



Co-Creating a Sustainable Ecosystem for Tourism & Cultural Events

An Edinburgh Science Climate Co-Lab event

Meeting Notes

Mon 7 August 2023 3.45–8.30pm

Queen Elizabeth House, 1 Sibbald Walk, Edinburgh EH8 8FT

Chaired by: Dr Simon Gage OBE

CEO of Edinburgh Science



Provocations

Welcome from Dr Simon Gage OBE, CEO of Edinburgh Science

Edinburgh in August is home to six Festivals. Along with these we have the UCI World Cycling Championships happening across Scotland. These attract visitors in large numbers, not just to visit the city, but to also experience the impressive cultural offering across the nation. Our Culture and Tourism industry is glorious, international, life-affirming. It produces jobs and forges careers. It is miraculous for a country of our size. However, has this all become too much? Has it got on top of us? The climate emergency forces us to think differently, changes need to be made and “business as usual” will not allow us to meet our climate objectives. The people in this room will have conflicting interests and desires about the future of this sector. We are here to discuss these today. To find solutions, exchange ideas and forge new connections.

Ministerial Address from John Lamont MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to see you all here at Queen Elizabeth House, the flagship hub for the Scotland Office and the United Kingdom Government in the heart of Edinburgh.

We are gathered under the banner of the Edinburgh Science Festival, and can I give a special welcome this evening to Simon Gage OBE, who is the Chair of Festivals Edinburgh.

Today’s topic for discussion could not be more relevant... but also exciting.

Why exciting? Well, I believe today’s Co-Lab on ‘Creating a Sustainable Ecosystem for Tourism and Cultural Events’ can generate some superb ideas.

Faced as we are with the challenges of climate change and the need to reach our Net Zero goals, we should feel optimistic – and not overwhelmed.

I was recently inside Cruachan – known as the Hollow Mountain – in Argyll which houses a mighty power station. It uses water and gravity to light and heat homes and hospitals, schools and factories.

A screen there gives you live updates on the UK’s power usage, and breaks down how that power was generated.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to report that coal was zero. Now, even a decade ago, that would have been unthinkable for a nation such as ours, where once Old King Coal reigned supreme.

If we can take dirty coal out of power production, slashing emissions, surely we can make great strides towards ensuring tourism is sustainable?

The questions we face are difficult.

How can we ensure that the city infrastructure, transport and hospitality sector underpin sustainable events?

What initiatives can cultural organisations employ to reduce their carbon footprint and broader environmental impacts?

How can the cultural sector and its host city work together to ensure that tourism happens in as environmentally sustainable a way as possible?

The United Kingdom Government recognises that sustainability is a growing driver for global tourism. People still want to travel, but they also want to be part of the climate solution, not the problem.

We in the UK Government want to increase visitor numbers, while managing this growth in a safe and acceptable way for local communities.

We have announced a number of measures that will support the sustainability of the sector across the UK.

Examples abound in international aviation, and the transition to zero emission vehicles.

The UK Government is spending over £2 billion to support the switch to zero emission vehicles. The focus is on smoothing the road to the public accepting the change, including accelerating the rollout of chargepoint infrastructure with grants for businesses.

Of particular significance in Edinburgh is international tourism, since the city and Festivals are truly global attractions.

The development and delivery of the UK's Jet Zero Strategy, which sets out how we will achieve net zero aviation by 2050, will contribute greatly to reducing the carbon footprint of tourism. This involves innovations such as sustainable, non-fossil, fuels.

And we are working with organisations such as VisitBritain to ensure the visitor economy pursues sustainable growth.

Last year, to support sustainable business events, VisitBritain developed an education series on making more sustainable choices.

UK Heritage organisations are also leading the way to a sustainable future.

In 2020, the UK Government worked with them to agree a Joint Heritage Sector Statement on Climate Change. It means the National Trust will plant 20 million trees by 2030 and create 25,000 hectares of new habitats by 2025.

Clearly, co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination between industry, government, and local authorities will be key to the success of an environmentally sustainable future.

That's why events such as this here at Queen Elizabeth House tonight are critical, drawing together the essential component parts we need to generate workable solutions.

We are not alone in this endeavour. The British Government engages on an international level to ensure that the ambition for a sustainable industry and heritage protection is a goal shared outwith the UK.

As co-hosts of COP26 in Glasgow, we were incredibly proud to host a joint Ministerial event on cultural heritage protection with the Italian government. We continue to call for all states to embed cultural heritage protection into their climate adaptation planning.

We seek balance, ladies and gentlemen, a balance in which tourism can grow and flourish, where our fabulous cultural wares can be showcased for the world.

That goal can, I believe, exist in harmony with a vision of responsible tourism which does not cost the Earth.

I know tonight's discussion will be as passionate as it is fascinating. We all here have the same goals, though perhaps differing ideas on how we might achieve them.

If the problem of grubby coal dominating our power generation can be eliminated with little more than water in a dam and a good slope at Cruachan, surely it cannot be beyond our wit and ingenuity to make tourism cleaner and greener?

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a tough nut to crack, but the task is not impossible. Over to you...

Provocation from Dr Ben Twist, Director of Creative Carbon Scotland

There's a risk here that we are fiddling while Rome burns. I've been to and spoken at many events over the last 10 years, to be honest, nothing much has changed. Carbon emissions are increasing. We have wildfires and a life and crop threatening heatwave across much of Europe, deadly floods in China, another heatwave in North America, ocean temperatures way above normal and at record levels.

The risk that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, what we probably all refer to as the Gulf Stream, may break down within my lifetime and that of just about everyone here. Arctic summer sea ice disappearing fast. We'll be thinking differently about cultural tourism then!

Meanwhile we have Governments in Scotland and the UK – along with all other rich world nations and nearly all opposition parties – still fixated on economic growth, when nobody has yet shown how you can decouple economic growth from a rise in carbon emissions.

- Take a moment to look into your hearts, and then raise your hand if you really, really, believe that economic growth can be decoupled from growth in carbon emissions?

[approximately 10% of delegates raised their hands suggesting 90% are unsure at the least]

To avoid fiddling amongst the flames, let's make sure that today's session brings about some real change.

To start with, some questions. When we talk about co-creating a sustainable ecosystem for tourism and cultural events, what do we mean by sustainable?

- What are we trying to make sustainable? Are we trying to co-create an ecosystem that is itself sustainable in the face of climate change, so it doesn't get legislated or taxed or priced something-else out of existence? Or are we talking – and I hope we are – about co-creating an ecosystem for tourism and cultural events which means that the wider environment is sustainable?
- Sustainable over what time frame? Are we talking about co-creating an ecosystem that will be sustainable for the foreseeable future – maybe until we all retire and don't have to worry about it anymore? Or are we saying – and I hope we are – that this ecosystem should result in that wider sustainability not just for now but for your children's children's children? The Welsh Government has a Future Generations Act and a Future Generations Commissioner. At the moment we're trashing their future.
- Sustainable for whom? Are we saying it should be sustainable for the people who come and take part, who earn a living from these industries? For the people of Edinburgh, some of whom never participate? Or are we saying – and I hope we are – that it should be sustainable for the people of Sub-Saharan Africa, who are paying the price today for every event, every festival, every tourist attraction that isn't already not just carbon neutral but carbon negative?
- And finally, what kind of sustainability do we mean? Alongside the climate crisis there's an inequality crisis – one which is partly caused and is certainly exacerbated by the climate crisis. And one which is local – inequality between communities in Edinburgh, Scotland and the UK – and global – inequalities between nations across the world. Are we trying to co-create a socially as well as an environmentally sustainable ecosystem for tourism and cultural events?

Those are my glass half empty questions. Here are some glass three quarters full thoughts.

First, I don't think we should despair. Humans have caused more carbon emissions since 1992 – the year of the Rio Summit – than in all the years before that. If you look at the graphs of atmospheric CO2 and global temperatures, the big change took place from the 1980s, when consumption grew rapidly owing to the falling cost of travel and transport, the ending of constraints on international capital flows and – I would argue – the increased use of shipping containers, which were only invented in the 1950s. If we can do so much damage in 30 or 40 years, we can stop doing that damage in the same period – between now and 2050, say. But we'll have to work just as hard to do so as we did on growing consumption since the 1980s. Really, we need to make good the damage we've already done – and by the way, neither off-setting nor Carbon Capture and Storage is a magic bullet.

Second, an ecosystem is a good way to think about this challenge. I'm going to get a bit technical for a moment, so forgive me – I'm reusing some thinking from my PhD here.

An ecosystem is a complex system: an open system consisting of many elements or agents which interact dynamically between themselves and indeed with influences outside the system. These interactions are rich, in that one agent may influence and be influenced by many others. They are non-linear, in that small changes can have large effects or vice versa. My point here – and this is why we are here today in this sort of forum – is that the ecosystem for tourism and cultural events involves many agents of all sorts: castles, museums and festivals, yes, but also restaurants and hotels, B&Bs, off licenses, campsites, bus companies, airlines, train companies, sole traders and corporations, public bodies, local authorities, governments at all scales. Let's remember that some of the bigger players are represented here today, and some of the smaller ones might be members of the Chamber of Commerce, but really the micro-businesses aren't in the room.

Complex systems have emergent properties – properties of the system as a whole rather than of any one agent or element. And emergent properties of the current ecosystem for tourism and cultural events are deeply unsustainable practices and outcomes: it is causing carbon emissions, big time, through travel, energy use and consumption by producers, audiences and visitors. If we want sustainable emergent properties, we're going to have to change the complex system. And that's hard. The thing about complex systems is that no one agent controls them. If one agent changes, other agents will just adapt to the change in order to ensure their own survival. Some agents have more influence than others, but it requires joint and coordinated action to bring about change. We need to work together to create a tipping point – another feature of complex systems – so that radical change happens.

How do we do this? We at Creative Carbon Scotland were involved in a project with Glasgow City Region, which was funded by EIT Climate KIC, the EU's Climate Innovation Hub, and which used an approach they have developed.

First, you need to understand the complex system – mapping it to grasp who the agents are, how they interact. Then you need to identify where the points of intervention are that might create tipping points. Then you try to do just that, exploring different ways of bringing about change. But the crucial point – and the reason we are all here today – is that it requires lots of different agents working together: providers of finance; the people who create the rules such as local and national governments; industry and commercial players; community organisations and civic society; public bodies; the media. And I'd say the arts and cultural sector.

It's not necessary for every agent to be involved in the work to create a tipping point, but you need the relevant and important ones. There's an interesting book by Simon Sharpe, called *Five Times Faster*, in which he points out that three jurisdictions effectively shape the regulations for vehicle emissions: California, the EU and China. If you could get the right people from those places to agree radical emissions reduction regulation for road transport, the rest of the world would follow: a tipping point. But if one of those groups isn't pushing in the right direction, there's a danger that it stalls progress.

One of the problems we have at the moment is that different players are pushing in different directions – and sometimes some of them are pushing in two directions at once. There's a demand for increased turnover, increased productivity, increased customers, increased audiences – and a demand to reduce emissions.

So my provocation to you today is to ask: are you pushing in the right direction, and are you working sufficiently hard with others, maybe in completely different fields to your own, to understand your own and others' place in the ecosystem and to find the points of intervention where you can bring about a step change, a tipping point?

There is perhaps a particular responsibility on those who make the rules – the local and national governments, but also the financiers, the trade bodies, the bigger parties which have more heft – to play their part.

My third glass three-quarters full point is about the role of culture and tourism in this venture. Obviously they play a big part in Edinburgh's and indeed Scotland's economy and character. But I think they're more important than that. In fact, I think they're essential. Changing the ecosystem so that its emergent properties are sustainable doesn't just mean tweaking it around the edges. We've been doing that for the last couple of decades and it hasn't worked. It means radical change. I think we need a paradigm shift, where we're working within a different, shared view of how the world is arranged, how it works.

Thomas Kuhn was the philosopher of science who popularised the term paradigm shift. He argued that science – and I think we can widen this to society as a whole – operates within a paradigm, where everyone agrees on the basic structures and mechanisms and we argue about details within that paradigm, without disagreeing about the overall picture. But there are always anomalous results, things that don't quite fit and eventually these get too many to ignore which leads to a need to shift to a new paradigm, where everything we knew for certain is still explained, but the problem results – the uncomfortable bits – also make sense.

The bit of Kuhn's thinking that is often forgotten in the popular use of this theory is that in order to have a paradigm shift, it's not enough to know what the problems are with the current system. You need also to have a new paradigm to shift to. And I think one problem at the moment is that we know there are lots of problems with the current paradigm, but we don't yet have the new one to shift to. That's one of the reasons no-one can think beyond economic growth as the sole measure of success of a society.

Cultural organisations – from festivals to theatres to museums to those who look after castles and everything in between – provide all sorts of opportunities to do thought experiments about different ways of imagining society. Heritage organisations have knowledge about how things were or were done in the past – for good or ill – and what we can learn from that. Theatres, novels, film ask the question: 'What if...?' and the characters and the audience or readers explore that idea together.

There's a researcher at the University of Edinburgh, Alette Willis, who's also a storyteller. She argues that 'We live by stories'. The stories we tell ourselves, each other, our children, our colleagues, create who we are and shape the society we live in. Cultural

organisations tell stories, in the work they make and present and the way they engage with their audiences. And they bring communities together to think about those stories collectively – to interrogate them, to understand them, to improve them. Through those stories, cultural organisations can try out new paradigms – and nobody needs to die in the process. If the paradigm is wrong, we just try out another. Artists are quick at dumping bad ideas and trying a different one.

And so my third point is that to create this new paradigm, we need to recognise that cultural organisations need to be in the mix.

I think my ten minutes must be up, so to recap:

- We need change, and radical change
- We need to co-create an ecosystem for tourism and cultural events that is socially and environmentally sustainable not just for itself, and for the short term, but for the wider environment, for people across the world and for future generations
- To achieve this we need to work fast and hard
- We need to understand the complex system, and work together to activate tipping points
- And culture has a role to play

Provocation from Prof Susan Deacon CBE, Chair of the Edinburgh Festivals

Forum

Tourism, culture and events really matter to our economy, but also to us as human beings – they're how we grow, understand and connect with the rest of the world. Covid, seeing the Royal Mile as a ghost town, was a reminder to us of the vital importance of culture. We never want to see that again.

In terms of climate change, we have come a long way, 5–10 years ago we would not have been having this conversation but the question is not how we get better at analysing, but at exercising our shared resource, leadership & imaginations to scale up change. Think about the amount of time and energy that is spent talking about the need to achieve net zero, rather than getting the right 5 or 6 people around the table to drive practical, real change. We spend far too much time on the analysis of the problem rather than developing the technology, science & engineering solutions.

People achieve things when we start building things together, rather than just critiquing it. We do need to do some work to articulate what change needs to be done but we need to shift the conversation now to how we make these changes actually happen – the doing. There's an unspoken assumption that we're talking about government when we talk about leadership, but they're not as powerful as people think. Instead of spending time talking around the problem with government, you could be making practical changes with investors and organisations that can actually achieve change. I'd caution against purism when we need to be practical and aspirations should be based on real opportunities.

My provocation to you is to hold up a mirror and think how each of you can pivot and reassign energy and resource towards activity that will actually deliver change in real time. Stop thinking in terms of sectors, it creates a divide – we need collaboration. Have more conversations about the doing – time isn't on our side.

I started life as a scientist and now I'm applying that background to climate change. Mott MacDonald is an engineering and consultancy firm which employs 18,000 people globally and is employee-owned with strong PRIDE values regarding ensuring positive social value in place since we began.

Co-Lab Discussion chaired by Dr Simon Gage OBE

Economic Arguments

Wellbeing and Financial Economies

- Festival and cultural events are growing at 1.5* rate of other industries. We generate billions of pounds each year. We are huge contributors to real old-fashioned economy.
- The festivals were founded 1947 initially not for economic gain but with the aim of bringing people together – a large part of their value is to the wellbeing economy. We need to understand exactly how we value this aspect of culture / tourism.
- You can salami-slice and make cuts to address emissions, but you also need to make sure that you value the important contributions that cultural events bring. If we believe in our impact in thought leadership – this can outweigh costs, we need to keep in mind bigger picture - world view.

Is decarbonisation consistent with economic growth?

- We need economic growth for survival, to create jobs, pay for healthcare, education and so on. We have dramatically reduced our carbon emissions since the 1980s and this has not come at the cost of economic growth. The phasing out of coal has made a huge difference and people didn't even notice that.
- Why not put a big old price on carbon, i.e., per tonne produced? It is very tricky to put a global price on carbon. A price on carbon would help though. Have governments missed the opportunity to use this tool effectively?
- Festivals and cultural events frequently rely on sponsorship which comes with conditions. We are often in a position where to get sponsorship we have to show that we are growing and becoming more international, whilst at the same time, we are working hard to reduce our emissions. These are competing priorities from funders.

Technology, Offsets & Insets

- Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) faces challenges not with evidence that it works, but on scalability. We should not be overly pessimistic – the technical solutions are there – it is now about scalability.
- Many are using offsets and CCS – have we considered insetting as effectively as we could? Would we be able to instead use money currently directed to offsetting / CCS to improve the efficiency of buildings and venues across the city, i.e., insetting? This is an area which is ripe for further exploration.
- There are small wins that we can make now e.g., provision of more water fountains across the city or seizing the opportunity of last years' bin strikes for wider discussion on waste / waste disposal.
- Who is culture for? When we are looking at the value of culture in relation to the emissions that we produce it is important to remember that we are sitting comfortably in the Global North providing something that, whilst valuable, is for our own benefit. The Global North has historically produced the most emissions whilst the Global South suffers.
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel is becoming available but remains expensive and inaccessible – what is the roadmap for this?
- Climate change has no borders. Disenfranchised and poorest nations in the world are paying the price of climate change. The University of Manchester are doing some interesting work and research on artist travel. Music industry festivals are signing up to [Vision 2025](#). There is good practice out there that we can learn from.
- A lot of things will happen around us and no one can solve everything on their own. Many things will happen in due course. What we would love to see is a curve going down smoothly. We should keep talking to people who know about what will happen in 10-15 years' time. We should be able to say 'this is what we can do, and we're doing it now'; 'this is what we know we can do in 5 years' time and we are planning for it'; and 'this is what we simply don't know'.

Behaviour Change and Paradigm Shifts

Youth, Protest & Societal Change

- Young people are the future, they are dynamic, passionate and they have new ideas. They think and talk a lot about climate change and impact. Protest is an essential part of culture and of shaping the future. Young people are also change-makers, we need to talk about the behavioural change that is needed. What is the role of education and working with young people – the rule-makers of the future?
- Certain social practices and beliefs perhaps need to change first. For example, daily showering is a behaviour that no one really questions. It requires water, heating and cleansing products. When did it become the norm to take a shower every day? It is a behaviour we take for granted. Scottish Government has developed campaigns to encourage people to think more about how they use water. Young people are trying to push behavioural change which is great. Artists are well placed to support this work – they are great at creating stories and work to influence behavioural change.

Storytelling

- Cultural events tell stories and provide a platform for storytelling and imagination. These are important elements of visualising the future.
- We do have to change the paradigm and agree that we do have to be pragmatic. We need to invest and celebrate in the work of engineering and science to incrementally make improvements. Simultaneously, we need to dream. One person spoke about their career: “I changed from science where you’re trained into one way of thinking. When you move to the arts you realise all those rules about thinking are really inhibiting. So yes, carry on with pragmatic progress but really explore interdisciplinary approaches because that’s where we’ll find solutions”.

Collaboration

- We need to spend time thinking about who needs to be in the room and around the table to create action, not more committees and working groups. We need people who can create action. It’s not just governments, although it can be, it can also be cleaners, micro businesses, SMEs, corporations. We need to break down silos and really collaborate effectively. This is what Edinburgh Science Climate Co Labs strive to enable.
- We need a change in recruitment processes. We are all guilty of recruiting people who are too alike and think in similar ways. For example, why don’t we invite the delivery driver or the IT technician etc. to these discussions? [Edinburgh Science does also run workshop events linked to The NetZeroToolkit that are open to everyone and specifically for people on the ground, delivering for their organisations and that have input to make and ideas].
- We must be really demanding of politicians, across parties, to work together. We also need to be more supportive of them and open to building better collaborative approaches. There needs to be less blame and intolerance in political work because this is NOT sustainable.

References

<https://www.vision2025.org.uk>

[Beyond Growth conference website.](#)

[‘Decolonising the social imaginary degrowth, culture, and new narratives of the good life’](#), Dr Halliki Kreinin’s keynote from SPRINGBOARD 2023.

[Wellbeing Alliance Scotland](#)

[Enough!](#)

<https://fivetimesfaster.org>

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/nov/17/people-cause-global-aviation-emissions-study-covid-19>

Delegate List

Name		Job Title	Organisation
Jane	Ali-Knight	Professor	Edinburgh Napier University
Julia	Amour	Director	Festivals Edinburgh
Lori	Anderson	Director	Culture Counts
Graham	Arnold	Director, Infrastructure & Project Finance	Lloyds Bank plc
Romane	Boyer	Green Arts and Edinburgh Festivals Officer	Creative Carbon Scotland/Festivals Edinburgh
Charles	Burke	Team Leader Net Zero and Infrastructure Policy	UK Government
Ben	Carter	Account Director	Vattenfall
Marie	Christie	Head of Development - Events	VisitScotland
Jo	Cook	Observer	UK Government
Alix	Davies	Place Manager	Scottish Futures Trust
Susan	Deacon	Chair	The Edinburgh Festivals Forum
Gordon	Dewar	CEO	Edinburgh Airport
Alix	Farr	Sustainability Lead	Skyscanner
Simon	Gage	CEO	Edinburgh Science
Beth	Hall	Head of Policy	UK Government
Francesca	Hegy	Chief Executive	Edinburgh International Festival
Alan	Hendry	Sustainability Director	Mott MacDonald
Jason	Higgs	Partner	PwC
Brenna	Hobson	Executive Director	National Theatre of Scotland
Dovile	Jancionyte	Development Officer	Edinburgh Science
Stuart	Jones	Commercial Director	Lumo
Valentina	Kretzschmar	Vice President, Climate Risk and Strategy	Wood Mackenzie
John	Lamont	MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State	UK Government
Stephanie	Maia	Communications Officer	Edinburgh Science
Claire	Marion	Carbon Manager	The City of Edinburgh Council
Shona	McCarthy	Chief Executive	Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society
Jessica	Monsen	Project Manager	Edinburgh Science
Ben	Murray	Associate Director	AECOM
Gareth	Owen	Environmental Operations Officer	Baillie Gifford
Anhelina	Parkhomenko	Intern	Edinburgh Science
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Hannah	Schlesinger	Director of Development and Marketing	Edinburgh Science
Stephen	Sheal	Head of Government Affairs and Policy	Net Zero Technology Centre
Rebecca	Tremlet	Observer	UK Government
Ben	Twist	Director	Creative Carbon Scotland
Rosalyn	Watson	Tourism Officer	Fife Council / Welcome to Fife

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We would like to thank the organisations shown below whose funding enables us to deliver these unique and invaluable collaboration opportunities. If your organisation is not yet listed below, perhaps you might like to consider supporting our climate projects – please contact Hannah Schlesinger, Director of Development & Marketing (hannahs@scifest.co.uk), or any of us at Edinburgh Science.



PROGRAMME SUPPORTERS



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Appendix

(i) About Edinburgh Science

Edinburgh Science Foundation is an educational charity, founded in 1989, which operates Edinburgh Science's Education and Festival programmes. We are best known for organising Edinburgh's annual Science Festival – the world's first public celebration of science and technology and still one of Europe's largest – our science education outreach programmes, Generation Science and Careers Hive and our community engagement work.

Our mission is to inspire, encourage and challenge people of all ages and backgrounds to explore and understand the world around them. As leaders in our field of Science Communication, we work year-round to create and deliver dynamic hands-on workshops and exhibitions and inspirational shows, discussions, debates and performances that continually push the boundaries of public engagement with science. Communication and engagement are at the core of all our work and we strive to ensure that this is embedded in all aspects of our organisation.

Edinburgh Science Climate Co-Lab Series

Edinburgh Science's Climate Co-Lab is a series of round table events which bring together senior leaders from various business sectors; government; charity; academia and beyond to foster ideas and inspiration to help them grasp the opportunities presented by the climate emergency. Many of the leaders that we convene might not usually find themselves in the same room as one another and as such the round tables prove invaluable for making new connections and seeding new partnerships.

Following two or three powerful provocations from subject-matter experts, participants are all invited to have their input into a round-table discussion. Each event is chaired by an inspiring leader who ensures that delegates put their ideas on the table, and dynamically steers the conversation toward a beneficial conclusion rounding off with a few possible action points. The Co-Lab also provides ample networking opportunities, helping to catalyse the net zero transition through inspiring and connecting the people who can deliver it.

Edinburgh Science began delivering these events in April 2019 after awarding the prestigious Edinburgh Medal to Ms Christiana Figueres - the acclaimed Costa Rican Diplomat who was instrumental in bringing about the Paris Climate

Agreement. We organised a round table on that day, with leaders of business, public sector, third sector and higher education present. They were challenged by Christiana to collaborate, to act, to not wait for anyone to give them permission and to use the opportunity that presented itself for positive change.

This optimistic ethos is what has driven these events ever since, with delegates finding immense value in them, due to the diverse invite list and facilitated discussion format.