



# GLASGOW'S COP26 LEGACY: A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

Since COP26, for the past 5 years Glasgow Chamber of Commerce has turned climate ambition into action, empowering our business community to innovate and build resilience.

# INTRODUCTION: MARKING 5 YEARS SINCE COP26

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) marked a pivotal moment for global climate action, placing businesses firmly at the heart of the transition to a more resilient economy. In the years since the summit, Glasgow's business community has shown that ambition did not end with the closing plenary. Instead, organisations of all sizes have continued to embed climate resilience into their strategies and innovate in response to emerging risks and opportunities.

From reducing emissions and improving energy efficiency, to rethinking supply chains and developing new circular initiatives, businesses across the city have demonstrated leadership in translating international commitments into practical, measurable action at a city and city region scale.

Central to this momentum has been collaboration and strong local leadership. Glasgow Chamber of Commerce (GCoC) has played a vital convening and enabling role, helping to translate the goals and urgency of COP26 into practical support for businesses. Through targeted programmes, skills-focused initiatives, peer networks and tailored guidance, GCoC has supported organisations to build capability, share learning and move confidently from ambition to implementation.

This report captures how businesses and GCoC have worked together since COP26, highlighting projects, partnerships and real-world examples of business leadership. Together, they demonstrate that sustained ambition, backed by collaboration and practical support, can deliver meaningful progress towards a more resilient future for Glasgow.



*"COP26 was a defining moment for Glasgow - and where our city made its mark on global climate action."*

**- Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council**

# POLICY AND INFLUENCE

GCoC occupies a distinctive leadership position at the intersection of business, climate policy and city governance, shaped by Glasgow's role as host city for COP26 in November 2021. COP26 created momentum and responsibility, positioning GCoC as a long-term champion of the business climate transition. Since then, Glasgow Chamber has deliberately reframed climate action as a core economic and competitive element for Glasgow businesses, moving it from the margins of sustainability into mainstream of economic strategy.

A central pillar of this leadership is Circular Glasgow, founded in 2017 and now recognised as one of the most established city-level circular economy programmes in the UK. Circular Glasgow has built a large, cross-sector network of businesses, public-sector partners and innovators, demonstrating how circular business models can deliver productivity, resilience and emissions reduction simultaneously. Its work has directly informed Glasgow's ambition to become a circular city by 2045, with evidence and learning feeding into wider Scottish policy discussions on waste, resources and industrial transformation.

Following COP26, GCoC intensified its role as a translator of policy into practice, focusing on three core functions: translating global and national climate policy into business-relevant action, acting as a trusted intermediary between government, councils, and finance, and showcasing credible business leadership to policymakers to strengthen confidence in delivery-focused approaches. This emphasis on practical credibility has underpinned all major post-COP initiatives led by GCoC.

GCoC has coupled local delivery with policy advocacy through the British Chambers of Commerce and Scottish Chambers of Commerce networks, calling on the UK and Scottish Governments to unlock funding at the scale required for the climate transition. These collective calls for long-term, accessible investment frameworks enable businesses to generate and scale the solutions needed to tackle climate change. By grounding advocacy in evidence from programmes like Circular Glasgow and Step Up to Net Zero, GCoC has strengthened the case for funding that delivers inclusive economic growth.

Overall, from COP26 to the present, GCoC has evolved from stewarding a moment of global attention to anchoring a business-led climate transition, one that combines influence, delivery and skills to help shape climate policy and practice at city, Scottish and UK levels.



# THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AT COP26 AND BEYOND

Pictured: Bill McDonough hosts Circular Glasgow at the ICE Hub during COP26

## COP26 ACTIVITY

During COP26, GCoC supported by the Scottish Government, highlighted the vital role of business-led climate leadership. By connecting local businesses with global strategies, it positioned them within the wider climate dialogue while reinforcing commitment to sustainable growth and resilience. [Watch the highlights from COP26.](#)

## CLIMATE CHAMBER SIGNATURE SERIES

The Climate Chamber Signature Series underscored the importance of business led climate leadership.

The [former CEO of Nokia](#) emphasised that digitisation is key to reaching climate goals, while [Crete Faremo](#) highlighted the importance of infrastructure investment. [Stefano Agostini](#) and [Emma Keller](#) stressed the importance of business innovation and design, and [Muhammad Yunus](#) called for economic systems to evolve alongside climate action to achieve lasting and equitable change.



**Allison McRae, Senior Director, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's blog on "COP26 should be the springboard for lasting change"**

[Read more](#)

## CIRCULAR GLASGOW AT THE ICE HUB

Bill McDonough, Partners and Circular Glasgow gathered at the ICE Hub, a working space for Innovation for the Circular Economy during COP26. The afternoon positioned circular economy as a foundational climate solution, moving beyond incremental changes towards regenerative systems that reduce waste and costs and strengthen supply chains.

During COP26, business and education demonstrated strong leadership and resilience in their climate strategies.

[Read more about how they are driving action](#)

## ONGOING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Building on this momentum, GCoC continues to lead a dynamic programme of thought leadership and events that address today's most pressing climate and economic challenges. GCoC remains at the forefront of shaping sustainable growth and empowering organisations to turn climate ambition into measurable impact.

## GLASGOW TALKS

Glasgow Talks, GCoC's flagship leadership and insight series, provides businesses with direct access to senior decision-makers. By partnering with senior leaders such as *James Close, Head of Climate Change at NatWest Group*, and *Alex Plant, CEO at Scottish Water*, the series positions sustainability as a driver of resilience while providing opportunities for competitiveness and growth.



Photographed: ScottishPower speaking at Glasgow Talks. [Read more about the session here.](#)



Photographed: James Close, Head of Climate Change at NatWest Group

## BARCLAYS BUSINESS BREAKFASTS

Barclays and GCoC have organised gatherings of business leaders from various sectors for open discussions. The format is informal and discussion-driven, allowing for meaningful exchanges.

For information on how Barclays are working to reduce the emissions they finance, visit their [website](#).

## CIRCULAR SUPPER CLUBS

The evening before COB, Circular Glasgow gathers international and local businesses to provide senior leaders with a platform to share challenges, collaborate and drive change. [Watch the highlights from 2025](#)

# GLASGOW CLIMATE WEEK



Pictured: Chris Norbury, Chief Executive of E.ON UK at COB25

## LAUNCHING GLASGOW CLIMATE WEEK

At the inaugural Congress of Business (2023), Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, announced that May 2024 would mark the city's first Glasgow Climate Week. Led by Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Climate Week supports action towards a climate-adapted city.

Delivered through a partner-led programme of events, Climate Week provides an opportunity to showcase the breadth of climate action taking place across the city. GCoC plays a central role in delivering activity throughout the week, hosting a range of events and mobilising its business networks to drive engagement and participation.

## CONGRESS OF BUSINESS (COB)

COB is a high-level annual summit bringing together senior business leaders and sustainability decision-makers to turn climate ambition into practical action. Established to build on the momentum generated by COP26, COB ensures sustained business-led climate action between COP summits.

Working in partnership with British Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the University of Glasgow and E.ON UK, and Barclays (in 2024 - 2025), it drives climate ambition across Glasgow and through global business networks. COB emphasises sustainability as a commercial opportunity, focusing on efficiency, resilience and future-proofing business operations.

Find out more about how our COB partners are building resilience across their organisations

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

**E.ON UK**

**62% OF BUSINESS LEADERS CITED FINANCE AS THE KEY BARRIER TO REACHING CLIMATE GOALS**

**91% SEE CLIMATE CHANGE AS AN INNOVATION OPPORTUNITY**

**43% REPORTED A LACK OF CLEAR GUIDANCE, HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR STRONG LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT**

\*stats from COB25

**COB HAS ENGAGED OVER 1,410 INDIVIDUALS SINCE LAUNCHING IN 2023**

**COB DIGITAL CAMPAIGN REACHED 7.5 MILLION IMPRESSIONS**

COB has strengthened Glasgow's role as a global convener, connecting international ambition with local action. The strategic themes focus on cities and industry as drivers of climate transformation, building partnerships for a resilient and inclusive economy and supporting businesses to position for investment and manage risk by connecting them to evolving finance and market signals.



Pictured: Keith Anderson, CEO, ScottishPower

### 2023

Mairi McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero & Just Transition; Dr Gary Kendall, Head of Climate Strategy, NatWest; David Mowatt, Partner, Circularity Capital Investments; Keith Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, ScottishPower; Razan Al Mubarak, UN Climate Change High Level Champion; Thomasina Miers OBE, Chef and Author; Professor John Crawford, University of Glasgow; Wesley Spindler, Managing Director, Sustainability, Accenture; Niels Otterstrøm Jensen, Programme Director, Novo Nordisk; Wayne Hubbard, Chief Executive Officer, ReLondon; Shevaun Haviland CBE, Director General, British Chambers of Commerce;

### 2024

Sarah Howard MBE, Chair, British Chambers of Commerce; James Close, Head of Climate Change, NatWest Group; Emma Howard Boyd CBE, Chair, Green Finance Institute; Nick Cochrane-Dyett MBE, Chair, British Chambers of Commerce Abu Dhabi; Catherine McGuinness CBE, Chair, Connected Places Catapult; Will Hutton, Political Economist; Nicola Barclay, Chief Executive Officer, BE-ST; Dr Roddy Yarr, University of Glasgow; Billy McFadyen, Scottish Event Campus; Graham Ross, Austin-Smith:Lord; Anna Campbell-Jones, Designer, Retailer and Presenter



Pictured: Dr Susie Mitchell, Programme Director, GRID

### 2025

Jennifer Jordan-Saifi, Chief Executive Officer, Sustainable Markets Initiative; Gerard Gallagher, Global Sustainability Leader, EY; Baroness Martha Lane Fox, Entrepreneur; Andy Haldane, Former Chief Executive Officer, Royal Society of Arts; Chris Norbury, Chief Executive Officer, E.ON UK; James Byrne, Partner, Sustainable Ventures; Dr Susie Mitchell, Programme Director, GRID; Will Attenborough, Co-founder, Green Rider; Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli, Former Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Glasgow;

# PARTNERSHIPS

Since COP26, GCoC has deepened strategic partnerships that connect global frameworks with city wide delivery and collaboration and supports businesses to adopt circular and sustainable practices that enhance competitiveness, resilience and growth.

## Find out more about our partners and get in touch:

Glasgow City Council: [Website](#) | [Sustainability@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:Sustainability@glasgow.gov.uk)  
Zero Waste Scotland: [Website](#)  
ReLondon: [Website](#) | [hello@reondon.gov.uk](mailto:hello@reondon.gov.uk)  
SMI: [Website](#) | [info@sustainable-markets.org](mailto:info@sustainable-markets.org)  
GALLANT: [Website](#) | [gallant-info@gla.ac.uk](mailto:gallant-info@gla.ac.uk)  
British Chambers of Commerce: [Website](#)



Pictured: OECD Report launching at COP26

## GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

**GCoC has a long-standing partnership with Glasgow City Council and key city partners, supporting Glasgow's transition to a circular and green economy.**

Our role spans strategy, delivery and thought leadership, with support now extending across a wide portfolio of activity. This includes shaping and supporting delivery of the city's first and second Climate Route Maps, and helping move from planning to large-scale delivery through the Climate Plan (currently in consultation), the Route Map delivered with Mott MacDonald, and the Local Heating and Energy Efficiency Strategy.

We have also supported an OECD-backed circular economy report for Glasgow, funded by Zero Waste Scotland and published at COP26.

Through membership of the Sustainable Glasgow Board and its hubs, we help convene public, private, and third-sector partners, including initiatives such as the Sustainable Glasgow Dialogues. GCoC also supports efforts to mobilise climate finance, helping develop and advance innovative public-private investment opportunities.

Alongside this, Glasgow City Council's work on Greening the City initiatives helps create opportunities to link nature-based solutions with health, resilience, and inclusive growth.

Together, this partnership is well positioned to scale circular economy activity, accelerate district heating and retrofit at neighbourhood level, strengthen monitoring and learning, and position Glasgow as a leading circular city for collaboration and investment.



Pictured: Councillor Susan Aitken speaking at COB25



Pictured: Circular Glasgow and ReLondon in Glasgow

## ZERO WASTE SCOTLAND

Zero Waste Scotland has supported Circular Glasgow since it was established in 2017 (funding from Scottish Government and European Regional Development Fund), primarily focusing on enabling the circular economy in Glasgow and bridging national policy and local business delivery.

Early activity included the Circle City Scan, delivered by Circle Economy, mapping material flows across the city and identifying priority circular actions. This work aimed to position Glasgow as one of Europe's early circular city frontrunners and initiated dialogue with key businesses around circular strategies.

Circular Glasgow supports businesses through education, inspiration, providing networking opportunities and enabling knowledge sharing through effective storytelling.

By 2020, Circular Glasgow had established a trusted delivery model, combining Zero Waste Scotland's strategic expertise with GCoC's convening role, taking on a key contributing role towards the Circular Economy Route Map for Glasgow 2025-2030.

## CIRCULAR GLASGOW X ReLONDON

A knowledge transfer partnership was formed between Circular Glasgow and ReLondon in 2020 to position Glasgow and London as leading circular cities, accelerating progress on city-level climate targets while helping businesses futureproof their operations through circular economy principles.

The collaboration focuses on business-led adoption, including:

- Sharing best practice, tools and methodologies to amplify efforts of businesses already enacting circular principles.
- Facilitating peer learning between businesses and practitioners to create commercial opportunities.

The partnership builds confidence among businesses and explores circularity as a route to cost reduction, innovation and long-term resilience.



Pictured: Dr Paul Little, Principal and CEO of City of Glasgow College meeting His Majesty King Charles III at COP26



## SMI X GCoC

During COP26, GCoC began working closely with the Sustainable Markets Initiative (SMI), founded by His Majesty King Charles III, to explore how a city-region model could accelerate innovative and sustainable economic growth. This early collaboration laid the foundations for an ongoing partnership, with Glasgow becoming one of only a small number of cities to secure affiliate partner status in 2025.

The collaboration brings together:

- A unique convening capability, where GCoC engaged His Majesty King Charles III, 50+ Chamber members and 32 mayors from the C40 Cities network to demonstrate its role as a local connector and how city-led climate action and market-based solutions can work together.
- SMI's global platform for private sector action, aligned with the Terra Carta principles.
- Regional leadership, convening power and business networks.

GCoC continues to bring businesses and finance leaders that align with the SMI back to Glasgow, ensuring the Terra Carta principles are embedded into the city's business ecosystem.



Pictured: Jennifer Jordan-Saifi M.V.O MBA, CEO of SMI talking at Congress of Business 2025



Pictured: Our members; ACS Clothing, Austin-Smith:Lord, Anderson Strathern, Little's Chauffeur Drive, Scottish Water and AC Whyte, attending the Sustainable Markets Initiative Terra Carta Roundtables & Exhibition

The affiliate partnership will enable Glasgow to showcase how global sustainability frameworks can be operated at a city scale, supporting a shift from ambition to sustained, market-led delivery.

## GALLANT: GLASGOW AS A LIVING LAB ACCELERATING NOVEL TRANSFORMATION

GALLANT is a research programme led by the University of Glasgow in partnership with Glasgow City Council, utilising Glasgow as a living lab to pilot sustainable solutions and apply Doughnut Economics as a whole systems framework for a climate resilient city.

GCoC acts as a strategic engagement and delivery partner to ensure the programme reaches beyond academia and public bodies into the private sector and local economy.

GALLANT has worked with GCoC to mobilise Glasgow's business networks and engage businesses with living lab discussions and peer learning dialogues, translating academic research into business insight and action.

GCoC has co-produced workshops, case studies and synthesis reports to identify barriers, opportunities and next steps.

By contributing to GALLANT, GCoC has helped translate Doughnut Economics and climate resilience research into practical business action.

**[Read more about GCoC's collaboration with business and GALLANT](#)**

*National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) exemplifies the vision for a regenerative and inclusive city through collaboration, building connections between communities and increasing circularity through its materials loan system. By embedding sustainability, equity and enriching cultural involvement, NTS is dedicated to ensuring the theatre can be enjoyed by all, while supporting a healthy and thriving city.*

**GALLANT Business Case Studies**





Pictured: Shevaun Haviland CBE launching the Green Innovation Report at NMIS, Glasgow



Pictured: The Glasgow Business Awards 2025

## BUSINESS REPRESENTATION AND NATIONAL POLICY INFLUENCE

GCoC and East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, co-chair the British Chambers of Commerce Climate & Environment Policy Group, shaping UK wide, business-led policy positions on climate and environmental transition.

The group ensures that the perspectives of business, in particular SMEs from across sectors and regions, inform evidence-based recommendations to government level, reinforcing the voice of Glasgow and Scottish businesses in shaping practical climate transition.

Lessons from COP26, including business mobilisation, circular economy adoption and city-led delivery, have helped to shape national transition pathways, linked to outputs such as [British Chamber of Commerce's Beyond Linear: Moving Towards a Circular Economy report](#) and [Green Innovation Building Sustainable Futures for UK Business Report](#)

## CLIMATE EXCELLENCE RECOGNISED AT THE GLASGOW BUSINESS AWARDS

The Glasgow Business Awards play a vital role in recognising organisations that demonstrate leadership, innovation, and measurable impact in sustainability and climate action. Through the support of committed sponsors, these awards celebrate best practice across Glasgow's business community.

The Award for Green Champion, sponsored by ScottishPower, recognises organisations embedding environmental leadership into their core operations and delivering tangible climate and sustainability outcomes. Recognised winners include: *Green Fulfilment Ltd; SWG3; Peel Ports Clydeport; Matthew Algie*

The Glasgow Business Award for Net Zero Achievement, sponsored by Glasgow City Council, highlights organisations making measurable progress towards Net Zero, demonstrating innovation, collaboration and emissions reduction. Recognised winners include: *EGG Lighting; Pest Solutions; Dear Green Coffee Roasters; Glasgow Bus Alliance*

The Award for Sustainable Development, sponsored by Scottish Water, celebrates long-term commitment to sustainable development, balancing environmental responsibility with economic resilience and social value. Recognised winners include: *Barclays Glasgow Campus; SWG3; Matthew Algie; Peel Ports Clydeport*



Pictured: ACS Clothing winning Glasgow's Most Outstanding Business 2024



Pictured: EGG Lighting winning Net Zero Achievement 2025

# ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND JOBS OF THE FUTURE

**4,800+ INTERACTIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**150+ BUSINESSES ENGAGED**

## MY FASHION PATH

My Fashion Path connected young people and students with businesses, academics and policy makers to challenge fast fashion, promote circular practices and inspire sustainable fashion careers. Activity promoted reuse and repair skills, showcased circular fashion models and highlighted career pathways within a transitioning sector.



Highlights Video from My Fashion Path at COP26 taking place at Glasgow Caledonian University, recently named Scotland's most environmentally sustainable university.

## MY CLIMATE PATH

My Climate Path is a COP26 education legacy initiative that makes a tangible impact for Scotland's young people. The initiative connects young people with employers to share knowledge and real-world experience, helping them understand pathways into green roles across all industries.

Created by Glasgow City Region DYW Groups, supported by GCoC and funded by the Scottish Government, My Climate Path continues to champion the DYW Pledge by linking education, business and opportunity.



My Climate Path winning Bronze in the Education Excellence category at the Global Good Awards 2022

## CLIMATE HEROES

Climate Heroes brings sustainability professionals into schools to inspire young people and build awareness of the skills needed for the green economy. With Climate Heroes sharing experiences in sustainable roles, the initiative also offers meaningful experiences that support young people into green career pathways while giving employers access to a talent pipeline.

## COB FUTURES

COB Futures is an interactive careers event offering young people a chance to explore sustainable career pathways through inspirational speakers and hands-on workshops with businesses including Balfour Beatty, Lush, ScottishPower and Kabloom.

Each year during Glasgow Climate Week, COB Futures engages young people from schools across Glasgow City Region, strengthening Glasgow's future talent pipeline and supporting employers to build green skills.



Pictured: Barclays, City of Glasgow College, COWI, McTaggart, SSE



Pictured: Minister for Higher and Further Education and Senior Leaders from GCoC, City of Glasgow College, AC Whyte

*"Scotland must harness the opportunities of transitioning to a green economy, including educating and training our future workforce for emerging green roles. Events like COB Futures are essential in achieving these goals and I congratulate everyone involved in making the day happen."*

**- MINISTER FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION**

## COB INSPIRES

COB Inspires is for students, graduates, and early-career professionals interested in sustainability careers.

It's an interactive afternoon to explore ideas, network with peers, and build relationships. Since its launch, it has featured speakers from Balfour Beatty, Small99, and QTV.

# SKILLS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Pictured: Chris Cagienard, Managing Director of Pest Solutions at Step Up To Net Zero Celebration 2025

## STEP UP TO NET ZERO

Step Up to Net Zero, funded by Glasgow City Council and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is a programme that provides tailored support to Glasgow based SMEs to take practical steps towards circular economy and climate goals, while creating green skills pathways for individuals through funded placements.

The programme acts as a lasting delivery model by demonstrating how global commitments can translate into transformation as placements combine economic development, green skills and carbon reduction goals, to progress workforce readiness and climate ambitions.

*"At EGG Lighting, reducing waste has always been central to our work, but the Step Up to Net Zero programme gave us the time, space, and expertise to truly understand it — insight that is now strengthening our circular offering and how we support clients on their journey to Net Zero."*

- EGG LIGHTING

Programme outcomes:

- Created 100+ placements to upskill and improve employability, including pathways into green careers.
- Reinforced GCC priorities of reaching net zero by 2030 and a circular economy city by 2045.
- Around one third of businesses retained participants beyond the placement.
- Presenting to national and international audiences, highlighting the opportunities it brings to the city as a place-based programme, including engagements in Cardiff and Slovenia.

The programme has supported over 100 businesses, including; *Circulus, Dear Green Coffee Roasters, Glasgow Science Centre, Glasgow Film Theatre, and Matthew Algje.*



Meet the Step Up to Net Zero Businesses Video

## ACTS TOOLKIT (ACTIONABLE CLIMATE TOOLKIT FOR SCOTLAND)

The ACTS Toolkit, developed by Circular Glasgow and funded by Scottish Enterprise, is a suite of free sector-specific resources designed by businesses, for businesses.

The resource was built utilising insight from businesses to share their learnings with other SMEs. By translating sustainability and circular economy concepts into clear and practical steps, the toolkit reduces barriers to action by making sustainability practical and accessible.

ACTS Toolkit provides guidance and templates for:

- Introductory support for carbon footprint calculations
- Policy guidance
- Real examples of sector-specific opportunities and challenges.

## [VIEW TOOLKIT](#)

From innovative reuse models to low-carbon operations, businesses across Glasgow are actively leading the way by sharing powerful stories and practical insights on circular economy practices and climate resilience.

**Explore the full collection of examples to see what's possible when organisations commit to change**

Step Up to Net Zero  
Launched  
June 2022

Step Up to Net Zero  
Phase 2  
December 2023

Development of ACTS  
Toolkit  
November 2024

Launch ACTS  
Toolkit  
March 2025

# INTERNATIONAL TRADE & GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Pictured: MOU Signing between GCoC and Bremeninvest

GCoC has hosted inbound and outbound trade missions that position Glasgow as a centre for green trade and innovation, supporting international collaboration on clean energy and linking climate ambition to economic opportunity for businesses.

## CLIMATE CHAMBER MISSION

Hosted by GCoC during COP26, the Climate Chamber Mission was the largest international trade mission ever delivered by British Chambers of Commerce. The event mission focused on leading sustainable partnerships by positioning climate action as a trade opportunity and a route to new markets.

The Mission brought together 85 businesses from 15 countries through the global chamber network to share sustainable business models and to identify collaborative opportunities. The mission created lasting partnerships, therefore strengthening Glasgow's position as a leading circular economy city.



Climate Chamber Mission Highlights

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY VIRTUAL TRADE MISSION IN MILAN

Milan has been central to GCoC's international trade activity on the circular economy, demonstrating how global partnerships can accelerate sustainable business practices. The mission connected Glasgow businesses with Milan's expertise across key sectors, strengthening trade links with Italy and embedding circular principles into supply chains.

This relationship continued through engagement at Milan's Hub-E event in 2021, showcasing Glasgow's leadership and underlining the vital role of international trade in advancing the circular transition. Building on this momentum, the partnership has been maintained through continued engagement, including a speaking contribution by GCoC at Milano Circolare in 2023.

## GREEN HYDROGEN TRADE MISSIONS TO GERMANY

GCoC, supported by the Scottish Government and Scottish Chambers of Commerce has led targeted green hydrogen trade missions connecting Scottish businesses with partners in Bremen and Lower Saxony.

Outward missions supported Scottish companies to access German hydrogen and advanced engineering markets and accelerate collaboration in clean energy and climate technologies. Inward missions showcased Scotland's hydrogen capabilities through site visits, opening new routes to partnership, procurement and investment.

Hydrogen was formalised as a priority sector through a Memorandum of Understanding with Bremeninvest, establishing a framework for repeat missions, shared market intelligence and long-term collaboration.

**Richard Muir, Deputy Chief Executive, Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's blog on "How Scotland can build international trade links"**  
[Read more](#)



Pictured: Trade Mission to Bremen, Germany



Pictured: Inward visit to GCID and University of Strathclyde Technology & Innovation Centre

## TRADE MISSION TO COP28 DUBAI

Two years after COP26, GCoC led a delegation of 8 businesses, including SEC and University of Strathclyde, to COP28 in Dubai, in partnership with GCC, showcasing Scottish climate innovation and building new international connections.

COP26 showcased that Glasgow Airport is capable of managing high-profile events and excels in providing world-class service. Glasgow Airport has been effectively translating its climate commitments into actionable results.

[READ MORE](#)

# CIRCULAR ECONOMY BUSINESS SUPPORT



## CIRCULAR GLASGOW

Circular Glasgow has demonstrated the city's sustained commitment to circular economy principles since it was established in 2017. From the outset, it focused on practical business engagement and built a strong network of organisations committed to growth through sustainable and circular approaches.

Circular Glasgow has delivered a range of pragmatic and strategic initiatives since it was launched, including regular cross-sector networking sessions, workshops and the creation of the Circular Glasgow Network, supporting over 1,500 opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.

Continued actions and ambitions give Circular Glasgow, and the city itself, the credibility to be seen by the business community as a trusted, experienced leader on climate during and since COP26.

## CIRCULAR MIXERS

In partnership with Harley Haddow and Material Source Studio, monthly Circular Mixers are purpose-led spaces for businesses to meet like-minded organisations and grow collaborative networks where they learn from living circular projects and explore how circularity supports competitiveness, innovation and growth.

Welcoming businesses such as BE-ST, Edrington, RBS and Sprigg to share their story, Circular Mixers provide a space for practical insights to demystify circular economy concepts to create collective momentum.



Pictured: Circular Mixer with Gordon Bain, MAST Architects

## ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

Circular Glasgow works closely with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF) as an Associate Member, reflecting the success of its large-scale business engagement. This recognition highlights Glasgow's potential to influence circular economy practice internationally. Circular Glasgow representatives have participated in EMF events, including in Stockholm, building global connections and contributing to shared learning.

Circular Glasgow contributes to EMF's peer learning sessions, workshops and convenings that focus on urban systems to translate circular economy theory into place-based delivery.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Circular Economy Leadership Programme, in partnership with Circle Economy and Scottish Enterprise (in 2025) and Zero Waste Scotland (in 2026), is aimed at senior leaders looking to build skills and an understanding of embedding circular principles into business strategies.

The programme was facilitated by Co-Director of the UKRI National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Hub and included a visit to one of Europe's leading circular cities.

The programme aims to strengthen leadership capability to deliver scaled implementation of circular strategies through commercial viability.



Pictured: Circular Economy Leadership Programme 2025: SWG3; Civic; Glasgow Building Preservation Trust; O'Herlihy & Co; Austin-Smith:Lord; DF Concerts & Events; Harley Haddow and Friends of Wilson

*"I came away with more confidence and a boldness to push through, to be the change we need, supported by a new team of friends who have become my biggest champions"*

**- DF Concerts & Events**

# CAMPAIGNS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUPPORTED BY CIRCULAR GLASGOW

Pictured: Jenny Graham, the fastest female to circle the earth backs Grounds for Recycling during the 2023 UCI World Cycling Championships.

Glasgow has further demonstrated its role as a driver of sustainable ambitions by raising awareness and supporting positive behavioural changes through public-facing engagement.

Campaigns delivered or supported by Circular Glasgow have created new opportunities to reduce waste and rethink resources in creative and practical ways, supporting businesses and communities to take visible action.

## **COP NESS MONSTER**

A large-scale public art installation unveiled in October 2020, 'Messy', a reimagining of the Loch Ness Monster, was showcased ahead of and during COP26. It brought climate conversations into the public realm through a creative and highly visible installation.

## **CHALLENGE THE GAP: WATERBEAR ORIGINAL AND PAUL BLACK**

Challenge the Gap is an investigative short film produced as a WaterBear Original (released 2022) and supported by GCoC. The film explores circularity in practice through visits to local businesses, including Dear Green Coffee Roasters and Scottish Leather Group, shifting from linear to circular models and shows why circularity matters for business, communities and the climate.



## **PLATE UP FOR GLASGOW**

By supporting 37 hospitality businesses to trial low waste choices on their menu and engage customers in climate positive behaviour, Plate Up for Glasgow highlighted food waste and encouraged businesses to address their climate impact. 95% of participating venues are keen to participate in a similar initiative.

## **GROUNDS FOR RECYCLING**

Grounds for Recycling was a campaign that tackled coffee waste delivered in the context of the 2023 UCI Cycling Championships. It highlighted that over 90% of coffee waste is not recycled, raising awareness through visible public engagement.

Working with over 60 businesses, the campaign saw a 98.5% reduction in CO2 emissions and 93% of participating businesses reported a positive impact on their food management.



Challenge the Gap Teaser Video

## **CAMPAIGN STATS**

**PLATE UP FOR GLASGOW REACHED: 868K**

**GROUNDS FOR RECYCLING REACHED: 29.3K**

Five years on from COP26, the progress captured in this report demonstrates what is possible when ambition is matched with collaboration, capability and sustained leadership, particularly at a city and city regional level. Glasgow's business community has shown that climate action is not a one-off commitment, but an ongoing journey one that strengthens resilience, drives innovation and creates long-term value for the city and businesses.

As the path to a circular, climate resilient and inclusive economy continues to evolve, GCoC remains committed to supporting businesses at every stage by convening partners and championing best practice. Together, through shared learning, continued investment and collective action, we will build on COP26's legacy and shape a more ambitious and sustainable future for Glasgow.

If you want to get involved, share ideas and innovations or simply want to connect with our work please contact us [here](#).