

MEDIA CLIMATE PACT: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS 2021

SEVEN COMPANIES LEAD THE WAY, AN INVITATION
FOR MORE TO COMMIT TO THE PACT

INTRODUCTION

“THERE IS NO OTHER ISSUE IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE THAT HAS RISEN TO THE EXISTENTIAL LEVEL THAT CLIMATE CHANGE HAS.”



**BILL MCKIBBEN AT MIRRORS OR MOVERS
IX CONFERENCE**

Extreme weather events are already affecting communities worldwide. If it continues unabated, climate change will reverse progress made across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The infamous 2015 Paris Agreement saw 197 countries set a goal of reaching net zero

emissions across the global economy by 2050. Since then, emissions have however continued to rise rather than fall. This is referred to as the emissions gap.

“I PREFER TO THINK OF IT AS A CULTURE GAP. A GAP BETWEEN WHAT WE ARE DOING, AND WHAT IS POSSIBLE AND IN FACT NECESSARY, ON THE OTHER. NO INDUSTRY IS BETTER POSITIONED TO CLOSE THIS GAP THAN THE MEDIA SECTOR.”¹



**CHRISTIANA FIGUERES, FOUNDING PARTNER, GLOBAL OPTIMISM AND FORMER EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (2010-2016)**

Governments, businesses and civil society will come together in Glasgow to accelerate action on climate this November. Even though that conference was delayed by a year due to Covid-19, the media sector did not wait to take action.

The Responsible Media Forum launched the Media Climate Pact on 9 November 2020, the original start date of COP26. The Pact brings the industry together to drive climate-friendly behaviours up, and emissions down. A year on, this report summarises the progress that signatories have made.

The seven founding signatories hope to lead the way, inspiring more media companies to take action. The Pact remains open for new signatories.


¹ Responsible Media Forum, The Superpower of Media – Mirrors or Movers II: managing the societal impacts of content (2020): <https://responsiblemediaforum.org/downloadDocumentFile?document=299>.




Extreme weather events are increasing

PROGRESS


The Media Climate Pact consists of two commitments: one operational and one focused on content. While we recognise that as global companies we have an operational footprint that we need to tackle, it is through our content that we can make a much bigger difference that will go far beyond our own companies and sector. As ITV puts it, this is about “creating programmes with the biggest impact on the audience and the smallest impact on the planet”.²




Commitment 1:
We will commit to implement science-based targets on climate and drive actions that are consistent with a 1.5-degree pathway to achieve net-zero as close to 2030 as possible, and by 2050 at the latest.




LEVEL 2: commit to set science-based targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative by 2021, to be implemented by 2023 (consistent with the SBTi’s 2-year window).



LEVEL 1: commit to set science-based targets aligned with climate science (but not validated by the Science Based Targets initiative) by 2021, to be implemented by 2023.



Commit to offset any remaining emissions through verifiable programmes.

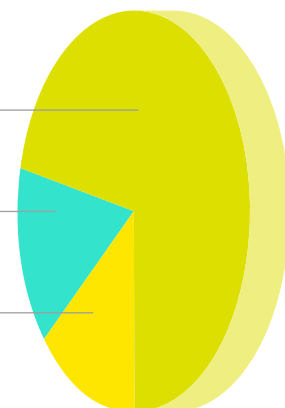


100% renewable energy across own operations with the ambition to incentivise implementation of renewables across our value chain by 2030. Where it is impossible or prohibitively expensive to source renewable energy, we will buy renewable energy certificates to compensate.

Six of the companies (Channel 4, ITV, Informa, Pearson, Sky and Virgin Media³) have already met this commitment. Five of them have set an approved Science-Based Target (SBT), all in line with a 1.5°C pathway. Channel 4 committed to the initiative in May 2021, and will have until May 2023 to get its SBT approved.⁴

Company progress on setting science-based targets

- 5** Science-based target set & validated
- 1** Committed to the Science Based Targets initiative
- 1** Target aligned with science set



² ITV plc Annual Report (2020), p.46: <https://www.itvplc.com/-/media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/documents/reports-and-results/annual-report-2020.pdf>

³ Virgin Media is covered by the SBT set by its parent company, Liberty Global, in December 2020.

⁴ See <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/companies-taking-action#table>

All seven signatories have set a net zero target: Virgin Media by 2025; Channel 4, Informa, ITV, Pearson and Sky by 2030; and RELX by 2040. In addition, Channel 4, Informa, RELX, Sky and Virgin Media are powered by 95-100% renewable energy; and ITV has committed to buy 100% renewable energy by 2025. Sky also has a target to generate over 20% of the energy requirements for all new buildings and large refurbishments through on-site renewables. The company is also a signatory to EV100, already having rolled out 151 plug-in hybrid electric vans and 11 fully electric vans. Finally, RELX is launching an internal carbon price in 2021 which is planned to reach \$100 per tonne of CO₂-equivalent by 2030.

WHEN THESE TARGETS ARE MET, AT LEAST 1.9M TONNES OF CO₂-EQUIVALENT WILL HAVE BEEN REDUCED AND 2.5M TONNES BALANCED BY CARBON REMOVALS – THE EQUIVALENT OF TAKING OVER 3M⁵ CARS OFF THE UK'S ROADS.

Companies are also setting further goals that are specific to their business. For example, Informa has a target to save its customers more carbon than Informa

emits as a business by 2025, by helping people connect more efficiently and save on travel by bringing specialist communities together. ITV has committed for all programmes that are produced and commissioned in the UK to be albert certified by the end of 2021, meaning that productions have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint and offset the remainder. Channel 4 has made a similar commitment for all productions to be albert certified by Spring 2022. All UK-commissioned Sky Originals are certified carbon neutral since 2020, and the new Sky Studios Elstree aims to be the world's most sustainable film and TV production studios when it opens in 2022.



Commitment II:
We will help drive behaviour change towards climate-friendly lifestyles through our content.



We will train & educate at least 80% of colleagues with content responsibilities on the latest climate science and mitigation strategies.



We will aim to increase the reach and availability of climate-related content to ensure it is front and centre of local, national and global conversations; and



We will track and report consistently on our climate change-related content and the impacts we are having through our content.

DEFINITIONS:

Content: any kind of multimedia material, including print, audio and video, distributed by a committed company. This includes academic articles, radio shows, newspaper articles, advertising campaigns, literature, TV programmes, films, series, exhibitions and events.

Climate-related content: content that references climate change. This could be a news article about the latest climate science, a documentary about climate change's impacts and/or solutions, an advertisement campaign for a product or service that helps the customer reduce their climate impacts, or the placement of climate-friendly behaviour in a TV programme.

⁵ Calculation based on the Carbon independent.org Emissions from cars calculator, providing the average emission per car in the UK: <https://www.carbonindependent.org/17.html>

Good progress has been made on training >80% of staff with content responsibilities on the latest climate science and mitigation strategies. Channel 4 has already done this through albert. ITV has also achieved this for its UK workforce and committed to roll this out to its global workforce by the end of 2021. Pearson has committed to provide training opportunities to all employees and suppliers by 2023. Sky encourages all employees to undertake albert's Sustainable Production Training and arranges bespoke sessions for senior leaders in commissioning and production.



Sky's Daily Climate Show

Various signatories launched new programmes, formats, advertising campaigns, and other content in 2020 & 2021 to increase the reach and availability of climate-related content. For example, Sky's Daily Climate Show became the first daily news programme dedicated to climate change and the environment. Sky News correspondents investigate how global warming is changing our landscape and how we live our lives in a prime-time slot. It is also weaving climate stories

into sports coverage, for example explaining how weather and air quality affects athletes' performance.

GOOD PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON TRAINING >80% OF STAFF WITH CONTENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE LATEST CLIMATE SCIENCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES.

Another example is ITV's "The Shows We Never Want To Make" advertising campaign. Offering viewers an insight into a world ravaged by climate change, Coronation Street has become Catastrophe Street, This Morning is now This Warming and Ant and Dec are hosting Saturday Night Blown Away. And Channel 4 broadcast various sustainability-related programming including Dispatches: Is Your Online Habit Killing the Planet?, How to Steal Pigs and Influence People, and a second series of My Family and the Galapagos.



ITV's Catastrophe Street

Outside of broadcast, RELX is growing its portfolio of environmental products and services which aid decision makers and researchers, encourage debate and spread good practice: RELX tracks its share of citations in environmental science, which represented 47% of the total market and 62% in energy and fuels in 2020. RELX also has an SDG Resource Centre which showcases the latest in science, law, business, events and more that can help drive forward the SDGs, drawing on content from across the whole of the company and from key partners. Virgin Media is raising awareness through its TV platform and partnerships, promoting relevant programmes to customers through its TV service, digital, and comms.

Signatories are integrating climate-related content across their portfolios, moving from one-off campaigns to integration. Informa is committed to embed sustainability inside 100% of its brands by 2025, giving customers the content and connections to drive a more sustainable future. Pearson is integrating sustainability, social responsibility and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) knowledge and skills into its content, qualifications and online programmes, preparing people to make an impact in their lives and jobs. And all broadcasters – Channel 4,

ITV and Sky – are mandating that each commissioning or original production includes a conversation about how it could include climate change as a subject in what Sky calls the “Planet Test”.

“WE NEED AN ALL VERTICAL APPROACH – NO VERTICAL IS EXEMPT.”



**WOLFGANG BLAU, VISITING RESEARCH FELLOW,
REUTERS INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM AT MIRRORS
OR MOVERS IX**

CONCLUSION

Humanity has far to go when it comes to closing the emissions and culture gaps and achieving what science tells us is necessary to avert dangerous global warming. Yet, the efforts of seven leading media companies to reduce their own emissions and drive wider behaviour change towards climate-friendly lifestyles through content, summarised here, are encouraging. Systematically putting climate at the heart of editorial and creative decisions for mainstream content would have been unthinkable five years ago. There are no limits to human creativity, and over the next years we look forward to seeing new formats, storylines, events, and publications raising awareness and driving action.

We hope other media companies join us in our effort to play our part in tackling climate change. Only by working together, increasing our collective reach and learning from each other will we have the maximum impact necessary to achieve the change that is needed and make our vision for a more low-carbon future a reality.



FURTHER READING

All the information that this report contains was taken from the following public reports. They provide much more detail and context on what each company is doing to meet its commitments under the Media Climate Pact.

Channel 4, Sustainability: <https://www.channel4.com/corporate/about-4/operating-responsibly/environment>

Channel 4, Financial Report and Statements (2020): https://annualreport.channel4.com/assets/pdf/Financial_report_and_statements_Channel4_AR20_ACC.pdf

Informa plc, 2020 Sustainability Report: https://www.informa.com/globalassets/documents/sustainability/reporting/2020/informa_sustainability_report-2020-web.pdf

ITV plc, Annual report and Accounts (2020): <https://www.itvplc.com/~media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/documents/reports-and-results/annual-report-2020.pdf>

ITV plc, The Shows We Never Want To Make (26 November 2020): <https://www.itvplc.com/socialpurpose/news/2020/the-shows-we-never-want-to-make>

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

Pearson plc, Annual Report and Accounts 2020: https://plc.pearson.com/sites/pearson-corp/files/annual-reports/Pearson_AR20_Online_210426.pdf

Pearson plc, Sustainability & ESG Supplement 2020: <https://plc.pearson.com/sites/pearson-corp/files/pearson/investors/pearson-ar20-sustainability-indices-210317.pdf>

RELX plc, Corporate Responsibility Report 2020: <https://www.relx.com/~media/Files/R/RELX-Group/documents/responsibility/download-center/2020-cr-report.pdf>

Responsible Media Forum, The Superpower of Media – Mirrors or Movers II: Managing the Societal Impacts of Content (2020): <https://responsiblemediaforum.org/downloadDocumentFile?document=299>

Sky, Impact Report 2020: Seeing the Bigger Picture: https://static.skyassets.com/contentstack/assets/bltdc2476c7b6b194dd/blt413353949e85b2cd/Sky_Impact_Report_2020_Seeing_the_Bigger_Picture.pdf

Sky, Sky News to launch first daily news programme dedicated to climate change and the environment (21 March 2021): <https://www.skygroup.sky/en-gb/article/sky-news-to-launch-first-daily-news-programme-dedicated-to-climate-change-and-the-environment>

Sky, Sustainable Production Principles (2021): https://static.skyassets.com/contentstack/assets/bltdc2476c7b6b194dd/blt2311f761467bc5c5/5ffd6e97da1b7963acc684/Sky_Sustainable_Production_Principles_-_FINAL_12.01.21.pdf

Virgin Media, Sustainability Report: Dialling into 2020: https://www.virginmedia.com/content/dam/virginmedia/dotcom/documents/corporate/virgin_media_2020_sustainability_performance.pdf

ABOUT THE RESPONSIBLE MEDIA FORUM

The Responsible Media Forum is a partnership between 25 leading media companies to identify and take action on the social and environmental challenges facing the sector. It provides a platform for participating companies to learn from each other and leading organisations in other sectors; identify trends and areas for prioritisation; engage with stakeholders; and run collaborative projects and events on key issues.

<https://responsiblemediaforum.org/>



PARTNERING
FOR A SUSTAINABLE
SECTOR

ABOUT CARNSTONE

Carnstone is a specialised management consultancy working globally at the intersection of sustainability and business strategy. Rooted in sound technical and commercial understanding, we provide advice and support to large companies, international organisations and NGOs from offices in London and Shanghai.

We believe collaboration is one of the most effective ways to tackle complex sustainability issues, and a significant part of our work consists of bringing companies together to drive progress across sectors.

<https://carnstone.com/>

