



IMEX

Sustainable Event Report IMEX Frankfurt 2023

Prepared by **MeetGreen** 

Our mission



Carina Bauer,
CEO, IMEX

At IMEX our ethos is to share what we learn for the benefit of the global business events community. Our sustainability report showcases the work we do around IMEX Frankfurt both in the run up to and on site at the show, peeling back the curtain to reveal what goes on behind the scenes. We hope you'll find information and inspiration here for your own events.

This report is the second one we've produced, working with our sustainability consultants MeetGreen®, meaning we can now benchmark our progress against 2022. It's an opportunity to champion and build on our achievements – notably waste reduction, low carbon F&B and energy use – as well as pinpoint areas to develop. There's always room to improve and innovate on our journey to net zero.

We recently launched our net zero roadmap, part of

our commitment to the industry-wide Net Zero Carbon Events (NZCE) initiative. Our intention is to reach net zero by 2030, ahead of the 2050 target set out by NZCE in line with the Paris Agreement. This roadmap is part of our wider Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, and an expression of our vision: **a thriving global events industry focused on positive change.**

This impact can't be achieved in isolation, however, and working with our partners, colleagues and friends across the industry is paramount. I'd like to end, therefore, by thanking our partners who have been crucial in our sustainability efforts: isla, for supporting us with the detailed measurement of our event carbon footprint and special thanks to Eric Wallinger at MeetGreen®, our sustainability consultants, for preparing this report and for helping us to go further and do better every year. Experience shows that progress accumulates through a series of small nudges and tweaks. The key? Just start, right here, right now."



ABOUT US

2023
stats



Attendance:

11,764
Event
participants



2,900
Exhibitors from
150 countries

3,800+
Total buyers from
90 countries

178
Press attendees from
20 countries

iMEX Frankfurt is the largest trade show of its kind in Europe, bringing together the global meetings, events and incentive travel industry. It's where 3,800-plus global meeting planners connect with 2,900 suppliers from across the world, building powerful working relationships – in turn creating better events, meetings and experiences.

WHO WE ARE



IMEX FRANKFURT SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Measure our event footprint

Deliver net zero events by 2030

Make sustainability education
accessible to all

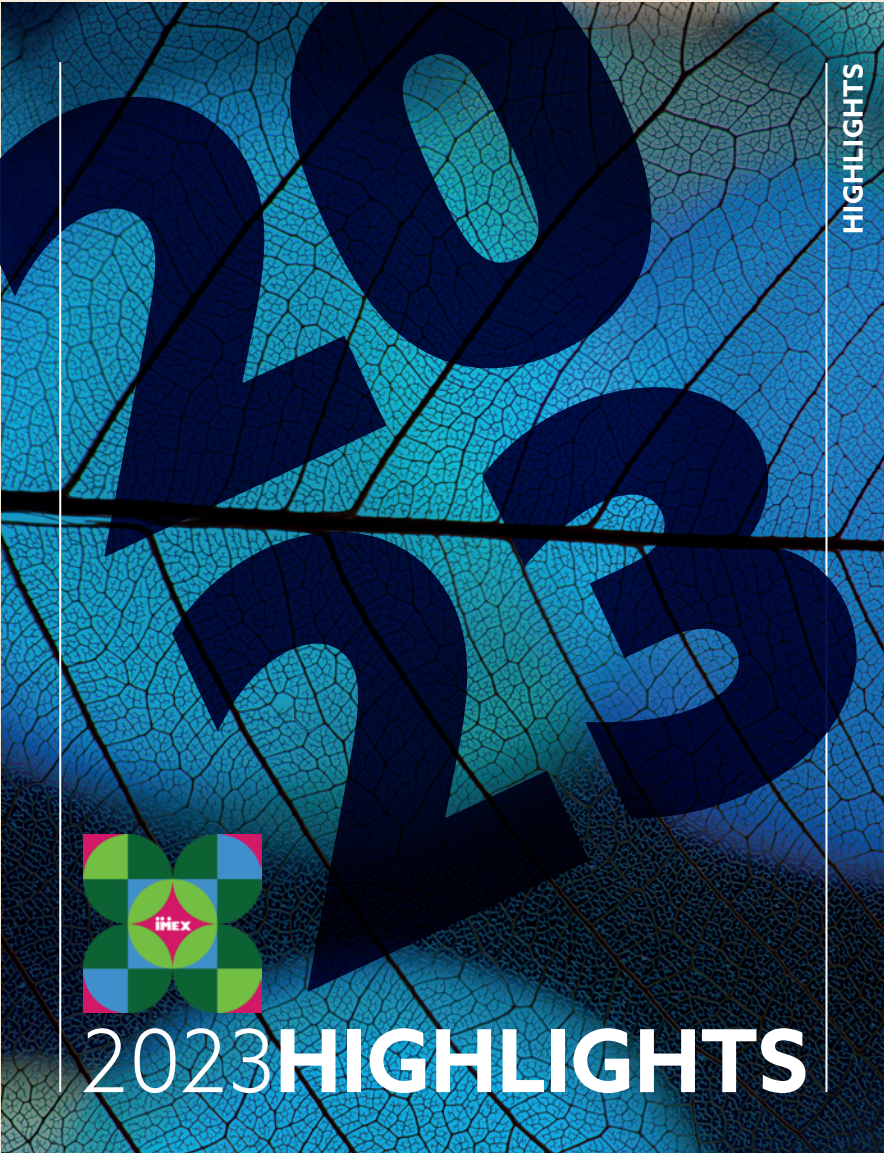
Share what we learn and
amplify best practice

Give back to our
local communities

Champion the positive
impacts of meetings and events



Measure
Deliver
Share
Give Back
Champion



Carpet reduced by
909 sqm

compared to previous show averages.

85%
less print production

in Hall 9 (our learning area) compared to 2022.

Estimated
38% reduction in
"build & burn" single-use exhibitor booths

compared to 2019 levels.

86%
of event waste diverted into organics, material recycling and donation channels

3kg
reduction in waste per participant

despite 26% increase in attendance.

12%
reduction in onsite energy consumption

despite 22% increase in exhibitors.

1,000
trees planted

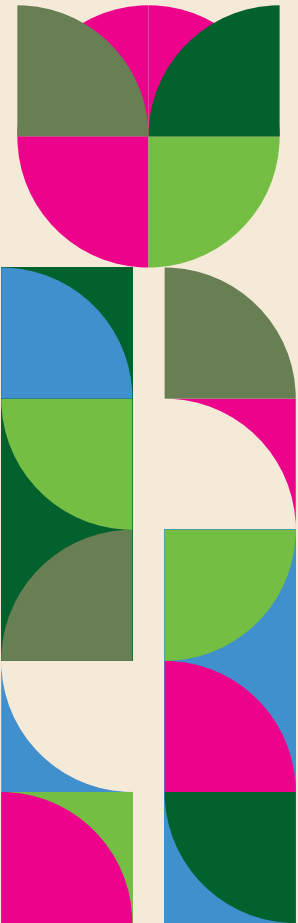
to neutralize fossil portion of fleet emission.

20% increase
in people choosing vegetarian option at Gala Dinner

compared to 2022.

99.5%
of event waste diverted from landfill

A word from our host destination and venue



Ecological, social and economic responsibility is part of our business strategy. Our sustainable business practices are founded on a wide range of voluntary commitments. As well as an EMAS certification (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme), we take part in ESG ratings and actively support German and international sustainability initiatives. As sustainability is a joint effort, we're thankful for our long-term successful partnership with the IMEX Group that leads us closer to a sustainable future for events."

Wolfgang Marzin,
President and Chief Executive
Officer of Messe Frankfurt



Sustainability is one of the most important factors for successful events - today and in the future. The efforts of the host city play just as an important role as the planning of the event itself. Frankfurt is not only committed to preserving its many green spaces, but also to becoming climate-neutral by 2035. Our local business events industry is dedicated to sustainability in the areas of mobility, resources, catering and communication. As the host city of IMEX, we are pleased to welcome a pioneer of sustainable events to Frankfurt every year and to showcase the city's overall commitment to sustainability."

Jutta Heinrich
Director Frankfurt
Convention Bureau

HOST DESTINATION AND VENUE



Of all the factors influencing the sustainability of an event, **destination and site selection** play two of the most significant roles towards helping manage and mitigate our environmental impacts.

IMEX Frankfurt's venue **Messe Frankfurt** and host city of **Frankfurt** both offer numerous sustainability attributes:



Frankfurt Airport serves more than **300 destinations across five continents, making it the airport with the most direct routes in the world.**¹ This is significant given direct routes tend to outperform connecting routes in terms of carbon emissions. **On average, non-stop routes reduce carbon emissions by roughly 100 kg/person relative to the next best connecting flight option.**²



Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof (main railway station) is one of the largest rail centers in Europe. There's a direct connection to Frankfurt Messe station, located within IMEX Frankfurt's host venue Frankfurt Messe.

Emission reductions here can be even more significant, **with savings up to 214 kg CO₂e per passenger kilometer when comparing domestic flight averages to national rail travel.**³



1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt_Airport

2. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0160738319301227?via%3Dihub>

3. <https://ourworldindata.org/travel-carbon-footprint>

ADDITIONAL VENUES



ADDITIONAL VENUES

As part of our **sustainable sites strategy**, we work to select and contract with venues that are committed to **sustainable operations, energy efficiency, and community impact**.

Frankfurt Marriot Hotel: Location of Association Focus reception as well as Hosted Buyer and attendee accommodation.

- ⊕ Powered by 42% renewable energy, a portion of which is generated onsite via solar panels.
- ⊕ Property has achieved Fairpflichtet certification from the German Convention Bureau. The Fairpflichtet Sustainability Code is a voluntary commitment to corporate responsibility for sustainability and the production of events.⁵

Kap Europa: The location of Association Focus at IMEX Frankfurt.⁴

- ⊕ Powered by 100% renewable electricity purchased from Mainova AG.
- ⊕ Property includes 1,000 square meter green roof which introduces natural cover and reduces the carbon footprint of the building by helping to mitigate urban "heat island effect"- the refraction of the sun's rays off paved surfaces.



Adina Hotel Frankfurt Westend: Accommodation for the IMEX team.

- ⊕ Property powered by approximately 27% renewable energy.
- ⊕ Food is recovered from breakfasts and restaurant operations and passed on to local food bank "Frankfurt Tafel".



4. <https://www.messefrankfurt.com/frankfurt/de/locations/kongress-event-locations/kapeuropa/nachhaltigkeit.html>

5. <https://www.fairpflichtet.de/en/home-english/>



85%

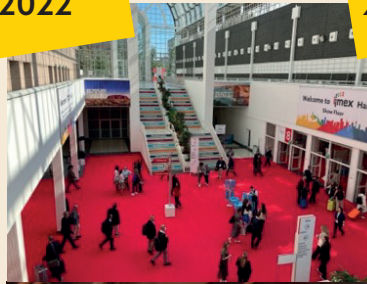
less print production in Hall 9 overall compared to 2022.

Environmental design and exhibitor engagement

We work hard to minimize materials entering the waste stream through our design decisions and long-term collaboration with suppliers and exhibitors.



2022



2023



ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND EXHIBITOR ENGAGEMENT

2023 highlights:

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN:

Carpet reduced by 909 square meters compared to previous show averages.

The Galleria between Hall 8 (our exhibition space) and Hall 9 (our learning area) was uncarpeted for the first time.

⇒ Emissions savings here are the equivalent to **45 standard car journeys from Messe Frankfurt to IMEX HQ in Brighton, UK.**⁶

Use of **digital projection** in significant sections of the Hosted Buyer Lounge eliminated the need for large format printing and graphics.

Our **three-year usage signage & branding strategy** achieved:

⇒ **85% less print production** in Hall 9 overall compared to 2022.

⇒ Our three learning zones - Ocean, Forest, Canyon - contained **no new printed signage**.

EXHIBITOR ENGAGEMENT:

⇒ As part of our ongoing exhibitor engagement and sustainability education efforts there's a **substantial decrease in single-use "build & burn" booths**, with an estimated **38% reduction** reported compared to 2019 levels.



6. <https://circularecology.com/embodied-carbon-footprint-database.html>

WASTE MANAGEMENT

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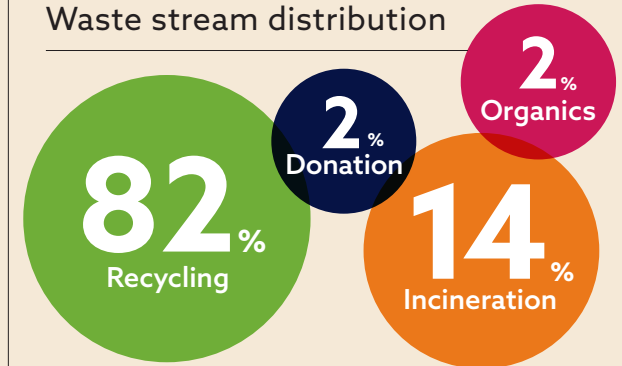
The World Economic Forum recognizes Germany as the country averaging the **highest recycling rate of any country at 56.1%**⁷ with one of the most effective waste management systems on the planet.

Did you know?

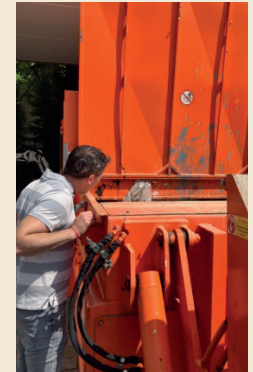
IMEX and Messe Frankfurt teams performed **waste-oriented back of house audits** at Messe Frankfurt, key hotel properties, Alte Oper (site of the IMEX Gala Dinner), as well as an in-person site visit to the **Meilo Recycling Facility** in Gernsheim, Germany, to learn more about processes, technology, and materials accepted in the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region.



IMEX Frankfurt 2023 Waste stream distribution



In 2023, IMEX Frankfurt diverted 86% of all event waste, pre-incineration, into material recycling, organics and donations channels. Germany then “thermally recycles” and converts any residual waste into energy, through incineration.



IMEX Frankfurt 2023 event diversion:



7. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/12/germany-recycles-more-than-any-other-country>

WASTE MANAGEMENT

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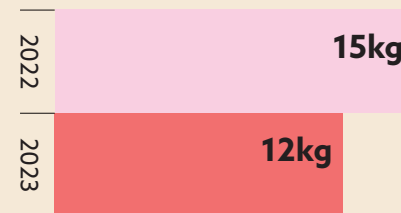
IMEX Frankfurt year on year

- ➔ Direct recycling remained consistent between 2022 and 2023.
- ➔ 86.8% in 2022 vs. 86.4% in 2023.
- ➔ Recycling rate is 30.3% higher than the average in Germany.
- ➔ Nearly 1,000 square meters of carpet was removed from the Galleria at Messe Frankfurt in 2023 - this eliminated a large volume of material from the waste stream.

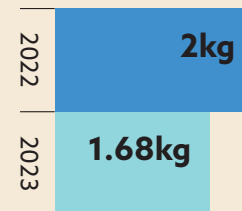
26%

Onsite attendance rose in 2023 by 26%, with a **total of 2,461 more attendees** onsite. **However, despite this increase, the total waste and waste incinerated per person reduced substantially:**

Total waste per attendee

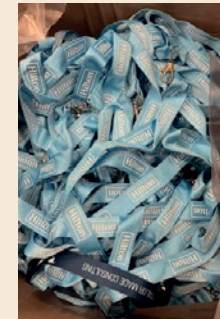


Waste incinerated per attendee



91 KGS

IMEX Frankfurt **recovered an estimated 91 kgs** of name badges, lanyards, and holders through TerraCycle Europe.



Event waste distribution

33%

Waste from move in

67%

Waste in show + move out



Did you know?

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

FOOD AND BEVERAGE



The menu at IMEX Frankfurt is designed to achieve four key sustainability goals:

- 1 Reduce single use plastic
- 2 Reduce carbon emissions through menu choices
- 3 Support the regional economy through locally-sourced items
- 4 Offer delicious and nourishing food!



100%
of all to-go hot cups
featured compostable
paper lids



Hosted Buyer Lounge and restaurant outlets offered **reusable crockery**.

Plumbed water stations at Messe Frankfurt allowed attendees to refill their **reusable bottles** on site.



Did you know?

Frankfurt menus featured Fair Trade Darboven Coffee, Gschwendner Organic Teas, as well as Hassia Mineral Water from nearby Bad Vilbel, fruit and vegetables from Hanau & Oberrad, and Schwälbchen dairy products from Bad Sulzbach - all located in close proximity to Messe Frankfurt.



Did you know?

Food and Beverage



All of the 3,447 meals purchased at Messe Frankfurt restaurant outlets Centro and Granello utilized **reusable crockery and utensils**. This saved an estimated:

1,158 kg

of materials from entering the event waste stream.

22,419 kg

of carbon emissions. **That's the equivalent of 51 barrels of oil.**

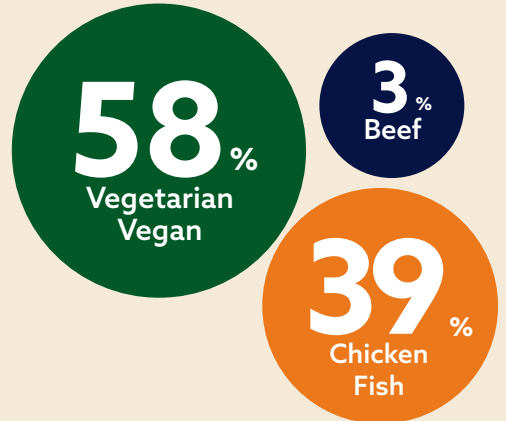


FOOD AND BEVERAGE

MENU DESIGN MAKES A DIFFERENCE. Beef options were reduced to less than 5% of the IMEX menus.

58% of Hall 9 food cart menu sales were vegetarian or vegan. Vegetarian meals can offer a lower carbon option that reduces the upstream emissions of production and manufacture by an estimated 90% per serving.⁸

Hall 9 food truck meals purchased by protein



8: Our World in Data - Greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of food product. <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/ghg-per-kg-pooe>

Did you know?



ENERGY AND WATER

ENERGY AND WATER

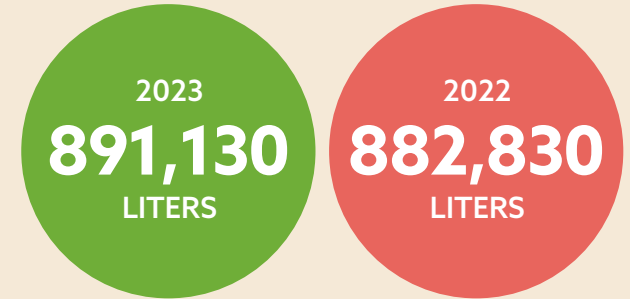


Despite a 26% increase in attendance for 2023, water consumption at IMEX Frankfurt rose by only 1% compared to 2022 levels.

In addition, despite a 22% increase in Exhibitors, electricity consumption decreased by 12% compared to 2022.

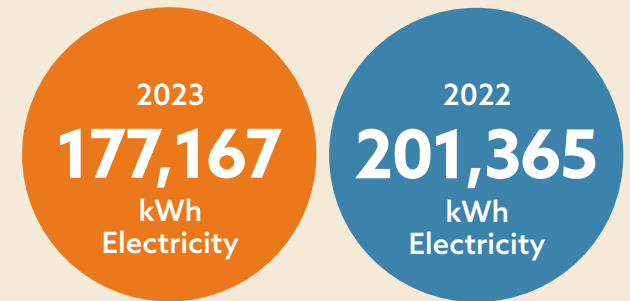


Venue Water Consumption (L)



These figures are a testament to Messe Frankfurt's **operational efficiency**. In addition, the abundance of **natural light** in the Atrium and Hall 8 **significantly reduced demand for overhead lighting** during daytime hours.

Venue Electricity Consumption (kWh)

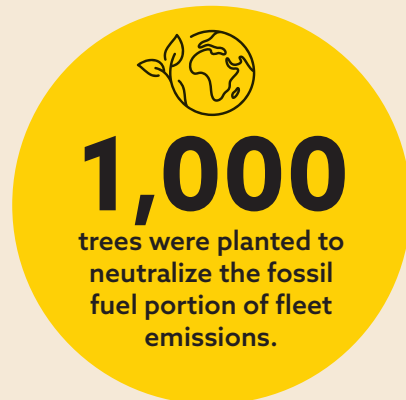


GROUND TRANSPORTATION

One of the most exciting new developments for IMEX Frankfurt 2023 was the use of **4 fully electric buses**.

These e-buses made continuous circuits from **Messe Frankfurt to the Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof**, one of the largest rail transit centers in all of Europe.

Of the 37,500 km traveled by IMEX Frankfurt contracted ground transport, **an estimated 1,000 km were powered electrically**. While commercial bus electrification is still an emerging technology, it expands the lower carbon transportation options (e-bus and rail) in our event transport mix.



Did you know?

- ➔ Introducing **IMEX e-buses** saved an estimated **103 kg CO₂e** ⁹
- ➔ **1,000 trees were planted** to neutralize the fossil fuel portion of fleet emissions, bringing the total number of trees planted since 2022 to 2,000.
- ➔ By helping to facilitate direct linkage with low carbon rail, it's possible to travel 24,390 km on 1 MT of carbon compared to just 3,922 km via air travel ¹⁰ – **that's 84% more km per MT.**

9. Defra UK and Hanse Mondial 10. <https://ourworldindata.org>

Did you know?



The Alte Oper (Old Opera House), site of the IMEX Frankfurt Gala Dinner, sources 30% of its energy from renewable energy sources. It also features kitchen organics recovery, glass collection, and recycling programs.

100%

meals served on reusable service ware. Efforts here saved an estimated 177 kg waste from entering the venue waste stream. **That's the weight of around 39 bowling balls!**¹¹

160 kms

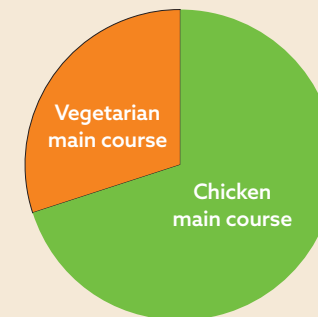
Menu carefully selected with a focus on **local producers within 160 km of Frankfurt**. These include Bickus Hessen organic chicken, vegetables from the Oberrader gardens, as well as wines from the Reingau Region.



By sourcing chicken instead of beef for the Gala Dinner meat option, this saved an estimated **3,815 kg CO₂e** in upstream embodied supply chain and production emissions.¹²

32%

of diners **selected the low-carbon vegetarian option** at the Gala Dinner.



11. Assumes 4.5 kg weight of average bowling ball 12. <https://eventfoodcarboncalculator.com/>



Did you know?

See what IMEX Frankfurt Exhibitors are doing to advance event sustainability

The Frankfurt Convention Bureau delivered all booth materials and supplies by bike to reduce fossil fuel consumption.

The Hilton booth invited attendees to vote for projects to receive 5,000 EUR worth of carbon credits. The winning project was "Making Climate Impact In Florida".¹³

IHG Hotels' Journey To Tomorrow attendee sustainable pledge activation, invited participants to pledge action in the following categories: people, community, carbon and energy, waste, and water.

SUSTAINABLE EXHIBITING

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Maritz Global Events' Sustainability Challenge powered by Heka Health, gave attendees the opportunity to participate in a sustainability-focus scavenger hunt to discover the event's sustainability practices as well as count their steps during their time in Frankfurt. Congratulations to Team New Zealand for winning the competition. Participants in Maritz Global Events' Sustainability Challenge walked over

2,958,585

steps in 2 days!

13. <https://www.climecogreen.com/project/making-climate-impact-in-florida/>



MATERIAL DONATIONS

MATERIAL DONATIONS

Donating material we're unable to reuse is central to our sustainability and community impact strategy.



782 kg

of Hall 9 Turf donated to **Naturgarten e.V.**



40 kg

of blankets, t-shirts, and office supplies to **Frankfurt Bahnhofsmission.**



0 kg

of exhibitor furniture left behind during move out.



782 kg

water bottles donated to **Messe Frankfurt** and **Frankfurt Convention Bureau.**



120 kg

or more of floral donated to **Messe Frankfurt** staff and **ShoutOutLoud.**

Engaging our stakeholders and benefiting our destination community is at the core of our mission and values. See below for 2023 highlights:

58

young hospitality, event or tourism management students participated in the **IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum**.

61

attendees participated in the **IMEX Frankfurt People & Planet Pledge** taking significant sustainability steps before, during and after their time at the show.

28

Exhibitors signed the **IMEX Frankfurt People & Planet** contributing to a more sustainable event.

EDUCATION, ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY IMPACT



EDUCATION, ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY IMPACT



IMEX Frankfurt charitable support helped to benefit the following organizations in the Frankfurt Rhine-Main region:



€1,000

Stiftung Waisenhaus Orphanage

ShoutOutLoud

Caritasverband Frankfurt

EQUITY AND WELL-BEING



EQUITY AND WELL-BEING

Supporting event equity – speaker balance¹⁴

58% female

42% male

261

attendees joined the She Means Business education sessions.



Supporting education and literacy

105

attended AVoice4All sessions.

Supporting attendee wellbeing

298

attendees participated in Be Well Lounge sessions.

200+

attendees participated in the IMEXrun.



¹⁴. Due to data privacy, IMEX cannot access gender information speakers identify with when they register, so these figures are based on name and biography

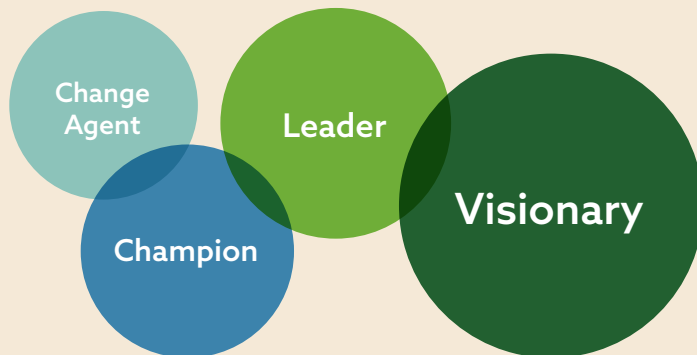
EVENT SCORING

For the second consecutive year IMEX Frankfurt achieved the highest tier of **MeetGreen's MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0.**



This tool allows organizations to benchmark their progress against their own efforts and other events of similar size and type. **Categories assessed include: Destination, accommodations, venues, catering, transport, exhibits, AV, marcoms, CSR, and measurement/reporting.**

For the 2023 event cycle MeetGreen® has awarded **IMEX Frankfurt** the highest level of achievement: **Sustainable Event Visionary.**



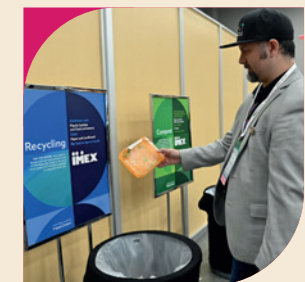
A SUSTAINABLE EVENT VISIONARY:

“Leads within their own industry, prioritizes measurement and works to move the sustainability dial. Researches and develops new initiatives to improve environmental performance and uses the organization's buying power to drive change with venues and vendors.”





- ➔ **Exploring reuse and recycling options for event textile fabrics**, banners and silicone edge graphics.
- ➔ **Encouraging participation in low carbon rail transit options** serving Messe Frankfurt, particularly from European attendees.
- ➔ **Piloting food donation with Messe Frankfurt food outlets**. While wastage is low, German laws and operational considerations have made donation here a challenge.
- ➔ **Enhanced sustainability focus on sponsor driven spaces** - exploring ways to limit excessive branding while still achieving necessary recognition and exposure.
- ➔ **Setting 15 - 25% reduction target** for use of adhesive decal (stickers) in Messe Frankfurt Galleria.
- ➔ Better understanding of the food waste collection process from Hall 9 restaurants, Centro and Granello, to **ensure waste is recovered and diverted**.
- ➔ **Sourcing carpet with recycled content**.





Thank you



IMEX Frankfurt would like to thank our valued long-time **venue and supplier** partners who have made our 2023 **sustainability impacts and initiatives** possible:

- ④ **Accente**
- ④ **Eventence**
- ④ **Hanse Mondial**
- ④ **Fairconstruction**
- ④ **Fairservices**
- ④ **Messe Frankfurt**
- ④ **Frankfurt Convention Bureau**

Prepared by:

MeetGreen®

www.meetgreen.com