



Glasgow Declaration

Climate Action in Tourism

Below you are provided with the Operating Guidelines drafted in the format of the FAQs for ease of reference. Please do not hesitate to email oneplanetstp@unwto.org if your question is not included.

To navigate the document, please click on your selected question in the overview to directly access the reply.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why has this Declaration been created now?

As the world is recovering from the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, this UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November 2021 (COP26) will be a crucial occasion for travel and tourism, providing an opportunity to accelerate climate action across our sector and start a decade of concerted, urgent action to cut the sector's global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in half. The intent of the Glasgow Declaration is to urge and enable all travel and tourism stakeholders to sign and demonstrate, for the first time as a united sector, a shared voice and commitment to aligning the sector's climate ambitions with scientific recommendations and international agreements.

2. Who wrote the Declaration?

The wording of the Glasgow Declaration has been carefully developed in consultation with a diverse range of travel and tourism stakeholders, including private sector actors, international organizations, NGOs and academia. These stakeholders provided feedback on the Declaration, which was then reviewed by the drafting committee composed of representatives from UNWTO, UNEP, Tourism Declares, Travel Foundation and VisitScotland. The Declaration has been developed within the framework of the Sustainable Tourism Programme of the One Planet network.

3. What is the Declaration asking from its signatories?

The Declaration is asking its signatories to commit to:

- Support the global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050
- Deliver climate action plans within 12 months from becoming a signatory (or updating existing plans), and begin implementing them
- Align their plans with the five pathways of the Declaration (Measure, Decarbonize, Regenerate, Collaborate, Finance) to accelerate and co-ordinate climate action in tourism
- Report publicly on an annual basis on progress against interim and long-term targets, as well as on actions being taken
- Work in a collaborative spirit, sharing good practices and solutions, and disseminating information to encourage additional organizations to become signatories and supporting one another to reach targets as quickly as possible

4. Who can become a signatory of the Declaration?

Everyone in the tourism sector has a role to play in accelerating climate action and therefore all tourism stakeholders (legal entities) can become signatories of the Glasgow Declaration.

Destination Signatories comprise national, sub-national (regional) and local governments, as well as destination management organizations.

Business Signatories include accommodation providers, tour operators, travel agents & OTAs, cruise lines, airlines, transport providers, destination management companies, venues, attractions, etc.

Supporting Organization Signatories include entities such as NGOs, trade associations, academia, etc. which can play a multiplier role.

5. Who are the Launch Partners?

Launch Partners are organizations which become signatories of the Glasgow Declaration before its launch at COP26 on 4th November 2021.

6. Are Supporting Organization Signatories expected to make the same commitments as Destination and Business Signatories?

Yes, all signatories are expected to make the same commitments. Nevertheless, the role of Supporting Organizations in implementing those commitments will be different from the role of Destinations and Businesses. As Supporting Organization Signatories do not directly operate tourism products and services, they are expected to play a multiplier role, assisting their members to accelerate climate action, therefore reporting requirements will also differ accordingly.

7. Are Supporting Organization Signatories committing their members with their signature?

No. Supporting Organizations are not committing on behalf of their members. Supporting Organizations demonstrate alignment with the objectives, promote and commit to support their members climate ambitions towards the objectives of the Glasgow Declaration.

8. Do organizations have to pay to sign the Declaration?

There is no application or membership fee involved in becoming a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration.

9. How can organizations sign the Declaration and then communicate about it?

The online form to sign the Declaration should be completed by the legal representative of the organization signing, or his/her authorized representative. All signatories are requested to confirm that they accept the [Terms and Conditions](#) for signatories. The form to sign the Declaration is available within the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme's website [here](#).

Received Signatory forms will be processed every fortnight and the logos of signatories featured online [here](#).

Signatories will be able to refer publicly to their status as signatory of the Glasgow Declaration, in accordance with the Communications Guidelines.

10. How is the “global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050” defined?

The [Paris Agreement](#) is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s [Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C](#) released in 2018, limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to 2°C is projected to significantly lower the impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems and retain more of their services to humanity, while lowering the impacts to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. As a pathway to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the report states that emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) would need to fall by about 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching Net Zero around 2050.

Building on the IPCC Special Report’s methodology and mindful of the fact that global GHG emissions grew 1.5% per year between 2009 – 2018 with no signs of peaking, [UNEP’s Emissions Gap Report 2018](#) outlined, after a review of Nationally Determined Contributions, that by 2030, emissions would need to be 55% lower than in 2018 to put the world on the least-cost pathway to limiting global warming below 1.5°C.

11. What is Net Zero and is it the same as climate neutral?

There is still a lack of consensus about the meaning of terms such as carbon neutral, climate neutral and Net Zero. However, following guidance from the UNFCCC secretariat and aligning with the emerging agreement around this terminology, the following UNFCCC-aligned lexicon applies to this declaration:

Carbon Neutral: the status where the greenhouse gas emissions associated to an organization, company, product or service are estimated, plans are developed and implemented to reduce or avoid them, and finally any non-avoided emissions are compensated or “offset” with carbon credits.

Net Zero: the status where the greenhouse gas emissions associated to an organization, company, product or service are estimated, plans are developed and implemented to reduce or avoid them, and finally any non-avoided emissions are “neutralized” through carbon capture or removal technologies.

Climate Neutral: a wider term than the ones above, climate neutral refers to zero interference with the climate from human activities. It includes not only greenhouse gas emissions, but also aspects such as changes in the albedo of surfaces, placing aerosols in the atmosphere and others.

Carbon neutrality can be a step towards Net Zero. However, carbon neutrality will not get us to the goals of the Paris Agreement, as it is impossible for every organization, company, product and service to offset their emissions. At some point, the options for offsetting are exhausted. We need carbon capture and removal technologies in order to achieve Net Zero and the goals of the Paris Agreement.

12. What does it mean to “support the global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050” in practical terms for signatories?

The Declaration is intended to spur urgent, concerted climate action in tourism and therefore acknowledges the importance of halving emissions by 2030 as a key milestone for all sectors to be able to achieve Net Zero globally by 2050.

In the absence of a specific sectoral emissions reduction goal for the travel and tourism sector, the Declaration is requesting its signatories to strive to achieve a 50% emissions reduction from tourism operations by 2030, in alignment with the global commitment.

Signatories are requested to describe within their Climate Action Plans their maximum ambition towards a 50% reduction target by 2030. Taking into account the complexities of the tourism value chain and circumstances which influence the various tourism sub-sectors, signatories that consider a 50% reduction target by 2030 for their operations beyond their reach are requested to explain their limitations (e.g. in line with WTTC/UNEP Net Zero Roadmap for Travel & Tourism) and describe their efforts to overcome them. Organizations wishing to commit to a more ambitious target than 50% by 2030 are welcome to sign.

The Declaration aims to mobilise tourism stakeholders to reach this shared global goal as well as to advance towards the collective definition of a sectoral goal, for which the engagement and collaboration of all types of tourism stakeholders is key.

13. Are signatories expected to communicate their maximum ambition towards a 50% reduction target by 2030 at the time of signature?

Signatories are expected to define their 2030 ambition with regards to emissions reduction within their Climate Action Plans. It is expected that some stakeholders would already be able to set 2030 targets within their Climate Action Plan. For others, the Climate Action Plan will need to include the definition of a 2030 target within its proposed activities.

14. What if my Nationally Determined Contribution is committing to more/less than 50% emissions reduction by 2030?

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are national climate plans highlighting climate actions, including climate related targets, policies and measures that governments aim to implement in response to climate change and as a contribution to global climate action.

According to UNWTO’s research, out of the 191 NDCs in effect as of October 2021, 46% make references to tourism. More than half of the NDCs which make references to tourism refer to the sector’s vulnerability (54%) or potential to support adaptation to climate change (66%), whereas a third of the references connect the tourism sector with mitigation efforts (29%).

NDCs therefore provide valuable guidance for signatories, as they outline the 2030 emission reduction targets set at national government level to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement. This is particularly pertinent for Destination Signatories, which may decide to fully align a target for tourism

with their national overall targets or define a new - more ambitious - target for the tourism sector, which in all cases shall be complementary to the existing NDC and does not supersede it.

15. What if I am a frontrunner and have already made significant achievements in emissions reductions and thus won't be able to further reduce emissions by 50%?

Some businesses and organizations, by nature of their operations already being low, could already be aligned with the necessary reduction levels required to achieve global targets. It is hoped that they would sign the Declaration and focus on supporting other businesses and destinations to Decarbonize, or focus on other pathways, for example Regenerate or Collaborate.

16. What does it mean to “deliver a Climate Action Plan within 12 months from becoming a signatory, and implementing them” in practical terms for signatories?

Signatories of the Declaration are expected to publish a Climate Action Plan, or to update an existing plan by integrating climate action elements or aligning its targets with those with the Glasgow Declaration, within the first year from signing.

Each Climate Action Plan will need to be tailored towards the unique circumstances of the signatory organization and the category of Signatory the organization belongs to.

Within their Climate Action Plans, 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 intended climate action. Signatories are also expected to report on progress implementing their plans, as a means to ensure transparency and foster implementation.

17. Do climate action plans need to refer to all five pathways proposed in the Declaration?

When drafting a Climate Action Plan, signatories are advised to consider all pathways and how their plan addresses each one of them. All plans will need to address how to Measure and Decarbonize. Except in a very few circumstances, plans should address what positive role the organization can play - Regenerate. The final two pathways - Collaborate and Finance - focus on how the first three pathways are best achieved.

18. Is there support available to help signatories draft Climate Action Plans?

A series of initial Recommended Actions have been identified with the aim to provide some high-level guidance on what actions a Climate Action Plan might contain. The actions are categorised according to the five pathways of the Glasgow Declaration, and filtered to make clear which stakeholders they are most applicable to. The Recommended Actions can be found within the Glasgow Declaration website hosted by the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, together with additional resources and tools. A Climate Action Plan template is currently being collaboratively developed and will be available soon.

Signatories (and those not yet signed) who are looking for capacity building and knowledge sharing are encouraged to engage with the Travel Foundation and Tourism Declares.

19. I am a Supporting Organization Signatory and have low climate impact from my direct operations. What should my Climate Action Plan address?

The direct impact of decarbonizing the operations of a tourism organization that does not operate travel services is limited, however the potential enabling, or catalytic impact of their Climate Action Plan can be very significant. Supporting Organization Signatories share the same goals and commitments as all other signatories to the Glasgow Declaration, and are expected to develop a Climate Action Plan focused on how that organization can best support climate action via the five pathways. For example, this could include advocacy, support, mobilization, incentivization, and education of their membership, stakeholders or audience to encourage alignment with the Glasgow Declaration.

20. How are signatories expected to “report publicly on an annual basis on progress against interim and long-term targets, as well as on actions being taken”?

Signatories must report on the progress implementing the Glasgow Declaration on an annual basis. The Climate Action Plans that signatories need to deliver will become the baseline for annual progress reporting on the implementation of climate commitments through the One Planet network platform.

The intake of reports runs each year between November and February and signatories would be supported in the process by the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme, which is led by UNWTO.

The development of a transparent and seamless annual reporting mechanism and template for the Glasgow Declaration will follow a participatory process and consultation with the signatories. For those signatories that are already reporting through other initiatives (e.g. SBTi, CDP, etc.), sharing a few data points with One Planet would be sufficient to avoid reporting burdens.

21. What will the information reported through the One Planet network platform be used for?

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 and the aim is to also use the UNFCCC’s [Global Climate Action Platform \(GCAP\)](#) as the reporting platform to make information public. GCAP has been set up to allow all non-Party stakeholders (non-State actors) to publicly list their climate action commitments, and to track progress in implementing them. In this way, the industry follows global best practice.

The individual reports received from signatories will be made public online within the website of the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme as a means of increasing transparency, with the exception of information deemed as confidential by the signatory.

The reporting relies on organizations reporting accurately and in a timely fashion. The information reported will not be verified nor audited. Nevertheless, “lottery audits”, where a few signatories are randomly selected to be audited, may be organized from time to time depending on the availability of funds, in which case all signatories will be preliminarily informed.

22. In connection to the Measure pathway, which are the “UNFCCC-relevant guidelines on measurement, reporting and verification” that the Declaration is referring to?

The UNFCCC only provides guidance for measurement and reporting for national governments. However, there are internationally recognized approaches to the estimation of emissions and their verification, as well as to reporting, for non-State actors which the UNFCCC welcomes.

For measurement and reporting, the global standard is the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard, although other national or international standards such as ISO 14064 or France’s Bilan Carbone can also be used.

For verification of emissions, the ISO 14064 series provides a process for verification of GHG footprints which is the global standard. There are other national verification processes that can be used, depending on the country where the signatory of the Declaration is based.

23. When it comes to measurement and reporting of emissions, are Scopes 1,2 and 3 included?

Emissions for Scope 1,2 and 3 should be measured and reported.

According to the GHG Protocol Scope 1 covers direct GHG emissions which are from sources that are owned or controlled by the reporting entity (e.g. fuel combustion, company vehicles). Scope 2 covers indirect GHG emissions, from consumption of purchased electricity, heat or steam. Scope 3 covers all other indirect GHG emissions that occur in a company’s value chain from suppliers or customers (e.g. purchased goods and services, business travel, employee commuting, waste disposal, transportation and distribution).

24. When it comes to measurement of emissions, what year should the baseline measurement be set from?

The related suspensions of operations due to COVID-19 for 2020 and much of 2021 mean that most organizations in the sector have seen their absolute emissions reduce, whilst emissions per KPI of output have increased accordingly. These two years are therefore not ideal base years.

For those organizations that were already measuring their emissions before COVID-19, the year 2019 offers a good option for a base year. For companies that are not already measuring, the base year could be 2022. If a company signs the Declaration in 2021 and has measured emissions during the year, they could use 2021 as baseline as long as they are able to build in their modelling that emissions are projected to return to 2018-2019 levels between 2022 and 2023.

Frontrunners who have already been measuring for several years might choose an earlier year than 2019. However, the base year should not be earlier than 2015, as many business operators have had steadily increasing climate footprints and going back too far may lead to an underestimated baseline.

25. In connection to the Decarbonize pathway, what are targets aligned with climate science?

As described in [WTTC/Harvard Learning Insights of June 2021](#), targets aligned with climate science are based on the concept of a global carbon budget. By accounting for the GHG emissions put into the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution began, and understanding how these affect the climate, it is possible to calculate the maximal level of emissions that would enable global warming levels to remain well below 2°C and even further to 1.5°C. The approach of targets aligned with climate science involves combining carbon emission trajectories from the IPCC with allocation algorithms to distribute a share of the global emissions budget to the operations of an organization.

26. In connection to the Decarbonize pathway, can I reach my target using offsets?

The Glasgow Declaration states that “while offsetting may have a subsidiary role, it must be complementary to real reductions”. Therefore, signatories must prioritise real emissions reductions and offsets cannot be used to reach emissions reduction targets.

For those signatories that - in addition to setting an ambitious real emissions reduction target for 2030 - wish to set carbon neutrality targets for 2030 or before, carbon credits would play a relevant role when it comes to offsetting residual emissions.

27. In connection to the Finance pathway, are signatories expected to provide funding?

The Finance pathway’s role is to ensure the finance is in place to support the organization's own strategy/policy. The Declaration is aimed at all levels, from national government to private, public and third sector actors.

28. What happens if I do not report my emissions annually and/or fail to produce a Climate Action Plan within 12 months of signing the Declaration?

Follow-up mechanisms will be put in place to ensure signatories remain compliant with the reporting requirements of the Declaration, and every effort will be made to provide and signpost any additional support needed to meet those requirements. If organizations remain non-compliant after a 90-day grace period, signatory status will be revoked until such time as requirements are met.

Signatories will not be removed for failing to hit the concrete targets included in their Climate Action Plans, however it is expected that the Glasgow Declaration will increase accountability and facilitate increased capacity and collaboration towards achieving those targets.

29. How does this Declaration relate to the Race to Zero campaign?

[Race to Zero](#) is an ‘umbrella’ campaign that aggregates credible commitments to become net zero, absolute zero, or climate positive from a range of leading networks and initiatives across the climate action community. All members are committed to the same minimum requirements: halving emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050 at the very latest. They are also aligned to the same overarching meta-criteria: to pledge, plan, proceed and publish. This campaign focuses on mitigation, while its sister

campaign, the [Race to Resilience](#), focuses on climate adaptation. It is a multi sectoral campaign, while the Glasgow Declaration is focused on Tourism.

30. How does this Declaration relate to the Science Based Targets Initiative?

The [Science Based Targets initiative \(SBTi\)](#) is a partnership between CDP, World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the United Nations Global Compact (UN Global Compact).

The SBTi leads the Business Ambition for 1.5°C campaign, calling for business leaders to set emissions reduction targets in line with a 1.5°C future. Business Ambition for 1.5°C is a partner in the Race to Zero campaign. Therefore, companies that commit to the Business Ambition for 1.5°C campaign are automatically recognized as part of the Race to Zero campaign.

SBTi is a multi-sectoral campaign addressed to businesses, which for the time being does not propose a specific methodology for the tourism sector. Nevertheless, a few frontrunning tourism businesses are already signed up and there is potential to leverage on the guidance that SBTi provides to SMEs for SMEs in tourism. The Glasgow Declaration is focused on Tourism and aims at maximising the synergies with SBTi to accelerate climate action in tourism.

31. What is the connection between the Glasgow Declaration and Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency?

Tourism Declares A Climate Emergency was formed in January 2020 with the aim of accelerating the development and delivery of Climate Action Plans across the tourism industry. The Tourism Declares framework and commitments were used to inform the Glasgow Declaration, and the commitments made by signatories are aligned with one another. All signatories to the Glasgow Declaration are able to join the Tourism Declares community, in order for team members to benefit from ongoing collaboration, support and networking with peers across the industry as they develop and implement their climate actions plans. Tourism Declares is one of the members of the Glasgow Declaration's drafting committee.