary Art, Forestry England
- Thomas Lamers: Collectief Walden
- Adam Sutherland: Director, Grizedale Arts

The Orienteering Programme was effective in bringing together a wide range of perspectives and voices that will contribute to the shaping and delivery of *We Live Here*, with participants including activists, environmental agencies, artists, academics and curators whose work focuses on environmental issues. The programme enabled a wide range of conversations to take place, with the format allowing one-to-one and small group discussions as well as conversations between the whole group. The provocations were effective in driving conversations forward, providing particular insights into questions around land use and ownership, and revealing differing curatorial approaches employed by Inbetween Time, Grizedale Arts and Forestry England.

Appendix D: Orienteering Programme

Appendix E: Orienteering Participants List

WHAT	Online consortium research trip: Kathy Hinde, Breakwater & Rebecca Bienart
WHEN	15 September
WHO	Tim Harrison, Daniel Brine (NNF), Jocelyn Cunningham (Lancaster Arts), Mikey Martins (Freedom Festival), Thea Behrman (Metal Culture), Kate Wood & Bill Gee (Activate), Helen Cole (IBT).
PURPOSE	Developing knowledge of arts & ecology practice, identifying Finnish artists for possible commissioning

The consortium undertook a series of ‘Online Research Trips’ in order to meet artists from across the UK, the Netherlands and Finland. For the England-focussed element of the ‘Online Research Trips’, the group met with two artists that had been identified during the research process and in response to an interest from several consortium members in their work.

KATHY HINDE

Kathy Hinde’s work grows from a partnership between nature and technology expressed through audio-visual installations and performances that combine sound, sculpture, image and light. Drawing on inspiration from behaviours and phenomena found in the natural world, she creates work that is generative; that can be different each time it is experienced. Kathy frequently works with other practitioners and scientists and often actively involves the audience in the creative process. She has created installations in public spaces, including urban streets, woodlands and forests. She has shown work extensively across Europe, Russia, China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, USA, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. She was awarded the Ivor Novello Award for Sound Art in 2020.

There is considerable interest in Kathy’s practice among consortium members who appreciated the depth of engagement with subject matter and the communities with whom the artist works as well as the compositional and artistic strength of her work. The group also recognised her substantial experience of presenting work both in urban and rural public spaces.

<https://kathyhinde.co.uk>

BREAKWATER COLLECTIVE

Breakwater is a London-based Korean diaspora artist duo of Youngsook Choi and Taey lohe. Their work explores social practice across subject matters around climate justice and migrants’ lived experience, excavating counter-narratives centred around spiritual knowledge and the political resonances of landscape. For their Radio Arts Catalyst residency in 2020-21, they are collaborating on their project Becoming Forest, with the radio producer, curator and activist Cường Phạm who inquires into cultural identity, movement, sites of community and geographical space.

The consortium is very interested in exploring possibilities with Breakwater, whose combination of social and environmental perspectives reflects the aims of We Live Here

very strongly. There is some uncertainty regarding how the artists' visual and participatory practices interact, but a strong desire to see how the collective might respond to the commission brief. The relationship between Breakwater, and the Decolonising Botany collective, of which the two members are part, is also of interest.

REBECCA BIENART

Rebecca Beinart is an artist, educator and curator, based in Nottingham. She works collaboratively with places, plants and communities. Through socially engaged and place-based research, she develops long term projects - using creative workshops and public dialogue to reflect on collective histories and futures, social and environmental justice, knowledge-making, and the politics of public space. Artworks emerge from this rich mulch - conversational, sculptural and alive. Recent projects include Desire Lines, a commission for Crow Park in the Lake District; Urban Antibodies, research supported by Arts Council England and Wellcome Trust and Jerwood Open Forest exhibition at Jerwood Space, London. Alongside her work as an artist, she works as the Engagement Curator at Primary, an artist-led space in Nottingham, running a public programme of commissions, workshops and events - centring co-production and community led processes.

The quality and depth of Rebecca's engagement with communities in Keswick, and the range and visual strength of the public outcomes were impressive. The consortium would be interested to see how the artist would respond to the commission brief and how, in particular, these visual strengths might be manifested in an art work with a high level of public visibility and legacy.

<https://rebeccabeinart.info>

Appendix C: Artists' Online Talks Programme

3. REFLECTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS PRACTICE

The research undertaken in the course of this project has revealed a number of tendencies within artistic practices which address ecological and environmental issues, or which seek to represent aspect of landscape. These are manifested in both the works that artists create, and in the programmes delivered by arts institutions. The examples referenced here, which are indicative rather than exhaustive, are mainly in the UK, the Netherlands and Finland, although many of the same tendencies can be traced in other countries around the world.

In each of these countries, there is a strong art & ecology movement. A large proportion of this work is focussed on gallery-based visual arts practice as exemplified by the works of Tuula Narhinen (Fin), Jussi Kivi (Fin), Xandra van der Eijk (NL) and the Deep Time Agency (NL). In particular, there is a considerable amount of work which is rooted in close and sustained collaboration between artists and scientists from a range of different disciplines,

and in which that scientific expertise and knowledge is rigorously visualised. Such practices include works by Katie Paterson (UK), Antti Tenetz (Fin), Simon Faithfull (UK) and Anna Dumitriu (UK). In Finland in particular, numerous residencies opportunities such as those offered by Mustarinda Foundation and the BioArts Society, nurture these types of collaboration and artistic practice.

There is a strong, international infrastructure for the presentation of gallery-based environmental / eco art works including many of the world's leading art galleries and cultural institutions, but also including smaller gallery spaces such as SOLU (BioArts Society, Fin), Radius CCA (NL), Groundwork Gallery (UK) and ArtLab Berlin. There is often a strong overlap of interests with arts organisations that have a particular focus on digital and media arts. Environmental arts projects are also frequently presented in other non-arts or hybrid spaces such as the Wellcome Collection and the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford.

Whilst many art galleries are dedicating an increased level of resources to diversifying audiences, outreach and community engagement, it is clear that cultural institutions still present a barrier to engagement for many people, particularly those from diverse communities, communities with high levels of unemployment and economic disadvantage, as well as those who live in geographical areas where funded arts provision is limited.

We Live Here aims to take many of the concerns of these eco / bioarts practices to a wider audience, working with artists to explore the possibilities of presentation in public spaces in order to increase the reach and impact of project. Whilst knowledge partnerships with scientists, environmentalists and others with detailed knowledge of natural ecosystems will play a large part in *We Live Here*, the project will also seek a wider-range of perspectives and types of 'expertise', drawing on the experiences and perspectives of communities whose lives are intertwined with the landscapes in which the programme will work.

In recent years there have been some notable examples of great, public realm work that explores environmental issues. Projects such as Michael Pinsky's projects *Pollution Pods* and *Plunge*, and Olafur Eliasson's *Ice Watch* have made powerful public statements about the threats to our environment. However, such projects are hugely expensive and are only possible for the largest institutions, usually in major cities. *We Live Here* aims to commission works that can reach significant audiences, but which do not require the same huge levels of expenditure associated with these flagship projects.

The research also demonstrated a continued thread of landscape-based sculptural works such as those by Antti Laitanen (Fin) and Marc van Vliet (NL). Both artists create incredibly beautiful and accessible sculptural interventions into natural landscapes that sit within a tradition of land art running through the likes of Andy Goldsworthy, David Nash, Richard Long back to the land works of 1960s and 70s. Whilst creating powerful and moving works, both Antti Laitanen and Marc van Vliet work alone and their creations are singular responses to elemental forces. As such they occupy a place within an even longer romantic tradition of landscape art, which has historically foregrounded the viewpoint of the usually-white, usually-male individual. There remains much that is powerful and of interest in these

works, and, at a time when the social function of art is prioritised, questions remain regarding the relationship of the arts to solitude, affect and deeply personal interactions with nature. However, these are not the immediate questions facing the We Live Here commissioning programme.

Whilst these land-based, outdoor practices are created outside gallery spaces, many of the same problems of access remain. Often, the primary audience for the work is through the presentation of documentation in gallery spaces, presenting barrier to engagement for many. Furthermore, the landscapes in which the works exist in their concrete states are often remote, rural areas of beauty, subject to types of aesthetic and environmental tourism which are themselves rooted in culturally and economically privileged perspectives.

The presentation at *Orienteering* by Adam Sutherland, Director of Grizedale Arts, made a powerful case for the shift away from a 'sculptures in a forest' or 'outdoor gallery' model of environmental art, to a model that is more deeply, and sustainably connected to the social, environmental and economic realities of a landscape as exemplified by the development of The Farmer's Arms and its associated projects in Cumbria.

The research process also revealed a strong thread of artist working closely with communities to explore environmental issues through effective participatory practices. In many cases, these artists emerge from theatre practices. In their project NAU 000/1000, Collectief Walden (NL) have undertaken in-depth research into the impact of changing sea-levels and coastal erosion, engaging with and shaping their work around the experiences of individuals and communities on the front line of these environmental changes. De Onkrudenier (NL) explore urban neighbourhoods with residents, learning together about the biodiversity of those places. Breakwater (Youngsook Choi & Taey lohe) work with urban communities to explore the impact of green spaces on mental wellbeing. Rebecca Bienart (UK) worked with local schools and other community members in Keswick to explore and represent the layered historical meanings, narratives and experiences of Crow Park, overlooking Derwent Water.

In each of these cases, the depth and integrity of the engagement with local communities is of a high standard, and the public outputs are well-made and engaging manifestations of that process. In each case, however, the audience-facing presentation of the work, was accessible to a limited number of people, either because of limited capacity, presentation context or, in the case of online outputs, because only those involved in the project or accessing the artists website would know that the work could be experienced there.

We Live Here will aim to support work that combines this quality and depth of participatory process, with a wider reach and accessibility to larger, more diverse audiences.

Compared to other areas of arts practice, eco- and environmental arts appear to be significantly lacking in diversity of perspectives with some exceptions. TH is in dialogue with Samir Bhowmik (Finland / Pakistan) whose work explore environment, labour and colonialism, reflecting on the imbalance of impacts on European and North American

Landscapes in comparison to landscapes in the global South. Breakwater and other members of the Decolonising Botany collective explore ‘social practice across subject matters around climate justice and migrants’ lived experience, excavating counter-narratives centred around spiritual knowledge and the political resonances of landscape.’ The historical, technological and colonial roots of the current environmental crisis reveal the urgent need for a diversity of perspectives and *We Live Here* will aim to reflect this. Jason Singh, meanwhile, identifies the risk of largely white-led institutions employing artists of colour to explore only ‘what it means to be an artist / person of colour engaging with the natural world’ rather than allowing those artists to pursue the real content of their work, which may not focus primarily on those considerations.

The research undertaken demonstrates the possibility of commissioning work that engages powerfully with ecological and environmental matters, that is rooted in strong and effective participatory engagement with communities where environmental challenges are manifest, and which is presented in accessibly, public realm formats. However, there are few examples of artists in which all these characteristics exist to a highly developed degree. In order for *We Live Here* to achieve the quality of work, depth of participation and breadth of reach to which we aspire, we anticipate the need for close and involved dialogue with artists. In the development of the commissioned projects, we will present the artists with new opportunities for participation and presentation. We will make provocations and encourage new ways of working. We will provide opportunities to collaborate and receive support in order to develop and expand their own practices. Through this process we hope that *We Live Here* will create new works that have a powerful and far-reaching impact in and between the communities where they are made, and on the practice of the commissioned artists.

Whilst the focus of this R&D has combined artistic and practical considerations, there is a huge amount of artistic / theoretical research to be done on areas such as eco-feminism, climate justice and ecological colonialism. These themes will underpin future *We Live Here* projects and international development within and beyond the parameters of the 2023-2025 Commissioning Programme.

4. ARTISTS RESEARCH

4.2 CRITERIA

The criteria for selecting artists on the shortlist were as follows:

- High quality of artistic work
- Specific interest in making work that explores nature, ecology, the environment or landscape
- Track record of making public realm work
- Experience of collaborative or participatory practices

- Create work that has the capacity to engage a broad audience and not just regular arts attenders

Across the selection of all commissions, attention will be paid to the diversity of perspectives represented within the project.

4.3 SHORTLISTED ARTISTS

See spread sheet (In spreadsheet add artists' info & notes in relation to WLH)

4.4 SHORTLISTING PROCESS

Consortium members submitted lists of artists from the UK, Netherlands and Finland whose work they were interested in. These names were added to the list of artists identified by the TH through research trips and online research creating a long-list of over 40 artists. Consortium members and the TH then viewed examples of the long-listed artists' work online, through images, videos, artists' statements and websites and allocated numerical scores to their top 5 preferences. This enabled the group to identify all artists that were of interest to two or more consortium members, and identify where there was greatest enthusiasm for the work of individual artists and companies. Whilst this process was inevitably rather broad in its approach, it enabled the consortium to narrow the field. More detailed analysis of artists practice and specific project proposals will be made at the Commissioning Selection stage.

4.5 COMMISSION SELECTION PROCESS

4.5.1 **CALL OUT:** A detailed outline of the commissioning opportunity will be sent to short-listed artists with an invitation to apply. This call-out will incorporate:

- A summary of the overall project parameters, aims and scope
- A detailed dossier of information on the potential contexts offered by each consortium member in terms of social, geographic and environmental context, key local issues relating to ecology & community, potential knowledge & engagement partnerships, target communities and presentation opportunities. This information will be drawn from **Appendix A: Consortium Members Dossier**

NB: The consortium considers that it would not be appropriate to ask artists to produce proposals until funding for the commissioning programme has been secured. It is therefore planned that the Call Out will be sent to artists once funding is confirmed (Planned for April / May 2023).

4.5.2 **APPLICATION:** Shortlisted artists will be invited to apply, providing:

- An outline of their own artistic practice and track record

- A summary of their proposed project
- An outline of where they would like to work, with which partner organisations, connecting with which communities.
- An indicative budget
- Outline of timeline

Consortium members and the project lead will read the proposals and select those that they consider to be potential We Live Here Commissions.

4.5.3 INTERVIEW: Selected artists will be interviewed on Zoom by TH and the consortium members who have expressed an interest in those proposals. This will be a 2-way process enabling consortium members to learn more about the proposed project and ask questions about the process, and for the artists to learn more about the contexts that the partners will offer.

4.5.4 SCOPING TRIP: Before the final decision is made, 1 or 2 artists per country will be invited to visit the locations in which they propose to make and present their projects, in order to assess the feasibility of the project and meet with potential partners.

4.5.5 DECISION: The project lead and consortium members will meet to decide which projects will receive the three We Live Here commissions and to allocate budgets.

5. POSSIBLE ORGANISATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

5.2 FILM PROGRAMME

Conversations with Erich Berger, Director of the BioArts Society (Finland) and Adam Sutherland, Director of Grizedale Arts, identified a large number of projects exploring ecological and environmental themes taking the form of single channel video works. These include works by Annette Arlander, Emilia Tikka, Annabel Howland, Pekka Niittyvirta and a large collection of un-catalogued works in held by Grizedale Arts.

Based on these conversations, *We Live Here* will develop a tourable programme of artists' video works which will be co-curated by partners in the UK, Finland and The Netherlands (provisionally Grizedale Arts, BioArts Society and Radius CCA in Delft, Netherlands).

The touring programme will be presented in 3-4 gallery spaces in the cities hosting the *We Live Here* Commissions. They will provide a venue-base focal point around which programmes of discussions and other engagement activities will take place.

5.3 INTERNATIONAL ART & ECOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

The symposium on site-specific performance at Oerol Festival in June 2022 identified a desire among delegates to maintain the international dialogue and network, with a particular focus on the areas of Access & Diversity and Environment & Ecology. At the symposium TH proposed We Live Here as a potential context for a future event focussing on Environment & Ecology. Dialogue is currently underway between TH, Performing Arts Fund NL (who funded the initial event and are keen to support its next iteration), Oerol Festival and Inbetween Time, exploring the potential to collaborate on the development and delivery of such an event in June 2023. It is anticipated that this will form part of an application for funding to Performing Arts Fund NL. It is hoped that this can also lead to the delivery of an international online conference on Art & Ecology in June 2025.

6. COMMISSIONING MODEL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 FORMAT OF COMMISSIONING PROCESS & PROJECTS

The R&D enabled TH to work with consortium members to develop a framework for the commissioning, development and presentation of commissions through *We Live Here*. Each commissioned project will be developed and (re)presented in two locations. The overall concept, thematic, general presentation format and process will be the same in both locations. The specific content, site of presentation, participants and partnerships of each iteration will respond to the differing contexts of the two locations. In each location the artist will work with local communities to explore aspects of the specific geographic and social context.

The project will work with a range of community types including hyperlocal communities and neighbourhoods, communities of interest and groups of people who access and use a particular site. These communities will also include organisations and agencies working in these sites that maintain, protect and increase our understanding of the natural world.

The nature of the participation will vary according to the artist's practice, but it will be a requirement of the selection process that this engagement should make a genuine contribution to shaping the content and/or form of the work, ensuring that the projects are connected, relevant and accessible to people living in, working in and accessing these localities.

The consortium will select works that combine depth of engagement through development & participatory process with breadth of reach. We will seek projects with a high degree of visibility achieved through location of presentation, scale, stylistic language and duration of presentation.

There is potential to commission projects that are presented in a range of different types of public space including streets and public spaces of towns and cities which attract significant footfall, rural or natural landscapes in locations that are accessed by a significant number of people due to leisure and tourism, and urban green spaces, that have a high level of use by local communities.

We will invite applications from artists working in a range of artforms including visual arts, performance, digital, sound and music, as well as hybrid practices that incorporate elements of multiple artforms.

Based on a wide range of participatory and public realm projects delivered by the consortium members it was agreed that £30,000 was an appropriate budget per project, per location, so each commission would have an overall budget of £60,000. It was agreed that any less than this would not enable delivery of a strong process, public realm presentations of significant scale and visibility, and the desired quality of work.

It was also agreed that We Live Here should have an overall time-frame of two years, allowing for appropriate allocation of time for proposals from artists, selection, concept development, participatory process, creation and presentation. This time frame was also appropriate in order for the commissioned works to be presented within the context of consortium members' own festivals and presentation programmes.

6.2 PRESCRIPTIVE MODELLING & COLLABORATION

As stated previously, much work identified through the R&D has high quality engagement practice, but sometimes limited presentational reach. If this proves to be the case of projects that are proposed by shortlisted artists, we will explore more prescriptive approaches and work with artists to develop more highly visible outcomes. This could include, for example, commissioning an artist to create a visible manifestation of their project for a specified public space, to work with another artist with experience of creating accessible public realm installations or to create a digital manifestation of the project which could remain accessible (and visibly promoted in the landscape) for several years.

6.3 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES

We Live Here aims to test out new forms of inter-connected, place-based commissioning, that connect localities whilst demonstrating strong and effective commitment to reducing environmental impact. It will develop and consolidate participatory practices that connect artists, communities and locations nationally and internationally in ways that are meaningful and engaging, whilst limiting physical travel as much as possible. Hybrid forms of participation will combine face-to-face engagement with carefully facilitated online working.

As well as reducing the need for travel, this will place locally-based facilitators at the heart of the participatory process.

Where possible, we will work with local practitioners as facilitators and collaborators, thus combining the experience of international artist with the local knowledge, understanding and relatability of local artists, contributing to local artistic ecologies and reducing the need for travel by lead artists.

Travel by artists, producers and participants, when necessary, will avoid flights and any unnecessary car use, maximising use of public transport (trains & buses).

Project production will identify the most environmentally responsible solutions, making use of recycled materials and working with organisations that have a commitment to environmental responsibility.

All consortium members have a commitment to environmentally sound practices and have provided their own Environmental Sustainability Policies.

6.4 WE LIVE HERE NATIONAL REACH & IDENTITY

The consortium discussed the importance of *We Live Here* presenting a clear and recognisable identity across all six locations. It was agreed that this could be achieved through:

- Overall thematic coherence and clarity about how each commission contributes to this thematic
- Ensuring that direct and meaningful connections are made between each of the 2-3 locations / communities involved in each commission
- Presentation of artists' video programme in 4-6 gallery spaces or other locations alongside the presentation of the commissions
- Contribution to strategic national debates through the Key Cities Network
- Creation and promotion of online content through *We Live Here* website, including video and audio material, talks & discussions and the artists' video programme
- Effective and well-resourced marketing & PR campaign
- Strong social media

6.5 SHARED AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AIMS

All partners have, or are developing robust Audience Development Plans, which demonstrate a focus, shared with *We Live Here*, on increasing and diversifying audiences. There are particularly strong, shared priorities around removing barriers to engagement relating to race and socio-economic status. Engaging with young people is also a priority for

4 out of the 6 consortium members. As well as these demographic priorities, *We Live Here* and the consortium members will seek to engage audiences in localities where engagement with the funded arts sector is low. This includes the following places:

Levelling Up For Culture

- Basildon
- Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
- East Riding of Yorkshire

Priority Places

- Basildon
- Fenland

In addition to these designated places of low engagement, all consortium members will engage with audiences from neighbourhoods that have historically had low incomes, standards of living and investment, and the diverse communities that live there.

Consortium members were selected, in part, because of their commitment to meaningful and sustained engagement with marginalised communities. *We Live Here* aims to bring additional capacity and resources to those localities and to those existing community relationships, enabling consortium members to work closely with those communities on environmental themes that have a strong local relevance.

6.6 PARTNER AGREEMENTS

The consortium discussed the need for robust and detailed Partner Agreements outlining:

- Production roles
- Promotional responsibility & crediting
- Financial contributions, benefits and liabilities
- Reporting, data gathering & evaluation
- Legal & safeguarding responsibilities
- Intellectual property

Daniel Brine of Norfolk & Norwich Festival provided a template Partner Agreement that will be used as a starting point. Independent advice will be sought regarding the content of Partner Agreements before these are completed and signed by consortium members.

6.7 BUDGET CONTRIBUTIONS & PRODUCING

Each consortium member will contribute a minimum of £8000 to the project for the commissioning and presentation of one project. If one organisation wishes to support the

commissioning and presentation of more projects, or if the project that they want to support is more expensive than the costs set out in the proposed budget, they will be required to contribute a larger amount to be negotiated.

In addition to this cash contribution, each organisation will provide in-kind support in the form of administration and management costs, marketing and promotion through their existing channels and outreach & community engagement support. Any additional producer support required for the project, that would incur an additional cash cost on the partner organisation, will be covered by the project.

Details of the financial arrangement will be set out in the Partner Agreements and reflected in the overall project budget.

6.8 TIMESCALES

ACE: Expression of Interest	21/10/22
EOI Result:	12/12/22
Submit Full Application:	09/01/23
Full Application Result:	20/03/23
Project starts	May 2023
Project ends	May 2025

Within this framework, creation and presentation of projects in each location will be dictated by the festival / programme schedules of each consortium member.

7 DEVELOPMENT

7.1 STRATEGIC PLAN

This R&D process has enabled TH to consult with a wide range of highly experienced partners and advisors who have contributed substantially to the development of longer-term plans for *We Live Here*. In addition to consortium members, these included:

- Amy Vaughan: Executive Director & Deputy CEO, Battersea Arts Centre, Previously Interim SE Area Director /Director & Director of Change Programmes, Arts Council England
- Kasper de Graaf: Chair of the APPG on Key Cities and the Key Cities Network
- Alan Boldon: Chief Executive, Dartington Trust and Director of Weave
- Emma Dunton, Former Programme Director, Season for Change

The 2023-2025 Commissioning Programme that will be informed by this R&D process is intended as a springboard to the establishment of *We Live Here* as an organisation commissioning and presenting work that explores connections between the arts, ecology and communities. It will deliver innovative artistic projects develop intra-local collaborations, connecting local communities in the UK and globally in a conversation about the urgent environmental and ecological challenges that face our world.

In 2023-2024, We Live Here will be established as a Registered Charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee, overseen by a Board of Trustees.

7.2 ADVISORY BOARD

Whilst TH has many years' experience of instigating, planning and delivering large-scale international and community-based arts projects, it is recognised that a project of the scale of the *We Live Here Commissioning Programme 2023-2025* would benefit from external oversight. Furthermore, practical and strategic guidance around the establishment of a new organisation will also ensure that *We Live Here's* transition from Sole Trader-managed project, to organisation, will be smooth.

In October – December 2022, TH will form an Advisory Group of 5-6 individuals, which will meet on a quarterly basis, in order to:

- Oversee delivery of We Live Here
- Monitor finances
- Identify new opportunities
- Act as an advocate for *We Live Here*
- Support the transition from project managed by a sole trader to Charity & Company Limited by Guarantee

Advisory Board members will have expertise in the following areas:

- Financial Management
- Development & Fundraising
- Project Management
- Artistic Practice
- Diversity and engagement
- Environment & ecology
- Academic partnerships

The Advisory Board will also represent diverse perspectives and protected characteristics.

7.3 KEY CITIES NETWORK

Throughout the Research & Development Phase of *We Live Here*, TH has been working closely with Kasper de Graaf, Chair of the APPG on Key Cities and the Key Cities Network. Four of the six consortium members are based within Key Cities (Hull, Lancaster, Norwich and Southend). The remaining two operate across wider areas that include Key Cities (Bournemouth/Christchurch/Poole and Bath & North East Somerset).

The Key Cities Network works with regional cities, towns and organisations across local government and beyond to deliver prosperity, protect the environment and raise standards of living across the UK. The network is central to the levelling up and devolution agendas. Key Cities' work in platforming and connecting the diverse voices of urban UK, helping to unlock successful devolution and a productive, balanced economy for all parts of the country. The network has strong engagement with Government Ministers and Departments, and runs a successful All-Party Parliamentary Group. The Key Cities APPG, briefings, events and research initiatives help drive the national policy agenda on cities. It is an active champion for the future of urban centres, producing ideas, research and engagement to drive prosperity and a good standard of living and environment for all. The group works closely with ten universities in the Key Cities Innovation Network to drive place-based urban innovation.

<https://keycities.uk/about/>

The vision of the Key Cities Network, and its focus on intra-local solutions to the most urgent challenges facing communities living in regional centres, provides an important strategic frame for the development of *We Live Here*. TH contributed a paper to the Key Cities Report currently being developed by Kasper de Graaf in partnership with Arts Council England, setting out the aspirations of *We Live Here* in this context, and how it will contribute to the aims of the Key Cities Network.

Appendix F: Key Cities Report Text

Working with the Key Cities Network, *We Live Here* will, therefore seek to build conversations between locations in the UK and in other countries, places where people may have experienced similar conditions very differently and where alternative cultural and political responses may have been found. It will connect artists, cultural organisations, municipalities, academic institutions, communities and many other organisations and agencies that maintain, protect and increase our understanding of the natural world. Artistic projects will offer a shared, non-hierarchical space for open-ended thinking, talking and imagining. Collaboration between regional Key Cities in the UK and internationally will be fostered through the delivery of specific cultural projects. Opportunities will be explored to evaluate and develop understanding of the value and potential of such collaborations. In the longer term, the aim is for this to contribute to and drive a truly global conversation.

Working with the Finnish Institute, we have identified the regional cities of Kotka and Oulu as potential international Key City collaborators:

Kotka is an industrial, maritime city in the southern part of the Kymenlaakso province on the Gulf of Finland. We are in dialogue with the city's Cultural Director, Tomi Purovaara, who is very keen on developing the city's cultural life and international networks. We are currently planning a joint meeting between *We Live Here*, Key Cities and Tomi Purovaara, Cultural Director for the City of Kotka.

Sometimes called the 'capital of Northern Finland' Oulu is a city and maritime centre in the region of North Ostrobothnia, Finland. Oulu has also been very successful in recent urban image surveys; in a study published by the Finnish Economic Survey in 2008, it received the best ranking of large cities in image ratings across the country, including ratings from respondents in all provinces. Once known for wood tar and salmon, Oulu has evolved into a major high-tech centre, particularly in IT and wellness technology. Other prominent industries include wood refining, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, paper, and steel. Oulu is chosen as the European Capital of Culture in 2026 European Capital for Culture 2026. We are currently planning a joint meeting between *We Live Here*, Key Cities and Johanna Tuukkanen, Head of Cultural Services for the City of Oulu.

Conversations regarding this area of development are less advanced with the Netherlands. We will seek introductions, via the Dutch Embassy and/or Dutch Culture to civic and cultural partners in Delfzijl, Delft, Dordrecht and Almere.

7.4 SKILLS & TRAINING

Training in filming and editing was provided by Sagitta Media. Following this TH made and edited several text videos and is now able to record and edit simple videos of interviews and documentation of artworks to a good standard. These skills will be used in the future creation and dissemination of digital content relating to the *We Live Here* commissions. Filming and audio recording equipment was also purchased with R&D Funding. This equipment was used during the R&D Process (see below) and will be used throughout the delivery of the *We Live Here* Commissioning Programme.

7.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

Development of social media content and reach was the least successful part of the R&D process. Some content (text, images, video and a blog post) were produced by the project lead and consortium members in response to R&D activities. The intention was to undertake a series of interviews with the artists and representatives of organisations that TH met through the R&D process, and to make these interviews, or sections thereof, available through Instagram and Facebook. Whilst TH met a huge number of people within the process, it became apparent quickly that it was not appropriate or practical to interview people in these first meetings.

The primary purpose of those meetings was to get to know artists and to understand their work better. For practical reasons these interviews often took place in cafes and homes. After a small number of tests, it felt inappropriate for TH to interview people in these situations, and to make those interviews public. In order for TH to feel confident about artists representing *We Live Here*, and for those artists to feel confident about being represented in the context of *We Live Here*, relationships need to be more developed. It remains a key aim of *We Live Here* to generate substantial and engaging online content, but this will be done in the context of specific commissions, once artists have been selected.

It was clear that, once there are activities to announce and promote, the potential social media reach, through partnerships in England and internationally, will be considerable.

Investment in time and human resources will be required over the course of the commissioning programme to develop social media capacity, reach and expertise.

7.6 BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Working with graphic designer Chris Hall, TH developed branding for *We Live Here* incorporating logo and tagline, colour scheme and font use.

The domain www.welivehere.org.uk was purchased. A holding website is being developed and will go live in November.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTING

TH Registered *We Live Here* with Julie's Bicycle Creative Green Tools. However, the R&D process did not fit in with any of the designated categories. The *We Live Here* Commissioning programme will be monitored throughout using this tool.

During the R&D Process, the following measures were implemented to limit environmental impact:

- Consortium members travel to Oerol Festival (NL) by train
- Consortium members and guests travel to Lancaster Event by train rather than car
- Project lead undertakes majority of research meetings by video call
- All partners have rigorous environmental sustainability policies and report on their activities using the Creative Green Tools.
- Working from home over the summer months meant that the carbon footprint of the activity was limited

- *We Live Here* aims to run a paperless office. Where this is not possible, recycled materials are used.

TH planned to travel to Finland by train and ferry in order to reduce emissions. However, a family illness meant the additional 6 days travel time that this would have entailed was not viable.

9 SUMMARY

The R&D achieved all the aims set out in the project application to a high level, and as such, has been effective in laying the foundations for the delivery of the *We Live Here Commissioning Programme, 2023-2025*.

The stated aims were as follows:

Enrich understanding of art & ecology

The R&D gave a very substantial insight into artistic practices exploring ecological and environmental themes in the UK, Finland, the Netherlands and beyond through:

- Face-to-face and online meetings with artists from the UK, Netherlands and Finland
- Online and face-to-face meetings with organisations specialising in arts and ecology
- Experiencing a wide range of artworks including performance, visual arts, film and digital projects
- Substantial desk research & reading
- Undertaking the University of Helsinki / IHME online course in Art & Ecology

Shortlist artists

Drawing on an extensive long-list of artists generated by this research and the knowledge of consortium members, a shortlist of 5-6 artists from each country was identified. The shortlisted artists demonstrate a high quality of practice and fulfil all, or the majority of the agreed criteria.

Identify international & community partners

Research in Finland and the Netherlands identified potential curatorial collaborations with the BioArts Society, developing a touring artists video programme that will sit alongside the commissioned projects, and Oerol and the Performing Arts Fund NL, with whom plans are being developed to host an international symposium on site-specific arts and ecological

practice. In addition to these immediate developments, considerable progress has been made, working with the Key Cities Network, in the development of intra-local collaborations between localities in the UK and other countries. A framework has been established and discussions have begun with regional partners and municipalities in Finland and the Netherlands about possible future collaborations.

The research process identified and connected with engagement partners in each of the 6 consortium locations. These include conservation agencies such as the RSPB, several regional wildlife trusts and Forestry England. By engaging these organisations, it is hoped that We Live Here will demonstrate the value for conservation agencies of engaging with artists and arts organisations. The R&D also established connections with community organisations such as The Warren (Hull), Partnership for Education, Arts, Culture & Heritage (Kings Lynn-based LCEP) and Trinity Community Arts (Bristol). These partnerships will be fundamental to the engagement of *We Live Here* with people and communities living in the places where the commissions will be created and presented.

Develop environmentally responsible touring models for community-based co-production

Working with the consortium member, the details of a model for longer-term 'concept' touring have been established, enabling commissioned works to be re-created with and for different communities in different locations. The conceptual model for responding to locally significant environmental issues through community participation has been set out and will form part of the brief for commissioned artworks. Creating participatory processes that not only engage local communities, but also connect those communities to each other, is at the heart of this approach. This locality-to-locality connectivity will be achieved by maximising online, environmentally sustainable approaches. The engagement of artists with communities in the creation and presentation of works will be hybrid, employing face-to-face, located engagement where necessary, but deepening and extending this engagement through online participation, working with local facilitators. As well as limiting travel, all productions will also draw on work undertaken by Norfolk & Norwich Festival into environmentally responsible touring practices. *We Live Here* will aim to challenge, test and critically develop approaches to sustainable production and touring.

The practical, financial and promotional dimensions of this touring / multi-site commissioning and presentation model, have also been established.

APPENDIXES

- **Appendix A: Consortium Members Dossier**
- **Appendix B: Artists Short List**
- **Appendix C: Artists' Online Talks Programme**
- **Appendix D: Orienteering Programme**
- **Appendix E: Orienteering Participants List**
- **Appendix F: Key Cities Report Text**