

How can National Convention Bureaux Leverage Their Influence for Sustainability?

A collaborative action plan by the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe



THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF THE
NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAUX OF EUROPE

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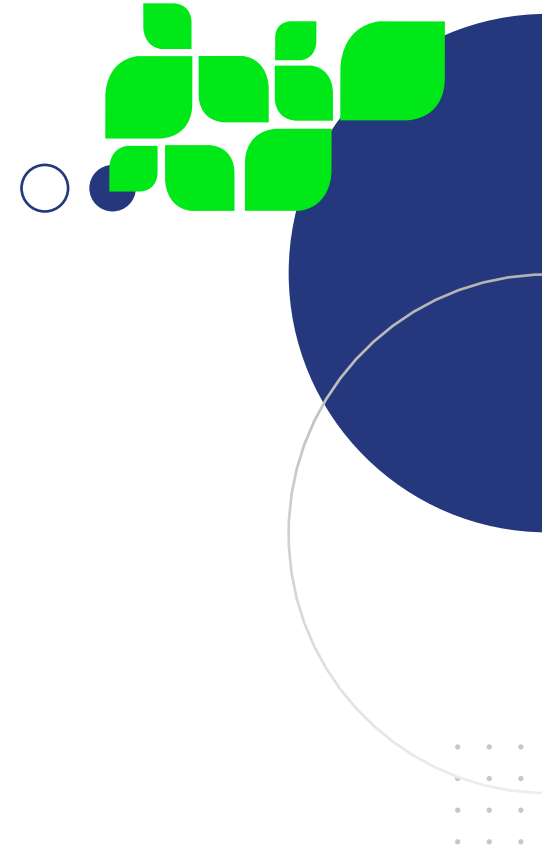
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01 Introduction

The future of events is sustainable and regenerative!

The climate crisis is the most urgent challenge of our time. It threatens the well-being of people and the planet, and requires unprecedented collective action from all sectors of society. There is no denying that we need transformative change - and business events must play an important role. As the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe, a group of 29 national member organisations, we are committed to contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, the ambitious roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable. We believe that Europe can and should lead the way in the transition to a low-carbon, regenerative and socially just economy.

We also recognise that in realising this ambitious goal, business events can be an immense force for good. From scientific conferences to political summits and trade fairs - meetings and gatherings of all types are essential tools for human collaboration and communication. The business events industry therefore has a unique opportunity and responsibility to contribute to the global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

On the flipside, we know that business events have significant environmental and social impacts that need to be addressed and reduced. We feel the responsibility to act now and change the conversation about sustainable events: **Taking action now means being on the side of innovation and new successful business models – and failing to act risks being left behind by the changing expectations and demands of customers, partners, and stakeholders.** Business events have been focusing on ecological sustainability for many years, but from now on we need to expand our understanding of sustainability, intensify our efforts, and align them with the best available science, existing international goals and frameworks as well as leading industry movements such as the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative.

Two years ago, in the midst of the pandemic, the Strategic Alliance published its first joint whitepaper, describing a future vision for the national convention bureau in the year 2030, and its future roles and purposes. Applying the learnings of Covid-19, some of our key questions were: How can national convention bureaux (NCVB) best prepare for future crises and disruptions? How can we anticipate threats and opportunities and

set ourselves up to create maximum value for our partners and stakeholders? How can we become more connected across borders, more collaborative across sectors, more resilient together?

This new whitepaper is built on many hours of insightful conversations around these questions, and it reflects the new roles and purposes we have jointly defined for ourselves. It is a result of our continued, trust-based collaboration, motivated by our shared vision for a sustainable future. It showcases how, in unison, the European NCVB are taking joint action towards a shift to sustainable business events and the overall transition for sustainability. We want to share our good practices, plans and ideas with our peers, partners and stakeholders in the business events industry - not just in Europe, but around the globe. Intended as a conversation starter, we do hope that this whitepaper will inspire and encourage more dialogue and cooperation on this vital topic.

We invite you to join us in this journey. Let's get in touch, exchange experiences and learn together how we can make the business events landscape more sustainable, equitable and successful. Together, we can make a difference for ourselves, our communities and our planet.

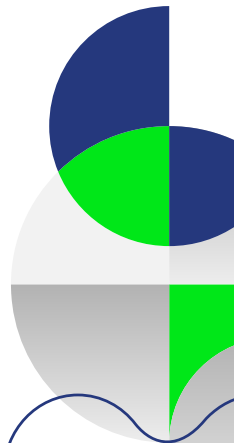
Last but not least, we would like to thank all alliance members and their representatives, as well as our partners for their continued collaboration and support.



Eric Bakermans, Co-Chair



Matthias Schultze, Co-Chair





02 Definition

What do we mean by Sustainable Development – and what comes after?

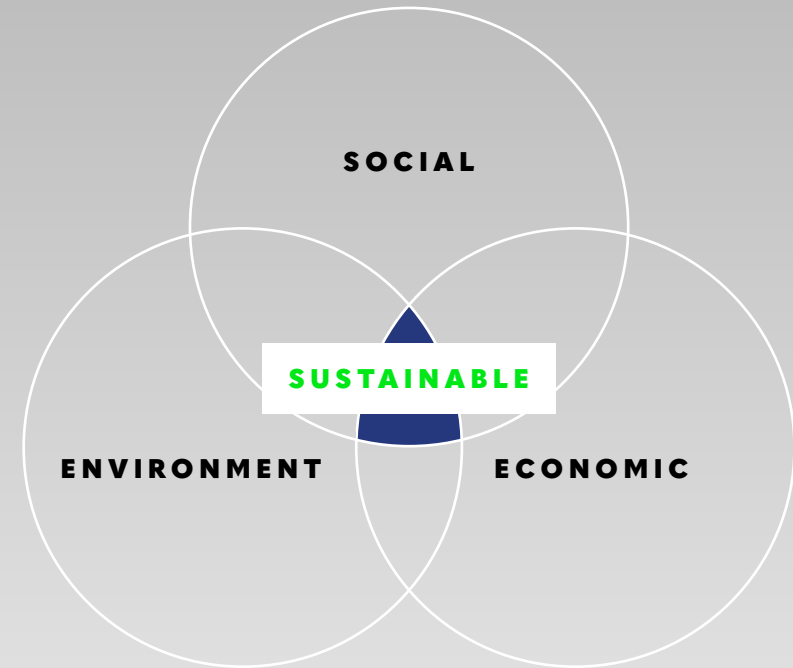
When we speak of Sustainable Development, we refer to an approach of doing business that aims to balance the economic, social and environmental aspects of human activity in order to “meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. The term – and the quote above – were popularised by the Brundtland report, published way back in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development. The United Nations and the European Union have adopted this definition and – up to this day – incorporate the principles of sustainable development into their policies and strategies.

As a Strategic Alliance and as individual organisations, we firmly commit to the idea of balanced, sustainable development. We are aware of the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions, avoid waste and negative impacts to the biosphere - but our ambition should not be limited to that.

Moving into the future, we are convinced that the business events landscape – in accordance with wider industry – needs to adopt a regenerative approach. This means implementing a strategy that not only reduces harm, but also enhances the health and vitality of all natural and social systems. **We strive to help shape a landscape of regenerative business events, with the purpose to not only minimise our footprint on the planet and society, but to maximise our handprint*, that is, our positive contribution to the economy and the world around it** – achieving a net positive impact as a result.

**for more details, read “[Introducing Handprints: A Net-Positive Approach to Sustainability](#)”*

by Gregory A. Norris, Director, Sustainability and Health Initiative for NetPositive Enterprise (SHINE), Massachusetts Institute of Technology





03 Our frameworks

The European Green Deal, Net Zero Carbon Events and what they mean for the future of business events.

One of the main principles of the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureau of Europe is to work within existing policy frameworks, maximise alignment with existing industry initiatives and seek to add value instead of duplicating efforts.

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

It will therefore not come as a surprise that the most important backdrop to our joint action plan for sustainability is the European Green Deal, the comprehensive and ambitious plan by the European Commission to make the EU the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. It covers various sectors and policies, such as energy, transport, industry, agriculture, trade and finance, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to the levels of 1990 ("Fit for 55"). The European Green Deal also seeks to foster green innovation, competitiveness and social justice, ensuring that no person and no region is left behind in the transition.

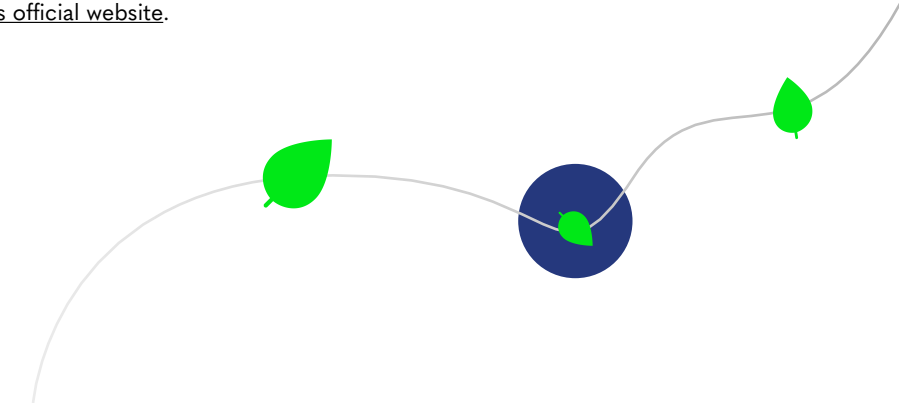
The business events industry, which includes our entire landscape of professional meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions, is directly affected by the European Green Deal, as it has a significant environmental impact due to its high consumption of resources and generation of waste and emissions. In order to become more sustainable – and stay competitive in the long term – our industry will need to adapt to the new regulatory frameworks and market conditions created by the European Green Deal, as well as to the increasing demand for sustainability from customers and stakeholders.

It is still difficult to predict the challenges and opportunities these profound changes will bring in areas like energy, waste and circular economy, travel and logistics – but **it is safe to assume that the European Green Deal will be a gamechanger, rewriting the rules of what defines a successful business model.** As central players in the European business events industry, we want to embrace and promote the European Green Deal as a catalyst for innovation, competitiveness and social responsibility – the best way for our industry to become truly future-proof.

To stimulate and support this shift, the European Union has established a number of instruments, such as the European Innovation Council, the Horizon Europe programme, the InvestEU fund and the European Green Deal Investment Plan. These offer funding opportunities for research and development projects, start-ups and SMEs that contribute to the green transition. Our sector can benefit from these initiatives by playing out its key strengths - fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among different actors and sectors involved in green innovation, showcasing best practices and solutions for sustainability challenges, and facilitating networking and partnerships among innovators, science, start-ups and investors.

Lastly, but most importantly, the European Union ensures that the green transition is fair and inclusive for all citizens and regions through the Just Transition Mechanism, which provides financial and technical support for those most affected by the shift to a low-carbon economy. As an evolving business events industry, based on values like purpose and legacy, we can support positive change and promote social justice and inclusion by helping our stakeholders engage with diverse and underrepresented groups in the planning and delivery of events of all kinds. Whether it is about involving local stakeholders in co-creating event content and experiences, providing accessibility and affordability options for participants with different needs and backgrounds, or supporting charities and initiatives that address social or environmental issues – ecological and social sustainability must go hand in hand.

For more details on the European Green Deal, please visit the [European Commission's official website](#).



NET ZERO CARBON EVENTS

Launched in November 2021, during the United Nations Climate Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow, the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative is a global effort to work together across the entire events industry to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement - net zero by 2050, and a 50% emissions reduction by 2030.

Besides providing a widely visible platform to communicate our industry's commitment to tackle climate change, the initiative is developing common methodologies for measuring the industry's direct, indirect and supply chain greenhouse gas emissions, creating a joint roadmap towards net zero by 2050 and providing tools and support for implementation and reporting.

The Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative is coordinated by the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) and currently consists of more than 350 signatories and more than 150 supporting partners.

In order to support the goals of Net Zero Carbon Events, and to create further alignment on taking the right steps towards sustainability, the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe and its individual member organisations are joining the initiative as supporting partners. This not only means that Alliance partners help raise further awareness for the initiative, but are encouraged to actively contribute to developing roadmaps, areas of action and solutions, together with their national stakeholders.

For further information on the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative, please visit: netzerocarbonevents.org or contact: info@netzerocarbonevents.org



The sustainability transition is business-critical, and we need bold leadership and action in all parts of the business events world. The NCVBs have a crucial role since this challenge requires collaboration, sharing, challenging each other, and setting the norm.

Annika Hallman, The Swedish Network of Convention Bureaus/
Gothenburg Convention Bureau





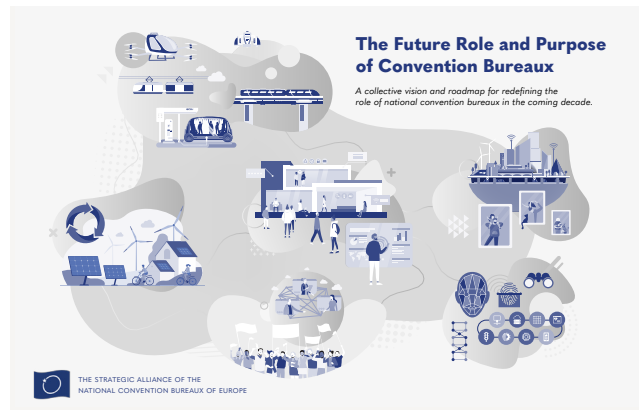
04 Our roles

How national convention bureaux can support sustainable change.

If there was one single takeaway message from the Strategic Alliance's 2021 positioning paper on "The Future Role and Purpose of Convention Bureaux", it was the insight that the roles and self-image of NCVB are currently in transition.

"Looking into the future, there are three main aspects that define how NCVB can find their ideal form for creating value: A truly global outlook, big-picture perspectives on emerging trends in the business events landscape at large, and the ultimate goal of providing leadership and guidance for the successful and sustainable development of their respective home markets and all stakeholders. By combining all three aspects, NCVB will put themselves in a key position to shape the transition of the MICE platform to the next generation. Based on these important factors and goals, the NCVB of the future can be described in four elementary roles, i.e. strategist, facilitator, expert and communicator."

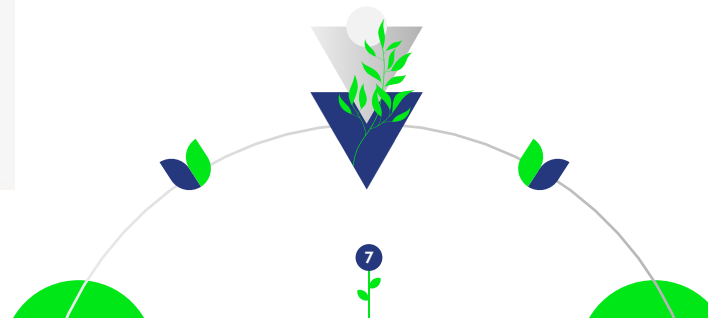
For more details about the roles, purposes, and the convention bureau of the future, download the 2021 whitepaper on our website convention-europe.com or click on the cover to download the whitepaper directly:



What does this mean in the context of urgent climate action? – **We believe that in order to drive the sustainable transition in the business events industry, NCVB need to leverage all aspects of their new roles.** By being up-to-date with the latest industry trends and developments and providing leadership (Strategist), building bridges and fostering closer collaboration among their traditional and new stakeholders (Facilitator), by acting as hubs for competency and resources (Expert) and by distributing relevant information and news throughout their markets (Communicator) – NCVB will be able to coordinate and align their stakeholders during the upcoming transition, while making sure that all voices are heard and represented.

An even larger threat than the Covid-19 pandemic we are just slowly emerging from, the ongoing climate crisis challenges NCVB to quickly adapt to their new roles, to learn fast and become active. In successfully tackling these challenges, they can provide unique value to their stakeholders, strengthen their competencies and USPs, and secure their public support and legitimacy for the future. Ultimately, NCVB need to be able to demonstrate to their governments and other public and private stakeholders that business events are a force for good, and an essential puzzle piece in creating sustainable societies and industries.

In all of this, the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe provides a platform for co-learning and mutual support, for exchanging good practice and experiences. To form the core of these activities, the Alliance members met in a series of online and in-presence workshops, and agreed on a set of joint positions – as outlined on the following pages.





05 Where we stand

Our mission and commitment as a European Alliance.



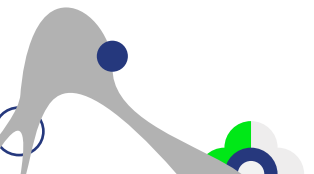
OUR MISSION

We will relentlessly lead the transformation towards a responsible business events sector in Europe, driving the ecosystem as a positive force for sustainable, social and economic progress.



OUR COMMITMENT

As an alliance of 29 European national convention bureaux, we recognize our responsibility to lead the European business events industry – by example and by leveraging our influence – in the transition towards sustainability. This includes the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion as well as legacy through business events that have a net-positive impact on social, ecological and economic scales. From our unique positions between markets and governments, private and public stakeholders, we can use our holistic view of the industry to mediate and accelerate the transition, pointing out difficulties and naming the problems. In doing so, we can create the right conditions for new sustainable business models and help lay the foundations for a future-proof business events ecosystem.





06 Areas of action

These are the areas in which we will become active.

Based on the four roles and purposes outlined above (see **04 Our roles**) we have defined four pillars and related areas of action: **EXPERTISE & RESOURCES, ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION, STRATEGY & STANDARDS, FACILITATION & INNOVATION.** Resulting from the exchanges among the Alliance members during a workshop in Prague in January 2023 and a series of online meetings, the areas of action describe potential avenues for the Alliance's joint initiatives in the context of sustainability. Besides that, they also provide a framework and inspiration for future strategic initiatives by the European member organisations and other, non-European national convention bureaux.

EXPERTISE & RESOURCES

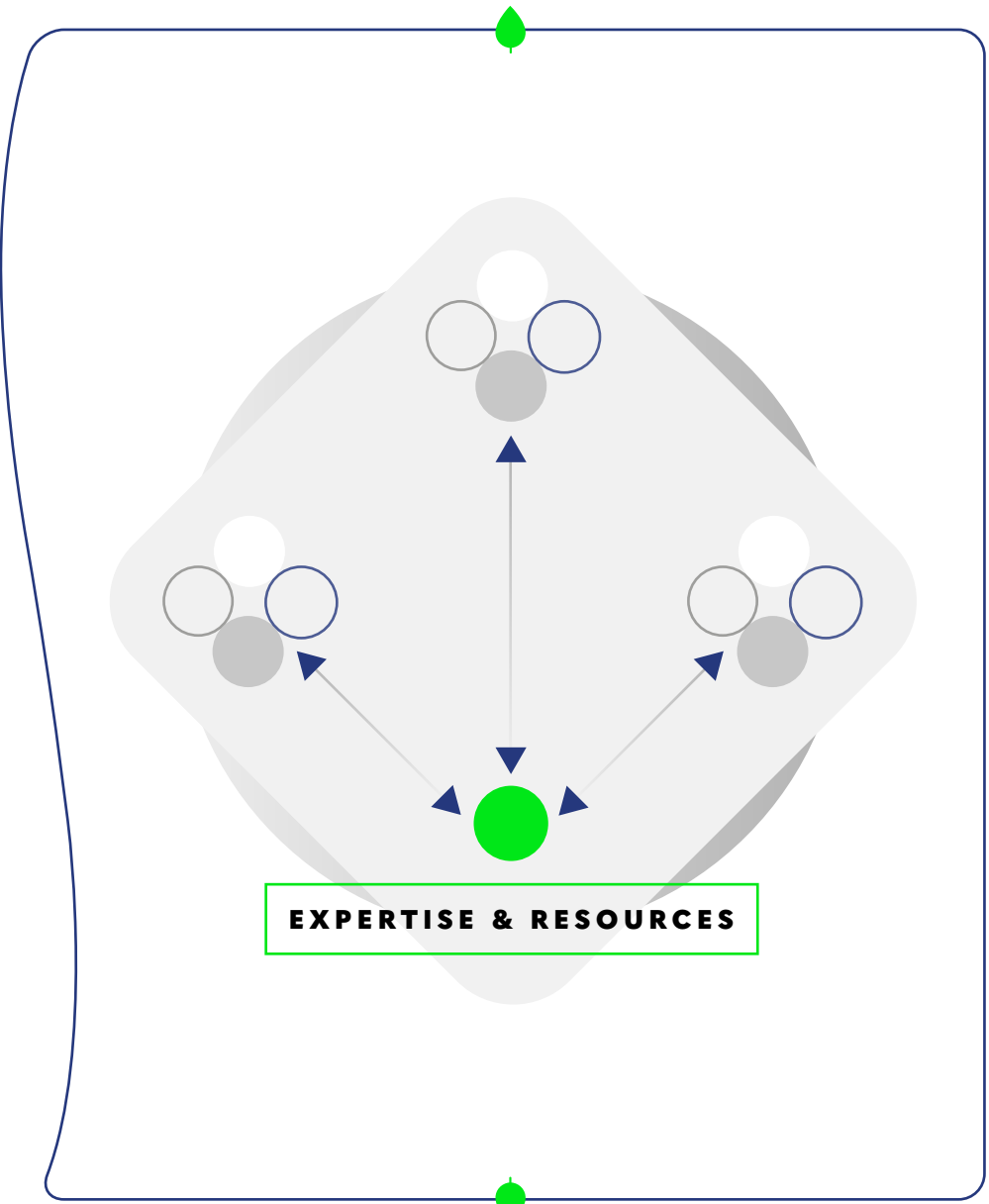
Structuring, highlighting and making available expertise, information and know-how that can help stakeholders successfully navigate the transition to sustainability, for example ...

- by connecting with climate, green tech and sustainability experts, fostering knowledge transfer and providing latest information on developments, trends and tools to the business events community
- by creating a curated, continuously growing pool of know-how and resources on sustainability for business events
- by compiling a catalogue of tangible good practice cases from NCVB from all over the world for open use, co-learning and experience exchange



We must harness transformative strategies, transcending boundaries to foster innovation, environmental stewardship, and socioeconomic progress.

Dušan Borovčanin, Serbia Convention Bureau



ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

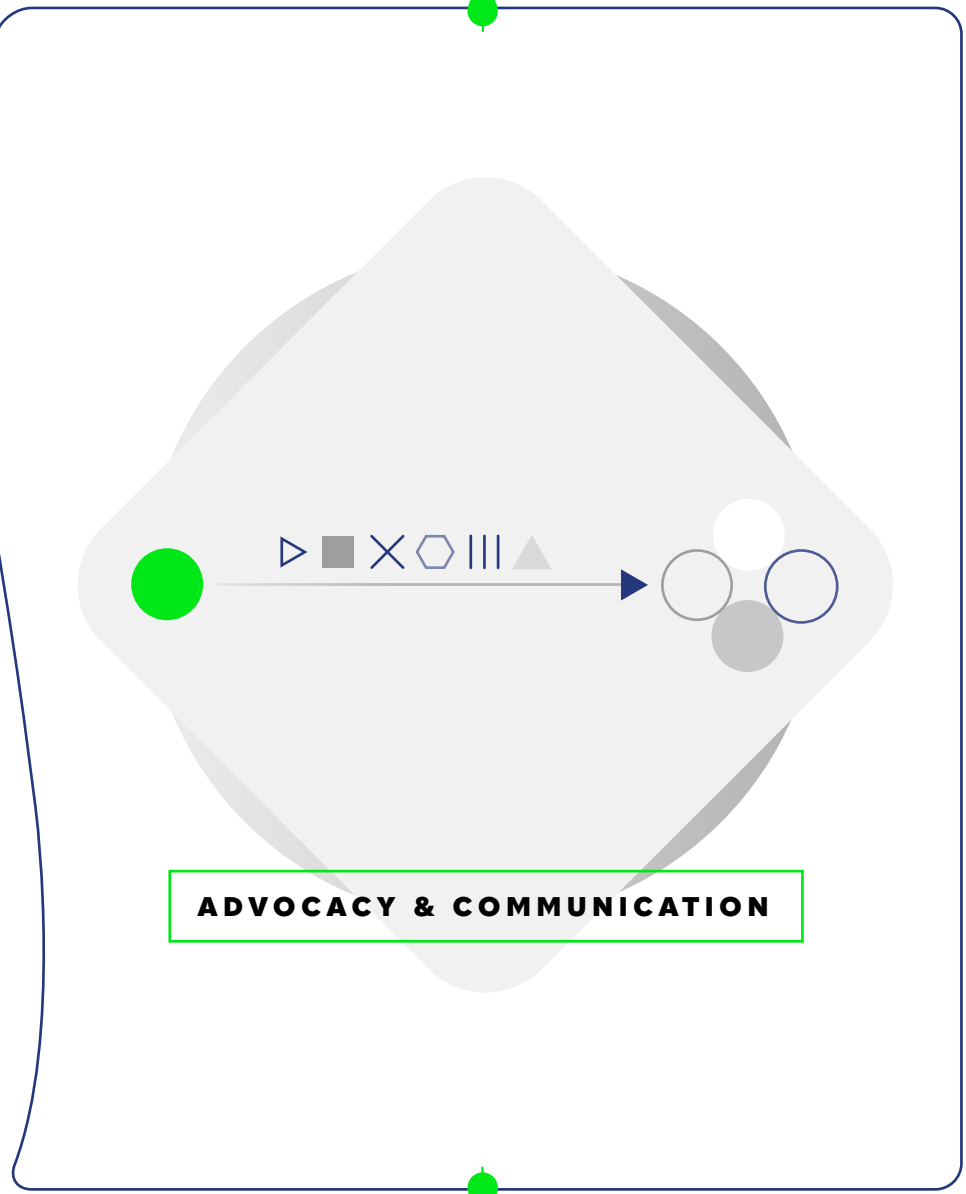
Showing steady presence and commitment for the cause of sustainability while being an independent and trusted voice in the conversation between all stakeholders, for example ...

- by becoming more visible and outspoken advocates for the objectives of the European Green Deal and initiatives like Net Zero Carbon Events towards destinations, clients, policymakers and other groups
- by supporting the training and upskilling of business events professionals to support the new skill requirements and help in the build-up of further capacities to manage the transition
- to promote and highlight inspiring sustainability success stories and best practices from the community, while also being open and transparent in communicating roadblocks, failures and dead-ends in the process



Transformation is at the heart of the sustainable development of the events industry. By transformation, we mean aiming for a balance between economic, social and environmental interests through more competitive, sustainable, qualitative, innovative and inclusive models.

Sandie Meyniel, ATOUT FRANCE



STRATEGY & STANDARDS

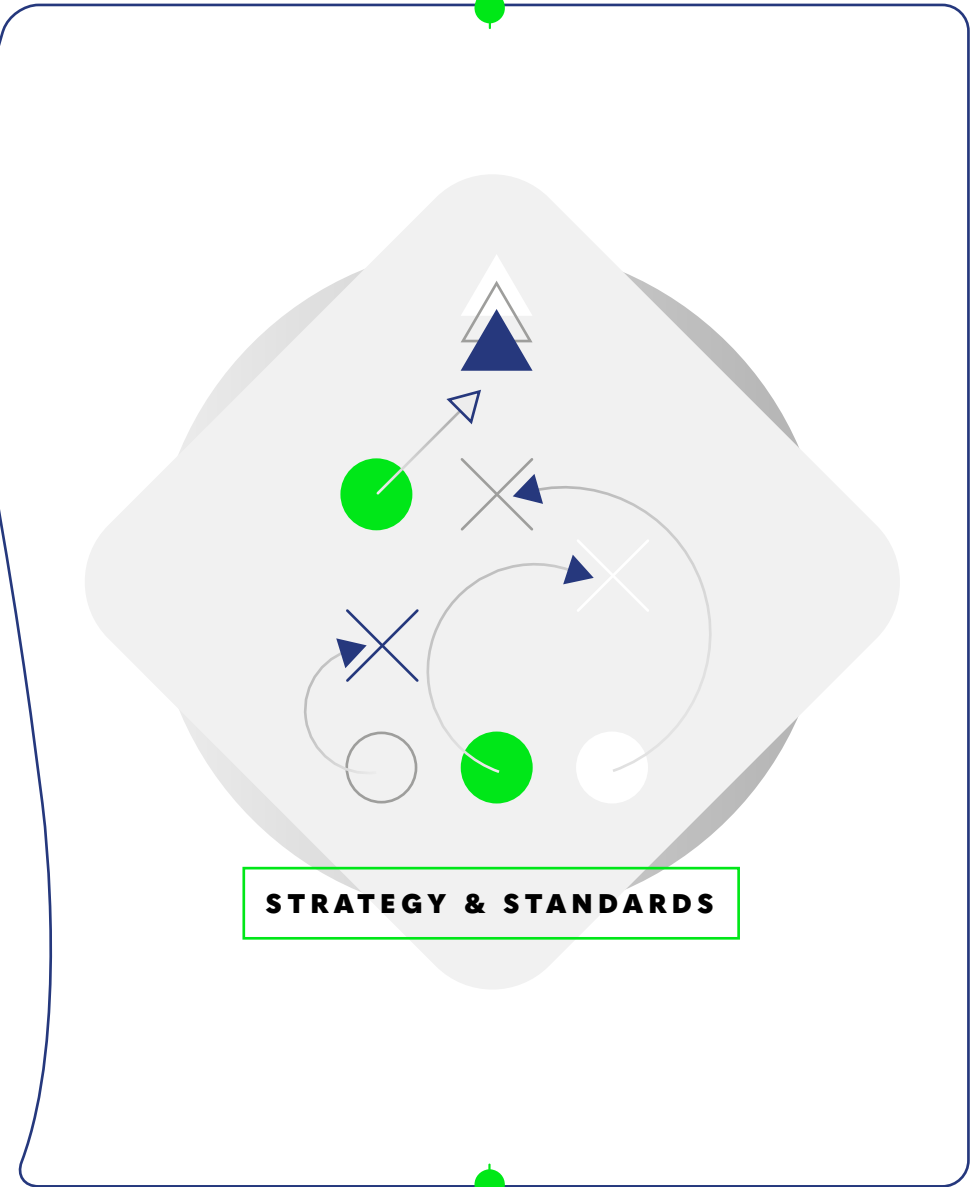
Giving guidance, aligning and coordinating sustainability efforts across the sector – always following the main principle of efficiency, i.e. not duplicating work, but adding value – for example ...

- by encouraging as many stakeholders as possible to join a common roadmap, apply shared measuring indicators and standards
- by collaboratively developing a joint manifesto and set of guidelines for all NCVB to commit to (this whitepaper itself being a first step and conversation starter)
- by offering business events stakeholders flexibility and various points of entry to the process of sustainable development in order to create equally fair conditions for all



Social sustainability will play an essential role in the transition of business events, as it significantly impacts the quality of relationships between organisations and their stakeholders.

Tereza Hofmanova, Czech Convention Bureau



FACILITATION & INNOVATION

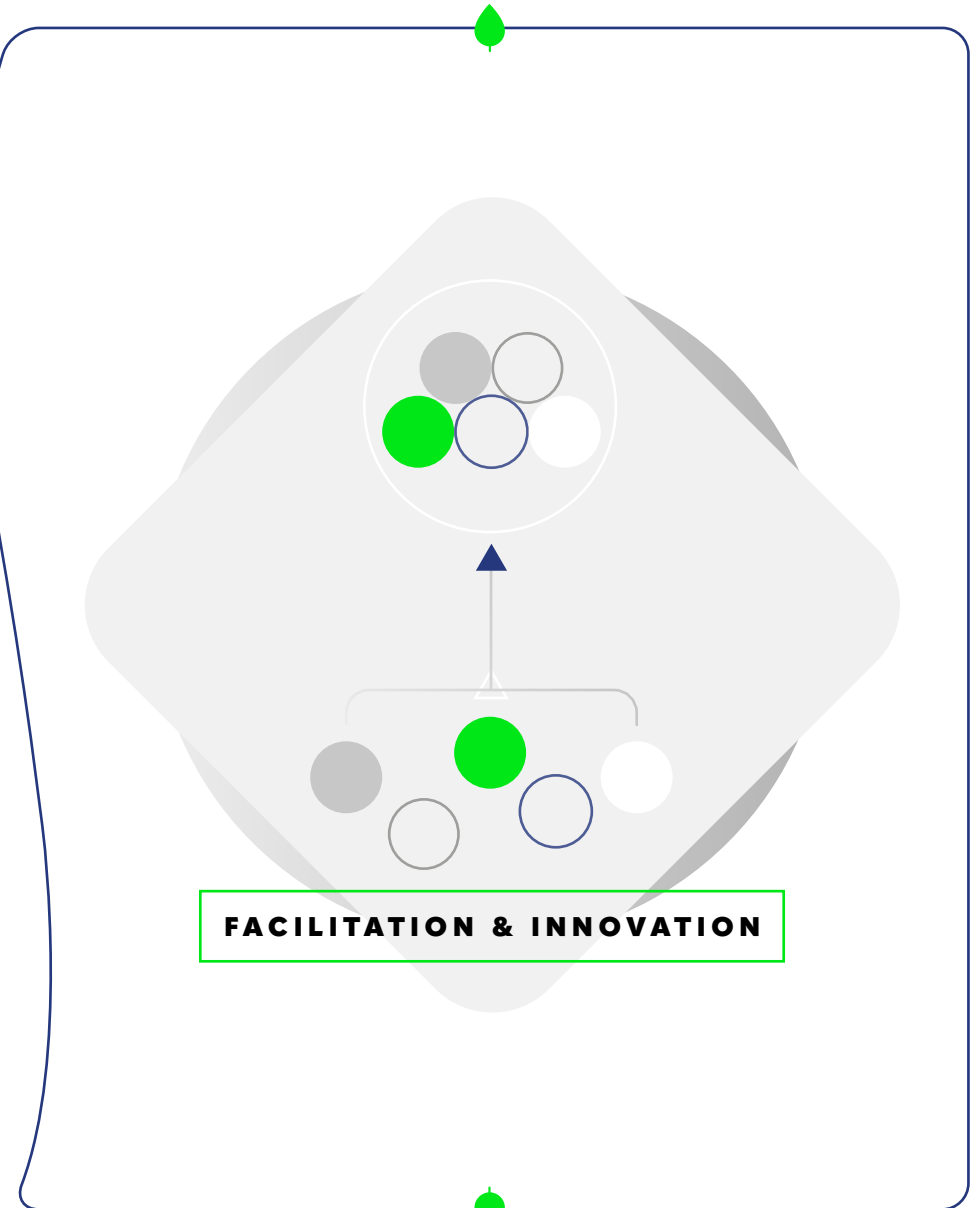
Unlocking new potential for cooperation, synergy and innovation by connecting networks and offering platforms for conversations inside the business events landscape and with other sectors, for example ...

- by creating new platforms and meeting places for the broad exchange among all stakeholders in business events industry, for example in the form of a sustainability summit or continuous, specialised communities and task forces
- by building bridges and networks to new partners in science and academia, industry technology and start-ups, and facilitating and incentivising cross-sector innovation processes, challenge-based competitions and hackathons
- by supporting investments in research & development for new solutions in the business events market, specifically by mobilising EU funding in order to create new European landmark projects



It is essential to understand that being sustainable is no longer just an ethical duty, but a real business necessity.

Tobia Salvadori, Convention Bureau Italy





07 Activities

A catalogue of actions to be implemented and explored

The four areas of action, as outlined above, show a number of concrete directions and approaches for NCVB to leverage their role and influence in accelerating the sustainable transition. Within these areas of action, the members of the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe have defined several activities and projects which can be tackled as a shared effort by the Alliance.

1

DIRECTED TOWARDS ALL INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS



Publish the joint whitepaper as manifesto and launchpad for future activities

Working together as allies requires a shared point of departure, a common position from which to build. This whitepaper is the first basis for all members and partners of the Alliance to come together and formulate their position towards sustainable development. It is also an invitation to others to join in the conversation and support the common cause.



The learning and sharing on a European level will empower all national initiatives towards a movement for mindful and responsible international travel.

Barbra Albrecht, Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB)

2**DIRECTED AT THE INTERNAL ORGANISATIONS OF ALL NCVB****Develop practical sustainability handbooks of tools and instruments to support NCVB in day-to-day decisions**

In order to make sure NCVB professionals and teams are equipped with the right know-how and tools to manage their organisations and successfully support their stakeholders in responsible and sustainable ways, Alliance members will develop practical sustainability handbooks tailored to their specific needs. Throughout this process, the Strategic Alliance will serve as a platform for exchange and peer-learning.

**Set standards to include sustainability and responsibility in all NCVB strategies and activities**

Already in the near term, each national convention bureau agrees to develop a sustainability strategy, or positioning paper, outlining the strategic steps and milestones which will be taken to promote sustainable practice and solutions, and push the sustainable transition of their specific markets. Wherever possible, these individual national strategies should be aligned, following similar standards, methodologies and metrics. The roadmap and industry standards set by the work of the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative will provide the general framework for these activities. The Strategic Alliance and its members will join the Net Zero Carbon Events Initiative as supporting partners.



Our collective action can and will be powerful, impactful and drive meaningful change – both for the future of business events and for global climate targets.

Ciara Gallagher, Meet in Ireland

3

DIRECTED TOWARDS THE PUBLIC AND POLICY STAKEHOLDERS



Highlight and make accessible existing good and best practice cases

To secure continued support and trust by the public, policymakers and other public stakeholders, NCVB need to transparently communicate and share challenges and road-blocks, but also stir enthusiasm for new solutions by showcasing what is already being done by the business events community. Besides showing data and evidence of the general progress in the sustainable transition, the Strategic Alliance will also share latest examples of sustainable event technologies, socially responsible destination strategies and other best practice cases that help motivate and inspire others.



Set up a joint PR and communication programme sharing relevant news, information and new practices

Directly related to the communication of best practice cases, the Strategic Alliance wants to become more active in publishing relevant news content and stories from the European business events ecosystem. A joint communications programme, combining resources and team members across member organisations, can identify newsworthy content, new ideas and stories, and coordinate the effective distribution to the Alliance's public and policy stakeholders.



Build a media hub: a single online platform for all information, resources and education on sustainable business events

Hand in hand with the efforts to proactively create a dialogue on sustainability progress with public and policy stakeholder groups, the Alliance can curate all relevant information, resources and education content on a one-stop-shop online platform - a media hub both for journalists and the public, but also for professionals from the wider business events sector.



A continuous dialogue with policy-makers and the wider public is crucial for demonstrating the positive impacts of sustainable events on society.

Evelyne Bardyn, VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau

4**DIRECTED TOWARDS CLIENTS**

Establish a shared system to educate clients regarding sustainable practices in food, mobility, waste management and other relevant areas

In the process of planning events, clients need to know where they can find reliable, unbiased and easy-to-access information about sustainable solutions and practices in the destination of their choice. In order to help clients educate themselves about specific options for food sourcing, sustainable transportation and logistics, waste reduction, and other solutions, the Alliance can work together with other expert organisations in setting up a shared education platform to be used by all member NCVB.



Provide independent and trusted solutions for clients' emission tracking and offsetting (carbon calculator, carbon management)

Reducing carbon emissions requires data-driven tools for measuring and assessing progress. As a service to all clients, and as a way to streamline measuring standards and metrics, the Alliance can work with trusted providers of event carbon management solutions to offer an easy-to-use carbon calculator and options for emissions offsetting. Making information and low-threshold solutions for carbon data and management accessible to clients will be a first important step to establishing data-driven solutions more widely across the European business events ecosystem.



To be explored: Set up a database of audited suppliers with sustainable and social certificates

When it comes to planning sustainable events with a real legacy, planners and PCOs are often looking for trusted suppliers from the regional ecosystem. In many cases, regional Convention Bureaux already provide lists of audited venues, hotels, catering companies or incentive experiences with relevant certifications. The Strategic Alliance will explore the potential of scaling this model to a European level - facilitating the search for new and innovative solutions while also providing incentives for businesses to shift to fully sustainable practices.



To be explored: Develop an independent, not-for-profit sustainability index

Sustainability indices are useful tools for benchmarking sustainability performance in many areas of the business events landscape. Next to providing frameworks for data-driven evaluation, they also help promote, reward and share best practices, innovative solutions and organisations' commitment to change. For these reasons, the Strategic Alliance will explore approaches to creating a fully independent and not-for-profit sustainability index for European destinations.



To be explored: Offer public sector support and funding for clients buying sustainable solutions

In order to attract international business events and - at the same time - incentivise the sustainable development of their regional ecosystems, several European destinations have started setting up public funding programmes for associations, companies and NGOs hosting their events in the respective region. The Strategic Alliance plans to evaluate the benefits of this practice and explore ways of applying such programmes to create stimuli both for international clients and their regional or national supplier partners.

5

DIRECTED TOWARDS SUPPLIERS AND THE WIDER BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY



Launch a universal gathering for EU-based and international players: a European Sustainable Business Events Conference

As an annual meeting for aligning efforts across all European countries and stakeholder groups, and as an occasion to come together and celebrate progress, a European Sustainable Business Events Conference can help galvanise the movement towards net zero emissions, provide a hub for all related initiatives and accelerate the roll-out of best practices across Europe and beyond. Such a conference, taking place each year in a different destination and combining the best practices and solutions available, can be a proof-of-concept, showcase and blueprint of the ideal sustainable business event. It can also serve as a living example of business events working as powerful platforms for sustainable change.



Use the conference as a meeting point for fostering a dedicated community for sustainable business events

Establishing a progressive culture of sustainable business events across the entire continent will only be possible by connecting people from all professional backgrounds who share the commitment and passion to be part of the sustainable transition. A European conference can help serve as an annual meeting place, but community building, knowledge transfer and exchange needs to be fostered throughout the year. The Alliance can play an important part in providing the basis for the build-up and continuous expansion of such a community.



To be explored: Set up science and university challenges, technology hackathons with IT, deep tech, start-up and research partners

In order to solve the many complex challenges surrounding the path towards sustainable business events, decarbonisation as well as fair and inclusive access, NCVB will launch cooperations with new allies and partners in technology, start-ups, academia and science. Dedicated innovation programmes at universities, technology hackathons or interdisciplinary think tanks can help address these challenges in open, exploratory ways - thus creating novel approaches and solutions to be explored. The Strategic Alliance will evaluate potential use cases and formats for such cooperative programmes and consider the launch of first pilot projects.



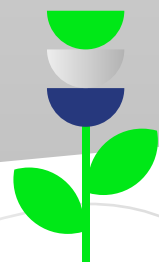
To be explored: Run a series of educational roadshows in order to showcase new sustainable solutions for destinations

How do business events professionals best learn about new sustainability practices, innovative technological solutions, or impactful frameworks for collective action? Whether in the form of a touring format for engaging young professionals in the meetings industry, or as a showcase at leading international conferences and trade shows, a series of European sustainable events roadshows could help in creating a focused overview and hands-on learning opportunities - showing in inspiring ways how today's real and existing solutions will define the future of events. Strongly focused on promoting new solutions as well as training and innovation in the sustainable space, the Strategic Alliance is taking first steps to explore the potential and feasibility of such an endeavour.



To be explored: Incentivise upskilling and new certifications along the supply chain

One of the core roles and activities of NCVB today is supporting the development of competencies and capacities in their respective business events ecosystems. The rapid systemic transition towards sustainable events brings with it new requirements for professional skills and know-how - competencies that will be widely needed across the spectrum of professional roles - from planners, to destination managers and suppliers. The Strategic Alliance will examine the most effective ways to distribute information on upskilling programmes, new certifications as well as professional and leadership development opportunities to their stakeholders, thus contributing to a swift, inclusive transition and fair access to life-long learning.



+ 08 About us

The Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe

The Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe is a network of national destination management and development organisations. As a collaborative industry platform, it concentrates on strengthening Europe's position as a leading destination for international business events. The purpose of the Alliance is to create a beneficial working relationship amongst the NCVB of Europe in order to sustain and further develop the position of Europe.

The idea of creating synergies and establishing a joint platform for Europe as a destination for business events on the international stage continues to gain traction: Officially launched at IMEX 2014 in Las Vegas with nine founding countries, the Alliance is now a 29-member strong network that has steadily grown over the past couple of years. Since 2014, the Alliance has met twice a year in rotating host destinations.



THE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF THE
NATIONAL CONVENTION BUREAUX OF EUROPE

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+ Appendix

Tangible steps in the sustainable transition – good practice examples from the European convention bureaux.

Atout France

A PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT INVESTMENT PROJECTS AND EXEMPLARY SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

A new sustainability programme, "Destination France", aims to make France a benchmark destination for sustainable tourism. The aim is to support and facilitate investment projects and exemplary sustainable development approaches. For one year, the awardees benefit from engineering support and co-financing of research, in order to accelerate the realisation of their projects. A first programme was launched in June 2022. This programme was open to all the components of sustainable tourism: from mobility and sustainability training to eco management and ecosystem conservation.

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Betty Rech, Atout France

Atout France

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND EXCHANGE: A RESEARCH TRIP WITH FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

In October 2023, Atout France in collaboration with Wonderful Copenhagen + Visit Denmark hosts a research trip to Copenhagen. The trip with French partners has a dedicated focus on sustainability. Its key goals: benchmarking, monitoring and exchange of best practices with operators from the European business events market. The programme will consist of site inspections as well as meetings and exchanges with local operators.

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For more information, please contact Sandie Meyniel, Atout France.

Austrian Convention Bureau

AUSTRIA'S OFFICIAL ECOLABEL "GREEN MEETINGS & EVENTS"

In 2010 the Austrian government in cooperation with the Austrian Meeting Industry, represented by members of the Austrian Convention Bureau, implemented a credible, practical and ambitious label to reduce the environmental footprint of conferences. Since then the label has grown and is reworked on a regular basis together with meeting and event professionals. At the moment there are 110 licensees (PCOs, event agencies, convention bureaus, hotels & locations) who can certify a meeting and hold an important role in motivating event owners and organizer to take serious sustainable actions.

[Further details](#)

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*For more information, please contact Michaela Schedlbauer-Zippusch,
Austrian Convention Bureau*

Austrian Convention Bureau

CONVENTION4U: AMPLIFIER CONGRESS FOR GREEN MEETINGS IN AUSTRIA

The Austrian Convention Bureau organises its annual conference Convention4u "the Austrian Meeting Industry Lab" as certified Green Meeting. It plays an important role as example and amplifier for sustainable organized conferences. Major efforts are taken eg. in waste and energy reduction, diversity, focus on regional, seasonal & vegetarian catering, strong communication to motivate stakeholders to join sustainable actions. Meeting professionals attending C4u experience a "green" organised meeting and discuss about implementation of sustainable actions within the meeting industry in sessions.

[Further details](#)

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*For more information, please contact Michaela Schedlbauer-Zippusch,
Austrian Convention Bureau*

Catalunya Convention Bureau

TOOLS AND METHODS FOR SUSTAINABLE EVENTS IN CATALONIA

The Catalunya Convention Bureau has designed specific tools and methods for sustainable events: a sustainability guide, a check list considering 3 levels of achievement to progressively accompany organisations in their transition to sustainability as well as a calculator for CO2 emissions. Further measures include a series of videos to improve sustainability, aimed at companies and an incentive for companies with sustainability certifications, recognized by the Government of Catalonia and the Global Sustainable Tourism Council - free membership to the CVB. Together with the destinations, the local CVB, Catalunya Convention Bureau developed an integrated plan for sustainable and legacy events in Catalonia, side by side with a roadmap to meet this challenge in a coordinated and cooperative manner.

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*For more information, please contact Deborah Chicote,
Catalunya Convention Bureau*

Catalunya Convention Bureau

ACO2RDS VOLUNTARIS (VOLUNTARY CO2 AGREEMENT) — COMMITMENT TO CO2 REDUCTION

ACO2RDS VOLUNTARIS is a programme promoting voluntary membership and commitment to the calculation of CO2 emissions, reduction and compensation, developed by the Government of Catalonia for all industries. As the Catalan Tourist Board, we have been a member since 2012, measuring our CO2 emissions on an institutional level (including the CVB). Today, as CVB, we are taking advantage of the measures carried out by the Catalan Office for Climate Change, adapting the program to the MICE Industry in Catalonia to help them to become more sustainable.

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*For more information, please contact Monica Santa Eulàlia,
Catalunya Convention Bureau*

Convention Bureau Italia

HANDBOOK ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

Convention Bureau Italia produced a handbook on sustainability in the meetings industry, providing a comprehensible interpretation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all MICE actors and supporting the first steps of becoming more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

[Further details](#)

For more information, please contact Tobia Salvadori, Convention Bureau Italia

Convention Bureau Italia

ASSESSMENT TO MEASURE THE DEGREE OF SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ITALIAN MEETING INDUSTRY

For a wide ranging assessment of the present degree of sustainability in the Italian meeting industry, Convention Bureau Italia identified eight main MICE business categories. For each one of these categories, a specific questionnaire was designed in order to assess how active operators are in applying sustainable practices and measures. Each company receives a specific evaluation based on the answers provided.

[Further details](#)

For more information, please contact Tobia Salvadori, Convention Bureau Italia

Estonian Convention Bureau

LEADING THE DESTINATION-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH IN ESTONIA

Estonia follows a destination-wide sustainability approach. The activities under this strategy include:

- 1) Sustainable destination communication via the websites of the Estonian Convention Bureau, Visit Estonia and key cities, sharing the same "story".
- 2) A self assessment tool for suppliers to measure their current sustainability practices and identifying/inspiring development areas. The tool was developed by Visit Estonia with support of the Estonian Convention Bureau.
- 3) Sustainable events organising guidelines for event planners as well as sustainability actions required when applying for public sector conference support.
- 4) Educating clients: seminars, visits, articles to share best practices and case studies.

Further details

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For more information, please contact Kadri Karu, Estonian Convention Bureau

Finland Convention Bureau

"SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL FINLAND" PROGRAMME

Visit Finland's "Sustainable Travel Finland" programme (STF) helps travel professionals and event organisers make more sustainable choices when creating travel itineraries and organising business events in Finland. The programme is designed for companies and destinations to adopt and develop more sustainable practices. The core idea of the "Sustainable Travel Finland" programme is to provide suppliers with a sustainable development path; a concrete toolkit that makes it easier to adopt sustainable practices and choices in the everyday business.

Further details

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For more information, please contact Ines Antti-Poika, Finland Convention Bureau

GCB German Convention Bureau

"RIGHT AND FAIR" (FAIRPFLICHTET): THE SUSTAINABILITY CODE OF THE GERMAN-SPEAKING EVENT INDUSTRY

The sustainability code "right and fair" (fairpflichtet) is a voluntary commitment to corporate responsibility for sustainability both with regard to internal company organisation and the running of events. At the same time, the sustainability code provides practical guidelines resulting from the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact and inspiration for all those involved in the organisation and implementation of events. The code enables providers in the event industry to transparently document their sustainable activities in their sustainability profile. Currently, just under 330 members have joined the codex.

[Further details](#)

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*For more information, please contact Christine Koch,
GCB German Convention Bureau*

GCB German Convention Bureau

"SECON – SUSTAINABLE EVENTS CONFERENCE" – SHAPING THE FUTURE

"SECON – Sustainable Events Conference" and earlier sustainability conferences have been regularly co-hosted by the GCB since 2009. On average, around 250 participants, specialists and executives of the event industry take part. The aim of the event is to highlight the need for sustainable concepts for meetings and events. SECON provides practical content on sustainable event management through inspiring presentations and workshops. The concept also includes keynotes and excursions to start with fresh input. The knowledge imparted strengthens the competitiveness of companies and the sustainability competence of Germany.

[Further details](#)

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*For more information, please contact Christine Koch,
GCB German Convention Bureau*

MeetDenmark

STRONGER VALUE AND IMPACT THROUGH LEGACY IN DENMARK

MeetDenmark and its member destinations have recently finished a project in which they developed and tested legacy processes and tools on 10 scientific congresses. The goal was to further develop the Danish efforts to strengthen the value and impact of congresses for associations, delegates and the destinations. The final report will be made public during 2023. The next step is to further develop the Danish ecosystem.

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For more information, please contact Peter Dyhr Andreassen, MeetDenmark

MeetDenmark

A GREENER BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY

MeetDenmark's greenhouse gas accounting project aims to provide an overview of the carbon emissions associated with hosting events in Denmark and to develop strategies to reduce these emissions. The project involves measuring the carbon footprint by analyzing the emissions associated with accommodation, food, and energy consumption. The data is used to develop strategies to reduce emissions for each company. It helps to raise awareness and demonstrates that sustainability can be integrated into event planning without compromising the quality. The project consists of an e-learning tool, webinars and 1-on-1 consulting.

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For more information, please contact Anne Sofie Hattesen, MeetDenmark

MeetDenmark

CREATING MORE SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS

In 2023, MeetDenmark launched a new project focusing on due diligence for sustainability addressing human rights and environmental issues. One of the key benefits is its focus on circular economy and innovation. By promoting circular economy principles, such as waste reduction and sustainable sourcing, the project is helping to create a more sustainable event industry. The project is also promoting innovation by encouraging suppliers to develop new and more sustainable products and services. It involves mapping the entire value chain, including suppliers and partners, to identify new opportunities.

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For more information, please contact Anne Sofie Hattesen, MeetDenmark

MeetDenmark



MEETDENMARK'S AMBITIOUS SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

MeetDenmark's sustainability analysis and sustainability plan is an example of how to address some of the important areas to create a more sustainable business event industry. Using this analysis, MeetDenmark developed an ambitious sustainability plan that includes three main action areas:

- Action area 1: Continuing the green transition (footprint).
- Action area 2: Increasing the social value creation (handprint, positive contributions and regenerative transition).
- Action area 3: Make sustainable business good business (making the sustainable choice easy and create more long-term value).

[Further details](#)



For more information, please contact Anne Sofie Hattesen, MeetDenmark

MeetDenmark



FACILITATING CHANGE AND UNLOCKING NEW POTENTIALS

MeetDenmark's approach to promoting sustainability in the business event industry is multifaceted and comprehensive. Through a combination of webinars, conferences, written guides, success stories, and knowledge sharing, we seek to inspire the industry to accelerate the sustainable transition and create a more sustainable future. We share stories to inspire others to follow suit. By highlighting the achievements of sustainable events and showcasing the benefits of sustainability, we hope to encourage even more event organizers and suppliers adopt sustainable practices.



For more information, please contact Anne Sofie Hattesen, MeetDenmark



Meet in Ireland

IRELAND'S SUSTAINABILITY PLEDGE FOR BUSINESS EVENTS

Ireland's sustainability pledge in the Business Events sector started with the construction of the world's first carbon neutral convention centre back in 2010. The Convention Centre Dublin is one of Europe's most environmentally friendly venues. Dublin entered the Global Destination Sustainability Index in 2017 and was followed hot on its heels by Cork, Kerry, Shannon, and Galway (the four other Business Events Hubs). We achieved 'Most Improved Destination' in 2019 and have 3 regions ranking in the Top 30 destinations in 2022. We've come a long way since 2017 and are continuously investing in and developing as a sustainable destination. Failte Ireland have set Climate Action as its key strategic focus. We are also planning to introduce a sustainability badge which will align our industry with international best practice, and by 2025, only those accredited with our sustainability badge will be offered supports and opportunities.

For more information, please contact Ciara Gallagher, Meet in Ireland

Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority

SUSTAINABLE ORGANISERS' GUIDE

As part of its action plan for sustainability and increasingly sustainable events, the Monaco Convention Bureau is currently working on the implementation of a Sustainable Organisers' Guide.

*For more information, please contact Estelle Antognelli,
Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority*

Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority

ONLINE CARBON CALCULATOR

To help visitors ensure their trip to Monaco is as sustainable as possible, the Monaco Tourist and Convention Authority is providing an online carbon calculator. The calculator is an educational tool used to provide a general estimate of your carbon footprint. It is not intended to replace a complete carbon footprint report produced by a professional.

[Further details](#)

*For more information, please contact Estelle Antognelli,
Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Authority*

Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC)

TOWARDS CLIMATE-NEUTRAL BUSINESS TOURISM & EVENTS: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO OUR SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Achieving climate-neutral (business) tourism in the Netherlands is challenging due to the diverse and complex nature of the sector. A common goal has been set for climate neutrality by 2050, but stakeholders must take individual actions based on their own interests and possibilities now. Collaboration in coalitions is crucial to work on concrete initiatives. Our sustainable policy, based on scientific expertise and input from professionals, focuses on the pillars of the Glasgow Declaration. Key areas include enhancing research, reducing emissions in transport (both to and within the country), promoting sustainable venues & accommodations, strengthening ecosystems, securing financing and support, and fostering collaboration and leadership for a climate-neutral future.

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*For more information please contact Lindsey Eijffinger,
Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions*

Polish Tourism Organisation - Poland Convention Bureau

61ST ICCA CONGRESS – ACHIEVING A POSITIVE IMPACT

The 61st ICCA Congress in Krakow was the first in-person ICCA global event since the pandemic and attracted over 900 delegates, speakers, and ICCA staff from 81 countries. There was representation from across the world allowing ICCA and local partners (Krakow CVB, Poland CVB, ICE Krakow) to use the congress as a platform to place sustainability – which is one of the four ICCA pillars – at the top of the agenda. ICCA took measures to mitigate issues around plastic use, transportation, food waste and operational collateral. More information can be found in the dedicated sustainability measurement report that was produced after the congress.

Further details

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*For more information, please contact Aneta Książek, Poland Convention Bureau or
Malgorzata Przygórska-Skowron, Krakow Convention Bureau*

Serbia Convention Bureau

THE LAUNCH OF THE SERBIAN MEETINGS INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY HUB

Serbia Convention Bureau initiated the creation of a "Sustainability Hub" which will consist of three parts:

- 1) A pool of local experts, aimed to help international meeting planners in reaching the national targets set for SDGs.
- 2) A best practices catalog with cases from the Serbian meetings industry — aimed to inspire and educate other meeting planners.
- 3) Resources for success stories — a pool of internationally relevant success cases that can inspire and educate local industry. The Serbia Convention Bureau will promote the sustainability hub in all its activities (bid documents, media, etc.) and create a joint PR campaign with industry partners and experts.

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Darja Butiga or Dusan Borovcanin, Serbia Convention Bureau

Slovenian Convention Bureau

CONVENTA SUCCESSFULLY REDUCES ITS CARBON FOOTPRINT

Conventa is one of the longest-running B2B MICE events in the region and it has become the meeting point for event organisers in New Europe. Reducing negative environmental impacts is one of Conventa's most important objectives. When we embarked on our sustainable path in 2009, we quickly realised we had to establish a system of constant improvements to achieve sustainable transformation. Thus, we developed our in-house CONVENTA 7R model. In 2022, Conventa won the golden Bea World Award for the "Best Sustainable Event of the World".

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Fredi Fontanot, Slovenian Convention Bureau

Swedish Network of Convention Bureaus

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO IMPACT – GOTHENBURG WAY TO LEGACY

For many years, Gothenburg has been working with value creation and impact at meetings and events. In order to maximise impact and measure results, a more strategic and systematic approach was needed. It resulted in "Gothenburg Way to Legacy", a model consisting of a method, a toolbox and community support, allowing for different levels of stakeholder engagement. At the DMO, there is an organisation-wide impact strategy group consisting of the sustainability strategist and key staff from the CVB, the events department and the trade and industry group.

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Ulrika Scoliège, Göteborg & Co

Swedish Network of Convention Bureaus

CONGRESSES AND BUSINESS EVENTS, PAVING THE WAY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Congresses and business events have a massive environmental impact and need to be utilized and monitored wisely. As of 2022, the city of Malmö will be focused on proactively approaching strategically selected events that have the potential to both generate impact for the local community and pave the way for a sustainable future. Additionally, the city of Malmö, will identify the needs for (and assist in), creating new business events within targeted focus areas. The city's objective is that all new events should have the potential of boosting the ecosystems and becoming recurrent in Malmö.

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For more information, please contact Johan Menso, Malmö Convention Bureau

Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB)

A NEW APPROACH TO TRAVEL

Sustainable travel doesn't necessarily mean having to go without. Sustainable travel means greater awareness and depth and more enjoyment. With this in mind, Switzerland follows its own sustainability strategy: Swisstainable.

Swisstainable is all about having one's finger on the pulse – and maximum relaxation in a natural setting. Our tips: Use public transportation; enjoy nature up close and at first hand; experience the local culture in an authentic way; consume regional products, stay for longer and delve deeper.

[Further details](#)

*For more information, please contact Barbra Albrecht,
Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau*

VisitEngland / VisitBritain

POSITIVE IMPACT BEYOND THE MEETING ROOM

VisitBritain, working in partnership with #MEET4IMPACT and GDS Movement created this new legacy and impact toolkit. This was created to support our DMOs/CVBs and large event venues to agree, plan and create the greatest possible impact through business events working in collaboration with their clients, whilst minimising the impact on the environment. The toolkit was then followed up by a 5 month course on impact management, embedding sustainability into event strategy, authentic story telling and impact management – more details to follow with a synopsis on key content discussions.

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Paul Black, VisitBritain / VisitEngland

VisitEngland / VisitBritain

SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE; A PATHWAY FOR VENUES

VisitBritain, working in partnership with Isla to produce a guide for meeting and event venues to support their transition to net zero. The guide, free to download, looks at company operations, commitments and communications, event deliveries, measurement and reporting, value chain engagement with key action points to implement in the next couple of critical years.

[Further details](#)

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For more information, please contact Paul Black, VisitBritain / VisitEngland

VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau

CREATING POSITIVE IMPACT: FLANDERS' CONFERENCE SUPPORT PACKAGE

In Flanders we focus on attracting purpose driven associations organising impactful conferences. With our sustainability plan as a guideline, we developed a modular "Impact Support Package". Each association can select the service that supports them most. Our offer varies from sustainable transport solutions e.g. train and e-taxis, sustainable catering for your conference dinner, hybrid services and better rates at our Flanders Heritage Meeting venues with at Green Key label. Associations wishing to benefit from this support submit a file and sign our sustainability charter.

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For more information, please contact Tuya Beyers, VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau

VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau

DEVELOPMENT OF A CO2 EMISSIONS CALCULATOR FOR CONFERENCES & EVENTS

A sector consultation has shown that there is a need in Flanders for an easy to use yet scientifically correct tool to calculate CO2 emissions for events. We are currently part of a sounding board group that is co-developing a CO2 emissions calculator with the Research Centre for Public Impact from the University of Applied Sciences. The aim is to have a calculator that can estimate correctly what the CO2 emissions are for events taking into account different impact dimensions like energy, mobility, catering and waste. Every conference organiser will be able to use this tool free of charge

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For more information, please contact Kevin McMullan, VISITFLANDERS Convention Bureau