

***Invitation to contribute:***

***Bar association and law society approaches to addressing the climate crisis – emerging practices and trends***

*The IBA Bar Issues Commission, with support from the IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit, welcomes contributions from bar association and law society representatives to its new report on the steps their organisations are taking to address the climate crisis.*

**Background**

Recent years have seen a growing international recognition of the important role that non-state actors can play in enhancing and directing climate action.<sup>1</sup> The role of professional service providers – including lawyers, law firms and barristers chambers – has recently become a particular international focus: this is exemplified through initiatives such as the Race to Zero ‘Draft Principles on Net Zero for Professional Service Providers’ (which sets out proposed principles for aligning the provision of services and advice by consultancy, legal and advertising providers with net zero/1.5C);<sup>2</sup> and the Net Zero Lawyers Alliance ‘Framework for Net Zero Alignment’ (which provides guidance on the steps that commercial law firms can take to align with net zero through their operations and client engagement).

Bar associations and law societies<sup>3</sup> provide critical sources of support and knowledge-sharing for their members, and therefore have an important role to play in supporting lawyers and law firms to address climate change. In recognition of this role, in 2020, the IBA published a ‘Climate Crisis Statement’ setting out specific recommendations for bar associations to consider, including supporting climate education for law students and qualified lawyers, and encouraging lawyers and firms to report on their efforts to combat climate change.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, in March 2024, the IBA launched the ‘Climate Registry’:<sup>5</sup> a platform for bar associations to share the steps they are taking to address climate change and facilitate the transition to net zero.

To date, the Climate Registry has received contributions from bar associations across Europe, Asia, Oceania and North and South America. These contributions illustrate that many bar associations are actively addressing climate change – both through their own operations, and their engagement with member lawyers and law firms – and that they are taking a range of different approaches to this work.

Against this background, the IBA Bar Issues Commission, with support from the Legal Policy & Research Unit, is preparing a knowledge-sharing report, titled ‘**Bar associations addressing the climate crisis: emerging practices and trends**’. This report – which will be the first of its kind – will draw on contributions to the Climate Registry and interviews with bar association leaders, to provide detailed case studies on how different bar associations across the world are addressing climate change; the challenges they face in this work; and how they view their roles and the roles of the legal profession more broadly in the context of the climate crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, the launch of the ‘Race to Zero’ coalition of non-state actors in 2020, available at: <https://racetozero.unfccc.int/system/race-to-zero/>; United Nations Environment Programme, ‘Strengthening transparency of non-state actors: How national experiences and new digital technologies can strengthen the Transparency efforts of non-state actors’ (2023) available at: <https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/43573>; <https://www.wemeanbusinesscoalition.org/blog/non-state-actors-play-a-critical-role-in-climate-policy-through-both-action-and-advocacy/>

<sup>2</sup> See UN Race to Zero, ‘Professional Services Providers: Consultation Draft Guiding Principles for Serviced Emissions Draft Working Paper’ (2024) available at: <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Professional-Service-Providers-draft-guidance-for-consultation.pdf>; and ‘Catalysing climate action: The role of professional service providers in realizing a net-zero future’ (September 2024) available at: <https://climatechampions.unfccc.int/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Catalysing-climate-action-the-role-of-professional-service-providers-in-realizing-a-net-zero-future.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The remainder of this note refers only to ‘bar associations’ for brevity.

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://www.ibanet.org/Climate-Crisis-Statement>

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.ibanet.org/IBA-Climate-Registry>

**An invitation to all bar associations and law societies to be involved**

All bar associations, law societies and similar bodies from across the world are invited to upload their climate initiatives to the IBA Climate Registry through the following link: <https://www.ibanet.org/IBA-Climate-Registry>.

If your bar association or law society is interested in contributing to the report, please contact Emily Morison, Project Officer, IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit for more information and to set up a conversation, at: [Emily.morison@int-bar.org](mailto:Emily.morison@int-bar.org)

Signed:



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