Decarbonization of MICE events in Krakow

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The meetings industry, like other sectors of the economy, is facing an urgent need for decarbonization and sustainability today. The climate crisis and its effects, such as extreme weather events and loss of biodiversity, are affecting entire earth systems. Excessive greenhouse gases resulting from human activities are the direct cause of rapid climate warming.

In pursuit of climate neutrality, Krakow is committed to sustainability, as reflected in strategies such as the Sustainable Tourism Policy for Krakow and the Sustainable Development Policy for ICE Krakow. A key partner in this process was the Carbon Footprint Foundation, which together with Kraków5020 and the Kraków Network initiative developed a decarbonization strategy for the meetings industry, an ESG report for ICE Kraków and a carbon footprint calculator for the meetings industry.

Why is measuring the carbon footprint at MICE events crucial?

Carbon footprint is the total greenhouse gas emissions (expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent - CO2e) caused by a specific activity, including events. Measuring it is essential for several reasons:

1. legal requirements: EU regulations, such as the CSRD and ESRS standards, are gradually encompassing more and more companies, mandating reporting of ESG indicators, including emissions. ESRS 1 directly addresses “Climate Change.” Even if a company is not yet subject to this obligation, business partners who report may require carbon footprint data, which may affect cooperation.

2 Stakeholder expectations: Customers, investors, employees and business partners increasingly expect companies to be committed to sustainability and environmental protection. Companies with an ESG strategy in place are seen as lower-risk entities.

3 Business benefits: Decarbonization can lead to reduced operating costs by optimizing energy and raw material consumption. In addition, engaging in pro-environmental activities builds trust, improves brand image and can lead to increased profits. Companies that take action early can gain a competitive advantage.

How to measure an event's carbon footprint?

Measuring a carbon footprint requires analyzing emissions throughout the lifecycle of an event. The most commonly used methodology is that based on the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol), which divides emissions into three scopes:

- Scope 1 (Scope 1): Direct emissions - from the organizer's own controlled sources, such as fuel combustion in company-owned company vehicles.

- Scope 2 (Scope 2): Indirect emissions related to energy consumption - from the production of electricity or heat purchased and consumed by the organizer.

- Scope 3 (Scope 3): Emissions outside the scope of the organization but related to its operations - including all other indirect emissions in the value chain, e.g., transportation of participants and subcontractors, purchased goods and services (including catering), waste management, employee business travel.

Correct identification of emission-generating areas (such as energy, heating/cooling, transportation, nutrition, waste) is key. Consumption data should be collected and multiplied by the appropriate emission factors.

Available tools and calculators

There are various tools to support measuring the carbon footprint. Calculators can address specific areas, such as air transportation, like the myclimate Flight Calculator.

A particularly valuable tool for the event industry is the Planet Positive Event platform. It is an online tool designed by and for event organizers. It enables self-assessment of an event's sustainability and includes an event carbon footprint calculator that measures Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, generating results that comply with the GHG Protocol.

The Planet Positive Event platform was developed to comply with ESRS and other industry standards. It was one of the first in the world to combine a carbon footprint calculator, sustainability criteria, certification and external evaluation in accordance with ESRS standards and the CSRD. The entire process of evaluating an event's sustainability includes a self-assessment by the organizer, a review and potential requests for additional details by an external assessor, the calculation of a rating, and finally the generation of a detailed report and certificate. The tool was developed in the European Union. An example of its application is the evaluation of the Conventa 2024 event.

External evaluation and certification

After self-assessment and calculation of the carbon footprint, the data is reviewed by independent, third-party assessors. These assessors confirm the data or ask for corrections. This step ensures transparency and credibility of the assessment. The Planet Positive Event platform works with certified external assessors.

We would like to inform you that one of our Kraków Convention Bureau employees has been certified as Regional Assessors within the Planet Positive Event tool.
Festivals for climate

“Festivals for Climate” is an initiative that brings together more than a dozen Krakow festival organizers and organizers who have decided to work together for a greener culture. Aware that organizing large-scale events puts a strain on the environment, the group is looking for viable, sustainable and implementable pro-climate solutions.

The result of the first activities is the publication of a short collection of good practices to serve as a guide for other institutions, foundations and associations wishing to join this green initiative. This is just the beginning - “Festivals for the Climate” has the ambition to become a platform for jointly

creating a more sustainable face of culture and an invitation to action for all who care about the planet.

Decarbonization as an opportunity

Measuring and reporting carbon footprint is not just an obligation or a response to expectations, but also a basis for taking reduction actions. The decarbonization strategy is based on five pillars: Why, Identification of areas, Analysis of carbon footprint, Reduction, Offset of emissions. Reducing emissions (e.g., through energy efficiency improvements, RES investments, transportation optimization, sustainable catering, better waste management) is the priority. Offset (compensation) is an important but final step, used where reductions are difficult to achieve, and should be based on credible projects.

Involving all stakeholders - subcontractors, business partners and customers - in the decarbonization process is key to effective action and building trust.

Taking steps to decarbonize and measure the carbon footprint is not only a response to global and legal challenges, but more importantly an opportunity to build competitiveness, improve operational efficiency and strengthen Krakow's image as a leader in sustainable MICE events. The tools available and the local expertise being developed provide solid support in this process.