

Practical tools for

Creative Climate Action

Reflection Cards – Tensions & Triggers



60-90 min



2-8 participants

Tool description and purpose

The Reflection Cards: Tensions & Triggers is a discussion-based tool designed to explore and address sensitive dilemmas that may arise in collaborative cultural projects. It focuses on situations where local authorities, artists, intermediaries, and civil society actors work together — but experience friction.

Each card presents a real-world tension or triggering situation related to artistic freedom, institutional expectations, or public reaction. The purpose is not to solve these dilemmas in a standardized way, but to create space for honest reflection, strengthen mutual understanding, and build more resilient partnerships.

This tool is grounded in the principle that art must remain free and that intellectual property rights are fundamental, not only for democratic integrity but also for artists' livelihoods

When to use?

You can use the Reflection Cards at multiple stages of a cultural or artistic project — not just during planning:

Before the project begins (planning phase)

- To surface assumptions, align expectations, and open up dialogue between artists, funders, and partners.

During the project (creation/production phase)

- To address tensions as they emerge, process conflicting perspectives, and prevent misunderstandings from escalating.

After the project (reflection or evaluation phase)

- To reflect on what went well, what caused friction, and what could be done differently in future collaborations

How to use?

- Draw one card at a time (each card contains a dilemma or triggering situation).
- Read the situation aloud in a group setting.
- Discuss together:
 - How could this situation arise?
 - How might it be resolved?
 - How could it have been prevented?
- Repeat for multiple cards or select the most relevant ones.
- Optionally, document insights or create shared principles based on the discussion.
- No predefined answers — just honest conversation.

Benefits of using this tool

- Clarifies expectations on both sides before a project begins.
- Builds trust by emphasizing shared principles.
- Helps funders avoid over-instrumentalizing art.
- Empowers artists to protect their role and rights.
- Enables sustainable and transformative collaboration

Example use cases:

- A public funder, an artist, and an NGO meet to launch a climate-themed public artwork.
- A regional intermediary trains municipalities on artistic commissions and freedom of expression.
- A city project team holds a kickoff with creatives to clarify expectations before project start.
- A culture organization is debriefing after a controversy caused by provocative artwork.
- A university course on cultural policy uses the cards in classroom dialogue.

Download Cards from the toolkit

