

Guidelines for communicating throughout the Zero Waste Cities Certification process

[The Mission Zero Academy](#) has designed this document to support and guide municipalities, waste management companies and local groups on how to properly communicate about the Zero Waste Cities Certification.

For further assistance or questions, [please contact the MiZA team here](#) or via email at hello@missionzeroacademy.eu

General guidelines

As far as we know, the Zero Waste Cities Certification is the world's first certification system to measure and verify zero waste cities. Certainly it is **the biggest in the world in terms of its scope and framework**. This can be communicated clearly and proudly.

The Certification is hosted by the Mission Zero Academy. It is one of several services that MiZA provides to help accelerate Europe's transition to a zero waste society. Other services focus on SMEs, buildings and GhG emission savings. [MiZA is a spin-off organisation of the European non-governmental organisation Zero Waste Europe \(ZWE\)](#). ZWE focuses on reducing and preventing waste in our society by supporting and nurturing communities across Europe in their journey towards zero waste through sustainable strategies and implementation of circular economy practices.

The Certification is being rolled out across Europe, not just the EU, but it is **not on offer to local authorities outside of European borders**. This is due to the unique nature of the systems and context that European waste management, legislation and local authorities find themselves in.

There are **2 tiers of Certification** that a municipality can achieve - first becoming a Zero Waste Candidate City and then becoming a Zero Waste Certified City. Without formal notification from MiZA that a municipality has reached each level, they cannot use the term, logo or name for each tier.

Once a municipality has formally become either a Candidate or Certified City, they are then provided with a communications package to be able to communicate this with their audience. This includes the relevant Certification logo (different for Candidate Cities and for each level of Certification), other branded visuals and a draft press release/blogpost template to announce the news.

MiZA will continue to offer collaborative opportunities with its Certified municipalities throughout the journey, both to help improve the efficiency of local zero waste strategies but also to help raise awareness / profile for both the Certification and the municipality itself. This continued journey and ongoing support is a key thing to emphasize in all communications, recognising that progress cannot happen overnight and change is a long-term process.

Placing the ZWC Certification logos

The ZWC Certification has three logos.



The "main logo" logo (on the left) is the basis for all the variations and it acts as an umbrella badge for ZWCC communications. It represents the certification in broad contexts, like presentations that refer to ZWCC as part of MiZA's offering or in lists of logos on event websites etc.



The Candidate City logo adds a clear label to the "main logo" to indicate that a city is being considered for the certification. The city can use this logo to communicate its status.



The Certified City logo (up to 5 stars) adds a label and five levels to the "main logo" to indicate the stage of the certification process the city has reached. The city can use either the logo with the label and the stars or just the one with the label, depending on the visual asset they wish to design.

In order to ensure the correct and consistent use across all the communication channels and assets, the ZWC Certification logos have to be used having in mind these following rules:

- Do not change the colour of the label placed on the main logo.
- Do not stretch, skew or alter the logo.
- Do not rotate the logo.
- Do not change any of the colours of the logo.
- Do not change the position of the stars on the Certified City's logo.
- Do not detach the label from the logo.
- Do not alter, add or delete any of the elements in the logo.
- Do not add a drop-shadow or glow to any of the logos.
- In order to increase the visibility of the logo, leave some white spaces above and below the photo and place the logo in a way that the stars are on top of the white.
- When using the Certified City logo on a photo, you can add a white rectangle with the same length as the label to make the stars more prominent.

Links to the Zero Waste Cities programme

The Certification is built upon the experiences and lessons learned from Zero Waste Europe's Zero Waste Cities programme. The programme in the past was a mentoring and recognition one, which recognised nearly 400 municipalities across Europe who had made zero waste commitments. Local ZWE members were responsible for monitoring these commitments, whilst ZWE played a coordination role to harmonise efforts and build the capacity of local communities.

The Certification is the next step forward. It is a more professional, robust and pioneering system that we have developed in order to guide municipalities on their zero waste journey.

For more information on how the programme supports and supplements the Certification, [please read this explanatory blog here.](#)

Content of the Certification

In longer or bigger communication materials, it is useful to specify that the criteria of the Certification only covers Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), not all waste produced in the municipality's area, such as construction waste. In the long-term, our vision is to broaden out to cover all waste generated within our society. However, we have decided to focus on MSW for now due to the fact that municipalities can take immediate action on

this and a large impact can be had with households & businesses in a short period of time.

Individual companies, organizations or individuals can't use the Certification labels to declare themselves zero waste, even if they were owned and operated by the municipality. However, they can communicate that they are part of the community's efforts working towards the common goal, through partnerships with the local municipality.

Products or services can't be labelled with this certification even if they were produced by the municipality. However, each product or service can say that it is operated by the municipality which is a Zero Waste Certified City.

Support of local groups

MiZA's theory of change is built upon building the ability of local municipalities, businesses, NGOs, volunteer groups and interested individuals to be better informed and therefore able to apply zero waste principles in their everyday actions.

We recognise that municipalities cannot act alone here and the biggest impact is had when a whole-of-community approach is taken by a municipality. Whilst of course it is tricky to engage the whole community, a municipality should take advantage of the expertise of their local or national group/NGO that works on this topic. These are what are called 'mentors' and should be explicitly referenced as supporting partners when a municipality tells their story of becoming Certified.

Together with ZWE, MiZA is building a stronger and bigger network of empowered local groups to become the "go-to" players for zero waste. We are training these individuals and organisations to be "**Mentors**" within the Certification system. These individuals and organisations can offer their services instead of "traditional" waste management consultants, helping the design, implementation and monitoring of local zero waste strategies.

COMMITMENT PHASE

The public statement should come from the municipality, signed by a senior political representative.

The statement must communicate the start of the city's Certification journey and its commitment, not declaring itself a "'zero waste municipality/city".

Social Media post examples (do not forget to tag MiZA in all communication)

We are very proud to announce that we have officially committed to become one of the first Zero Waste Certified Cities in Europe. 🎉

As a Zero Waste Candidate City, we commit to achieve [goals] by [date] implementing a #circulareconomy system and reducing more than [percentage] of municipal solid waste.

Learn more ▼

[link to the press release or to the Certification]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here ▼

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste

OR

We are very proud to announce that we have committed to make waste history, embarking us on an ambitious zero waste plan that will lead us to become one of the first Zero Waste Certified Cities in Europe. 🎉

Acquiring the status of Zero Waste Candidate City, we commit to achieve [goals] by [date] reducing more than [percentage] of municipal solid waste.

Learn more ▼

[link to the press release or to the Certification]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here ▼

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste #circulareconomy

OR

We are very proud to announce that we have been awarded a Zero Waste Candidate City, under the Mission Zero Academy's Zero Waste Cities Certification.

A journey which will help our municipality to fully commit to #zerowaste and #circulareconomy implementation. 🎉

Find out more ▼
[link to the press release or to the Certification]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here ▼
<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA

Social media visuals for Candidate Cities

[Visual 1](#) (white)

[Visual 1](#) (dark purple)

[Visual 2](#) (dark purple)

[Visual 2](#) (white)

CERTIFICATION PHASE

The certification is divided into five different categories which reflect the stage and results of the municipality on their journey towards zero waste and circular economy implementation. When communicating about becoming certified or being certified it is important to remember that going zero waste is a journey of continuous improvement, which takes place also after the Certification issue. This will guarantee the possibility for the municipality to maintain its Certified status.

Social media post examples (do not forget to tag MiZA in all communication)

As a result of the work done in [period of time], we are very proud to announce that we have been awarded a Zero Waste Certified City by the Mission Zero Academy. 🎉

The Certification testifies the continuous improvements and efforts that our municipality has made so far in terms of waste reduction and #circulareconomy implementation.

In particular, we achieved:

1. XX [results]
2. XX
3. XX

Learn more about our next steps here 
[link]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here 
<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste

OR

We are very proud to announce that today we are now officially a Zero Waste Certified City, an important contribution to a bigger movement leading Europe's transition towards a #zerowaste and #circulareconomy implementation. 🎉

During our journey, certified by the Mission Zero Academy, we achieved [results].

We now commit ourselves to keep improving, reaching [xx] by [period of time].

Learn more here 
[link]

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste

OR

As a result of the work done in [period of time], we are very proud to announce that we acquired the Certified status within the Zero Waste Cities Certification, issued by the Mission Zero Academy, and became one of the first Zero Waste Certified Cities in Europe. 🎉

Huge thank yous to everyone who made it possible.

Let's keep working towards a full #zerowaste transition!

Learn more here 
[link]

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA

Social media post examples (do not forget to tag MiZA in all communication) - **Star level**

1*

For our continued efforts, we are very proud to announce that today we have been awarded 1-star Zero Waste Certified City, following the Zero Waste Cities Certification, issued by the Mission Zero Academy. 🎉

We have made the initial leap on our #zerowaste and #circulareconomy journey and are on our way to keep improving and achieve great results!

Huge thank yous to everyone who made it possible and let's keep working towards a full circular transition!

Learn more here 
[link]

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA

2*

For our continued efforts, we are very proud to announce that today we have been awarded 2-stars Zero Waste Certified City, following the Zero Waste Cities Certification, issued by the Mission Zero Academy. 🎉

The Certification testifies the continuous improvements and efforts that our municipality has made so far in terms of waste reduction and #circulareconomy implementation.

In particular, we achieved [above 55%] separate collection of municipal solid waste and [xx]

Learn more about our next steps here 

[link]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here ▼

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste

3*

For our continued efforts, we are very proud to announce that today we have been awarded 3-stars Zero Waste Certified City, following the Zero Waste Cities Certification, issued by the Mission Zero Academy. 🎉

The Certification testifies the continuous improvements and efforts that our municipality has made so far in terms of waste reduction and #circulareconomy implementation.

In particular, we achieved [above 65%] separate collection of municipal solid waste and [xx]

Learn more about our next steps here ▼

[link]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here ▼

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA #zerowaste

4*

For our continued efforts, we are very proud to announce that, as a Zero Waste Certified City, we have been awarded with 4 stars by the Mission Zero Academy. 🎉

The Certification testifies the continuous improvements and efforts that our municipality has made so far in terms of waste reduction and #circulareconomy implementation.

In particular, we achieved [above 75%] separate collection of municipal solid waste and the collection/composting of [over 80%] of generated organic waste within our community.

Learn more about our next steps here 

[link]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here 

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA

5*

For championing in the field of resource management, as a Zero Waste Certified City, we have been awarded with 5 stars by the Mission Zero Academy, repaying back our continuous efforts towards #zerowaste and #circulareconomy implementation. 🎉

Minimum 85% separate collection rate and a long list of great achievements empower us to be among the best performers in [country] and Europe, following a bigger movement that will lead Europe's transition towards #zerowaste.

Learn more 

[link]

More information on the Zero Waste Cities Certification here 

<https://www.missionzeroacademy.eu/municipalities/zero-waste-cities-certification/>

#ZeroWasteCitiesCertification #MiZA

Social media visuals for Certified Cities

[General 1](#) (white)

[General 1](#) (dark purple)

[1 star](#)

[2 stars](#)

[3 stars](#)

[4 stars](#)

[5 stars](#)

[General 2](#) (white)

[General 2](#) (dark purple)

[1 star](#)

[2 stars](#)

[3 stars](#)

[4 stars](#)

[5 stars](#)

Overcoming the common pitfalls and failings of Certification schemes

Too often, we have found that certification schemes do not live up to their promise. Public recognition and backing is provided by the certifying authority despite a lack of clear results and impact, or simply for the commitment. A regular criticism of certification schemes is that they support 'greenwashing' claims, often because the success of the certification is embedded into an organisation's business model. In these circumstances, an organisation is much more likely to, and be eager to, certify an entity if the survival or profits of the organisation require high numbers of certified entities.

To avoid this, MiZA has ensured that the organisation's business model is not reliant on the success of the certification. This is achieved through our development of several services that generate revenue, as well as continued collaboration with philanthropic organisations and businesses. Furthermore, the certification system has been designed to be legitimate due to the fact that an external, third-party entity is always responsible for the audit of a city wishing to become certified. This helps ensure the independence of the certification, as those trained to be auditors will always remain external and separate from the city which is undergoing the certification audit.

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