

## UFI releases key findings about the status of sustainability in the exhibition industry

- The research shows that exhibitors and visitors believe exhibitions can help them save time and money, while reducing travel to multiple locations and the related carbon footprint
- The exhibition industry states that the industry's transition towards sustainability has progressed to halfway between "only starting" and "very advanced"
- Key priorities have been identified and are informing several projects between UFI and other partners from the event industry
- The research provides detailed results for all regions of the world

Paris – 29 July 2021: UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has released a new report on the status of sustainability in the exhibition industry, including results from surveys conducted by UFI research partner Explori.

Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has severely hit the economy, the fundamentals remain, and sustainability is a strong priority for exhibitions and their participants.

For 86% of exhibitors and 87% of visitors, travelling to an exhibition helps save time, while for 84% of exhibitors and 83% of visitors it helps save money. For 67% of exhibitors and 64% of visitors, travelling to an exhibition, where they can do multiple things under one roof and avoid separate flights to other locations, helps to reduce their carbon footprint.

In parallel, the majority consider the environmental impact of the tradeshow sector to be important to them, and they believe that improving this environmental impact will become increasingly more important to the sector's long-term success.

Across all segments (organisers, venues and service providers) there is a feeling that the rate of transition towards sustainability is around halfway between "only starting the transition" and "very advanced", and, in general, exhibition participants also rate the efforts of the industry as "average", in this regard.

"This report is unprecedented in its analysis of the views of the industry and its clients as to the key issue of sustainability in our industry. We will use these findings in many of our current projects aiming to further improve the performance of exhibitions as *sustainable ways of doing business*," says Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director and CEO.

### Key findings detailed in the report:

Before COVID-19, what were the expectations from exhibition participants?

- 73% of exhibitors and visitors either agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for a tradeshow to display a strong commitment to sustainability.
- 34% of exhibitors and 36% of visitors said they would not attend a trade show that does not have a responsible approach to sustainability.

And what is the perception of the efforts to date?

- 73% of exhibitors say that their company is taking steps towards improving sustainability.
- On average, all segments (organisers, venues and service providers) of the industry believe the rate of transition towards sustainability to be halfway between "only starting the transition" and "very advanced".
- Exhibition participants rate the efforts of the industry as "average", generally speaking; 24% of exhibitors and 16% of visitors consider them to be "very poor" or "poor", while 26% of exhibitors and 30% of visitors see them as "good" or "excellent".

How is COVID-19 affecting the situation?

- Investments from the exhibition industry for programmes related to sustainability haven't been as affected as others. In June 2020, while 85% of companies had stopped or decreased their overall level of investments, that was the case for "only" 54% of companies for investments for programmes related to sustainability, and there was "no" or "limited impact" for activities related to sustainability for 51% of them.
- 89% of companies from the exhibition industry believe public investments to be necessary (43% "for a significant share" and 46% "as essential and necessary for most of the investments").
- Most importantly, "fundamentals remain" for exhibition participants. In 2021, 86% of exhibitors and 87% of visitors say that travelling to an exhibition helps them save time, while 84% of exhibitors and 83% of visitors say it helps save money. Meanwhile, 67% of exhibitors and 64% of visitors believe that travelling to an exhibition, where they can do multiple things under one roof and avoid separate flights to other places, helps them reduce their carbon footprint.
- Having said that, lower proportions of participants – although still a majority – believe that the tradeshow sector's environmental impact remains important to them (51% of exhibitors and 52% of visitors) while 58% of both exhibitors and visitors consider that improving this environmental impact will become increasingly more important to the sector's long-term success.

In terms of environmental impact, what are the priorities and how can they be achieved?

- Significant differences can be seen when comparing the views of participants and of the industry (and the type of activity within the industry) when it comes to identifying the key areas of material impact: plastic and food come first for participants, while travel and booths come first for the industry.
- Exhibition participants prioritise three domains of action to make the tradeshow industry environmentally sustainable: "reduce the costs of sustainable materials/products/services available for use", "develop new technologies or processes for problems such as waste, carbon emissions, etc." and "develop education about sustainable events at all levels of the value chain (including visitors and exhibitors)".
- 77% of exhibitors and 65% of visitors believe that "organisations that organise and set-up events" are responsible for helping the tradeshow industry improve its environmental impact. This responsibility also relies on exhibiting companies for 53% of exhibitors and 54% of visitors.

In line with UFI's objective to provide vital data and best practices to the entire exhibition industry, the full report can be downloaded at [www.ufi.org/research](http://www.ufi.org/research)

Attachment:

- [Cover of the "Status of Sustainability in the Exhibition Industry" report](#)

***About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry:** UFI is the global trade 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 more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 800 member organisations in 83 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Around 1,000 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: UFI Headquarters: [Email: media@ufi.org](mailto:media@ufi.org) Tel: +33 (0)1 46 39 75 00 or [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org)