

“The **Legacy** of Valencia Zentropy MICE: *Starting from the end to transform the beginning*”

From communication to longer term impacts

In cities across Europe, events have traditionally been seen as short-lived catalysts — powerful and visible, yet fleeting. As urban policies increasingly embrace sustainability, the challenge lies in ensuring that the impact of events lasts beyond their closing. **Valencia’s Zentropy MICE** project, implemented under the **European Urban Initiative – Innovative Actions (EUI-IA)**, redefines this perspective by placing **legacy** at the very heart of its strategy.

The guiding idea is simple: ***To achieve long-term impact, one must start by communicating it from the very beginning.*** Communication in Zentropy MICE is not just about visibility; it is a strategic process through which legacy is shared, built, and multiplied.

Within **MICE** (Meetings, Incentives, Congresses, and Events), communication has often centred on promotion — attracting visitors, sponsors, and media attention to the host city. However, as sustainability places people and communities at the core of urban development, **communication must evolve into a participatory tool for transformation** — one that connects with individuals and amplifies the collective impact of events.

In Zentropy MICE, communication translates Valencia’s sustainability ambitions — from circular economy and energy efficiency to social inclusion and innovation — into stories that engage people, trigger action, and mobilize local entrepreneurs. Each event becomes an opportunity to connect participants, citizens, institutions, and local businesses through shared values and measurable actions.

By aligning with the **EU Green Deal’s objectives**, the **Sustainable Urban Tourism Agenda**, and the **EU Missions on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities**, Valencia positions communication as the first step in shaping collective behaviour. A trust-based narrative — grounded in transparency with accurate data— can reduce environmental impact, mobilize local actors, and generate new opportunities for social and economic growth.

In this sense, communication plays a vital role: it opens dialogue, aligns intentions, and establishes the frameworks that will later transform plans into tangible results across **Valencia’s neighbourhoods**.

Communication strategic objectives

The communication strategy of **Valencia Zentropy MICE** is designed as a catalyst for awareness, **aligning visibility with long-term change** and creating a genuine **citizen-centred dialogue** between the city and its communities, pursuing the following objectives:

1. **Showcase Valencia as a European benchmark.** Build a bold and coherent identity for Zentropy MICE — a city that leads by example in sustainable events, circular economy, and social innovation.
2. **Make circular MICE irresistible.** Turn complex concepts such as entropy, circularity, and legacy into engaging, easy-to-share narratives that inspire new behaviours from MICE attendees and beyond.
3. **Activate the city.** Invite citizens, entrepreneurs, and institutions to participate — not as spectators, but as co-creators of a shared urban legacy.
4. **Turn communication into collaboration.** Use storytelling, local media, and creative campaigns to connect people, events, and places around common sustainable goals.
5. **Create knowledge that travels.** Package learnings, data, and success stories into clear, exportable formats that cities across Europe (such as **Heidelberg, Ljubljana or Larissa**) can adopt and adapt.
6. **Measure what matters.** Track flows and impact to turn communication into a real governance tool for the city's sustainable transition.

In essence, Zentropy MICE's communication strategy moves from broadcasting messages to building shared meaning and action.

Partnering key audiences

To be effective, communication must reach diverse groups through a **holistic, multi-level approach**, engaging citizens, the tourism sector, and public institutions. The success of Valencia Zentropy MICE depends on **speaking the language of every community**—tailoring messages that translate complex ideas, such as entropy, legacy and circularity, into simple and engaging narratives.

Each audience is not a target — it's a partner in writing Valencia's next chapter: a city that communicates to transform, and transforms by communicating.

- **Citizens and residents:** Make them feel seen and involved. Through neighbourhood stories, local actions, and public dialogue, residents become proud ambassadors of Valencia's sustainable MICE legacy.
- **Local communities and associations:** Engage cultural, environmental, and social groups as creative partners — not channels — in shaping event impact where it matters most.
- **MICE professionals:** Speak business with purpose. Show organisers, venues, and suppliers how sustainability fuels competitiveness, reputation, and new market synergies and opportunities.

- **Public institutions and tourism boards:** Align objectives, multiply impact. Ensure that policies and plans integrate Valencia Zentropy MICE's outcomes and make them permanent.
- **SMEs and entrepreneurs:** Turn sustainability into business advantage and competitiveness. Highlight incentives, pilot projects, and recognition opportunities for companies that lead by example.
- **Universities and research centres:** Position them as innovation engines — co-designing methodologies, tracking impact, and training the next generation of sustainable event professionals.
- **Students and training schools:** Offer hands-on experiences that show young people they are part of the city's transformation.
- **Networks and international partners:** Use their reach to amplify Valencia's model — from ICCA and NECSTouR to the EUI and IURC communities — turning local action into European reference.
- **Volunteers and changemakers:** Empower citizens to act as storytellers, multiplying engagement through creativity and trust.

The Legacy of València Programme

The **Legacy València Programme** is a strategic initiative of the City Council of Valencia designed to transform professional events into tangible, sustainable benefits for the city and its citizens. Its objective goes beyond hosting congresses and events; it aims **to create a social, economic, and environmental legacy that strengthens urban quality of life and promotes a balanced tourism urban model**, considering the following phases:

Phase 1 – Mapping to transform

Legacy begins by **listening**. The first step involves mapping the city's challenges, local priorities, and vulnerable groups, while identifying actors with the greatest potential to receive and amplify legacy projects. Through interviews, workshops, and participatory mapping, communication channels are opened early, detecting gaps and enabling genuine dialogue between organisers and the city's innovation ecosystem.

This approach ensures that communication is **inclusive, strategic and adapted to local needs** —ensuring legacy is **co-designed** with the city's people and institutions from the very beginning.

Phase 2 – Building synergies

Each legacy project emerges through **collaboration**. Event organizers share their goals and intentions, while the city connects them to relevant stakeholders — universities, associations, SMEs, and social entities — aligning their aspirations with **municipal and public policy priorities**.

Communication plays a key mediating role here: it **translates objectives into shared value**, ensuring that every partner understands how their involvement contributes to the

city's sustainable future. In this way, synergy itself becomes a communication act — one that transforms fragmented objectives into coherent **collective action**.

Phase 3 – Designing action

Once the connection is made, Zentropy MICE prototypes specific legacy projects for each congress or event at the Palacio de Congresos. These are detailed through an **Action Plan** that defines activities, responsibilities, and timelines, alongside a Communication Plan ensuring visibility, coherence, and citizen participation.

Clear and creative communication ensures that events gain traction: participants and residents understand and contribute to the positive impact in the city. They tell a **unique story for each neighbourhood**, reflecting ownership and transformation.

Phase 4 – Valencia's legacy comes to life

During the events, communication guarantees **actions are visible and meaningful**. Connections between organisers, citizens, and local actors become tangible. Valencia assumes the role of co-creator of positive impact, where **shared knowledge materialises into real initiatives** — from circular waste pilots to community-led green actions.

Through continuous storytelling, the city communicates progress, shares testimonies, and celebrates the people behind the transformation. Communication thus amplifies visibility while deepening ownership and belonging.

Phase 5 – Measuring impact

The final step of the Legacy València Programme is not the end, but the beginning of a new cycle. **Evaluation combines qualitative and quantitative data to measure real impact and extract lessons learned**. Communication is again central: results are disseminated, stories are shared, trust is gained, and evidence informs future policies.

This approach consolidates a methodological framework for **continuous improvement**, guaranteeing transparency, traceability, and replicability. Communication transforms evaluation into learning — and learning into new opportunities for legacy creation.

An impactful phased communication strategy

Valencia Zentropy MICE's communication approach mirrors the phases of the Legacy València Programme. Its phased structure ensures coherence between planning, implementation, and legacy creation — proving that **communication is not linear but circular**, just like the sustainability principles it promotes.

- **Step 1 – Expectations and launch:** The project starts by creating curiosity and a sense of collective ownership. Teaser campaigns, media outreach, and a dedicated web portal introduce the vision of this innovative **“urban entropy” linked to the**

MICE sector— the idea of managing **energy, materials, and information flows** more efficiently through initial events.

- **Step 2 – Implementation and pilot events:** The *Congress Zero* pilot, co-led by **Las Naves** and **Palacio de Congresos**, tests participatory communication tools and interviews, collecting feedback from attendees and local actors to refine data and approaches.
- **Step 3 – Capitalisation and replicability:** The focus shifts toward neighbourhood engagement, and international dissemination through **European Transfer Partners (Ljubljana, Heidelberg, Larissa)**, expanding the project's legacy across Europe. Moreover, by sharing lessons learned through other EU initiatives and programmes, such as the **Tourism Sustainable Partnership of the new EU Urban Agenda**, Valencia positions its model of **communicated legacy** as a **replicable European benchmark** for sustainable events.

Communication impact is tracked through **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** — reach, engagement, media presence, and participation. Qualitative feedback from interviews and surveys feeds into a **continuous improvement loop**.

The innovation behind Valencia Zentropy MICE “legacy” approach

The greatest innovation of Valencia Zentropy MICE lies in its reversal of logic: **legacy is not something achieved after an event — it is something built before it begins to maximise its positive impact**, through deliberate and inclusive communication.

By starting from the desired outcome — the legacy — and designing communication accordingly, every participant, organiser, and citizen becomes part of the story from the first event. This anticipatory approach fosters purpose, clarity, and connection, turning abstract sustainability goals into **lived experiences and real solutions in Valencia's neighbourhoods**.

Zentropy MICE demonstrates that in sustainable urban development, communication is not an accessory but a fundamental component of the project's design. It shapes the way the city of Valencia will innovate, creating value for its citizens and future generations.

In the end, Zentropy MICE is not just about making events sustainable; it is about making sustainability understandable and engaging. Through its communication strategy, **Valencia turns entropy into synergy, transforming events into enduring legacies that live on their neighbourhoods**. Each event becomes an opportunity to rethink how Valencia learns and evolves, proving that when we envision the legacy we want to leave, we begin to build the cities we aspire to become.