



Proposed collaboration to launch a sector-wide initiative to promote and facilitate climate action in the global Event Sector

(UK-focused initially)

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The UNFCCC secretariat has a mandate to promote climate action among “non-Party stakeholders” (private sector, local authorities, NGOs, academia, civil society in general) to support the work of national governments to respond to the ongoing climate crisis.

We have already reached 1.1 degrees Celsius of global warming and we may reach the limit of 1.5 within the next decade, which would put global society, and all businesses within it, in a very difficult situation. Climate change threatens to undo the very foundations of our society, and with it, all businesses operating within it. Climate change is now an existential threat to our society and to business.

Also, within this decade, we aim to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is the decade of delivery. The decade of action. But without action on climate, none of the other SDGs will be realized. This is why the urgency and the focus on climate.

The event sector has traditionally been a significant contributor to making human interaction happen and for the UK it is a sector worth over £70 billion which employs over 700,000, accounting for over 50% of the UK visitor economy. There is a significant opportunity for capacity building and strategic support so the sector joins the #racezero and demonstrates how sectors can #buildbackbetter in line with the UN SDGs.

Positive Impact is a UK-based non-governmental organization with expertise on sustainability for the event industry. It has created guidelines for the consideration of human and child rights when planning an event with UNICEF UK and has an agreement with UNFCCC to promote climate action in the sector.

The UNFCCC secretariat invites the event sector stakeholders to consider launching a sector-wide initiative to spur additional urgent action on climate in a coordinated and collaborative manner. There is a significant opportunity for the event sector to be showcased as a leading example of demonstrating #buildbackbetter at COP26 in November 2021. Time is running out and actions need to be taken now.

WHY COLLABORATE THROUGH A SECTOR INITIATIVE?

The actions that any individual organization can take to address its climate change impact, while extremely important, are limited. Only through collaboration with other organizations it is possible to go beyond those limits.

In addition, not all organizations take a lead on climate action. A sector-wide collaboration puts positive pressure on those who are not moving fast enough.

The UNFCCC secretariat is already supporting two sectors in similar initiatives, fashion and sports, and is considering a third in travel and tourism. In all of them, the UNFCCC secretariat acts as a convener and an adviser



for the industry participants to jointly discuss and agree to commitments and actions that can be implemented collaboratively to advance sustainability and climate action across the sector.

As a neutral organization, the UNFCCC secretariat facilitates the conversations and shares experience from other sectors and other organizations, making honest and transparent conversations possible between competitors and business partners.

On the other hand, Positive Impact, as non-profit focused on sustainability in the event sector, has the substantial expertise to help the sector from within, and support alignment with standards such as ISO 20121 and similar guidance.

Through this collaboration, commitments or actions will not be imposed on industry members. The members themselves will decide what is to be done, with guidance and suggestions provided by the secretariat where relevant. The initiatives do not contain any sanctions for not meeting the agreed goals.

WHAT WOULD BE THE ROLES?

The UNFCCC secretariat would act as co-convenor of the initiative, a neutral intermediary to create an environment of trust and transparency that is conducive to solutions, and as organizer of the day-to-day work to be done in the initiative according to the decisions of its members (act as secretariat of the initiative) in its first stage of development. Once the initiative is launched, the initiative's stakeholders would need to organize themselves to implement it, either in collaboration with the UNFCCC secretariat or independently.

Positive Impact's role in creating the content of the framework would be administrative. Positive Impact would ensure participation and inclusion from across the global event sector, although initially from the UK, in the creation of the framework for the initiative. Positive Impact would coordinate the organization of initial meetings, and try to ensure participation by as many stakeholders in the industry as possible, including mobilizing the existing community of over 1,280 Positive Impact ambassadors to engage with their communities.

Members of the initiative would be invited to voluntarily join the initiative and participate in the work around topics of their interest. Such topics and the workstreams will be defined by them in the first stages of implementation. The goal of each workstream is to define practical actions/pathways to reach the agreed goals.

NO DUPLICATION - SYNERGIES

The initiative would not duplicate work already done or in process. One of the first steps is to take stock of where the sector is, and where it needs to be, to then map what is already available and integrate existing solutions while identifying any gaps. Then, plans would be developed to address those gaps.



SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

The Sports Framework for Climate Action and the Fashion Charter for Climate Action provide examples of the type of commitments and actions that the event sector may look at as part of this initiative. Further information can be found here:

<https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/global-climate-action-in-fashion/about-the-fashion-industry-charter-for-climate-action>

<https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>

WHAT COULD THE TIMELINE LOOK LIKE?

Initial Design Stage

Day 1	Initial meeting with interested stakeholders from the across the event sector, including the supply chain, to discuss how the initiative could be organized and which could the initial goals be.
1 month	Second meeting to present and discuss results of initial meeting and agree on further work
2 months	Draft foundation document for the initiative presented for feedback
4 months	Final meeting for agreement on the foundation document
6 months	Launch of the initiative

Implementation Stage

Ongoing	On-boarding of new participants and start of practical work to develop solutions/proposals to achieve the goals set up in the foundation document
7 months	Launch of workstreams to develop solutions/proposals to achieve the goals set up in the foundation document

NEXT STEPS

Should the sector be interested in exploring this collaboration further, the UNFCCC secretariat would be happy to participate in a conversation to provide more information and answer questions.



APPENDIX

Included below is an 'impact areas and actions' document which could be used as a high-level starting point for a discussion on options to enhance sustainability in the sector

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic presents itself as an opportunity for the event sector to transform itself into a sustainability-minded and future-proofed sector: one that strives to become net zero by 2050, puts people and the planet first, partakes in the digital transition and educates citizens across the world about sustainable development.

Several areas have been identified that the event sector can act on to become sustainable:

Carbon neutrality/Net Zero

The future is carbon neutral: the event sector must become carbon neutral/net zero by 2050 or earlier, with milestones to mark progress along the way. Carbon emissions of events can be calculated. After this, the various points outlined below can help to achieve carbon neutrality/net zero and protect the environment.

Clean energy

Events are powered by 100% renewable energies.

Circular economy

Utilize circular economy principles to reduce the amount of resources and raw materials consumed, by avoiding, reducing, re-using, and recycling where possible. Mapping the diverse resource flows of specific types of events (eg. conferences; music festivals) can help to identify starting points.

Energy efficiency

Hosting events in venues that have a good energy performance or introducing energy efficiency requirements or guidelines.

Mobility

When events are held offline, both professionals and attendees are encouraged to use sustainable and smart mobility and walking and biking where possible. Where there are no alternatives to using planes, trains and cars, the transport emissions are offset through credible carbon credits.

Resource efficiency

The events industry can commit to the non-pollution of the environment by for example:

- Using exclusively eco-friendly cleaning products at (outdoor) venues
- Banning single-use event (promotion) materials such as glow sticks
- Banning single-use plastic bottles and plastic packaging

Ecosystem and biodiversity conservation

The conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity can be done by for example:

- Ensuring that event materials are environmentally certified, e.g. FSC certified paper and checking the origins of wood (deforestation-free)
- Ensuring that event venues do not harm ecosystems or threaten biodiversity
- Selecting environmental NGO's as charitable causes for events

Food



Catering for a green events industry should consider the environmental cost of food production and serve food that comes from sustainable food systems. Ideally, food served at green event has a neutral or positive environmental impact and is also healthy. It is:

- Locally grown/ sourced
- Seasonal
- (Mainly) meat-free
- Grown without harmful pesticides
- Food loss and waste should be prevented by arranging for leftover food to be donated or sold for lower prices (too good to go, soup kitchen donations etc.)

Additional points:

- **Digitalization:** The events industry can actively partake in the digital transformation by providing an increased percentage of online events that are inclusive, participatory and accessible to a wide audience.
- **Education:** the events sector can play a vital role in promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and educating about climate change and environmental protection.
- **Innovation:** Events can be used to trial circular economy solutions, sustainable living innovations and promote the SDGs and the EUGD.
- **Participation and Inclusion:** Online events can have a wider audience reach as they remove cost barriers for travel, accommodation, subsistence (internet connection and devices are, however, required).
- **Event professionals:**
 - The sector can ensure a fair and prosperous society through transparent pricing and the payment for the delivery of services according to time and expertise rather than commissions.
 - Equality and inclusion can be promoted by having a diverse body of staff.
 - In terms of training the workforce of the future, event professionals can be trained in calculating carbon footprints and understanding best practice for carbon management to deliver emission reduction. This training will enable event professionals to decide on event related decision based on carbon impact.
 - To foster a new path of sustainable and inclusive growth, people who currently work in the event industry can be upskilled and re-deployed to deliver a 'new 'service of enabling connection, collaboration and participatory and inclusive decision making
 - Events professionals that have lost their jobs as a result of the coronavirus crisis could receive re-training in sustainability professions that are on the rise, such as solar panel installer.