

Application

UFI AWARDS 2023 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Please send a short summary of maximum 4 pages in English to sdaward@ufi.org briefly describing your entry, including the following information:

Company(ies) name

JMIC Joint Meetings Industry Council

Title (theme) of the entry

Net Zero Carbon Events

Contact person(s) details.

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Quick background, nature and general objectives of the program

JMIC unites associations in the meetings, events and exhibition industry worldwide. As such, JMIC is on top of a global process on reducing the carbon footprint for the entire ecosystem of the events industry.

The Net Zero Carbon Events (NZCE) initiative is hosted by JMIC and was initiated in 2021 with a Pledge to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Today, after two years of activity only, close to 500 organisations from 55 countries support the initiative by committing publicly to it; by collaborating in the development of a roadmap and practical guidelines; by following these guidelines; and by funding the initiative. NZCE is endorsed by the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and presents each year's progress at the annual UN COP event.

Detailed description, including stakeholders involved, actions taken and results achieved

The main objectives of the initiative is to activate the entire ecosystem to move towards net zero in time; to get ahead of the process of regulation and legislation; to find a global system for measuring the carbon footprint of the events; and to become a role model for all industries whose events, exhibitions or congresses the MICE industry is organising.

The strategy employed was to activate a group of supporters, including influential players in the industry before getting officially started. By advancing fast in the beginning and by publishing the NZCE Pledge and the industry's commitment with the UNFCCC support at COP26 in Glasgow, the initiative gained a lot of attention and interest not only within the meetings and events industry. The date of COP 27 as the set goal for presenting a major step forward was a profound motivation and increased the engagement by the most diverse players, including associations, big and small companies from the entire ecosystem of the events sector.

NZCE offers these players the opportunity to make their sustainability efforts public and also to actively shape the way forward for the entire sector. The initiative is inclusive, it takes into account the different needs of a wide variety of stakeholders such as venue operators, organisers, exhibitors, service providers, media and others. The coordination work was delivered by several associations members of JMIC in the beginning and supported by an external specialised agency. It is now fully embedded at JMIC with some external support and most importantly with the active engagement of over 50 players in the different workstreams.

Several important milestones were achieved throughout the course of the project development:

- 2021: preparation work on the Pledge, publication and acquisition of signatories, initial contact with UNFCCC and official endorsement
- UN COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021: NZCE launched its Pledge endorsed by UNFCCC
- 2022: work on a Roadmap towards the achievement of net-zero with a growing group of interested parties; call for signatories and supporters; launch of a funding scheme; organisation of several open online webinars to inform and invite all players from the entire ecosystem
- UN COP27 in Sharm El Skeikh in November 2022: official release of the Roadmap towards net zero for the meetings and events industry; start of the 3rd phase
- 2023: 8 workstreams with over 50 participants are actively developing methodologies and guidelines. These are: Venue Energy; Smart Production and Waste Management; Food and Food Waste; Travel and Accommodation; Logistics; Measurement; Offsetting; Reporting. A task force is overseeing the activities of the workstreams, which reports to the NZCE Board who are responsible for the overall direction of the initiative.

A website was set up, which includes background information, supporters and funders, as well as all progress made, documents and next steps. PR is being generated continuously and the project is being promoted at all suitable occasions throughout the year, which includes social media, association meetings, congresses etc.

All progress and materials can be accessed here: <https://www.netzerocarbonevents.org/resources/>

The above mentioned vertical and horizontal workstreams were specifically created to find ways to decarbonise in these dedicated areas, involving the specialists from the respective industry players. A decisive element is the development of common methodologies for measuring the industry's direct,

indirect and supply chain greenhouse gas emissions as well as the establishment of common mechanisms for reporting progress and sharing best practices.

The main approach was the involvement of the entire meetings and events ecosystem by creating cooperation around sustainability, from the smallest to the biggest players around the globe – coordinated by a credible entity: an international not-for-profit association. The initiative addresses all industry stakeholders, regardless of their decarbonisation progress. This open approach helps companies finding methodologies whether they are in the beginning of their process or whether are advanced in this area.

NZCE's aim is not a business approach or offering a certification for profit. It works through voluntary involvement and funding and is profoundly inclusive.

The initiative is fully funded by the industry stakeholders by their continuous in-kind contributions to the content and by financial participation. There are 4 levels of funding available, each commitment is for four years: Green level (individual definition of financial contribution by each company); Silver level (EUR 8,000); Gold level (EUR 15,000); Platinum level (EUR 25,000); At present, 30 companies and associations support NZCE financially and the number is growing.

Conclusion: lessons learnt, next steps (if any).

NZCE managed to achieve active involvement of meetings and events industry players worldwide and on all levels, making them the actors and drivers to find the best solutions. The entire achievement so far was only possible by their extraordinary voluntary input, including a lot of C-level engagement and sharing of expertise. The experience that joint engagement can create such a momentum and quality results in a short time brought about enthusiasm and identification within the industry.

Getting the official recognition and active endorsement from the UNFCCC helped to keep the pace and gave NZCE participants the opportunity to publicly communicate the results.

The most notable next steps will be the successful development of the above described workstreams by introducing common methodologies in their respective areas.

The main progress report coming from these workstreams is scheduled to take place at the next COP28 event in Dubai. Furthermore, the first reporting of the Pledge signatories is expected to commence in the first half of 2023.