

MEDIA CEOS PLEDGE TO HELP AUDIENCES NAVIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 WEDNESDAY 3 NOVEMBER



Today the CEOs of the UK's largest media brands will gather at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow to issue a rallying cry to the global industry to do more and better climate story-telling on screen across all genres.

In an industry first, 12 broadcasters and streamers have signed up to The Climate Content Pledge¹. The signatories - who represent over 70% of time UK audiences spend watching TV and film² - are committing to using their content to help audiences understand what tackling climate change might mean for them, as well as inspire and inform sustainable choices.

At this morning's panel, the CEOs of the BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Sky and STV will tell industry executives that content must reflect the realities of climate change to remain relevant and to continue to appeal to audiences.

Recent polling from Ipsos MORI revealed that in August, climate change was the second-biggest concern in the UK - second only to COVID and higher than the economy, NHS or education³.

The CEOs will highlight how TV and film have a unique role in helping audiences understand the solutions to tackle climate change and the choices to consider on the path to Net Zero, adding that it is the industry's responsibility to rise to that challenge.

The media has a proven track record in raising awareness of societal issues and inspiring action. From a 17% rise in calls to women's refuges during Helen Archer's domestic abuse

¹ The Climate Content Pledge signatories include: BBC, BBC Studios, Britbox International, Channel 4, Channel 5 / ViacomCBS, Discovery UK and Eire, ITV, RTE, S4C, Sky, STV, UKTV

² According to the [Ofcom Media Nations](#) report, broadcaster channels, catch-up and subscription VOD consumption accounted for 272 minutes of viewing per UK adult per day in 2020. According to the [BARB 2020 Viewing Report](#) in 2020 the channel portfolios of the BBC, Channel 4, C5, Discovery, ITV, Sky and UKTV (key signatories of The Climate Content Pledge) accounted for 92% of live, recorded and broadcaster catch-up TV (199 minutes), which equates to 70% of all time spent with broadcaster and subscription content in the UK.

³ [Ipsos MORI Issues Index, August 2021](#), n=1,013

storyline in The Archers⁴, to HIV test rates doubling after Channel 4's It's a Sin⁵; and from calls to mental health helplines rising sharply as a result of the Britain Get Talking campaign on ITV⁶, to tackling drink driving with the concept of a 'designated driver' in Cheers⁷, and Sky's Ocean Rescue campaign inspiring 50 million people to reduce their usage of single-use plastics⁸, the broadcast industry has used its creativity to embed solutions in a way that can work for a broad audience. This pledge builds on that proud tradition.

The Climate Content Pledge has been convened by albert, the screen industry organisation for environmental sustainability. For the past decade, albert has helped the production industry reduce environmental impacts and create content that helps audiences understand what a sustainable future might look like. Broadcasters, streamers and studios are already reducing the carbon emissions from production, and many are developing science-based Net Zero plans.

The panel assembled today, will outline how The Climate Content Pledge will build on the cross-industry collaboration facilitated by albert and the work that broadcasters have already been doing individually. They will discuss what it will take for the industry to help audiences navigate climate change, and explain what the Pledge means for them professionally.

The CEO panel takes place at BBC Scotland HQ today (3rd November) at 11am - 12pm UK time and will be streamed live via www.youtube.com/BAFTAGuru

NOTES TO EDITORS

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THE CLIMATE CONTENT PLEDGE

Climate change presents enormous challenges which will affect us all.

With the Paris Climate Agreement, nations all over the world have committed to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects. To limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and avoid catastrophic runaway climate change, carbon emissions must be halved by 2030. The decisions that governments, businesses and individuals make now and over the next five years are crucial to setting a sustainable climate trajectory. While the situation is urgent and grave, it is not without hope - every tonne of emissions avoided or removed can prevent further damage.

⁴ <https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/more-refuge-campaigns/the-archers-and-refuge/>

⁵ [Channel 4's It's A Sin hits 18.9m All 4 views and helps drive increase in HIV testing](#)

⁶ <https://www.itvplc.com/~media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/download/itv-social-purpose-impact-report-2020.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/2017/02/01/jay-winsten-and-the-designated-driver-campaign/>

⁸ Sky Ocean Research Tracker, September 2020 across UK, Italy, Germany (6000 respondents per market)

We, as members of the global screen industry, have a crucial responsibility to help our audiences engage with these challenges.

Therefore, we commit to the following principles:

1. We will reach more of our audiences with content⁽¹⁾ that helps everyone understand and navigate the path to net zero, and inspires them to make greener choices.
2. We will develop processes that help us to consider climate themes when we are commissioning, developing and producing content.
3. We will ensure that our efforts are informed by the science.
4. We will recognise the importance of fair and balanced representations of visions for a sustainable future.
5. We will work together:
 1. learning from and inspiring each other
 2. sharing relevant industry and audience insights and developing relevant metrics
 3. improving how we measure our impact.
6. We will communicate regularly with our colleagues, partners, and audiences so that we can all play our part in meeting this shared challenge.

These overarching principles are the foundation of our commitment - in addition, each of us will develop and publish our own "company-specific commitment". We'll revisit this every year, to review progress against our plans and challenge ourselves and each other to do more. We will continue to work together to support our shared ambitions, and we will share our progress publicly, holding ourselves and each other to account.

This pledge was developed by a group of media companies, facilitated by BAFTA albert. We encourage other media companies to adopt this pledge.

⁽¹⁾ For the purposes of this pledge, "content" is all programming with the exception of news.

QUOTES

Director of albert Carys Taylor said: "We are so proud to announce the launch of this pledge today. It represents a pivotal moment in our industry's sustainability journey and is an acknowledgement of the screen industry's huge opportunity and responsibility to enable all audiences to engage with solutions to tackling climate change through all kinds of content."

BBC Director-General Tim Davie said: "This pledge is a firm commitment from our industry to go further and faster to engage and inform audiences on the climate challenges we all face. At the BBC we will continue to tell the stories that matter, like in our powerful

new drama *The Trick*, or help audiences consider greener choices through our best loved shows like *EastEnders* and with new programmes such as *Shop Well for the Planet?* – but we all have more to do and we must match these efforts off-screen too, which is why we've put plans in place to reach Net Zero by 2030."

Channel 4 CEO Alex Mahon said: "This is a pivotal time for broadcasters and for our audiences as we join together to tackle the climate crisis that affects us and future generations. Signing this pledge is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for broadcasters and programme makers to work together and use the power of content on every platform. By engaging our viewers and giving them the information they need, we can help them to make informed choices about living more sustainably."

Channel 5/ViacomCBS UK President, Maria Kyriacou said: "Securing a healthy and sustainable planet for future generations through our incredible platforms is critical. Series such as *Go Green with the Grimwades* on Milkshake! have the power to drive meaningful change by shifting perceptions and establishing the enduring habits necessary to tackle climate change. We're proud to unite with our broadcast peers to accelerate our industry commitments."

Discovery EVP Gen Mgr UK & Nordics James Gibbons said: "The climate emergency is here and it's our great responsibility as broadcasters to thoroughly report and accurately reflect the changes that are happening to the world. Discovery is proud to be part of this collaboration, uniting colleagues across the industry to work together to tackle the climate crisis. We're all pledging to take action that brings tangible, world-changing results."

ITV CEO Carolyn McCall said: "From plant-based recipes on Daytime to putting electric vehicles on *Emmerdale*, ITV is committed to using our reach and world-class talent to make the transition to a sustainable future relevant and accessible for our audiences. This Pledge is a demonstration of how an industry can work together to create real change"

SKY, EVP & CEO, UK & Europe, Stephen van Rooyen, said: "Sustainability has always been at the heart of our business, from being the first carbon neutral media company, to launching the world's first carbon neutral TV in Sky Glass. Now, using our content and reach in millions of homes, we have the opportunity to inspire our customers to make changes that will help us all get to net zero. This Pledge is an example of the strength of the broadcast industry to come together and drive significant action."

STV CEO Simon Pitts said: "It's now critical that audiences across the UK see on-screen how they can make small changes towards a more sustainable future. We broadcasters have powerful platforms with dedicated audiences who engage regularly with our content, so we are in prime position to put this pledge into action at both a national and regional level – and we take this responsibility very seriously."

S4C CEO Owen Evans said: "We are at a pivotal point in determining our planet's future and S4C is committed to ensuring that the debate and action required to secure the future is accessible and engaging for our audiences. With almost 1,400 miles of coastline, climate

change is of fundamental importance to us and we want to play our part in global change through our platforms.”

ABOUT ALBERT

albert is the screen industry organisation for environmental sustainability.

Founded in 2011, the project supports the Film and TV industry to reduce environmental impacts of production and to create content that supports a vision for a sustainable future. A BAFTA owned and industry-backed project, albert is proudly industry funded, meaning all our activities are available at the lowest possible cost to organisations and zero cost to individuals.

With events, online tools and training, practical guidance and thought leadership, albert is enabling all screen industry professionals to identify and act upon opportunities on and off screen, for effective climate action. Find out more www.wearealbert.org

AUDIENCE INSIGHTS AROUND THE CLIMATE PLEDGE

Concern about climate change has been steadily growing amongst UK audiences. In May 2020 at the height of the UK’s first lockdown, 80% of Brits said they would do as much to tackle climate as they have to combat C-19. This figure was 77% in the US⁹. Globally, 71% of people regarded climate change as serious a crisis as C-19¹⁰.

Since this polling, pandemic-induced health and economic worries do not appear to have diluted audiences’ intense concern about climate change, and desire for action.

Polling from Ipsos MORI in August 2021 revealed climate change and pollution as the second-biggest concern in the UK – second only to C-19 and higher than the economy, NHS or education¹¹. While across the G20 in April-May 2021 the vast majority of people agreed that they wanted to do more to protect and restore nature in future (83%).¹²

Indeed, Ipsos MORI’s Political Monitor in August 2021 showed that 73% of Brits say they are already seeing the effects of climate change.

⁹ [Futerra Sustainable Lifestyles Survey, May 2020](#)

¹⁰ [Now What: Climate Change and Coronavirus, Ipsos Mori, June 2020](#)

¹¹ [Ipsos MORI Issues Index, August 2021](#)

¹² [Ipsos MORI Global Commons Alliance Report, April-May 2021](#)

Pledge Signatories

BBC - Tim Davie - Director General

BBC Studios - Tom Fussell - CEO

Britbox International - Reemah Sakaan - CEO

Channel 4 - Alex Mahon - CEO

Channel 5/ViacomCBS UK - Maria Kyriacou - President

Discovery UK & Eire - James Gibbons - EVP Gen Mgr UK & Nordics

ITV PLC - Carolyn McCall - CEO

RTÉ (Ireland) - Dee Forbes - Director General

S4C - Owen Evans - Chief Executive

STV Group PLC- Simon Pitts - Chief Executive

SKY Group - Stephen van Rooyen - Executive Vice President & Chief Executive Officer, UK & Europe

UKTV - Marcus Arthur - CEO

