



Mapping the Climate Action Plans (CAPs) of the ETOA membership, July-October 2024

CAP Mapping Exercise - Background

Between July and October 2024, ETOA conducted a detailed mapping exercise to calculate the percentage of its membership that had published a Climate Action Plan (CAP). This percentage allows ETOA to measure the climate action progress of its community against a baseline. Our sustainability specialist examined the 1100+ member websites available within our database and inspected third-party climate declaration sites (namely the [Glasgow Declaration](#) and [Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency](#)) to locate members' CAPs and update their respective 'Climate Action Plan Available' fields in their ETOA member profiles.

During the exercise, a 'Climate Action Plan' was undefined. Now, [The Blueprint for Tourism Climate Action Plans](#) describes a CAP as...

"a written strategy document, documenting the ways that an organisation plans to develop its operations in the context of ever worsening climate change" (page [22](#)).

Reflecting the tourism industry's breadth, the approaches to CAPs are highly diverse. Elements of one organisation's sustainability reports, strategies, and/ or policies frequently overlap with another organisation's CAP. The overarching difference between the two is the commitment to *action* found within the CAP. [The Blueprint for Tourism Climate Action Plans](#) describe 'climate actions' as...

- "1. Actions that result in less emissions being caused.*
- 2. Actions that result in more emissions being removed/absorbed.*
- 3. Actions that improve resilience towards climate change impacts.*
- 4. Actions that enable or support one or more of the first three categories, e.g. through measurement, training, networking, communication or fund raising."* (page [22](#)).

ETOA advocates for the long-term, positive impact of tourism. We provide our members with access to good practice, expertise, and support to enable transition. This includes facilitating member-member good practice sharing through our [Member Search](#); members can filter results to return only members with a CAP.

Similarly, to recognise wider efforts on sustainability and share related good practice (and acknowledging the ambiguity of what constitutes a CAP) we added a 'Sustainability URL' field to our database for members to input their sustainability practices and commitments.

Is that a CAP?

Third-party climate initiatives such as [The Glasgow Declaration](#), the largest sector-specific collaborative effort towards climate action, provide signatories with acceptance of a document* to be considered a 'climate action plan'.

ETOA does not house climate expertise, but the majority of ETOA's membership are not signatories of any climate action declaration. Therefore, during the exercise we used our judgement to decide whether a document* was, or was not, a CAP (comments and constructive criticism are welcome!). Our approach was:

Climate Action Plan (CAP): Favourable factors

- Titled 'Climate Action Plan' or similar.
- Accepted by credible third parties, such as those uploaded to [One Planet's Glasgow Declaration](#) or [Tourism Declares](#).
- Methodology follows the Glasgow Declaration's five climate action pathways (Measure, Decarbonise, Regenerate, Collaborate, Finance), or uses a similar methodology evolved by other sectors.
- States the member's current actions, as well as specific plans, goals, or targets to reduce emissions.
- Climate action progress is reported at regular intervals, typically at least every 12 months.
- Aligns targets with [science-based targets \(SBTi\)](#), or states the member is waiting for an approval of such targets.
- Features or refers to the member's baseline emissions measurement, allowing progress to be measured in subsequent CAP implementation reports.
- Carbon emissions in Scope 1, 2, and 3 are measured - or an explanation provided by measurement not done (e.g. in ETOA's case, we have focused on Scope 3 to date), with actions for reduction.

Climate Action Plan (CAP): Unfavourable factors

- General sustainability or climate action commentary, but no defined actions.
- Only features statements on sustainability practices, such as "we recycle", "we are paper-free", "we use LED lightbulbs" etc.
- States carbon neutrality with no supporting actions or measurement.
- Provides a climate or sustainability roadmap, such as "by 2030/2050 we will be..." but defines no actions to reach these goals.
- Features Scope 1,2, and 3 emission calculations but has no actions for reduction.
- States the member offsets some, or all of its carbon emissions, without acknowledging that 'offsetting' is problematic and/or insufficient to achieve emissions reductions and/or reduce levels of atmospheric carbon.
- General sustainability commitments and practices that would better suit ETOA's new 'Sustainability URL' field.

*ETOA recognises the diversity of CAPs and how they are presented online. 'Document(s)' refers to all forms of media in which a CAP was published online.

Issues we experienced

- Some members have multiple websites, but only one website can be inserted into the member profile's 'Website' field. CAPs hosted by member websites that were not listed in this field were not found.
- Not all members use or have a website. Those who operate through other means (such as WeChat) were not checked for CAPs.
- Some member websites were under construction during the exercise so could not be checked for a CAP.
- A small number of websites had technical, security or processing issues that prevented the site from being accessed.
- Some URLs inputted into the 'Climate Action Plan Available' were broken, outdated, or unrelated to climate action, producing false positives in ETOA's Member Search.
- Some members have a 'parent' member, whose website contains a published CAP. Members who did not mention their parent's CAP on their own website were classified as not having a CAP.

Feedback

The regulatory environment and sectoral norms continue to evolve, as do the tools available to support climate action and our understanding of what constitutes a CAP.

ETOA members and other interested parties who would like further explanation about how we reviewed your documents, please contact sustainability@etoa.org. Members can update their details on their [Member Search profile](#).

Contact: sustainability@etoa.org