

# CASE STUDY

## ZARAGOZA (SP) – OTTAWA (CA)

IURC - NA

JUNE 16, 2023

**Thematic Network(s): Innovative, Sustainable & Carbon Neutral Ecosystems and Strategic Sectors**

**Thematic Cluster(s): Tourism & Culture**

**Cross-cutting challenge(s): Climate Change and Energy Transition**

**Topic keywords: Sustainable tourism, economic development, events**

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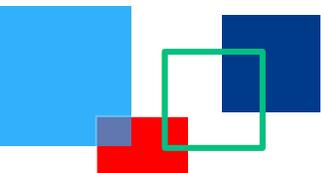
# ZARAGOZA – OTTAWA

## IURC – CASE STUDY

*The EVENTSOST system is transforming the tourism and events sector in Zaragoza, while Ottawa is analysing its adoption as another step to ensure that economic growth is accompanied by sustainability, a smaller carbon footprint, and a positive social impact.*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Zaragoza, Spain, and Ottawa, Canada, are working together to enhance their tourism industries and become regional event centers. During their second study visit, as part of the IURC NA program, representatives from Ottawa learned about Zaragoza’s methodology for measuring and controlling CO2 emissions from events. EVENTSOST is a certification system that promotes sustainable practices in event planning and development. It aligns with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and incorporates principles of circular economy, climate change mitigation, economic development, inclusivity, and equal opportunities. The City of Ottawa is analysing the adoption of the EVENTSOST certification system to promote tourism and economic development aligned with its sustainability goals. Additionally, Ottawa invited Zaragoza to join the Hybrid Alliance, an international network fostering collaboration in producing hybrid and multi-city events. Therefore, the partnership between both cities is promoting at a larger scale the implementation of sustainable principles in tourism, economic development, and the film industry.



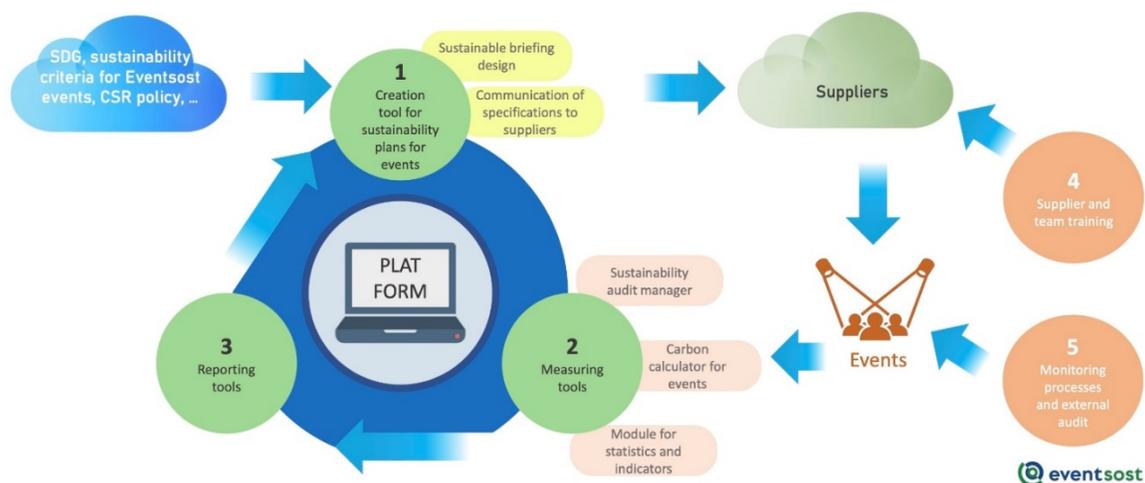
# CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Zaragoza, Spain, and Ottawa, Canada, were partnered as part of the IURC North America program in 2021. Both cities decided to work together around strategies to enhance the number and quality of visitors since the tourism industry supports economic development. They both aim to become regional event centers, gaining national and international recognition as congress cities and generating substantial income for local businesses.

Ottawa, as Canada's capital, is the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous city, and its hospitality and tourism sector is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest, with 11 million visitors annually and a \$2.2 billion budget. On the other hand, Zaragoza is a strategic business and cultural center in northern Spain that has prioritized sustainability as part of its strategic plan. As a result, they currently have 130km of bike lanes, 800ha of parklands, a tram system, and a pedestrian city center. In 2019, the city hosted 530 events, 19 major fairs, and 2,000 business meetings.

However, growing the tourism industry presents as many opportunities as challenges, especially when considering the goals of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 (Zaragoza) and 2040 (Ottawa). The most recent trends and forecasting studies by the World Tourism Organisation indicate that cities will continue to be in high demand by tourists of all sorts, and the problems associated with handling these visitors will have to be more systematically tackled by all stakeholders involved. Cities must ensure that tourism and large events are planned and implemented without deteriorating the environment and are aligned with their sustainability goals.

During the study visit of representatives from Ottawa to Zaragoza, they had the opportunity to share their ideas and experiences around this issue. In Zaragoza, the Convention Bureau, a department inside the Tourist Office dedicated to Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE), developed a methodology to measure and control the CO2 emissions from events. This led to the launch of EVENTSOST, a system to develop and certify the application of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria in the design, planning, and organisation of events. This certification allows companies to implement a sustainability management system that ensures they comply with the most relevant sustainable practices at an international level.



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EVENTSOST has been configured as a platform with a multidisciplinary perspective that gathers knowledge on the leading sustainable solutions for existing events, incorporates corporate social responsibility aspects, and applies these concepts to the organization of events that adhere to the following principles:

- The 2030 United Nations Agenda.
- Circular economy.
- The fight against climate change, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and achieving carbon neutrality.
- The promotion of economic development of the environment.
- The inclusiveness of people from groups at risk of social and labour exclusion.
- The promotion of equal opportunities.

In order to facilitate the achievement of these objectives, *EVENTSOST* developed a production system and a series of support tools that define the sustainability criteria which must be applied to each event in relation to several categories such as accommodation and venues, food, energy savings, waste management, accessibility, mobility, working conditions, and carbon footprint.

## RESULTS AND IMPACT

The City of Ottawa is currently analysing the possibility of incorporating the *EVENTSOST* system through their Major Events Office - created to attract large events using a "Bid More, Win More, Host More" strategy – or the Cultural Tourism Working Group – which brings together representatives from the city's tourism, cultural, festival, and live entertainment sectors to support the recovery of Ottawa's visitor economy.

Ottawa has also invited Zaragoza to join the Hybrid Alliance, a 24-city network co-funded by Ottawa, Geneva, The Hague, and Prague with a mission to connect the world to a global network of partners that foster collaboration to produce hybrid and multi-city events. The introduction of the *EVENTSOST* system to the Hybrid Alliance would present a unique opportunity to scale the certification implementation and expand the best practices for sustainable events.

The cooperation between Zaragoza and Ottawa and their exchange of systems and best practices to increase the sustainability of events and other economic activities have also led them to exchange knowledge through their respective Film offices. Both cities are currently comparing bylaws and ordinances, exploring Green Shooting strategies, and how to manage the impact of a high number of shootings in their city. The City of Zaragoza is also interested in the operations and results of Ottawa's Special Events Advisory Team as a potential model to replicate and enhance its capacities.

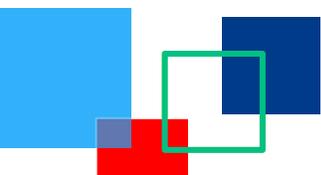
## KEY FIGURES

**€100 m**

**Economic impact in Zaragoza from big events (2019)**

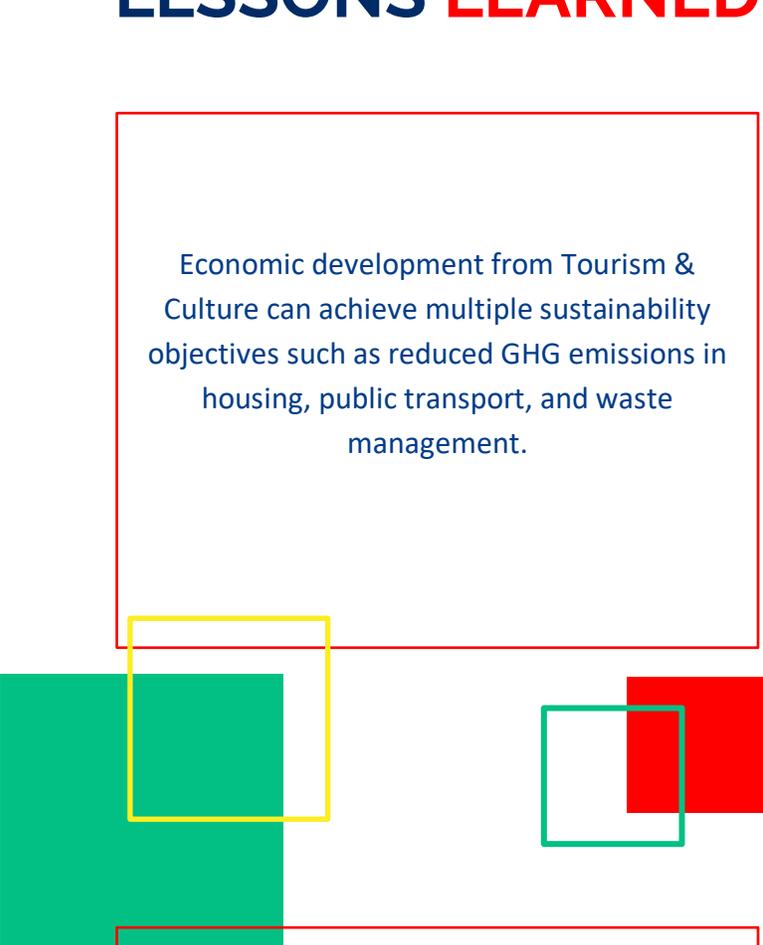
**30,640**

**Full-time jobs supported in Ottawa by the Tourism industry (2019)**

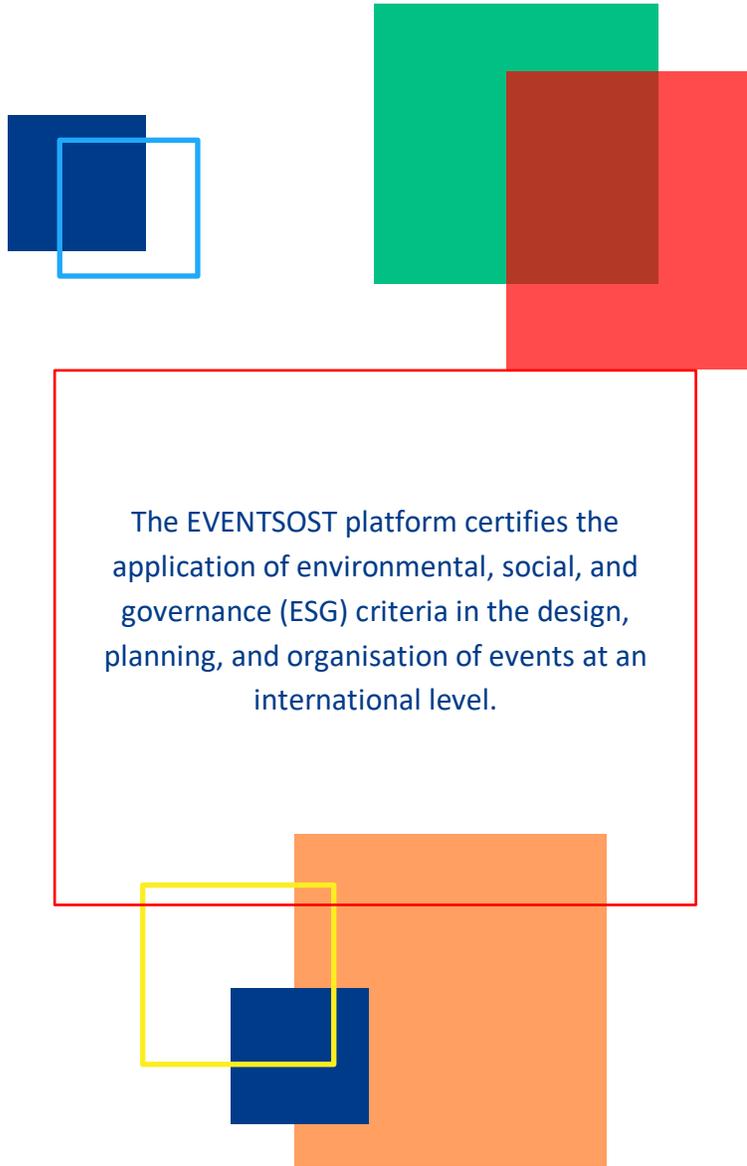


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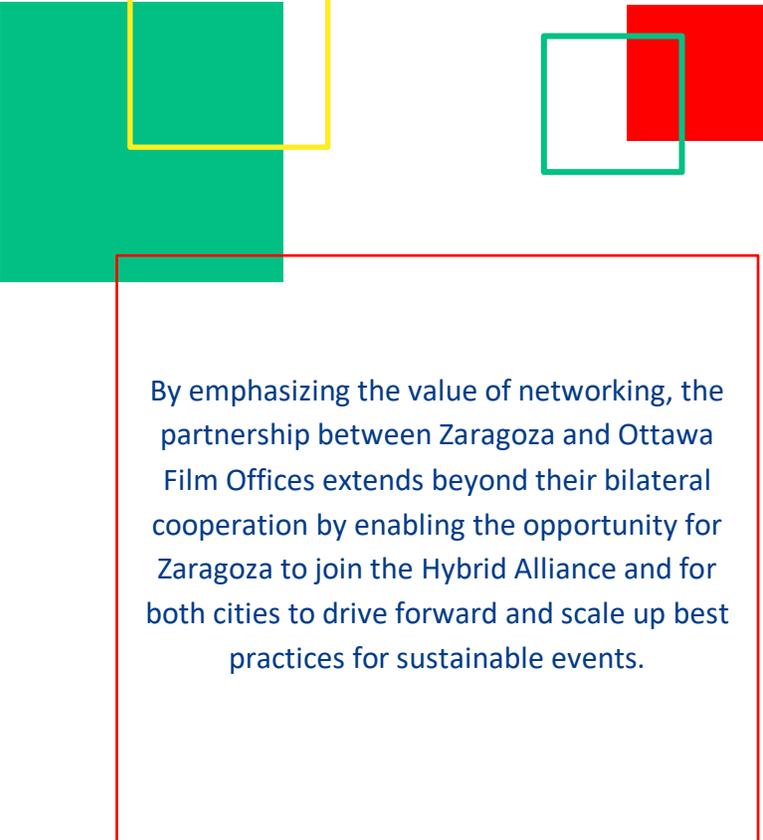
# LESSONS LEARNED



Economic development from Tourism & Culture can achieve multiple sustainability objectives such as reduced GHG emissions in housing, public transport, and waste management.



The EVENTSOST platform certifies the application of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria in the design, planning, and organisation of events at an international level.



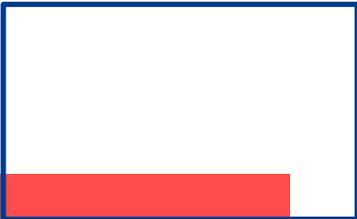
By emphasizing the value of networking, the partnership between Zaragoza and Ottawa Film Offices extends beyond their bilateral cooperation by enabling the opportunity for Zaragoza to join the Hybrid Alliance and for both cities to drive forward and scale up best practices for sustainable events.

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# THE IURC PROGRAMME

The International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme enables cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in IURC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international counterparts, building a greener, more prosperous future.

The IURC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.



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**Links to related outputs:**

[Zaragoza EVENTSOST methodology](#)

[www.zaragozaturismo.es](http://www.zaragozaturismo.es)

<https://ottawatourism.ca/en>

[www.hybridcityalliance.org](http://www.hybridcityalliance.org)