

UFI launches SDG database for the exhibition industry: translating the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals into action

- UFI initiates SDG database for the exhibition industry.
- Submissions received from around the world, including from the three largest global exhibition organisers – Informa, Reed Exhibitions and Messe Frankfurt.
- Exhibition organisers and venue operators demonstrate how the industry can make positive environmental and social impact, while enjoying cost savings, especially through multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- All 17 SDGs are featured, with SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, being the most common across submissions.

Paris – 5 Jun 2019: On the occasion of this year's Global Exhibitions Day (GED), UFI – the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry – is launching a new report and online database. It will track initiatives and projects in the exhibitions business globally that pay into the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. This resource – a first of its kind – aims to showcase work done by organisers, venues, and service providers alike, and to inspire others to also launch projects under this United Nations framework scheme. It was initiated by UFI working group on Sustainability and put together in collaboration with Greenview, Member of this working group.

“As the exhibition industry, we are connecting markets to foster trade and development. Through our daily work, we help to drive the growth of economies and societies. With this new, publicly available online database, we want to grow the awareness of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and how exhibition industry players are contributing to catalyse a sustainable future for all,” says UFI President Craig Newman.

The database, launched officially on this year's GED, can be accessed here. A summary report “The Exhibition Industry and the UN SDGs: Connecting People, Multiplying Impact” has also been produced.

In the first collection phase running up to early May 2019, a total of 20 exemplary submissions were accepted. The second collection phase will start from 6 June 2019. There are three entry types:

- Type I: Exhibition Theme: How the theme of the exhibition contributes to the SDGs
- Type II: Exhibition Operation: How the operator of the exhibition contributes to the SDGs
- Type III: Company's Operations: How a company's own operations contribute to the SDGs

The initial series of submissions gathered reveal that the SDG approach is well established within the exhibition industry's leadership. Each submission demonstrated how their actions contribute to SDGs, how their actions were made possible, and quantify monetary, time and other impacts made. The in-depth sharing also included a section on feedback and lessons learned, which allows others who are interested in hosting a similar activity to learn from these valuable experiences.

Best practices and innovative ideas across these submissions were compiled into a summary report “The Exhibition Industry and the UN SDGs: Connecting People, Multiplying Impact”, which can be downloaded at www.ufi.org/unsdg 70% of submissions cited a contribution to SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production. Actions taken include purchasing from local suppliers where possible, reducing usage of single-use plastic, reducing food wastage through composting or redistribution. Partnerships with suppliers, guests and local charities among others were often mentioned as key to achieving goals (SDG 17). We also see that sustainability is moving away from just being good-to-have to being part of the business model, with venue operators stipulating environmental terms in contracts.

Through multi-stakeholder partnerships, an impactful but high-cost project could be made viable. An example would be the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre’s (MCEC) Melbourne Renewable Energy Project, where the wind farm’s high capital outlay was spread across the numerous partners, making possible the project that is set to benefit the city’s 4.4 million population. The project contributes to multiple SDGs – SDG 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9 on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, SDG 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13 on Climate Action, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals.

The second most commonly cited SDG was SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth. This is not surprising as exhibitions reach out to tens of thousands of people and encompass all sectors of business, government, and civil society, with a large value chain of partners and stakeholders. The first series of submissions have showed us how the exhibition industry can touch SDGs in many different ways and can have a meaningful collective impact. We are encouraged to see the possibilities and hope to catalyse further action. As such, we are opening up a second phase of best practice collection.

How to participate

The second collection phase of exhibition industry best practices will commence on 6 June 2019. If you are interested in taking part, please contact chris@ufi.org.

For more information about UFI initiatives around sustainability, go to: www.ufi.org/susdev.

In line with UFI’s mission to provide vital data to the entire exhibitions industry, the full report “The Exhibition Industry and the UN SDGs: Connecting People, Multiplying Impact” is available free of charge on the UFI website at www.ufi.org/unsdg.

Attachment: infographic.

About UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the leading global association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents around 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 53 national and regional association members. More than 790 member organisations in 86 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 960 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

For more information please contact:

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About Greenview – Greenview is a sustainability consulting and research firm that helps organisations with their strategy, programmes, measurement, and reporting. In addition, Greenview provides technology solutions to make calculation and monitoring of data and best practices easy through its Greenview Portal. Greenview's clients include many of the hotel industry's leading chains, as well as cruise lines, event organisers, venues, destinations, trade associations, and research institutions, to catalyse sustainability as the industry's thought leader. With offices in Singapore and the United States, Greenview works with hotel companies to develop and implement strategies, programmes, and data measurement platforms. Greenview has also launched several innovative industry initiatives, including the Green Lodging Trends Report, the Cornell Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking Index, the Hotel Footprinting Tool, the Hotel Owners for Tomorrow coalition, and the UNWTO's sustainable cruise development benchmarking for South-East Asia. <https://greenview.sg/>

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