15 November, 2022

**BROADCAST INDUSTRY’S CLIMATE CHANGE PLEDGE DRIVES INCREASE IN SUSTAINABLE CONTENT**

*Titles include EastEnders, Joe Lycett vs The Oil Giant, Love Island, and Obki*

albert, the TV and film industry organisation for environmental sustainability, has today published an update from the largest media brands in the UK and Ireland on the progress of the Climate Content Pledge, one year after it was signed alongside COP26 in Glasgow.

As part of the Pledge, programmes including ‘climate content’ are now reaching audiences - and winning awards - across a wide range of genres including comedy, factual, drama, entertainment and events. A partnership between eBay and ITV’s **Love Island,** to promote pre-loved fashion, led to over half of those aware of the partnership saying they had bought pre-loved clothing after watching the show, while **Emmerdale** has featured sustainable food systems. In October, the BBC’s **Frozen Planet II** joined forces with **EastEnders** for a one-off version of the soap’s end credits, showing a flooded version of the iconic map of London’s East End to highlight the challenges associated with a warming climate and rising sea levels.

Sky has a dedicated children’s animation with planet-saving alien **Obki,** which launched in 2021. **Britain’s Poisoned Rivers**, a new commission from Channel 5, will examine the crisis facing the UK’s waterways, and Channel 4’s award-winning **Joe Lycett vs The Oil Giant** took a closer look at Shell’s sustainability claims. From S4C, **Y Byd ar Bedwar** explored the effects of carbon off-setting schemes in Wales while STV’s **Sean’s Scotland** sees weatherman Sean Batty meet local people involved in sustainable community-based projects. UKTV’s forthcoming comedy **We Are Not Alone,** features invading aliens who, having lost their own planet through a catastrophic climate event, arrive on earth to find humans knowingly poisoning themselves with fossil fuels.

Behind the scenes, changes are being made to weave sustainability requirements into the commissioning process, with many of the media brands making these considerations mandatory for editorial and the production itself. Dedicated training is being offered to commissioning staff on how best to feature climate change, along with tracking of issues in content to ensure teams learn from what works well.

Carys Taylor, director of albert, said: “We are excited to see the progress being made across the industry - and all genres. Although longer lead times for some programmes means there will be titles in the pipeline, the industry needs to go further and faster still. The most recent warnings from the UN make clear this action is urgent and our industry is crucial to enabling transformational change. albert is growing and developing support for the industry in making this crucial next step.”

Designed to improve on-screen storytelling around climate change action, the Pledge brings together 12 of the UK and Ireland’s largest media brands: the BBC, BBC Studios, BritBox International, Channel 4, Channel 5/ Paramount UK, Warner Bros. Discovery UK & Ireland (previously Discovery UK & Ireland), ITV, RTE, S4C, Sky, STV, UKTV.

In the last year since the Pledge was signed, albert has worked closely with commissioning teams to embed sustainability at the very beginning of the production process, providing bespoke editorial training to over 1000 people since 2021, and launching a new Editorial Engagement Tool, freely available to help those working in TV and film, to help consider new ways to bring climate storytelling into their programmes. It is also carrying out in-depth analysis of the impact of content on sustainable behaviour.

Several signatories to the pledge have funded the first pan-broadcaster research, giving an overview of audience perceptions of climate change, their roles in tackling it and the hurdles faced by the television industry in helping inspire audiences to change their behaviour, and how best to do this. albert will be sharing some emerging headlines from the research over the coming months.

**Summary of actions from each signatory and quote**

**BBC (including BBC Studios and UKTV)**

* Unrivalled reach: The BBC is committed to reaching the widest possible audience with climate and environmental themes, putting them at the heart of its biggest entertainment shows, its incisive global journalism, its inspiring content for children, and with a continued focus on producing outstanding world-renowned Natural History series. In June, approximately 13 million people watched the **Platinum Party at the Palace** with HRH Prince William’s call to ‘restore our planet’, while on BBC One and iPlayer over 9 million have seen the first episode of **Frozen Planet II** alone. The oil industry came under the microscope with **Big Oil v The World**, while BBC Education helped distribute over a million seed-balls to schools and inspired thousands with The Regenerators project. Radio 2 and **The One Show** collaborated on Go Green, a series of sustainable lifestyle features, and, in the summer, BBC Sport launched the Green Sport Awards. In total, the BBC has reached over 38 million, approximately 70% of the 16+ population, in the UK in 2021/22 with non-News content explicitly containing environmental themes – and globally, since 2016, over a billion have watched a BBC Planet title such as **Blue Planet II**, **The Green Planet** and **Frozen Planet II.**
* Making an impact: Importantly, the BBC wants to understand if the content is actually making a difference. Regular online polling reveals that claimed understanding of key terms like ‘net zero’ soared after COP26, when the BBC embedded relevant content across genres, from Daytime to Comedy, with 51% of UK adults saying the BBC increased their understanding of environmental issues.  More than 80% of viewers said their concern about climate change grew after watching **Frozen Planet II**, with 61% reporting subsequently engaging in at least one pro-environmental behaviour, such as reducing energy use.  And the BBC ran a more sophisticated social impact pilot study for The Green Planet, revealing significant associations between viewing the series, pro-environmental behaviours and enhanced wellbeing.
* Sparking creativity: The BBC has had sustainable thinking built into its TV commissioning process since Dec 2020 and this year has included this approach for Radio commissioning as well. The corporation has been delivering on a commitment to train all non-News editorial staff and has created resources used industry wide, including the one-day virtual [Climate Creatives 2022](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/QHQMCPYxRUPR0lHzt798?domain=bbc.co.uk/) festival. With 30 speakers, 10 sessions, 2 postcard films and in excess of 1,600 live session views, the BBC Academy event challenged, provoked and inspired the creative industries to all do more.

**Tim Davie, BBC Director-General** said*: “The industry must engage audiences on climate change in ways that are impactful and relevant. We’ve made good progress together over the last year, but as the science demands we go further, we will be doing exactly that at the BBC.”*

More detail on the BBC’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/sustainability/#deliveringontheclimatecontentpledge>

For BBC Studios, visit <https://www.bbcstudios.com/about-us/operating-responsibly/> and UKTV at [https://corporate.uktv.co.uk/article/the-climate-content-pledge-one-year-on/](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/7EpjCLPqNf79kXSBO3hP?domain=corporate.uktv.co.uk/)

**Channel 4**

* ​ For forty years, Channel 4 has been using the power of its programming to create change and shift and shake views and perceptions. Channel 4 believes film and TV have an important role and responsibility in fostering changes in attitudes. It is committed to using impactful content and the reach of its brand to inspire action which tackles climate change.
* Channel 4 has launched a dedicated ​hub for ​its award-winning and thought-provoking climate ​focused programming. All 4's #ClimateMatters showcases ​news and entertainment programmes ​which ​contribute to the global conversation on the climate emergency and which help educate and inspire viewers to do their bit for the environment. This includes **Joe Lycett vs the Oil Giant**, a take-down of greenwashing and winner of the inaugural Edinburgh TV Festival 2022 Climate Impact Award and **A Year On The Ice – Arctic Drift**, an exploration of climate change through the experiences of 300 scientists living on a research vessel in the Arctic and winner of the Best Science Documentary at the Grierson Awards.
* In May ​2022 Channel 4 ​launched ​the Climate Emergency Brief​, an initiative inviting the indie sector to create high-impact climate ​and sustainability focused programming. Broadcast as part of Channel 4’s 2023 climate season, shows will inspire audiences to engage with the climate emergency and empower viewers to help make change.
* Channel 4 ​is focused on addressing its own impact and ensuring it is doing its bit to transition to a sustainable future. It has reviewed its commissioning process and introduced systems to ensure climate themes are considered and tracked in every production. It has also introduced mandatory annual climate emergency training for its commissioners to ​help empower creative teams across TV and film to ​take action to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change in their supply chains.

**Alex Mahon, CEO at Channel 4** said: *“The climate emergency is the most urgent challenge to humanity, and as broadcasters we have a responsibility to rise to it with programmes and content that demand accountability and inspire action.”*

An update on Channel 4’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge will be availableby the end of 2022 on the 4Producers website:

<https://www.channel4.com/commissioning/production-information/sustainable-production>

**Warner Bros. Discovery UK & Ireland**

* Warner Bros. Discovery UK & Ireland has long been committed to better educate and influence audiences about the need for action to protect the planet as seen through its programming dedicated to the natural world and its value, impact and importance through the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet and many others.
* Since signing the Climate Content Pledge in 2021, Discovery has merged with WarnerMedia to form Warner Bros. Discovery and now has an even more diverse portfolio of audience touch points through TV, film, games, news and sport and it is committed to using these to address important issues as well as inform and entertain.
* In the last 12 months it has seen success with the introduction of shows like **Fifth Gear: Recharged** on discovery+, taking a much-loved motoring format and focusing on the benefit and appeal of electric vehicles, which builds on its broader commitment to EV Sports. Warner Bros. Discovery Sports extended its partnership with Formula E, continuing to broadcast live coverage of the world championship across Eurosport, discovery+ and Quest in the UK. Discovery Sports Events is also the global promoter and commercial rights holder for the FIA eTouring World Cup - the world's first all-electric touring car championship. Launching in 2023, it will also promote the ground-breaking Electric GT Championship - a platform for manufacturers to showcase their GT cars and innovative technology. Outside of live sport, the weekly Eurosport produced series focused on key topic in the sports and news agenda, The Power of Sport, featured Tokyo 2020 sport climbing Olympic gold medalist Janja Garnbret and French rugby star Clement Castets speaking openly about eco-anxiety the importance and impact of sustainable living. In addition, it has broadened its editorial focus on reuse, repurpose, renovation and sustainability, adding **Charlotte Church’s Dream Build** to shows like **The Restorers** and **The Repair Shop**.

**Antonio Ruiz, General Manager at Warner Bros. Discovery UK & Ireland**, said**:** *“As broadcasters we have a responsibility to use our voice and our platforms to impact change for good and helping to educate and inform our audiences on the climate emergency and environmental sustainability remains a key priority as we look to the future as Warner Bros. Discovery in the UK & Ireland. We continue to review not only how we create our content using sustainable production processes but how we can further drive awareness through our editorial content having seen a positive response through our factual, lifestyle and sports programming to date.”*

Further details on Warner Bros. Discovery UK & Ireland’s sustainability commitments will be available via WBD.com in 2023.

**ITV**

* Climate Action both off screen and on-screen is an essential part of ITV’s Social Purpose of shaping culture for good. Since signing the Climate Content Pledge, ITV has brought green issues and choices to life for millions of viewers by making them accessible and inspiring. From Daytime to Entertainment, Current Affairs to drama and beyond, sustainability-related content has been woven into programmes across all genres. Since Cop26 this has included **This Morning** broadcasting from their own forest, a 9-year-old climate poet on **Britain’s Got Talent,** and a storyline on air pollution in **Coronation Street,** while King Charles III recently noted the role **Emmerdale** is playing in bringing the sustainability of food systems into the national conversation. **ITV Regional News** has broadcast over 85 hours of climate related content to date in 2022.
* ITV’s game-changing partnership between **Love Island** and eBay promoting pre-loved fashion reached millions of viewers and was highly impactful. Half of those aware of the partnership said it changed their opinion of pre-loved fashion for the better, and 53% said they’d bought pre-loved in the past three months, more than double the amount for those who hadn’t watched Love Island and been aware of the partnership. Extrapolated to population level, 2.7m people are making more effort to shop sustainably as a result of the initiative.
* ITV is committed to continuing to embed engaging, inspiring and entertaining climate content across all genres for all audiences. It has introduced processes to make this part of creative development and will publish guidance for production teams on portraying sustainable choices within shows, as well as offering a sustainability conversation to all new productions in any genre. ITV’s pioneering internal Climate Content Tracker captures mentions of sustainability-related topics across its output, whether explicit or implicit, and monitors the different types of climate action mentioned. The results are discussed internally on a monthly basis. 100% of ITV colleagues, including commissioning, must undertake climate action training.

**Carolyn McCall, CEO at ITV** said: *"The Climate Content Pledge has had a tremendous impact across our industry, with all broadcasters developing their own innovative ways to engage viewers at this critical time. At ITV, we are using the breadth of our output to make relatable, entertaining and inspiring content that helps audiences understand the relevance of climate change to our lives, and how we can all be part of the solution. We look forward to more collaboration and to more impactful content in the coming years."*

More detail on ITV’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here: <https://www.itv.com/presscentre/press-releases/itv-announces-new-measures-support-sustainable-content-ideas-screen>

**Paramount UK (including Channel 5)**

* Paramount UK, which includes Channel 5, published its sustainability strategy known as Peak Sustainability on 17 October 2022. This is built around seven key pledges to drive change across the business and external suppliers, partners and audiences. Peak Sustainability strengthens its commitment to the Climate Content Pledge which includes a goal to 1) integrate positive environmental themes throughout Paramount UK’s content output 2) make Paramount UK’s content production slate 100% albert certified by 2024 and 3) collaborate with UK broadcasters on research to understand impact and inspire change.
* The business has increased the focus on green and sustainable issues across a number of its existing titles and new commissions including the recently announced: **Natural History Museum: Saving Planet Earth** and **Britain’s Poisoned Rivers: What can you do?** Aimed at raising awareness of the issues surrounding the global climate and nature crisis and encouraging positive behavioural change amongst its British audience, these new series will air in 2023.
* Issues around climate change are now a serious consideration as part of the commissioning process and its commitment under Peak Sustainability means the Commissioning Teams across Paramount UK have received training to help deliver its commissioning sustainability objectives.

**Maria Kyriacou, President of Paramount UK** said: *“As a media company and public service broadcaster that entertains and informs millions of people in the UK, we must use our powerful voice to shape culture and social attitudes. Our Peak Sustainability campaign and the pledges we have made will help us drive change and chart a path towards decarbonisation which is not only a business imperative, but essential for the future of our planet”.*

More detail on Paramount UK’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here: <https://www.viacomcbs-mediahub.co.uk/press-releases/paramount-uk-sets-out-peak-sustainability-strategy>

**RTÉ**

* In addition to becoming a more sustainable organisation and achieving the highest industry standards, including becoming the first broadcaster in Ireland and UK to achieve ISO 50001 standard for energy efficiency in 2021, coverage of climate change and environmental issues is embedded in RTÉ News and Current Affairs coverage, and across RTÉ's television, radio and online services through recurring series, important documentaries, themed podcasts and radio specials.
* RTÉ News' dedicated Climate section on RTE.ie/Climate includes news reports, clips, articles and opinion pieces, as well as a section dedicated to the European perspective through RTÉ's partnership with the EBU. Between March 2021 - March 2022, more than 560 articles themed around climate change were published on rte.ie, achieving almost 17.5 million views.
* RTÉ Learn, a dedicated online resource for teachers and educators has partnered with RTÉ Young People's Programming to inspire the next generation of climate activists by focusing on many issues related to climate change, such as how to deal with climate anxiety as part of its teen mental health series.
* The award-winning **Ecolution** 68-episode podcast is designed for kids who want to make a difference in the fight against climate change. It strives to make sense of a complex news topic by showing children that they are heard, and that they have allies.

**Dee Forbes, RTÉ Director General, said**: *"RTÉ plays a trusted and vital role in informing Irish citizens and in shaping national debate, and this is more important now than ever when it comes to climate change. While we are mindful of the need to do more, we are working hard throughout the organisation to increase energy efficiency in our operations, make more sustainable programmes and produce a rich mix of engaging and informative programming and content across our television, radio and online services, with a particular focus on younger audiences. It is incumbent on us all to do everything we can to improve public understanding of the issues and recognition of the need for urgent action and help deliver meaningful change."*

More detail on RTÉ’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here:

<https://about.rte.ie/sustaining-rte/rte-and-sustainability/>

**S4C**

* Examples of sustainable programming include current affairs, with **Y Byd ar Bedwar** exploring the effects of carbon off-setting schemes in Wales and **GRID**, S4C’s short-form online documentaries looking at a young community living off-grid in west Wales. Daily magazine programmes, **Heno** and **Prynhawn Da**, offered snippets of everyday sustainability ideas and celebrated the Great Big Green Week this year with special, focused items. The weekly gardening programme, **Garddio a Mwy**, has used sustainability starting in domestic gardens as a key theme, with top tips and interesting ideas running throughout the series.
* In the last 12 months, S4C has reviewed its content and commissioners are now more aware of the opportunities to incorporate climate themes into its programmes. It is currently adapting its commissioning process so that opportunities to include climate themes can be identified for every new commission from the outset. Commissioners and producers will have the chance to discuss these as part of the green-light go-ahead for productions.
* From next year, it will also begin to measure its efforts by tracking climate-related content across its output.

**Siân Doyle, CEO of S4C** **said**: *“There is no denying that climate change will impact us all. As the national broadcaster of Wales, we recognise the crucial responsibility we have in demonstrating leadership and responding to this pressing issue. From the youngest children to our older audiences, S4C aims to promote environmental sustainability in an informative, entertaining and thought-provoking way, to help our audiences in Wales engage with the challenges climate change presents, both to their communities and to the wider world.”*

More detail on S4C’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here: <https://www.s4c.cymru/cy/amdanom-ni/page/52904/cynaliadwyedd/>

**Sky**

* The business has continued to harness the immense power of sport to engage millions of fans through its [summer campaign with Sky Sports](https://www.skysports.com/more-sports/story-telling/29181/12345529/sky-sports-x-sky-zero-sustainability-in-sport), collaborating with key rights holders such as The R&A, Super League, Formula 1 and the ECB to encourage fans to #GoZero. It launched a TV ad which connected the climate crisis with sport and showed how we all have a role to play in looking after what we love. Fans took 1.7 million sustainable actions as a result. In October 2022, **’Footballs Toughest Opponent'** explored the relationship between football and climate change.
* Previous [research with the Behavioural Insights Team](https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Broadcasters-Report.pdf) revealed multi-generational content is a key lever for nudging sustainable behaviours. **Sky Kids** has commissioned a special collection of content for families in the run up to COP27 including **Obki Season 2**, **COP27: Six Ways to Save the Planet**, and an **FYI Special**.
* Beyond Sky content the business has pushed the boundaries of what it can deliver with its partners. It launched the second Sky Zero Footprint Fund, run by Sky Media with a £2m prize fund for ideas that combine creative and forward-thinking advertising with products and services which drive sustainable swaps or behaviours.

**Stephen van Rooyen, Sky’s EVP & CEO, UK & Europe,** said: *“The Climate Content Pledge is an important step for our industry to come together and deliver change. At Sky sustainability is at the heart of our business, and we are going bold across all genres on climate – from taking our business net zero by 2030, to successfully awarding £2 million through the Sky Zero Footprint Fund for two years running.”*

More detail on Sky’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available within the [Sky Impact Report](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/ZNzNCnz3Dik983Hmrc77?domain=static.skyassets.com) and the [Sky Zero website](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/bfn9CoO5EiQ2OPto0Grh?domain=skyzero.sky).

**STV**

* The business has achieved albert certification of all its broadcast and STV Studios UK-produced programming in 2022.
* Its new commissioning processes will incorporate sustainability themes in STV-produced programming, including a six-part series, *Sean’s Scotland*, featuring local people involved in community-based projects, addressing the impacts of climate change and enhancing the natural environment.
* There will also be an on-screen promotional campaign commissioned to coincide with the anniversary of COP26. *Small Changes Today, Big Difference Tomorrow* – is designed to inspire STV audiences to make greener choices.

**Simon Pitts, CEO of STV said** *“At STV, a focus on sustainability is embedded into all areas of the business. We’re committed to using the power of our platforms, our broad reach and our creative programme making skills, to inform audiences about the need for climate action and inspiring them to make sustainable lifestyle choices.”*

More detail on STV’s specific commitments under the Climate Content Pledge is available here: [www.stvplc.tv/social-impact/sustainability](http://www.stvplc.tv/social-impact/sustainability)

Ends.

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**Notes to editors**

BritBox International is also a signatory to the pledge – as a wholly-owned joint venture between the BBC and ITV, its commitments are reflected in those of the BBC and ITV groups.

**The Climate Content Pledge (signed November 2021)**

*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.*

*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]](#footnote-1) *that helps everyone understand*

*and navigate the path to net zero and inspires them to make greener choices.*

1. *We will develop processes that help us to consider climate themes when we are*

*commissioning, developing and producing content.*

1. *We will ensure that our efforts are informed by the science.*
2. *We will recognise the importance of fair and balanced representations of visions for*

*a sustainable future.*

1. *We will work together:*
   1. *learning from and inspiring each other*
   2. *sharing relevant industry and audience insights and developing relevant*

*metrics*

* 1. *improving how we measure our impact.*

1. *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.*

**About albert**

albert is the leading screen industry organisation for environmental sustainability.

Founded in 2011, albert supports the film and TV industry to reduce the environmental impacts of production and to create content that supports a vision for a sustainable future.

The BAFTA-owned, industry-backed organisation offers online tools and training, events, practical guidance and thought leadership to all screen industry professionals to help them identify and act upon opportunities on and off screen which can lead to effective climate action.

1. For the purposes of this pledge, “content” is all programming with the exception of news. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)