

Checklists – sustainable tourism

Introduction

We have summarised the suggested actions in three checklists for you.

The first one covers quick wins – actions that will only take a few minutes or involve a simple behavioural change. The second checklist includes actions that require a bit more effort and may involve some cost.

When you are ready for more, there is an advanced checklist with actions that may take longer, and could also involve an investment or external assistance.

You can track your progress too. We have included three columns of tick boxes so you can tick off what you have already done (completed), what you are currently implementing (in progress), and highlight the things you have left to implement (to do).

If you need support at any stage with your checklists and actions, contact the Tourism Development Team at VisitAberdeenshire who are there to help. Their email address is: industry@visitabdn.com



1. QUICK WINS

Actions that will only take a few minutes or involve a behavioural change.

Action	Completed	In progress	To do	Action plan if not completed
Are you encouraging recycling by providing clearly marked recycling bins for visitors and staff?	☐	☐	☐	
Are you reducing waste in daily operations, for example by reducing single-use plastics?	☐	☐	☐	
Have you looked up your nearest recycling or ReUse facilities?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you switch off lights when not needed, and when rooms are unoccupied?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you lower the settings on heating, hot water and other appliances when possible?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you encourage customers not to print tickets or booking confirmations, and do you accept e-tickets?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you plan meals carefully to reduce waste?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you store food properly to extend its shelf life?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you get creative with leftovers to reduce waste?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you encourage guests to take home leftovers by providing containers?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you share tips with guests on how they can help reduce food waste?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you promote sustainable modes of transport for visitors to get to your area, such as trains?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you encourage visitors and staff to use public transport, cycle, or walk when they are in your area, to reduce their carbon footprint?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you use native plants in your landscaping to support local wildlife?	☐	☐	☐	
Do you involve your team in sustainability efforts, do you ask them for ideas and feedback?	☐	☐	☐	
Have you uploaded your sustainability information to visitabdn.com?	☐	☐	☐	

2. MEDIUM TERM

May require some more time and may involve a cost.

Action				Action plan, if not completed
	Completed	In progress	To do	
Engage with Business Energy Scotland to explore the free advice and support they offer.	☐	☐	☐	
Offer locally sourced, sustainable food options to reduce your carbon footprint and support local farmers and fishermen.	☐	☐	☐	
Set up compost bins for kitchen waste.	☐	☐	☐	
Track inventory and monitor food stocks to avoid over-ordering.	☐	☐	☐	
Use more seasonal and local ingredients in your food offerings.	☐	☐	☐	
Give guests the option of smaller portion sizes.	☐	☐	☐	
Consider joining “Too Good To Go” to reduce food waste.	☐	☐	☐	
Explore how you can support local food banks.	☐	☐	☐	
Consider using the BankTheFood app.	☐	☐	☐	
Buy locally sourced products from local companies to support local community and cut down on transport emissions.	☐	☐	☐	
Research your suppliers’ business practices, to make sure you source goods and services sustainably.	☐	☐	☐	
Offer refill water bottle stations to visitors.	☐	☐	☐	
Reuse materials – refurbish and recycle – for example by buying second-hand furniture and refurbished equipment.	☐	☐	☐	
Donate or sell items you no longer need instead of throwing them away.	☐	☐	☐	
Minimise printing by using online tools to electronically send and sign documents (such as contracts), issue tickets, and send communications.	☐	☐	☐	
Create and offer digital brochures to reduce paper use.	☐	☐	☐	
Check that your energy provider offers 100% renewable energy, or switch to a green tariff.	☐	☐	☐	
Install motion sensors for lighting to improve energy efficiency.	☐	☐	☐	

Explore other ways of being more energy efficient, such as improving insulation.	☐	☐	☐
Research and share information about local EV charging points with your visitors.	☐	☐	☐
Introduce cycle-to-work schemes, for example Bike2Work.	☐	☐	☐
Promote low season travel with special offers or unique experiences.	☐	☐	☐
Partner with local conservation projects or donate to environmental causes.	☐	☐	☐
Share information with guests about the importance of biodiversity and how they can help protect it.	☐	☐	☐
Conserve water and energy, and encourage your guests to do the same.	☐	☐	☐
Avoid disturbing wildlife and support initiatives that protect habitats.	☐	☐	☐
Install outdoor lighting that minimises disruption to nocturnal wildlife and preserves natural night skies.	☐	☐	☐
Collaborate with your local community and government agencies to assess and manage climate change risks for your area.	☐	☐	☐
Measure and track your carbon emissions, and set realistic targets for reducing emissions.	☐	☐	☐
Track business travel and aim to reduce emissions.	☐	☐	☐
Where feasible, choose travelling by train over planes, and using public transport instead of driving.	☐	☐	☐
Ask for ideas, not just from staff, but also from customers and suppliers	☐	☐	☐

3. LONGER TERM

May require investment, external help, and commitment.

Action				Action plan if not completed
	Completed	In progress	To do	
Develop a climate action plan for your business; identify and prioritise actions, and measure progress.	☐	☐	☐	
Create policy documents on sustainability.	☐	☐	☐	
Create a Responsible Tourism page on your website.	☐	☐	☐	
Evaluate how climate change could impact your business, using tools like Adaptation Scotland's risk assessment guide.	☐	☐	☐	
Ensure your buildings, roads, and other infrastructure can handle extreme weather, such as stronger winds and heavier rainfall.	☐	☐	☐	
Invest in flood defences and improve drainage to protect properties from flooding.	☐	☐	☐	
Explore renewable energy options like heat pumps, solar panels, or biomass systems.	☐	☐	☐	
Install and use heating, boiler, and lighting controls to avoid wasting energy.	☐	☐	☐	
Consider investing in electric vehicles.	☐	☐	☐	
Invest in draught-proofing and insulation to reduce heat loss.	☐	☐	☐	
Develop attractions or experiences that are less reliant on weather.	☐	☐	☐	
Get involved in local conservation projects to protect landscapes and biodiversity.	☐	☐	☐	
Raise awareness about the impacts of climate change and the importance of sustainability among your team and guests.	☐	☐	☐	
Apply for sustainability awards.	☐	☐	☐	
Gain sustainability credentials through an organisation such as Green Key or Green Tourism.	☐	☐	☐	