



## Case Study

Canada's First Regionally-Based  
Carbon Audit and Climate Action Plan

synergy



# Key Results

- As part of its commitment as a Glasgow Declaration signatory, 4VI set out to measure the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for all tourism activity in the Vancouver Island region, making it one of the first and largest tourism carbon audits in North America.
- The baseline Carbon Audit report identified that transportation - including international travel, domestic travel, vehicles, ferries, buses, and RVs – accounts for nearly half of total emissions. The food and beverage sector comes second at 32%, while tours, goods and services, and accommodation make up the remainder.
- An industry-leading Climate Action Plan was developed to tackle the sector's carbon emissions and help make the Vancouver Island Region's tourism sector a climate action and sustainable tourism leader.

“ As a result of this report, 4VI was able to better understand, identify, and prioritize key areas for climate action within Vancouver Island's tourism industry and our own organization. Informed by these new learnings, we have worked to develop additional tools, resources, and programs to support our stakeholders with climate resilience and sustainable transformation.

Kyla Egan  
Director, Sustainability, 4VI

# Background

Vancouver Island, with its diverse landscapes and plethora of outdoor recreational opportunities, attracts over ten million visitors annually. As the destination management organization responsible for the region, 4VI (formerly Tourism Vancouver Island) has made a commitment to promote sustainable tourism, aiming to maximize the benefits while minimizing the negative impacts associated with tourism in Vancouver Island and beyond.

This case study explores 4VI's efforts in addressing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and their commitment to making travel a force for good on Vancouver Island. Together with Synergy Enterprises, 4VI undertook the enormous task of compiling data to complete a baseline carbon footprint assessment for tourism on Vancouver Island. They have set realistic targets and plan to track their progress against these targets in their Climate Action Plan.

“ Our goal was twofold: first, to measure and set a baseline for carbon reduction in the Carbon Audit report; and second, to set realistic targets and track progress to mitigate negative impacts of tourism on the environment, as outlined in the Climate Action Plan for the entirety of Vancouver Island.

Kaitie Worobec  
Project Manager, Synergy Enterprises

# Decarbonizing Vancouver Island's Tourism Economy

To align themselves with global stakeholders working towards effective climate action in tourism, 4VI signed the Glasgow Declaration. This shared commitment unites organizations worldwide in their endeavor to transform the tourism industry for a greener future.

4VI approached Synergy Enterprises to assemble Vancouver Island's first regionally-based Carbon Audit and Climate Action Plan. Quantifying the greenhouse gas emissions generated by tourism in a region like Vancouver Island is a complex undertaking. Nevertheless, 4VI recognizes the importance of establishing key metrics to understand the impact and develop targeted reduction strategies. This allows them to fulfill their commitments outlined in the Glasgow Declaration and collaborate with stakeholders, while simultaneously supporting local businesses and enhancing the visitor experience.

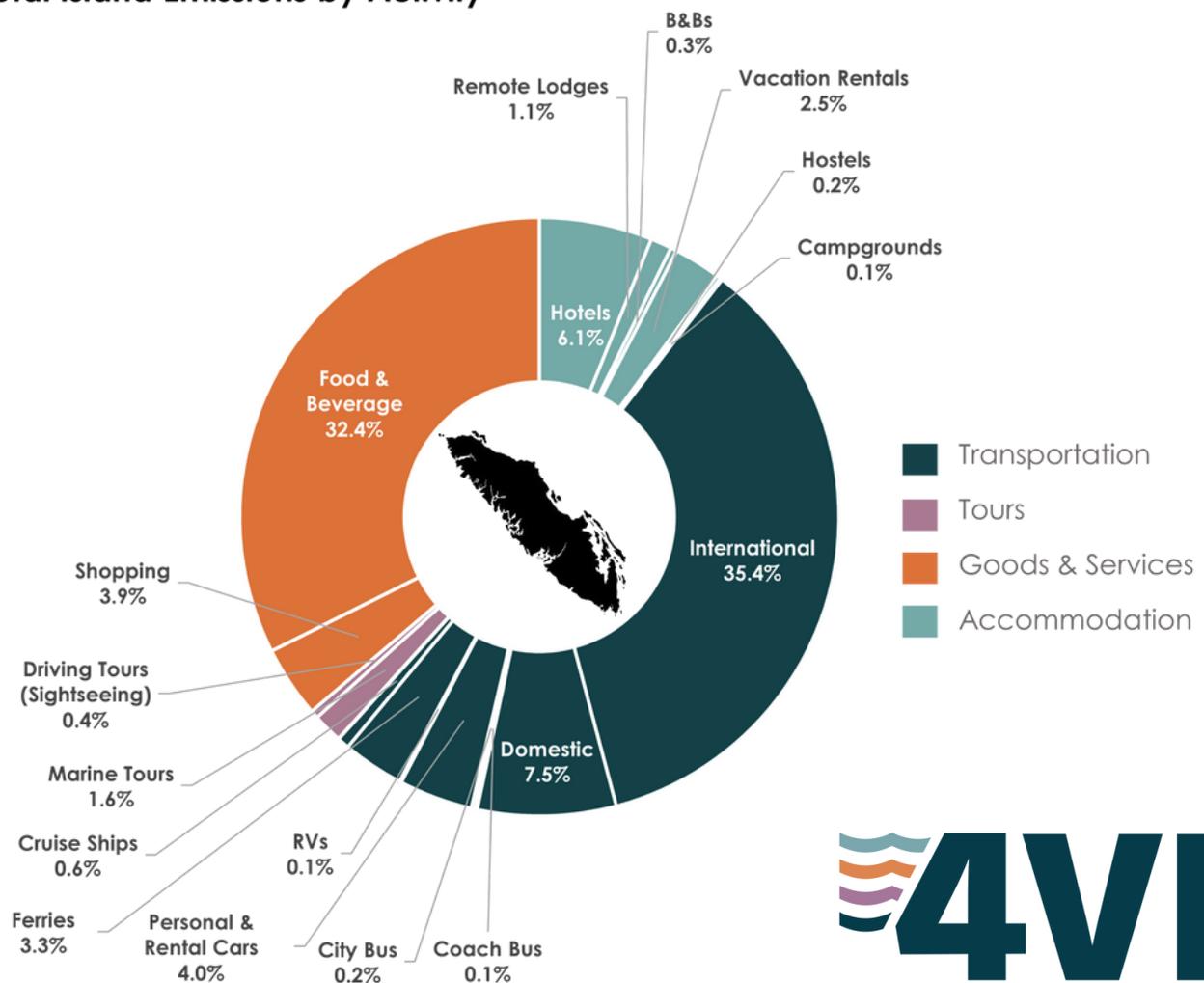
“ We know that sustainable tourism can be a force for good, and we are committed to creating positive impacts in the communities we serve. Our goal is to create a more sustainable future for tourism and this audit sets the necessary baseline to effect positive and lasting change.

Brian Cant  
Acting President & CEO, 4VI

## Baseline Year and Targets

The chosen baseline year for the inventory was 2019, as it represents a pre-pandemic period, offering a benchmark against which future performance can be measured. By utilizing this baseline, 4VI was able to set realistic targets and track progress in their mission to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with tourism activities on Vancouver Island. In 2019, tourism activities on Vancouver Island contributed to an estimated two million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, measured as tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e).

### Total Island Emissions by Activity



## 4VI's Climate Action Goals for a Sustainable Future

The Climate Action Plan outlines the climate action goals of 4VI for the period of 2023-2030. These goals are focused on five key areas and are in alignment with the Glasgow Declaration. The goals were developed through stakeholder engagement and analysis of the organization's greenhouse gas emissions. The goals are specific but also provide flexibility for collaborative projects that address the needs of the Vancouver Island region and its tourism stakeholders.

Each goal is followed by 4 - 7 key actions for 4VI to execute, all aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

<b>1</b>	<b>Measure</b>	Create a baseline Greenhouse Gas Inventory for tourism on Vancouver Island	Support 150 businesses and 10 CDMOs to measure their carbon footprint
<b>2</b>	<b>Decarbonize</b>	Cut tourism emissions in half over the next decade and reach net zero as soon as possible	Reduce emissions from 195 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e per visitor to < 100 kgCO <sub>2</sub> e by 2030 or earlier
<b>3</b>	<b>Regenerate</b>	Reach \$10 million in funding toward conservation initiatives	Support or initiate on regenerative tourism project each year
<b>4</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	Collaborate with CDMOs on measurement and capacity building for operators	Share best practice with global Glasgow Declaration signatories
<b>5</b>	<b>Finance</b>	Support \$2 million in funding applications by 2025	Support at least one joint funding application every year

# Nurturing a Sustainable Tourism Future

The findings of the Carbon Audit on Vancouver Island's tourism industry serve as a call to action for stakeholders, policymakers, and visitors alike. While the Island's allure continues to captivate millions, there is an urgent need to balance this growth with environmental responsibility. By aligning its climate action goals with the Glasgow Declaration, engaging stakeholders, and conducting a thorough greenhouse gas emissions inventory, 4VI has laid the groundwork for transformative change. Through collaborative projects and a range of decarbonization opportunities, 4VI aims to realize its goals while meeting the needs of the region and its tourism stakeholders. By taking decisive action today, 4VI is paving the way for a greener, more prosperous future on Vancouver Island.

“ We are thrilled to see that 4VI is taking steps to really understand where businesses on the Island stand in terms of carbon emissions and the environment. The only way to move forward is to understand where you've been, and we are really excited to work together with 4VI and other local businesses to see where we can go as a truly sustainable tourism destination.

Jill Doucette  
Founder, Synergy Enterprises



4VI (formerly Tourism Vancouver Island) is a non-profit social enterprise organization, created to ensure that travel is a force for good for Vancouver Island – forever. The ‘4’ in its name captures its four key social commitments — to the community, business, culture, and the environment. This focus extends to the work the organization does each day. Every opportunity for 4VI now and in the future will align with these social goals. The team’s mandate is to deliver innovative tourism advisory services, working directly with communities on Vancouver Island to both identify opportunities for enhanced tourism experiences and deliver on them. 4VI is the first destination management organization of its kind to not just commit to changing how tourism is managed, but to developing the corporate structure as a social enterprise that drives needed.

## Industry

Tourism

## Learn More

Synergy hopes to see more destination management organizations initiate undertakings like 4VI has done with their [Carbon Audit](#) and [Climate Action Plan](#). If you’re interested in taking on a similar project and want to collaborate with Synergy, please [get in touch](#).