



visit **Inverness**  
**Loch Ness**

# Climate Action Plan

2023-2025

The actions and targets for a  
sustainable destination.



**TOURISM DECLARES  
CLIMATE EMERGENCY**



**Glasgow Declaration**  
Climate Action in Tourism



# Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
1.0 Introduction .....	3
1.1 Climate Action Plan 22/23.....	3
1.2 Glasgow Declaration .....	4
1.3 Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency .....	5
1.4 Sustainable Development Goals .....	5
2.0 Accessibility & Inclusion .....	7
2.1 Accessibility.....	7
2.2 Inclusion .....	7
3.0 Destination Overview.....	8
3.1 Visit Inverness Loch Ness .....	8
3.2 Stakeholder Engagement.....	9
4.0 Climate Actions & Targets .....	9
4.1 Measurement .....	10
4.2 Decarbonise.....	10
4.3 Regenerate.....	12
4.4 Collaborate .....	13
4.5 Finance.....	14
5.0 Implementations & Monitoring .....	15

## Executive Summary

Following the success of Visit Inverness Loch Ness' Climate Action Plan from May 2022 – April 2023, the organization decided to continue with its award-winning work and create and implement a new plan for 2023/2024. Our plan has the following outcomes:

- To provide positive messaging to our members and visitors through our climate actions
- To change mindsets. Climate Action and Sustainability in tourism can often be viewed as daunting tasks for businesses but is of interest to visitors. We want to make sure that businesses are also interested in these tasks, therefore we have set some targets within the plan to cover this over the next year.
- Deliver the plan through a place-based approach, aiming at our local environment and continuing to align our climate actions with VILN's values and members.
- The plan will be split into two subsections, member benefits and tourist benefits.

Visit Inverness Loch Ness' Sustainability vision remains the same.

It's not too late, we are the last generation able to do something to ensure our climate is safe for generations to come. Climate Action and Sustainability is at the forefront of the Inverness Loch Ness Destination. Working collaboratively with stakeholders across the destination we will ensure what we do going forward is in the best interests of our people, our visitors, and our environment.

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) has been created by Visit Inverness Loch Ness, the official organization for the Inverness and Loch Ness tourism destination. The plan has been created with help from various stakeholders across the destination, without whom, this plan would not exist. Our plan consists of various actions and targets that

will meet the five pathways of the Glasgow Declaration, whilst also showcasing the sustainable development goals we are contributing to. The Climate Action Plan will monitor the destinations progress and impacts but also deliver actions for improvement within Inverness Loch Ness. For further details or questions regarding this plan please contact Bryony Beck, Destination Development Manager: [bryony@visitiln.com](mailto:bryony@visitiln.com).

## 1.0 Introduction

This plan will review its predecessor and then outline how the destination will carry out climate actions in line with the Glasgow Declaration, Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency and how it contributes to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The climate actions will also be categorized for member benefit and visitor benefit. The plan is being launched in May 2023 and will remain in place until April 2025. It will be a two-year plan to allow flexibility due to VILN's upcoming ballot in March 2024.

### 1.1 Climate Action Plan 22/23

The creation and implementation of the 2022/23 Climate Action Plan from Visit Inverness Loch Ness exceeded expectations. The plan has won three awards:



The 2022/23 CAP has now been completed and 87.5% of the plan was implemented .



## 1.2 Glasgow Declaration

The Glasgow Declaration was launched at COP26, with the objective to raise the climate ambition of tourism stakeholders and ensure strong actions to support the global commitment to halve emissions by 2030 and reach Net Zero as soon as possible before 2050. Tourism needs to act on climate issues to ensure the sustainability, competitiveness, and resilience of the sector. The declaration aims to lead and align climate action across tourism stakeholders, including all public and private sector organizations.

Within our destination we commit to deliver our climate action plan within 12 months, Visit Inverness Loch Ness signed up in December 2021 and we commit to report publicly on our progress, we will aim to do this annually. To ensure climate action is aligned across all tourism, we agree on the five shared pathways for our plan to follow. These are outlined in the table below.

<p>Measure</p> 	<p><i>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.</i></p>
<p>Decarbonise</p> 	<p><i>Set and deliver targets aligned with climate science to accelerate tourism's decarbonisation. This includes transport, infrastructure, accommodation, activities, food &amp; drink, and waste management. While offsetting may have a subsidiary role, it must be complementary to real reductions.</i></p>
<p>Regenerate</p> 	<p><i>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</i></p>



	<i>response. Help visitors and host communities experience better balance with nature.</i>
<b>Collaborate</b> 	<i>Share evidence of risks and solutions with all stakeholders and our guests, and work together to ensure our plans are as effective and coordinated 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.</i>
<b>Finance</b> 	<i>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.</i>

### 1.3 Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency

Tourism Declares launched on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, with signatories from across the industry. With Climate Emergency Declarations taking place in other sectors, there was a need for a tourism-specific declaration that could bring together organizations and individuals from across the industry under a common goal. Tourism Declares exists to enable everyone in the tourism sector to implement Climate Action Plans needed to halve sector emissions by 2030.

### 1.4 Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations (UN) Member States in 2015, it provides a blueprint for peace and prosperity for our people and planet. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Within our destinations CAP we have decided to work on a several of these SDG's, outlined below.

**5 GENDER EQUALITY**



**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**



**9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**



**10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES**



**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**



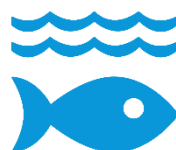
**12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**



**13 CLIMATE ACTION**



**14 LIFE BELOW WATER**



**15 LIFE ON LAND**



## 2.0 Accessibility & Inclusion

This plan also covers how accessibility and inclusion in climate action is being promoted within our destination.

### 2.1 Accessibility

People with disabilities make up approximately 15% of the global population, therefore it's imperative that we consider how sustainable solutions might look within the context of disabilities. People with disabilities bring unique perspectives, requirements, and insight into how we can design spaces and experiences to be ecologically sustainable but also accessible to all members of the community. Mitigating and adapting to climate change will lead to initiatives that will impact on many aspects of disabled people's everyday lives in relation to a wide range of policy areas. Inclusion Scotland has identified that despite international recognition of the greater vulnerability of disabled people to climate impacts, disability issues have received little attention from practitioners and policymakers internationally and in the context of climate governance in Scotland. Within our destination we will make lobby for climate action to be accessible for all. For more information on Climate Change, disabled people and climate action in Scotland, see Inclusion Scotland's report [It's our planet too](#).

### 2.2 Inclusion

Within this plan, climate action means both reducing the effects of climate change on the most vulnerable and ensuring the benefits and burdens of climate action are equitably distributed. Inclusive climate action addresses both climate change and socioeconomic inequalities. Other benefits include greater economic opportunity, improved health and well-being and better natural resource management. The full list of environmental action, social equity and economic opportunity and their interconnected dimensions are set out below.

#### Inclusive Climate Action Dimensions and Benefits

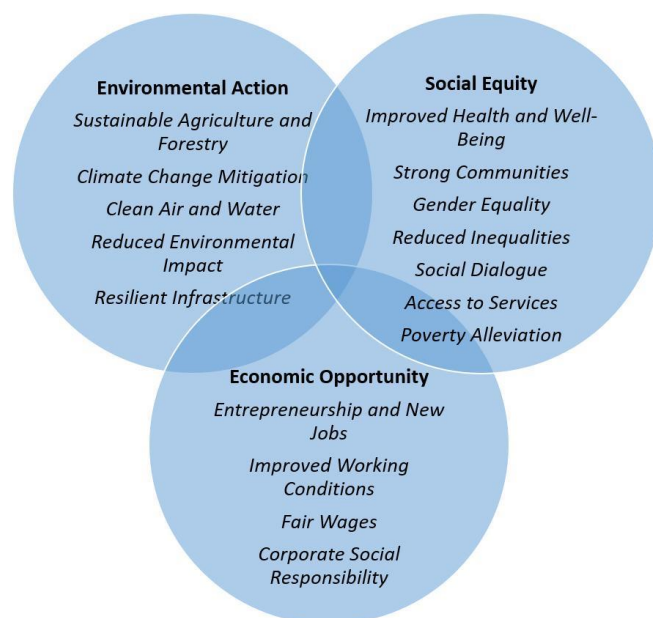


Figure 1 – The Interconnected dimensions and benefits of inclusive climate action

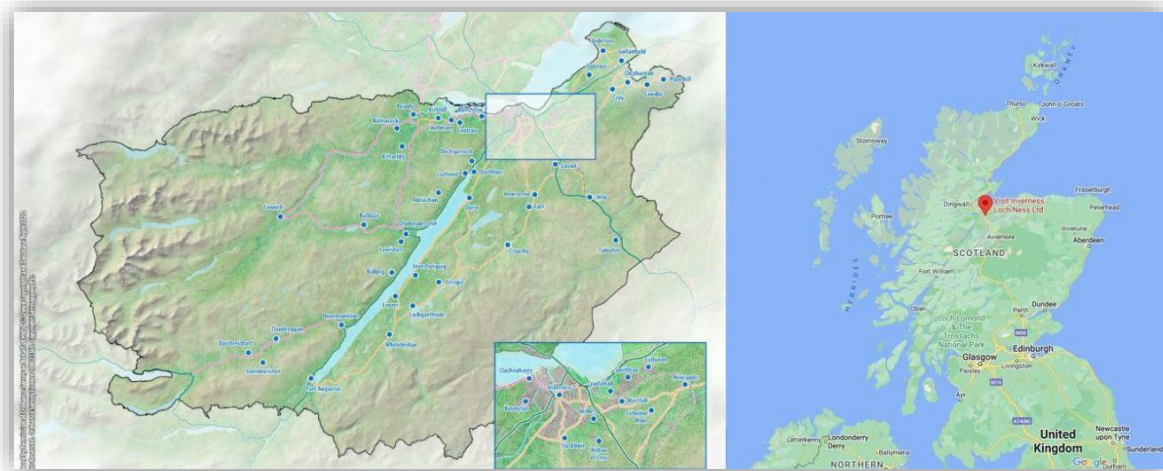


Within this plan inclusive climate action will be achieved through identifying holistic solutions with multiple benefits that integrate social equity, economic opportunity, and climate considerations. It will ensure participation of all stakeholders in consultation, planning and design of the plan. The goals and targets help to search for opportunities to implement climate actions that directly benefit all within our destination. The plan acts a measurement of impact of climate action and future plans will be adjusted as needed. The creation of the plan has resulted in the formation of partnerships across the destination, which will help to continue climate action in our destination at all levels.

## 3.0 Destination Overview

### 3.1 Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Our destination: Inverness, Loch Ness is in the North of Scotland, just over 100 miles west of Aberdeen and 65 miles northeast of Fort William. Inverness is known as the Highland Capital and Loch Ness is home to Nessie the Loch Ness Monster. Our destination covers over 1200 square miles, from Cawdor in the Northeast to Dalchreichart in the Southwest.



*Figure 2 – Map of VILN Tourist Destination*

VILN aims to create a stronger and more sustainable destination for its diverse membership of over 470 tourism businesses, 44 communities and its visitors who are drawn from around the world. The organization became the first Tourism Business Improvement District (BID) in the UK when established in 2014. In 2022 the organization was named the first carbon neutral BID in the UK and has also signed the Glasgow Declaration: Climate Action in Tourism, and the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency declaration in line with its sustainability goals. We maintain our carbon neutrality due to a partnership with Trees for Life, founded in 1993 are a charity

focused on rewilding the Scottish Highlands. We measure our carbon footprint monthly and offset it on an annual basis.

### 3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

Following the success of last years working group to discuss the actions and targets, we decided to continue with this format. Within our member newsletter we asked if anyone would be interested in becoming members of this years working group. We had a few members and stakeholders come forward which was fantastic. We initially held a few online meetings discussing the previous plan and what we all wanted in the 2023–2025 plan in terms of actions and targets. Bryony then went away to create a draft plan and consulted this with the VILN team and the stakeholder group. The plan was then re-drafted for a second round of consultation, which included a link to the plan within our weekly newsletter for members to feedback on. The climate action plan was then launched.

### 4.0 Climate Actions & Targets

The aim of these climate actions and targets are to provide positive messaging for sustainable and environmental action within our destination. This year the actions and targets are place-based, tailored for our destination. We want to change mindsets across our membership and destination so that everyone is included in sustainable development of the climate action plan. The actions and targets below are split into two sections, member benefits and tourist benefits. This has been done to ensure members are aware of the benefits available to them, and for tourists to see how our destination is creating climate action. The targets set out within the plan are to be met by April 2025. The actions are also linked with certain sustainable development goals (SDG).

## 4.1 Measurement

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>BENEFACTORS</b>	<b>SDG</b>
<b>1.1 MEASURE TOURISM NUMBERS</b>	Ongoing	Members	<a href="#">12</a>
<b>1.2 MEASURE LOCAL ATTRACTION NUMBERS</b>	Ongoing	Members	<a href="#">12</a>
<b>1.3 VILN CLIMATE ACTION BADGE</b>	10 Businesses	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">13</a>

### *Measurement – Summary of actions and targets*

- 1.1 Measure Tourism numbers. The target for this action is ongoing and will benefit VILN’s members. We will receive the numbers from the Highland Councils ranger team and the annual STEAM report.
- 1.2 Measure local tourism numbers. The target for this action is also ongoing and beneficial for our members. We will ask our members with attractions to report on their numbers quarterly.
- 1.3 VILN Climate Action Badge. This badge will be awarded to members who are working on their sustainability journeys, this could be something small like changing to LED light bulbs, to changing their heating from Gas to Air Source. We will develop a tick list of what members can do to be more sustainable. The badge will be awarded to anyone who meets at least three items on the tick lists. The badge will be developed as an online sticker that members can either put on their website, social media, or print out and display in their businesses. We hope to award at least 10 businesses in the first year.

## 4.2 Decarbonise

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>BENEFACTORS</b>	<b>SDG</b>
<b>2.1 CREATE SESSIONS FOR MEMBERS ON HOW TO MEASURE THEIR CARBON FOOTPRINT</b>	3 Sessions Per Year	Members	<a href="#">13</a>

<b>2.2 CREATE CARBON OFFSETTING/REDUCTION GUIDES SPECIFIC TO OUR DESTINATION.</b>	5 Guides Per Year	Members	<a href="#">13</a>
<b>2.3 CREATE EXAMPLES OF CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR VISITORS.</b>	10 Examples	Tourists	<a href="#">13</a>
<b>2.4 PROMOTION OF VILN'S INSETTING</b>	Develop Policy for inseting in Inverness Loch Ness Create visitor inseting area on the website.	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">15</a>
<b>2.5 CREATE CARBON CALCULATOR ON WEBSITE.</b>	Create by Autumn 2023	Tourists	<a href="#">12</a>

*Decarbonise – Summary of actions and targets*

2.1 Create sessions for members on how to measure their carbon footprint. We will create or facilitate sessions for members to learn how they can measure their carbon footprint; this will be linked to action 2.2 of creating guides to help too. We hope to deliver three sessions per year.

2.2 Create Carbon offsetting/reduction guides specific to our destination. VILN will develop guides on carbon offsetting and reduction for various sectors within the BID. The target for this action is five guides, however we hope to provide a few more than this. This will primarily benefit our members but will also show our tourists what our local businesses are doing to help tackle the climate emergency in our area.

2.3 Create examples of carbon footprint for visitors. We will create examples of carbon footprint for when tourists visit the destination, whether this be by bike, car, bus, train, electric vehicle, or plane. We will do this for various areas from around the world. We hope to provide at least ten examples. We will not be highlighting businesses within this target; however, we will be mentioning various towns and villages to help promote

the destination and inform tourists of where they can go, and how they can travel there.

2.4 Promotion of VILN's carbon insetting programme. We will develop a policy showing how we inset the organizations footprint and how that could apply to different members across the destination. The creation of a visitor insetting scheme will also be made available on our website. This will be linked to our carbon calculator.

2.5 Create carbon calculator on website. A carbon calculator will be added to our website so that tourists and indeed members can log on to measure their footprint and should they wish, the insetting will be available for them too.

### 4.3 Regenerate

ACTION	TARGET	BENEFACTORS	SDG
3.1 LITTER PICKS	3 Per Year	Members and Tourists	<a href="#">12</a>
3.2 PROMOTE FRESH WATER TOP UP SCHEME	30 new sign ups	Members and Tourists	<a href="#">11</a>
3.3 EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY TRAILS AROUND THE DESTINATION.	Create proposal by April 2024	Members and Tourists	<a href="#">15</a>

*Regenerate – Summary of actions and targets*

3.1 Litter Picks. Over the last six months, VILN has delivered two litter picks, for team building and giving back to our community. We would like to continue our work and this year would like to at least have three litter picks. Anyone can join us, from members, tourists, and the community.

3.2 Promote Fresh Water Top Up Scheme. This scheme was launched in July 2022 and has had many members and tourists engaged. We want to continue this work and have a target of thirty new sign ups by April 2024.



3.3 Explore options for sustainability trails around the destination. This is a major project that we would like to explore. Over the next year we will create a proposal for several sustainability themed trails around the destination. We then hope to launch these trails following funding applications for the promotion and creation of the trails (using existing network paths) in the next climate action plan (2024/25).

#### 4.4 Collaborate

ACTION	TARGET	BENEFACTORS	SDG
<b>4.1 VOLUNTOURISM</b>	Create Guide on Website by Winter 2023	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">5</a> , <a href="#">8</a> , <a href="#">10</a> , <a href="#">11</a>
<b>4.2 INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING</b>	Measure sustainable development decisions in the destination (e.g. new cycle path, trail etc.)	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">8</a> , <a href="#">9</a>
<b>4.3 WORKCATIONS</b>	Have 5 Locations available throughout the year.	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">8</a> , <a href="#">10</a> , <a href="#">11</a>
<b>4.4 EXTEND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT</b>	Measure engagement on sustainable development within the destination. 20/Year	Members	<a href="#">9</a>
<b>4.5 CLIMATE ACTION MEMBERS-ONLY SECTION</b>	Create by Jan 2024	Members	<a href="#">13</a>

*Collaborate – Summary of actions and targets*

4.1 Voluntourism. VILN will create a guide or a monthly newsletter on the website for voluntourism opportunities around the destination. We hope our members will provide us with the various opportunities within their businesses and communities. The guide will be created and maintained by Winter 2023.

4.2 Influence Decision Making. VILN will continue to advocate for sustainability across our destination, we will measure the amount of sustainable development decisions we help to promote or create. For example, Inverness Castle, Active Travel etc.

4.3 Workcations. We have many members across the BID who have space for people to work in, whether that is outdoor seating, indoor cafes, or flexible workspaces. This part of the plan will ask members to become ‘workplace friendly’ and open for locals and visitors to spend an hour or two in their establishments working.

4.4 Extend Business Engagement. Within our 2022/23 plan we measure the amount of sustainability engagements we have. We will continue to do this and have set a target of twenty engagements for this year. Within this goal we will also be developing a sustainable tourism newsletter which we will issue on a quarterly basis.

4.5 Climate Action Members–only section. Following consultation with our current working group for the plan, it was suggested we have a new climate action members–only section so that members can log on and receive tailored information from VILN for their businesses. This may include funding, sustainability policies, suggestions of who to work with etc. We hope to create this by January 2024.

## 4.5 Finance

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TARGET</b>	<b>BENEFACTORS</b>	<b>SDG</b>
<b>5.1 PROMOTE FUNDING SCHEMES TO MEMBERS</b>	15/Year	Members	<a href="#">8</a> , <a href="#">9</a> , <a href="#">10</a>
<b>5.2 APPLY FOR FUNDING TO FACILITATE BIGGER PROJECTS</b>	3/Year	Members & Tourists	<a href="#">All</a>

*Finance – Summary of actions and targets*

5.1 Promote funding schemes to members. This is another action within the 2022/23 plan, we will continue to promote funding schemes to our members and have established a target of fifteen per year.

5.2 Apply for funding to facilitate projects. To help with the destination's sustainable development VILN will apply for various funding for any projects that come up. We have a target of three successful applications per year. An example of this is the funding we have received for putting on active travel events in two locations within the destination to promote the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, which takes place in Glasgow in August 2023.

## 5.0 Implementations & Monitoring

We hope to achieve all implementations within this plan by April 2025. The goals and targets set out within this plan will be monitored through an excel spreadsheet similar to tracking KPI's. Monitoring will take place monthly and every quarter a progress report will be created and shared across our stakeholders.