Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism – Engagement Pack for National Tourism Administrations

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

The tourism sector is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and at the same time contributes to the emission of greenhouse gases (GHG). As of December 2019, tourism related emissions had been forecast to increase by at least 25% by 2030 in a business-as-usual scenario1. Taking into consideration the recent climate related risks and extreme unprecedented events, accelerating climate action in tourism is of utmost importance for the resilience of the sector.

The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism was launched at the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference COP26 in November 2021 as a catalyst for increased urgency across travel and tourism and to accelerate climate action.

The Declaration:

- Defines a consistent sector-wide message and approach to accelerate climate action in tourism;
- Is aligned with the scientific consensus and urgency to act now;
- Is a voluntary commitment aimed at enhancing the contribution of tourism to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

All travel and tourism stakeholders can become signatories of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism as every stakeholder has a role to play. As of August 2023, over 800 tourism organizations have become signatories2. Signing the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism entails five commitments:

1. Support the global goals of halving emissions by 2030 and reaching Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050;
2. Deliver a climate action plan (or update an existing plan) within 12 months from becoming a signatory and then implement it;
3. Align their plan with five pathways: measure, decarbonize, regenerate, collaborate, finance;
4. Report publicly on an annual basis on progress in implementing the plan;
5. Work in a collaborative spirit, share good practices and solutions, and disseminate information.

1.2 Purpose of the Engagement Pack

The Engagement Pack provides an introduction and guidance to implementing the commitments to the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism in the first years after signing up. It is designed to assist signatories, in this case NTAs, to get started with their climate action and to deliver on the commitments of the Glasgow Declaration. The pack includes lists of concrete actions, many of which can be implemented straight away, whilst others require more planning and preparation.

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2 https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/glasgow-declaration/signatories
2. HOW THE GLASGOW DECLARATION CAN SUPPORT GOVERNMENT-LED CLIMATE ACTION

2.1 Who is this Engagement Pack for?

This Engagement Pack has been developed by UNWTO to support National Tourism Administrations (NTAs) and other national agencies responsible for tourism, including National Tourism Organizations (NTOs). Tourism can be represented in government through various arrangements:

- Ministry of Tourism (e.g. Ministry of Tourism Brazil, Ministry of Tourism Maldives, Ministry of Tourism Jamaica, Ministry of Tourism Malta);
- Department of Tourism (e.g. Department of Tourism Bhutan, Department of Tourism Morocco within Ministry of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy; Department of Tourism within Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism of Botswana);
- Tourism secretariats within another Ministry (e.g. Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism Korea; General Directorate for Tourism Romania);
- National Tourism Board (e.g. Fáilte Ireland, Singapore Tourism Board; Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. alongside Barbados Ministry of Tourism and International Transport);
- A tourism authority or corporation that may have representation from both public and private sector representatives (e.g. Canadian Tourism Commission).

The focus of climate action will differ for different types of governmental tourism organisations. For this Engagement Pack, the above range of agencies will be all be referred to as NTAs.

The administrative or regulatory power of an NTA depends on national arrangements. Broadly, activities may include the development of national tourism policy, inter-agency collaboration, promotion, management and standards, infrastructure development, tourism statistics and insights, training and education.

2.2 Why sign the Glasgow Declaration?

There are several benefits of signing the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism and joining the increasing number of organisations (countries, regions, cities, businesses, and others) that have committed to contribute to achieve Net Zero GHG emissions by 2050 at the latest. The primary motivator is likely to depend on the context of each NTA, including the role of tourism within a country, the position of the NTA relative to other Ministries, and the country’s overall commitment to climate action.

Signing the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism can help:

- Catalyse collaboration and policy integration between tourism and Ministries of Environment/Climate - at national, regional and global levels - as well as other relevant ministries responsible for the implementation/coordination of climate policy.
- Communicate, internally and externally, the tourism sector’s commitment to addressing climate change and the importance of tourism climate action.
- Build capacity and embed sustainability and climate action in tourism plans and policies.

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- Empower NTAs, to set up a system for monitoring and benchmarking GHG emissions against other countries or sectors.
- Mobilise international finance and national funding for tourism's low-carbon transition, facilitate green investment flows for tourism enterprises.
- Create an enabling framework to facilitate and coordinate efforts and motivate key stakeholders, including tourism businesses, to work together towards reducing the climate impacts of tourism.
- Proactively respond to growing consumer awareness of sustainability.
- Become part of a growing global community of climate leaders in tourism.

The Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism focuses on climate change mitigation, but it also recognises the need to adapt to changing climatic conditions and the opportunities that integrated mitigation-adaptation approaches can deliver. Climate action occurs within the context of sustainable development and ecosystem restoration. Ensuring an integrated approach supports signatories in building resilience to climate risk and enables a transition towards regenerative and circular economy based approaches.
3. YOUR COMMITMENTS TO THE GLASGOW DECLARATION ON CLIMATE ACTION IN TOURISM

Signaling the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism allows an NTA to step forward as a global leader and accelerate a country’s climate action in tourism. This Engagement Pack provides an overview of what it means for an NTA to become a signatory.

In the following sections, the five commitments will be explained in more detail, including recommended actions.

3.1 Commitment 1: Support the global goals

Signatories are expected to describe within their Climate Action Plans their maximum ambition towards a 50% reduction target by 2030 and achieving Net Zero by 2050 at the latest. This journey may take longer for some countries than for others. For an NTA, the definition of the maximum ambition for the tourism sector depends also on the country’s broader commitment to climate change and the support that is available to NTAs. The Glasgow Declaration represents a mechanism for NTAs to support the implementation of national climate policy.

Recommended Actions:

- Check the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)\(^4\) of your country (e.g. what is the GHG reduction target; does it speak of tourism and in what context (e.g. mitigation or adaptation or both); is tourism a priority sector in your country?).
- Collect best practices to inspire action and learn how other countries approach tourism in their NDCs or other policy initiatives (e.g. see the annual UNFCCC synthesis report\(^5\)) and analyse the feasibility to replicate some of the approaches found.
- Investigate your country’s NDC negotiation process and identify opportunities to position tourism – become part of NDC discussions. Please note that the next submission round of NDCs is due for parties of the Paris Agreement in 2025.
- Understand relevant national climate policy and its implications for tourism (e.g. what support mechanisms are available; will compliance requirements affect tourism?).
- Connect with your UN Resident Coordinator (RC) – the highest-ranking representative of the UN Development System at the country level to adopt an integrated framework for action, considering the broad tourism value chain.
- Develop a narrative and political message/goal for tourism that supports or complements national climate policy approaches, including both the focus on mitigation and adaptation, and propose – when possible – quantifiable targets aligned with the country’s climate ambitions.

3.2 Commitment 2: Deliver a Climate Action Plan

Signatories are expected to publish a Climate Action Plan, or to update an existing plan by integrating climate action elements or aligning targets already in place with those in the Glasgow Declaration, within the first year from signing. For NTA signatories, this commitment should be implemented by integrating climate action in national tourism policies. If the policy cycle or renewal of national tourism strategies does not allow to directly include climate action in the national tourism strategy within the first twelve

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\(^4\) The UNFCCC maintains a registry of all NDCs, see https://unfccc.int/ndcreg
months, then the Climate Action Plan should provide a roadmap detailing when the inclusion – and target setting for reduced emissions – can be incorporated into future policy and the steps that need to be undertaken for it to happen.

Recommended Actions:

- Identify NTA officials that would lead the process of developing a Climate Action Plan for Tourism. These individuals need to be knowledgeable and have power to create change.
- Consider whether the NTA will lead and coordinate the Climate Action Plan development or whether another department with authority should be mandated. The exact arrangements will depend on the institutional arrangements in your country.
- Check your national tourism policy/strategy to identify how it connects to climate action (e.g. does it speak of climate; does it refer to topics related to climate action such as resilience; when will it be renewed?).
- Identify opportunities for adding climate action elements to existing tourism policy/strategy.
- Identify the role that key stakeholders would play in the implementation of the climate action elements.
- Set measurable milestones for your NTA’s Climate Action Plan or develop a clear process for how milestones will be developed and adopted progressively, keeping in mind that Climate Action Plans should be working documents and therefore can integrate improvements over time.

The **Policy Guidance to Support Climate Action by National Tourism Administrations** provides guidance on the different mechanisms that NTAs have to advance climate action for tourism. The **Guidance** includes information about the range of policy processes and instruments available to tourism policy-makers at the national level. The brief also includes good practice examples to advance climate action for tourism.

### 3.3 Commitment 3: Aligning the Climate Action Plan with five pathways

Within their Climate Action Plans, NTA signatories are expected to describe how they will address the five pathways of Measure, Decarbonize, Regenerate, Collaborate and Finance as they relate to their own operations and beyond. It is expected that Climate Action Plans will explain how each of the pathways will be progressively implemented.

All plans will need to address how to Measure and Decarbonize. Plans should also address, where possible, what positive role the NTA can play to support the Regenerate pathway. The final two pathways - Collaborate and Finance - focus on how the first three pathways are best achieved. In other words, they are enabling effective measurement, decarbonisation and regeneration.

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The Glasgow Declaration reads: Measure and disclose all travel and tourism-related emissions. Ensure our methodologies and tools are aligned to UNFCCC-relevant guidelines on measurement, reporting and verification, and that they are transparent and accessible.

For the signing NTA, the main objective should be to identify how to support sectoral emissions measurement. Given the complexity of the task, it is possible that measuring national emissions from tourism would not be possible to accomplish within the first twelve months. In this case, the first Climate Action Plan shall propose a roadmap detailing a progressive approach to advance towards this objective. Measuring organisational emissions of the NTA (similar to how businesses would measure their carbon footprint) could be a useful first step as it can support building internal capacity and familiarise staff with the requirements of emissions measurement. Yet the core objective of the NTA’s Climate Action Plan shall remain to advance towards sectoral emissions measurement, since this is where substantial impact can be made.

The first Climate Action Plan, which is due twelve months after the signature, shall propose the steps that will be followed to support sectoral emissions measurement. Ideally, the timeline to accomplish a first sectoral emissions measurement exercise will take place before 2025 as this is the year where a new round of NDCs will be submitted by countries in connection to the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Recommended actions:

- As an initial step, become familiar with existing standards that are widely accepted and credible for the reporting of emissions from organizations such as the GHG emissions protocol\(^7\) and scopes 1, 2 and 3.

- Consider producing an internal GHG emissions inventory that is defined by the NTAs organisational boundaries (note that defining the boundaries is also an important task). For example, in some cases the NTA may own and/or operate some tourism assets such as accommodation establishments or visitor centres. The carbon footprint of these operations would be part of the NTAs organizational footprint. The emissions inventory of the NTA as an organisation should align with national carbon measurement protocols, where applicable.

- In addition to the organisational GHG measurement of the NTA itself, it is important to measure emissions of the whole sector. There are several approaches that can be taken, depending on data availability, capability and resources. Consider which option will work for your destination.

- If your national context allows for a comprehensive statistical approach (i.e. developing a GHG satellite account), then draw on relevant national and international datasets that can be used to derive a national GHG emissions account for the tourism sector. Both the production and consumption perspectives are possible avenues. The work should be in line with the definitions and measurement boundaries described in the SF-MST developed by UNWTO. Are you in a position to pilot the statistical approach of the SF-MST?

- Should data or resources be insufficient to build a GHG satellite account in a top-down way, then it is possible to estimate tourism emissions in different ways. Here, NTAs can draw on relevant efforts by sub-national entities and other stakeholders which could support a bottom up approach for measuring sectoral emissions. Whilst not comprehensive, a bottom up approach can provide a rich picture of GHG emissions, including at finer scales. This type of measurement can also inform policy and tracking of progress. Are you in a position to pilot at national level any of the existing sub-national approaches to measurement of tourism emissions?

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\(^7\) For more detail see: https://ghgprotocol.org/
Explore how the measurement of GHG emissions can be complemented by a broader range of indicators to capture other aspects of the transition (e.g. capacity building, climate adaptation) or the impact of particular initiatives (e.g. finance, business certification).

Explore how the NTA could also play a role in dynamizing measurement for sub-national stakeholders, such as tourism destinations, and/or the private sector, by providing recognition and trainings, or incentives. UNWTO (2023) has compiled a summary of tools and methodologies, including the Statistical Framework Measuring Sustainable Tourism.

Decarbonize:

The Glasgow Declaration reads: Set and deliver targets aligned with climate science to accelerate tourism’s decarbonisation. This includes transport, infrastructure, accommodation, activities, food & drink, and waste management. While offsetting may have a subsidiary role, it must be complementary to real reductions.

For the signing NTA, several actions could start immediately – even before completing the measurement of GHG emissions and ideally in parallel These should be identified within the Climate Action Plan for their immediate start, both for the NTA’s ‘in-house’ implementation and to support tourism stakeholders taking climate action. The range of actions to be implemented should progressively evolve and expand as evidence on their effectiveness for decarbonization would become available through measurement.

Recommended actions:

- Plan for a series of consultations with tourism stakeholders in your country (or at destination level) with the aim to identify potential interventions that would support their climate action efforts in connection with mitigation/ decarbonization.
- Create a mapping of ongoing climate action initiatives and projects where, government entities, private sector, civil society and development assistance agencies are taking action in connection with the decarbonization of tourism activities (e.g. on resource efficiency, sustainable mobility, waste management, etc).
- Build a list of “sectoral actions” that can be implemented right away (e.g. feature climate action efforts from tourism stakeholders in the NTAs website or enable other recognition programmes; awareness raising on climate action or capacity building programmes) amongst a wide range of stakeholders. Include those actions addressed at the sector in your Climate Action Plan.
- Some actions can focus on the NTA as an organisation and ‘tourism actor’ itself. Create a simple list of “internal actions” that can be implemented right away (e.g. switch off lights and stand-by in the office; use tele-communication options for NTA meetings; encourage carpooling or public transport) and include those in your Climate Action Plan.
- Once measurement reveals key areas for GHG reductions in the NTA operation, develop a comprehensive action plan to guide investment for decarbonisation (e.g. replace equipment; new processes that foster low-carbon behaviours; staff training).
- Sectoral level measurement will also highlight key areas for intervention to further support the sector in decarbonization (e.g. capacity building of tourism workforce to

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decarbonise; incentives for climate action; tourism-specific low carbon technology information).

- Consider creative approaches that help you prioritise decarbonisation actions (e.g. an action matrix of ‘high-low carbon reduction’ versus ‘high-low ease to implement’).
- Adapt strategies if it emerges that the carbon reduction targets are not met (e.g. accelerate action, reconsider priorities, engage in new partnerships).

Regenerate:

The Glasgow Declaration reads: Restore and protect ecosystems, supporting nature’s ability to draw down carbon, as well as safeguarding biodiversity, food security, and water supply. As much of tourism is based in regions most immediately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, ensure the sector can support affected and at-risk communities in resilience building, adaptation and disaster response. Help visitors and host communities experience better balance with nature.

For the signing NTA, the Climate Action Plan should propose ways in which visitors and host communities could experience better balance with nature. Moreover, opportunities for tourism to contribute to the restoration and protection of ecosystems – to support nature’s ability to draw down carbon - should progressively be identified. It would also be important to ensure that the selected decarbonisation activities do not undermine ecosystem and community wellbeing and that the selected regeneration activities can support communities in resilience building.

Recommended actions:

- Plan for a series of consultations with tourism stakeholders in your country (or at destination level) with the aim to identify interventions that would support their climate action efforts in connection with adaptation/ regeneration.
- Consult with local communities and tourism-dependent groups, notably those operating in fragile ecosystem locations (including indigenous people where applicable), on the climate related impacts being faced already or in the near or mid-term future (e.g. are there particularly vulnerable locations; are some tourism activities disproportionately causing harm; are there examples of positive impacts?)
- Create a mapping of ongoing climate action initiatives and projects where, government entities, private sector, civil society and development assistance agencies are taking action in connection with the adaptation of tourism activities to a changing climate and the protection and restoration of ecosystems (e.g. coastal protection, reforestation, restoration of wetlands, protected areas, ecotourism, etc).
- Liaise with conservation organizations to identify environmental protection and restoration initiatives and projects (e.g. restoration of wetlands or forest) which could potentially be supported by tourism (e.g. carbon sequestration; nature-based solutions), as well as the needs of tourism stakeholders to embark on those approaches (e.g. capacity building; partnerships; etc)

Collaborate:

The Glasgow Declaration reads: Share evidence of risks and solutions with all stakeholders and our guests, and work together to ensure our plans are as effective and co-ordinated as possible. Strengthen governance and capacity for action at all levels, including national and sub-national authorities, civil society, large companies and SMEs, vulnerable groups, local communities and visitors.
For the signing NTA, the Climate Action Plan should propose a phased and coordinated approach to define the most suitable governance arrangements to support tourism climate action while identifying capacity building needs. Climate action can’t be done alone. It involves everyone in the tourism system and visitors, but also stakeholders from other sectors and parts of government, including at sub-national level.

Recommended actions:

- Consider whether the NTA will lead and coordinate the Climate Action Plan development or whether another department with authority should be mandated.
- Ensure you are up to date with developments in relation to climate change policies or other sectoral policy with relevance to climate change.
- Engage early with other government agencies to lay the foundation for tourism inclusion in climate or other sectoral policy making, and vice versa.
- Engage with academic institutions, regional bodies and international organizations.
- Map out what actions can be implemented by the NTA and which ones depend on other entities. To address gaps, coordinate activities with other parts of government, including Environment/Climate Ministries, Transport/Infrastructure, and Health conservation, for example by means of shared working groups.
- Coordinate with your UN Resident Coordinator (RC) to connect tourism into the UN system. The list of UN RCs is available here: https://un-dco.org/resident-coordinators-their-offices.
- Develop multi-level partnerships to identify and address knowledge gaps on climate change impacts and strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

Finance:

The Glasgow Declaration reads: Ensure organisational resources and capacity are sufficient to meet objectives set out in climate plans, including the financing of training, research and implementation of effective fiscal and policy tools where appropriate to accelerate transition.

Finance will be required to effectively implement the Climate Action Plan and wider sectoral policy. For signing NTAs, the Climate Action Plan should indicate which sources of funding will be used to implement the proposed actions. There is a two-fold focus. One is to ensure internal funding for the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The other focus, which should be addressed progressively, is related to how the NTA will create an enabling environment in which there is finance to support and scale up climate action in the tourism sector. Some of this could be in the form of direct funding and incentives provided by the NTA to sector initiatives.

Recommended actions:

- Specifically allocate budget to sustainability actions and projects, including the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.
- Work with partners (inside and outside of government) to develop financial instruments specifically designed for tourism and with a particular focus on supporting micro, small and medium enterprises.
- For NTA internal procurement consider the carbon implications of every purchase (e.g. supply chain management).³

Examine the carbon impact of marketing campaigns and consider using promotion as a tool to reduce emissions.

Implement low carbon conditionally criteria for government investment into tourism and explore similar standards for private sector investment.

Work with financial partners to create the right conditions for green loans, bonds and other instruments that support businesses in their transition.

Train tourism staff in understanding the ‘climate finance’ landscape and options so that they can apply for financial support, either for NTA-led projects or as partners in other climate-funded initiatives.

### 3.4 Commitment 4: Report publicly on an annual basis on progress

Signatories are expected to report on progress implementing their plans. This is to ensure transparency and foster implementation. It will also maximise the domino effect of catalysing action across the whole tourism sector.

The Climate Action Plans NTAs need to deliver will become the baseline for their annual progress reporting through the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme network platform. Individual reports will be made public online as a means of increasing transparency, with the exception of information deemed as confidential by the signatory.

#### Recommended actions:

- Set yourself up in the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme network platform to report annually on progress implementing your Climate Action Plan.
- Report annually on actions implemented; report also against emission targets (as soon as a baseline has been established) and other relevant indicators.
- Consider what other communication channels or platforms could be useful to share your progress reports, including lessons learned (e.g. directed at tourism sector audience; connecting with NDC process).

The development of a transparent and seamless annual reporting mechanism and template for the Glasgow Declaration will start in 2024 and follow a participatory process and consultation with the signatories. The information provided by signatories will be used to report on aggregated progress achieved implementing the Glasgow Declaration. Progress reports will be made available in the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme’s website, with the aggregated information being subsequently fed into the UNFCCC’s Global Climate Action Platform (G-CAP).

### 3.5 Commitment 5: Work in a collaborative spirit, share good practices and solutions, and disseminate information

Climate change is a complex challenge and working together is essential to achieve the required level of progress towards the low carbon transition. The commitment to work collaboratively, share good practices and (innovative) solutions, and disseminate information to key stakeholders in the tourism system cuts across all the other commitments. Several recommendations for actions have already been provided above.

#### Recommended actions:

- Within the NTA, raise awareness of the commitment to the Glasgow Declaration, climate targets and opportunities to become involved (e.g. create green teams; ideas boards; invite experts for talks; invest in staff training).
Create a plan for how to disseminate relevant information (e.g. tools and resources) and support the sector to create positive momentum for collective climate action.

- Increase awareness and communication among visitors on environmental impacts of tourism, and help individuals choose sustainable, low-impact travel options

- Create incentives, such as award schemes, to share best practice and reward early adopters.

- Signatories are encouraged to share information on relevant initiatives or activities with oneplanetstp@unwto.org for their dissemination through the newsletter of the Glasgow Declaration and inclusion in the repository of tools and resources when appropriate.

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4. BOUNDARIES OF THE GLASGOW DECLARATION

The Glasgow Declaration is a voluntary commitment and not an international treaty or part of global climate policy under the UNFCCC. It does not replace or conflict in any way with international climate change agreements and frameworks that countries have signed up to.

Whilst not legally binding, NTAs may consult with their Environment/Climate ministries and foreign affairs before signing the Glasgow Declaration. There are several reasons for early engagement. One is for the NTA to be fully aware of the country’s wider climate commitments, including decarbonisation targets, support packages, policies and international alliances. Second, increasing visibility of tourism with Environment/Climate Ministries is beneficial so as to lay a solid foundation for future collaboration.

The NTA cannot sign on behalf of any other organisation or tourism businesses. However, the NTA can play a leadership role and encourage climate action within the wider sector.

5. FUTURE UPDATES

The Engagement Packs could be subject to review every 24 months, if deemed necessary and after consultation and validation with the majority of signatories, to ensure collective progress is kept at the level of maximum feasible ambition and so that the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism continues to represent true leadership.