



NET ZERO CARBON EVENTS INITIATIVE

Frequently Asked Questions

October 2021

This document provides an overview of key elements and questions relating to the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative and Pledge.

Section 1: General Information

1.1 What is the Net Zero Carbon Events initiative?

The Net Zero Carbon Events initiative aims to bring together a wide range of industry stakeholders to:

- Jointly communicate our industry's commitment to tackling climate change and driving towards net zero by 2050
- Develop common methodologies for measuring the industry's direct, indirect and supply chain greenhouse gas emissions
- Construct an industry-wide Roadmap towards net zero by 2050, and emissions reductions by 2030 in line with the Paris Agreement and climate science, with support and guidance on key issues
- Foster collaboration with suppliers and customers to ensure alignment and common approaches
- Establish common mechanisms for reporting progress and sharing best practice.

1.2 Who can join the initiative?

The initiative is open to all stakeholders from the events industry (covering any kind of event): any company, association from the events industry, their clients, their suppliers, including the destinations and public authorities concerned, consultants, media, etc, and regardless of the extent to which they have established sustainability programmes in place.

All stakeholders that register with the initiative are considered as "Supporters" of the initiative. They will be invited to take part in the collaborative process to develop the Roadmap and they will all be informed of the project advancement/progress.

There are three categories of 'Supporter' who can participate:

- As an "**Operator**" if your company directly contributes to the production or delivery of an event – as an organiser, a venue, or a service provider
- As a "**Supporting Association**" for associations from the Events Industry representing companies who fall within category above and promote the initiative amongst their members
- As a "**Partner**" for all other stakeholders, including clients, suppliers and destinations.

Structures such as an event industry association or a media company that also organise their own events, may join under 2 categories.

Organizations may join the initiative at any time.

Participation is free of charge although there is an opportunity for organizations to support the funding of the programme. The initiative is indeed funded by the participating organisations and all supporters are invited to contribute resources when they register to the initiative. A specific recognition will soon be developed for those funding structures.

1.3 Who is organising the initiative?

The initiative arises from the work of an organizing task force initiated by leading industry stakeholders through global industry trade associations UFI, AIPC and ICCA joined by representatives of Emerald Expositions (US), Freeman (US), HKCEC (China), Informa (UK), Javits Center (US), MCI (Switzerland), Messe München (Germany), RX (UK) and Scottish Event Campus (UK). This initiative is hosted by JMIC and is supported by the UNFCCC, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, secretariat. Greenview is assisting the project from a technical perspective including managing the feedback processes relating to the Pledge and the Roadmap development, which is fully inclusive and open to all those who register with the initiative.

1.4 What is JMIC?

JMIC – The Joint Meetings Industry Council is the global umbrella organisation for the events industry. It represents the combined interests of major international Business Meetings Industry associations. JMIC has provided a forum for information exchange, strategy development and the recognition of excellence amongst industry groups for well over 50 years and is currently focussing on documenting and communicating the diverse values of the industry to broader community and governmental audiences in order to generate greater appreciation for its diverse roles in supporting global economic, academic, professional and social development.

1.5 What is UNFCCC?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 197 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing “dangerous” human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC. The UNFCCC Secretariat has been working with stakeholders in the events industry to support the establishment of this initiative and continues to be supportive.

1.6 What is Greenview?

Greenview is an international sustainability consultancy. For more information, please visit www.greenview.sg.

Section 2: The Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge

2.1 What is the Pledge?

The Pledge is a commitment which has been developed through a collaborative process involving stakeholders from across the events industry. It will be officially launched on 10th November 2021 at an industry event within COP26 in Glasgow. Signatories will commit to:

- Before the end of 2023, publish the organisation’s pathway to achieve net zero by 2050 at the latest, with an interim target in line with the Paris Agreement’s requirement to reduce global GHG emissions by 50% by 2030
- Collaborate with partners, suppliers and customers to drive change across the value chain
- Measure and track Scope 1,2 and 3 GHG emissions according to industry best practice
- Report on progress at least every two years.

It should be noted that the different elements of the Pledge may be undertaken in an iterative process rather than in the order set out, depending on the status of activity and specific approach of each company.

2.2 Who can sign the Pledge?

Operators and **Supporting Associations** will be able to sign the Pledge. Companies whose core business is not events, but which organise events to support their activities, will be invited to sign this pledge for that part of their business only: “Operator for the event department” for instance.

2.3 Do the commitments made in the Pledge relate to all company activities or just events?

For companies whose core business is events, such as organisers, venues and service providers, the commitments made in the Pledge relate to the company’s entire operations. It is the expectation that the company strives to achieve net zero by 2050 across operations. For companies whose core business is not events, but which organise or attend events to support their business activities, the commitments in the Pledge would relate only to the events organised, not to the company’s whole operations.

2.4 Why does the Pledge contain commitments to a process rather than specific targets?

The aim of this Pledge is to engage participants from across the events industry, one which is complex, diverse and international. Upon signing the Pledge, organisations will commit to net-zero by 2050 and an ambition to make significant progress by 2030 – in line with globally accepted minimum targets. They will also commit to undertaking a process to set their own pathway towards achieving these goals and collaborating with others in order to determine the most appropriate Roadmap for the industry as a whole. In establishing the Roadmap, which will be published in late 2022, specific actions, such as moving to renewables, and appropriate targets will be discussed and agreed.

2.5 What will happen after the Pledge is launched?

Once the Pledge is launched in November 2021, we will embark on a yearlong program to develop a Roadmap for Net Zero Events. This will be a consultative process involving all supporters who have signed up via the website. The Roadmap will be launched in November 2022. We will be working to develop a roadmap which will provide guidance on the key aspects but will not be providing individual assistance to companies to deliver the pledge. Workgroups on key issues will be put together once the pledge is launched and all Supporters will be invited.

2.6 What will the Roadmap contain?

The Roadmap will set out the various definitions, approaches and milestones for companies in the events industry to achieve net zero. It will not be prescriptive but will provide a framework which can be adapted depending on how far advanced the company is in its carbon reduction programmes or the geography in which it operates. The topics to be covered in the Roadmap include:

- **Mapping the carbon footprint of an event**, including identification of key emissions sources, who is responsible for them, significance and availability of data
- **Calculating the carbon footprint of an event**, including agreed metrics and methodological approaches, available tools, and links to existing methodologies in use by related sectors (eg hotels, aviation)
- **Opportunities and goals for carbon reduction activities**, including renewables, waste reduction, green transport etc, identification of collaborative opportunities and appropriate goals and targets
- **Offsetting of residual emissions**, following a hierarchy of best practice and establishment of an industry-agreed protocol to approach scope 3 offsetting
- **Net zero claims and interim milestones**, including how to claim 'net zero' status for a company or event, alignment to sectoral carbon budgets, and external audit and verification considerations
- **External collaboration opportunities**, to drive reductions through the supply chain.

The Roadmap will consider and provide alignment guidance on other net zero / carbon reduction frameworks such as the GHG Protocol, Science Based Targets Initiative, Race to Zero, Climate Neutral Now, Carbon Neutral Protocol and relevant national level frameworks.

Section 3: Key Definitions

3.1 What is Net Zero?

Net zero refers to a balance between man-made greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and their removal from the atmosphere. To achieve this balance, GHG emissions must be reduced and the non-avoided ones must be compensated or "neutralized" through the use of long-term carbon capture solutions. It is different from 'carbon neutral'. For carbon neutrality, the non-avoided emissions are compensated through the use of traditional offsets (carbon credits coming from projects that develop renewable energies, efficient transport etc.). Carbon neutrality can be an intermediate step towards net zero.

3.2 What is the Paris Agreement?

The Paris Agreement is an international treaty on climate change adopted in 2015 at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris. The Agreement set a long-term temperature goal to keep the rise in mean global temperature to well below 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels, and preferably limit the increase to 1.5°C (2.7°F). In order to achieve this there is a recognition that global carbon emissions need to be reduced by 50% by 2030 from a 2018 baseline and for net zero emissions to be achieved by the second half of the century. NB. As indicated later in this document, this 2018 baseline applies to the overall Paris agreement, not necessarily to specific industry initiatives such as this one for the event sector.

3.3 What are Race to Zero and Climate Neutral Now and how do they relate to this initiative?

Race To Zero is a global campaign led by the High-Level Climate Champions for Climate Action, Nigel Topping and Gonzalo Muñoz, to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. Given the COP26 deadline for the pledge, this Race to Zero "next step" is not part of the current initiative, but there will be an opportunity to apply for it to be officially recognised by Race to Zero in due course. Race to Zero also includes a track for SMEs which is being organised by the UK Government - <https://businessclimatehub.org/uk/> and which events companies may engage with directly.

Climate Neutral Now is an initiative of the UNFCCC secretariat which encourages companies and organization to estimate their carbon footprint and reduce it, and optionally to compensate it with credible carbon credits, and offers recognition for these actions. Requirements for Climate Neutral Now align with Race to Zero and best practice on climate action. Climate Neutral Now is a separate initiative to this collaboration, but there may be options for synergies.

3.4 What are Science Based Targets and how do they relate to this initiative?

The Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) is an initiative is part of the World Resources Institute's Center for Sustainable Business and a collaboration of WRI, CDP, WWF and the UN Global Compact. SBTi defines and promotes best practices in emissions reductions and net zero targets in line with climate science, namely those which what the latest climate science deems necessary to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement – limiting global

warming to well-below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C. SBTi provides technical assistance and resources to companies who set science-based targets and provides those companies with independent assessment and validation of targets. This initiative encourages companies to set targets which meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, but does not require them to formally adhere to the SBTi, nor seek accredited Science Based Targets.

3.5 What is the difference between GHG emissions and carbon emissions?

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases – commonly abbreviated to GHG. They include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases. Carbon emissions refers only to carbon dioxide emissions. Often the two terms are used interchangeably, however GHG represents the more accurate term. While this initiative is named “Net Zero Carbon Events”, the detailed content of the pledge explicitly refers to GHG.

Section 4: Context behind specific Pledge commitments

4.1 Why have 2050 and 2030 been chosen as target years?

For the initial purposes of this initiative, the globally established goals of achieving net-zero by 2050 and GHG emissions reductions in line with the Paris Agreement’s requirement to achieve net zero by 2050 and the IPCC report indicating the need to halve emissions by 2030, set the minimum benchmark for ambition.

4.2 Why is a system-wide approach being advocated for?

While the Pledge will be signed by individual companies who will have responsibility for setting their own pathways to net zero, the aim of this initiative is to provide a mechanism for bringing together the multiple stakeholders involved in the delivery of events to ensure that actions taken across the board can be linked, interdependencies identified, and ultimately system-wide changes be made to reduce carbon emissions.

4.3 What is the expectation for collaboration within the industry?

A system-wide approach will be key to achieving net zero across the events industry. This initiative is designed to foster such an approach and will bring stakeholders together around key issues where there is significant carbon impact to be addressed in order to find common solutions – this may include, for example stand design and construction, carpets or catering.

4.4 What is the expectation for collaboration with other industries?

Several industry sectors closely linked to events have their own net zero initiatives and plans. For example, a net zero methodology for hotels is currently under development and there is much work going on in the aviation sector to set pathways towards net zero. It is therefore vital that the events sector is plugged into this work to make sure that any methodological approaches are aligned, and that progress can be tracked back to events. In addition, IATA has recently announced a Net-Zero pathway for the aviation industry. The announced strategy is to abate as much CO₂ as possible from in-sector solutions such as sustainable aviation fuels, new aircraft technology, more efficient operations and infrastructure, and the development of new zero-emissions energy sources such as electric and hydrogen power. Any emissions that cannot be eliminated at source will be eliminated through out-of-sector options such as carbon capture and storage and credible offsetting schemes.

4.5 What are the baselines which should be applied?

The Pledge refers to the ultimate goal of net zero by 2050. However, in order to ensure that sufficient action is taken in the short term, companies must also commit to significant reductions by 2030, as set out in the Paris Agreement. While the Paris Agreement states that there should be a reduction in global emissions of 50% from a 2018 baseline, there is flexibility for companies and sectors to set their own. The Roadmap will therefore provide guidance for how companies can set appropriate baselines, depending on available data and what actions have already been taken. As a general rule, the baseline will be the first year when robust data is available.

4.6 How will companies be expected to report progress?

Transparency is key when it comes to showing actions and progress towards net zero and companies should get into the cadence of regular disclosures. While reporting on an annual basis is standard, the Pledge requires reporting every 2 years as a minimum, considering that in some cases progress will be more adequately measured and analysed over more than a year. However, those who can, should endeavour report on an annual basis. In addition, in order for the events industry to advocate strongly for its progress, regular updates based on data will need to be communicated. The Roadmap will provide guidance on different reporting frameworks which can be used but ultimately a flexible approach will be encouraged.

4.7 How will you address the challenges around measuring carbon emissions in the industry?

Initially, the initiative will provide examples and case studies showing different approaches to measurement, in order to support companies embark on the journey. After that, the common metrics and measurement methodologies which are already in existence will be identified and gaps filled as necessary. Local protocols will be considered throughout the process. It should be noted that in the first instance data collection will need to be undertaken at company level and this will facilitate the subsequent reporting at event level.

4.8 Will Scope 3 emissions need to be considered?

The standard for calculating a company's carbon footprint is set out by the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol. Emissions are separated into Scope 1 (direct emissions resulting from company operations), Scope 2 (purchased energy) and Scope 3 (upstream and downstream supply chain emissions). Reporting Scopes 1 and 2 is a requirement of the GHG protocol, whereas Scope 3 is optional.

However, in order to achieve net zero, Scope 3 emissions need to be considered. There are concerns within the events industry as to how Scope 3 will be defined and, in particular, whether and how transport for attendees and freight will be included. This transport element can account for more than 80% of the emissions for some international events but in reality the event organisers, venues and service providers have little ability to influence or reduce these emissions. Nevertheless, in establishing a robust roadmap to net zero for the events industry, transport to an event will need to be included within Scope 3, although this may vary from company to company depending on the nature of their business.

It is also important to remember that while there is a requirement to calculate and report on Scope 3 emissions, this does not mean that a company is responsible for reducing them, but for advocating with suppliers for reductions and actively driving decarbonization of their supply chain through setting clear requirements on their suppliers. It is recognized that addressing all emissions in Scope 3 from the outset may not be feasible and so companies may stage their approach accordingly. The Roadmap will also likely set out appropriate staging for the events industry as a whole when it comes to addressing Scope 3 emissions, including for offsetting when this will be necessary (see below). Also, while recognizing that the focus needs to be on reducing emissions *produced*, the industry could develop information on the so-called 'reduced travel' or 'flight consolidator' element, whereby a participant to an event usually ends up travelling less (to meet other participants) than would be needed without the event.

4.9 How will the reduction and offsetting of Scope 3 emissions be streamlined?

Within the events industry, as with all industry sectors, there is a significant overlap in Scope 3 emissions between different operators and the wider supply chain. While measurement enables all involved to make their best efforts to reduce the footprint of an event, residual emissions will initially need to be offset for the event to be carbon neutral. This initiative offers the opportunity for the events industry to determine a protocol through which emissions already offset by other entities can be counted, with only the remaining emissions to be offset by the events operators. Others who may offset event-related emissions include the attendee (or the company they represent), the transport provider (airline operator/owner, railway etc) or the hospitality provider (hotel owner, CVB etc). The remaining offsets will then be addressed by the events sector, with responsibilities to be defined as part of the Roadmap process.

4.10 Can carbon offsetting be considered?

Offsetting should always be a last resort. There is a lot of discussion around the benefits and weaknesses of carbon offsetting. Organisations that rely on offsetting (rather than emissions reductions) in order to achieve net zero are open to accusations of greenwashing. Because the carbon offset market is complicated and unregulated, it is important to ensure that offsets meet certain criteria, including the idea of 'additionality,' which means they represent an emission reduction or carbon removal that would not have taken place but for the offsetting activity. The Roadmap will develop guidance on what constitutes 'good' carbon offsets and how to ensure that they are used correctly. It will also set out a hierarchy of 'offsetting' which can be applied by companies or events depending on status and geography, with efforts made to transition offsets towards those which result in carbon removal and capture.