

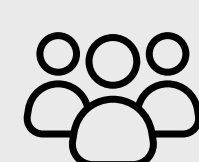
Practical tools for

# Creative Climate Action

## Lessons Learned – Reflecting on Collaboration



60 mins



1 -5 participant

### Tool description and purpose

This tool helps local authorities and project teams reflect on what they've learned from creative climate action initiatives—particularly those involving collaboration with artists and citizen engagement. It is based on real-world pilot cases and identifies what made participation meaningful, partnerships successful, and impact possible.

It is best used after a project ends or between project phases to capture insights, improve future planning, and institutionalize learning across departments and partners.

### When to use the tool?

- After completing a creative or participatory climate project
- At the end of a residency, open call, or public artwork initiative
- In project debrief sessions or funding report preparation
- When designing follow-up projects or scaling up pilots
- During cross-department learning or transition between team members

### Benefits of using this tool

- Captures tacit knowledge before it disappears
- Strengthens organizational memory and continuity
- Builds internal capacity to collaborate better with artists
- Informs new open calls, contracts, and participation formats
- Helps create a culture of reflection and improvement

### How to use this tool?

1. Use the “Collaboration Lessons” section to reflect on internal and cross-sector work
2. Use the “Participation Lessons” to evaluate public-facing elements
3. Invite artists, intermediaries, and citizens to reflect together
4. Document your answers and share within your team or organization
5. Extract key recommendations for future actions, funding applications, or strategy updates

### Example use cases

- A municipality debriefing after a creative climate pilot
- Project teams evaluating what worked and what didn't
- Funders requesting lessons learned in reporting
- Intermediaries consolidating feedback from multiple pilots
- Planning sessions for scaling or institutionalizing collaboration models

### Tool sections / reflection areas

#### A. Lessons from Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Reflect on internal processes and relationships:
- Did we allocate enough time for trust-building?
- Was the project grounded in local realities and lived experiences?
- What unexpected insights did the artistic process reveal?
- Did our institution learn something from the artist(s)?
- Did the project reach new audiences or create visibility?
- Were we flexible enough to adapt when things changed?

#### B. Lessons from Participation & Engagement

- Evaluate citizen-facing strategies and experiences:
- Did we actively build participation or just invite?
- Did we offer multiple ways for people to engage?
- Were participants involved early enough in framing the project?
- Did the artistic formats help lower the threshold for engagement?
- Did we have partners or intermediaries to reach citizens effectively?
- Was feedback collected and responded to?
- Did participation foster ownership, not just attendance?



*“Participation in Creative Climate Action requires more than outreach—it needs relationship-building, creativity, trust, and care. When these elements were in place, even small actions led to meaningful engagement and visible local impact.”*

- Trust takes time—and it’s essential. Collaboration across sectors only works when trust is actively built between artists, institutions, and communities.
- Start with the local, not the abstract. Projects resonated most when rooted in local realities, daily life, and emotional connections.
- Art can surface the unseen. Creative processes revealed overlooked barriers, untold stories, and new perspectives on shared challenges.
- Learning goes both ways. Capacity building needs to support both artists and public sector actors—each must learn to speak the other’s language.
- Visibility matters. Public installations, playful media, and interactive formats helped climate messages reach beyond the usual audience.
- Flexibility enables impact. Projects succeeded when there was room to adapt, respond to feedback, and evolve with the community.
- Participation must be built, not assumed. Simply inviting people is not enough—especially in communities with low civic activity or trust. Successful pilots used familiar spaces (e.g. schools, libraries) and intermediaries to bridge gaps.
- People engage differently—design for variety. Some joined workshops, others contributed through surveys, conversations, or creative response. Offering multiple ways to engage (quietly, playfully, publicly) increased inclusivity.
- Early involvement fosters ownership.
- Involving citizens already during naming, framing, or ideation stages created stronger emotional connection and buy-in.
- Art lowers thresholds for engagement. Artistic formats—such as light, sound, humor, and play—helped participants connect emotionally to complex issues without needing technical knowledge.
- Intermediaries help reach and support communities. Trusted local partners and creative hubs played a key role in connecting with citizens and explaining the process in familiar ways.
- Feedback is part of participation. Participation didn’t end with the artwork—it continued through post-events, discussions, and responses. Inviting people to reflect on what they saw, felt, or thought deepened the connection.
- Participation builds agency—not just attendance. When well designed, creative participation gave people a sense of power: to think, to speak, and to see themselves as part of the change.
- Participation in Creative Climate Action requires more than outreach—it needs relationship-building, creativity, trust, and care. When these elements were in place, even small actions led to meaningful engagement and visible local impact.