

# Sustainable Event Report

## IMEX America 2022

Prepared by | MeetGreen\*

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS



## Educate:

attendees, exhibitors, and hosted buyers on sustainable best practices

## Environmental footprint:

measure and decrease our event's environmental footprint

## Give back:

to our destination communities



OUR GOALS

IMEX America is the largest trade show in the US for the global incentive travel, meetings and events industry.

Our award-winning show brings the meetings industry together to do a year's worth of business under one roof. Suppliers and buyers from every sector of the meetings industry come together at IMEX, held at Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas.

It's free to attend, and our four-day program offers specialist education, networking, and much more, on and off the trade show floor.

WHO WE ARE

# ABOUT US

2022 stats



**Dates:**

October 10-13, 2022

**Venue:**

Mandalay Bay Convention Center

**Location:**

Las Vegas, NV

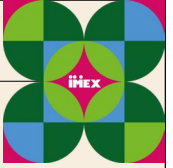
**Attendance:**



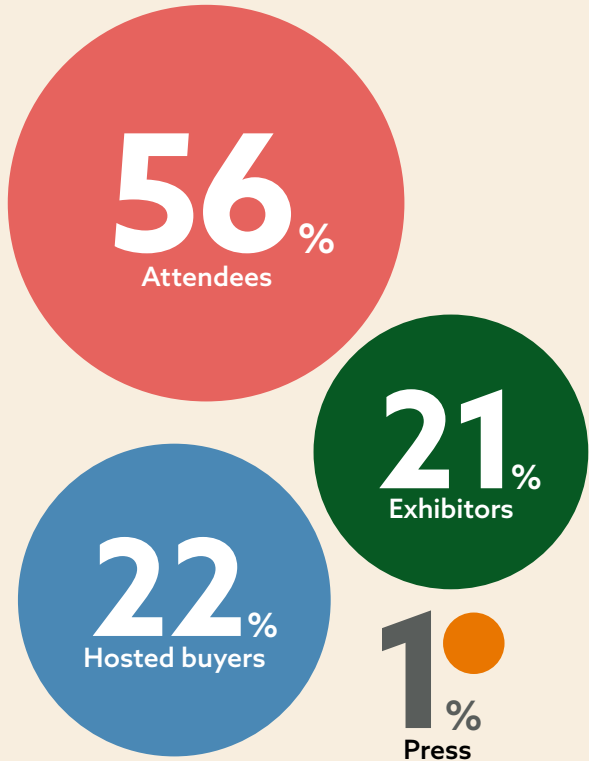
12,068

from

180<sup>+</sup> countries



**Attendance overview**



## Our mission



Carina Bauer,  
CEO, IMEX

I'm pleased to share our sustainability report for IMEX America 2022. I'd like to recognise the efforts that went into making this show a sustainable success. From the people working behind the scenes, sorting and diverting waste from landfill; to our green stakeholder team of suppliers and IMEX teamsters closely collaborating to make positive progress. And thank you to every attendee and exhibitor that supported our People and Planet pledge, refilled their water bottle, or simply opted for a waterwise meal.

Highlights from this report include, recovering 92% of event waste by diverting it into recycling, composting or donation channels - meaning we meet the threshold for a zero-waste event. By offering water refill stations and aluminium water bottles, we eliminated 19,499 single-use plastic bottles. All compostable

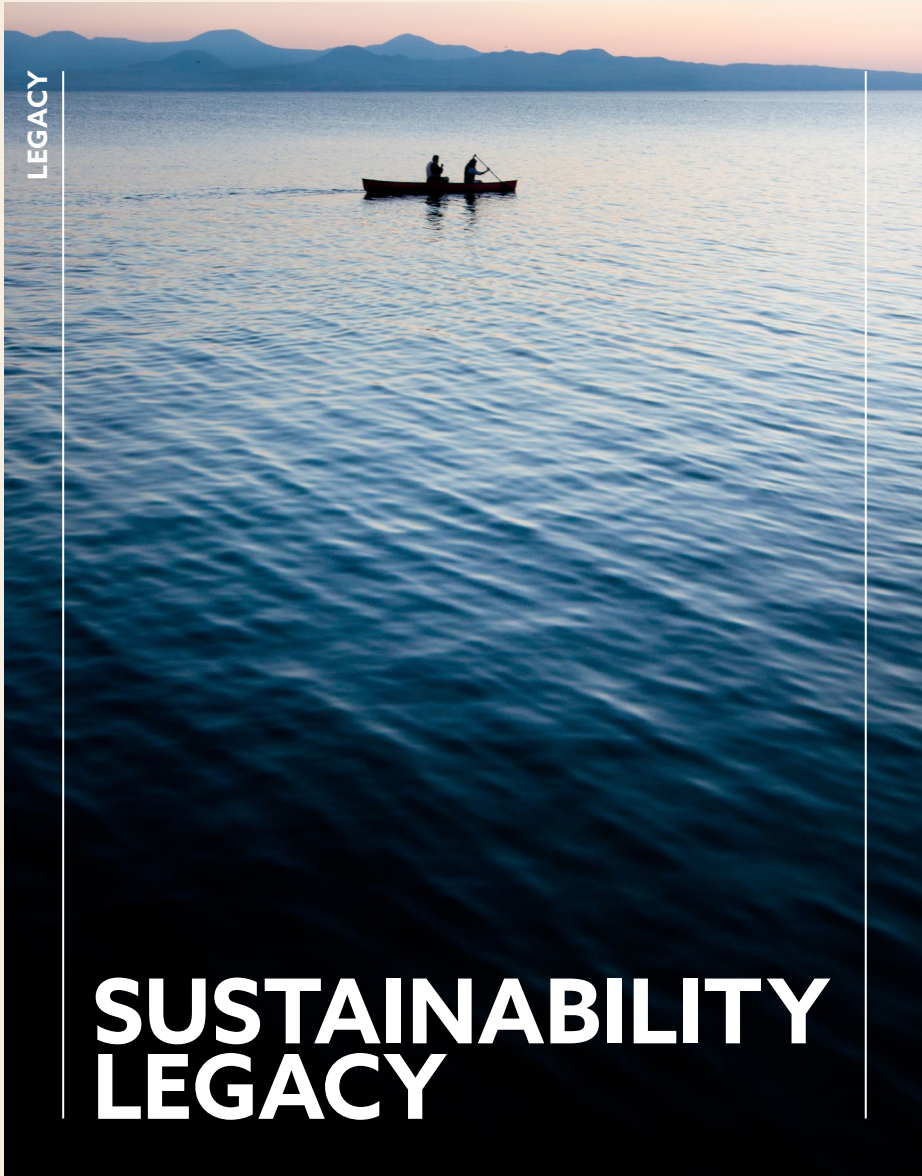
serviceware was hand-separated and routed to Terra Firma Organics to be composted into topsoil. We also piloted pc/nametag's badge holder take-back program, recycling approximately 1,350 badge holders.

81% of event carpet was returned directly to inventory for reuse and our food court was uncarpeted, saving an estimated 1,898kg of CO2. We're thrilled to have received MeetGreen's highest level of achievement - Visionary - based on the MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0. I hope sharing what we've learned helps you to put some of these ideas into practice at your own events. Dive into this report for all the details.

Finally, a shout out to our partners, isla, who are supporting us with the detailed measurement of our event carbon footprint, part of our commitment to the [Net Zero Carbon Events](#) industry initiative and our net zero roadmap. And a special thank you to Eric Wallinger at MeetGreen®, our sustainability consultants for preparing this report and for helping us to go further and do better every year."



OUR MISSION



**606,832<sub>kg</sub>**

of event materials recycled since 2012

**130,053<sub>kg</sub>**

organics composted since 2012

**49,849<sub>kg</sub>**

of event materials donated since 2012

**86%**  
average landfill diversion rate since 2012

**14,426**

name badges donated since 2013

**6,358**

Clean the World kits assembled since 2013

**793,338<sub>kg</sub>**

of event materials diverted from landfill since 2012

**6,603<sub>kg</sub>**

of food donated since 2012





**7,223** kg

of tables, chairs, desks, counters, carpet, rugs, shelves, meter board signage, banner fabrics, electronics, and floral donated to the Las Vegas community

**191,258** kWh

of MGM-generated renewable solar energy powered event activities at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center

**100%**

of People & Planet Village hard-wall construction fabricated with zero waste sustainable substrates

**91%**

of all IMEX printed signage was reused, repurposed, or recycled

**92%**

of onsite waste was successfully diverted into composting, donation, and recycling channels

**19,499** bottles

of single-use plastic eliminated event-wide

**2,150** badge holders

recovered through piloting first-ever pc/nametag badge manufacturer take-back recycling program

**113** kg

of event food donated to the Las Vegas Community

**261** attendees

joined **She Means Business** education sessions

**6,147** kg  
of IMEX America cups, Leafware, and fiber products were recovered and used as feedstock in local soil amendment



# 97

sessions were offered under the 'Respect For People and Planet' education track

## Education and engagement

A more environmentally sustainable events industry begins with education. Engaging, educating, and inspiring others are key objectives of the IMEX America onsite experience.



## 22 attendees

gained first-hand insights on the role renewable solar energy plays for both MGM resorts and **IMEX America** through an offset tour of the 100-megawatt MGM "Mega Solar Array," during Smart Monday, powered by MPI.

## 84 talented

emerging industry leaders were mentored on current topics in the events industry, including sustainability themed programming during the IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum.

## 155 IMEX America attendees

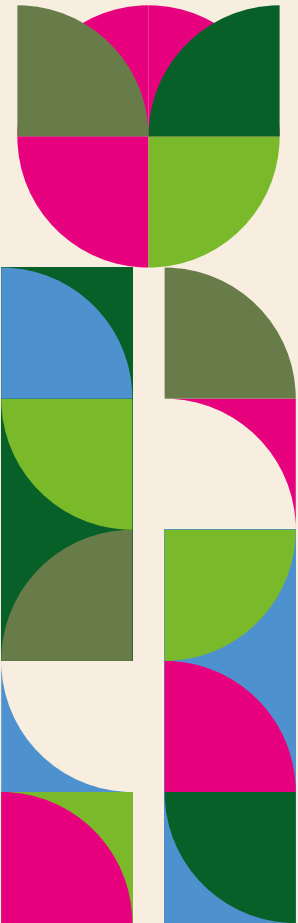
supported people and planet by pledging to champion social equity and environmental responsibility at the show, by taking the People & Planet Pledge.

## 112 booths

exhibited more sustainably by committing to actions outlined in the People & Planet Pledge.



## Our venue and general service contractor



“ It's a privilege to partner with IMEX America. When we collaborate with thought-leaders like IMEX, it helps advance our company's work in environmental and social sustainability as well as our industry. We look forward to our continued partnership to drive positive change for our planet and communities.”

**Brittany Price, Director of Sustainable Operations, MGM Resorts**



“ As we all strive to be better stewards of our planet, GES could not find a better partner to showcase our mutual efforts to continuously improve upon our sustainable efforts. This year was no different, as we introduced a unique organic element, suspending real plants from the ceiling, in the Hosted Buyer Lounge. As leaders in the events industry, IMEX America and GES welcome the challenge of environmental responsibility.”

**Rob Noble, Director of National Accounts, GES**



PARTNERSHIPS

### ➔ EXHIBITING SUSTAINABLY AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

One of the most exciting developments in recent years has been the degree to which IMEX exhibitors are embracing sustainability initiatives in their own organizations and showcasing them at IMEX America. In 2022:



**Maritz Global Events' Sustainability Challenge**, presented by Caesars Entertainment, powered by Heka Health, featured an opportunity to learn more about the sustainability efforts at IMEX America. It gave attendees the opportunity to participate in a sustainability-focused scavenger hunt throughout the show floor. Participants discovered sustainability practices embedded into the experience and counted their steps during their stay in Las Vegas. As a group the Challenge participants walked over 4,200,184 steps in two days, which is equivalent to reducing the fossil fuel emissions from a standard automobile driving from Reno to Las Vegas



**The Encore Global "Break Free" activation** placed sustainability front and center at IMEX America 2022 and highlighted opportunities for enhanced event hybrid connectivity. Plus, the elimination of all giveaway 'swag' items and booth construction from 100% rental and owned inventory.



pc/nametag



Featured **IMEX America** as the official 'soft-launch' of its plastic name badge holder manufacture take-back and recycling program that will be scaling up across 2023. It also provided **100% organic cotton** name badge lanyards for all event attendees.

Accor Hotels 



Announced the elimination of all guest experience single-use plastics by the end of 2022.

## Food and beverage

Food and beverage is a critical factor in sustainability. Meals and associated serviceware closely intersect procurement, supply chain, waste management, and participant well-being. Choices made menu-wide can have major savings 'upstream' in terms of raising, manufacturing, and producing items before they even reach the event.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row!

For the second year in a row, **IMEX America** ensured each food outlet contained at least one vegetarian/vegan option and a waterwise and low carbon option. Did you know if every attendee selected just one 'low carbon' main course during the show, we'd save the emissions equivalent to 'driving' a standard fossil fuel automobile the distance from the IMEX office in Brighton, UK, to Las Vegas 18 times!

## 7,516 bottles

of single-use PET plastic were eliminated at **IMEX America's** controlled concessions at Mandalay Bay Convention Center. **100%** of water bottles and soda cans sold were entirely aluminum, with items hand-sorted from the waste stream back of house, on-property, to ensure recycling was fully optimized.



**100%**  
of water bottles  
and soda cans sold were  
entirely aluminum



## 7,550 bottles

Plumbed Flowater stations saved an additional **7,550** single-use plastic bottles. The manufacturer reports an estimated **7,570** liters of water saved simply by not producing new bottles in the manufacturing process.

## 19,499 bottles

**4,433** single-use plastic water bottles were eliminated through MGM venue water stations. This equals **19,499** bottles of single-use plastic eliminated event-wide! When placed end to end, these bottles would form a continuous length of plastic stretching from Mandalay Bay Convention Center all the way to Drai's Nightclub - the site of MPI's Rendezvous event.



## Food and beverage (continued)

In an exciting example of strategic partnerships and taking existing initiatives to the next level, the World Wildlife Fund's 'Hotel Kitchen' program sponsored a Misfit Juice Bar in the exhibit hall. This raised awareness of reducing food waste in events, by making juices from imperfect produce. The Hotel Kitchen sponsorship offered free samples of four 'upcycled' 100% juice blends. Larger bottles were available for purchase. 128 were sold and were a delicious way to creatively reduce event food waste.



# 113<sub>kg</sub>

In addition to reducing waste at source, **IMEX America** recovered and donated **113kg** of food to the Three-Square Food Bank, translating to about **208** meals reaching those in need. Given the cash-concessions food outlet model of the show, less food is wasted inherently compared to traditional buffet settings, as most meals are prepared in small batches or at the time of order.

# 18,249<sub>kg</sub>

Show food that cannot be reduced at source, or donated to humans, is routed to Las Vegas Livestock to feed pigs. Having an organics program of this magnitude captures high volumes of kitchen scraps and meal prep waste, with much of this material quite heavy due to its inherent water weight. **18,249kg** of event material was sent to Las Vegas Livestock instead of to landfill.



# 100%

We're always on the lookout for new and innovative products. Solus water bottles, featured at Inspiration Hub sessions, are made of **100%** aluminum, but are then paired with a recovery and reuse program that is located 10 minutes from the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, where they are cleaned for reuse and refill. When successfully executed, these bottles can save additional upstream resources by combining environmentally preferable materials with design for reuse, instead of simply recycling alone.



Waste management is a process of continuous improvement and refinement. Through year-round conversations with our supplier team, IMEX works to find more environmentally preferable substrates as well as innovative sustainable design strategies. In areas we have less direct control, such as exhibitor booth construction, the show floor, and outside food and beverage, we're committed to education and enrollment through the IMEX America Sustainable Exhibiting Guide and the People & Planet Pledge.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## 92%

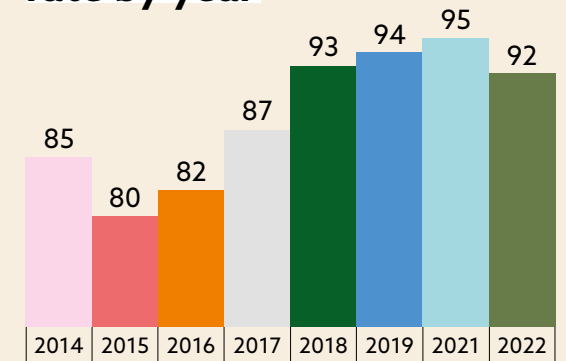
For 2022, the goal was to divert more than **90%** of event waste from landfill. This cycle IMEX successfully recovered **92%** of its waste with only **8%** not being able to be reused, recycled, composted, or donated.

**92%**  
IMEX America 2022 meets the threshold and achievement criteria for a Zero Waste Event!

## Zero waste

With its landfill diversion rate above **90%**, **IMEX America 2022** meets the threshold and achievement criteria for a Zero Waste Event!

### Landfill diversion rate by year



IMEX America 2022 meets the threshold and achievement criteria for a Zero Waste Event!



As IMEX America continues to optimize operations at its new home at Mandalay Bay Convention Center, we used 2022 as an opportunity to visit and audit the Republic Services Apex Landfill that serves event activities. One of the most exciting features of this site is that it captures and treats its methane gas which then renewably powers nearly 11,000 homes in Southern Nevada.<sup>(2)</sup>

WASTE MANAGEMENT

# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## Did you know?

All compostable service-ware at **IMEX America** is hand separated back of house and routed to Terra Firma Organics, just 20 minutes away in northeast Las Vegas, where it's composted into high quality topsoil and sold locally.<sup>(3)</sup> **6,147kg** of IMEX America cups, Leafware, and fiber products were used as feedstock in local soil amendment in 2022.

**6,147** kg



of IMEX America cups, Leafware, and fiber products were used as feedstock in local soil amendment in 2022

## IMEX America 2022 Waste stream distribution



## Badge back



Through **IMEX** badge-back bin recovery, an estimated **2,150** badge holders and lanyards were collected through ambassador bins.<sup>(4)</sup> Of this total approximately **1,350** plastic badge holders were sent to pc/nametag for recycling via its first-time manufacturer take-back program debuting at **IMEX America**. An additional **800** badges were donated to Operation Underground Railroad (OUR) for reuse in their upcoming events. All lanyards were donated by Mandalay Bay Convention Center to its network of community outlets.

## Material donations

Given the substantial role the IMEX America show floor plays in terms of our event's environmental footprint, both at the square footage and usage levels, material recovery and donation is one of the most critical strategies for event waste management efforts. This component becomes doubly important given IMEX America's limited control of material and end-use plans of its event exhibitors.



**7,223**kg

In 2022, **7,223kg** of tables, chairs, desks, counters, carpet, rugs, shelves, meter board signage, banner fabrics, electronics, and floral, which were recovered and donated to Mandalay Bay Convention Center's charities.

**57,072**kg

Since 2012 a total of **57,072kg** of event materials have helped benefit those in need in Clark County, NV. That is equivalent to the weight of two **IMEX America** charter buses or **388** baby elephants! <sup>(5)</sup>

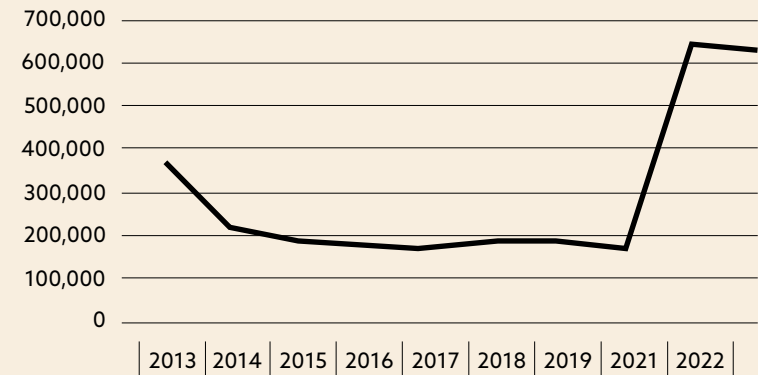
## Water and energy

Nearly all indoor water use in the Mandalay Bay Convention Center is related to lavatory use and food preparation. In addition, the biggest determinant in onsite energy use is related to variations in HVAC intensity (heating and cooling) driven by weather conditions onsite. As a result, **IMEX America** has limited ability to directly control both its onsite water and energy consumption. In response, we're committed to measuring both water and energy use annually to monitor consumption baseline trends and review with the venue to identify potential opportunities for ongoing improvement.

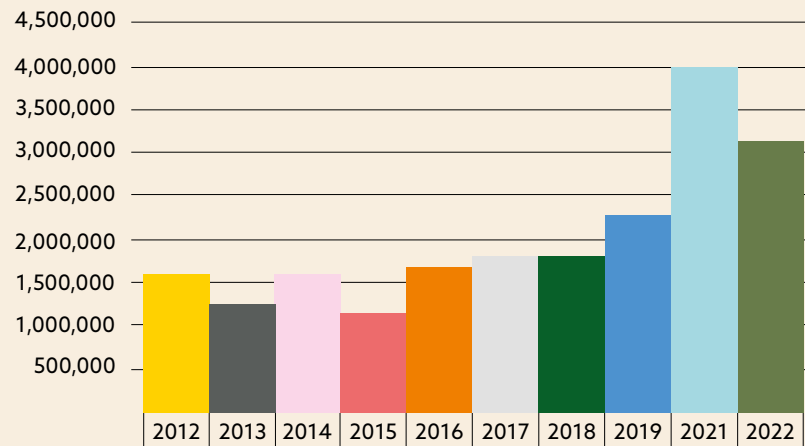
Of the **637,527 kWh** of electricity consumed in 2022 an estimated **191,258 kWh** came directly from renewable solar energy generated by MGM. That's equivalent to saving the emissions from approximately **192 barrels** of crude oil consumed.

←  
Did you know?

## Covention Center energy consumption (kWh)



## Covention Center water consumption (liters)



Nearly every drop of water used inside Mandalay Bay Convention Center and MGM Resorts Las Vegas is treated and returned to its source in Lake Mead thanks to Southern Nevada Water Authority infrastructure.

←  
Did you know?

## Carbon emissions

In 2022, **IMEX** embarked on the next phase of their emissions accounting and management journey. From 2012-2021 we benchmarked the show's carbon footprint with a focus on direct onsite emissions sources.

IMEX America has conducted an even more robust inventory of greenhouse gas impacts that includes numerous indirect and upstream emissions, such as the embodied emissions of menu food production and materiality, as well as attendee, exhibitor, and staff travel. This 2022 strategic shift links closely to the same accounting methodology utilized at **IMEX Frankfurt 2022**.



With the inclusion of complex and nuanced indirect emissions related to supply chain, transport, and materiality across an event with such a large exhibitor base as IMEX America, we have been thrilled to utilize the Trace tool by isla as a critical piece in our accounting process. Carbon emissions reporting from TRACE will be published as a separate report.

CARBON EMISSIONS



## Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge



IMEX America is committed to long-term reduction and mitigation of its event emissions and is an early signatory of the **Net Zero Carbon Events Pledge**. Given ongoing efforts to expand our reporting scope, we anticipate a likely increase in reported emissions in the next few cycles as we continue to further identify and aggregate data from new sources across the full spectrum of our event production.





## Carbon emissions (continued)

**IMEX America** recognizes its events have an emissions impact on our planet. We're looking forward to sharing our long-term reduction and compensation strategies and will be using our ongoing reporting to help measure and disclose progress.

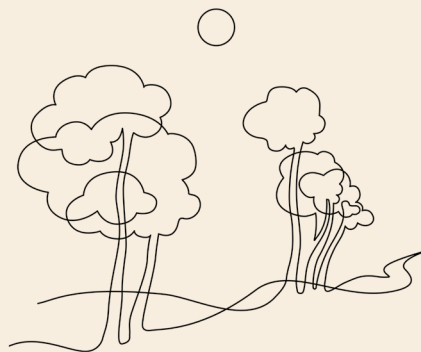
Given that significant resources are required to produce gatherings of our size, our vision has been to produce two thoughtfully curated events annually, **IMEX America** and **IMEX Frankfurt**, that are purposefully located near our major continental markets.

The hosted buyer model of convening has helped place IMEX events in a 'high ROI' attendance category for many attendees, hosted buyers, and exhibitors, since they are often able to consolidate their meetings to a greater degree than standard 'one-off' business travel trips.



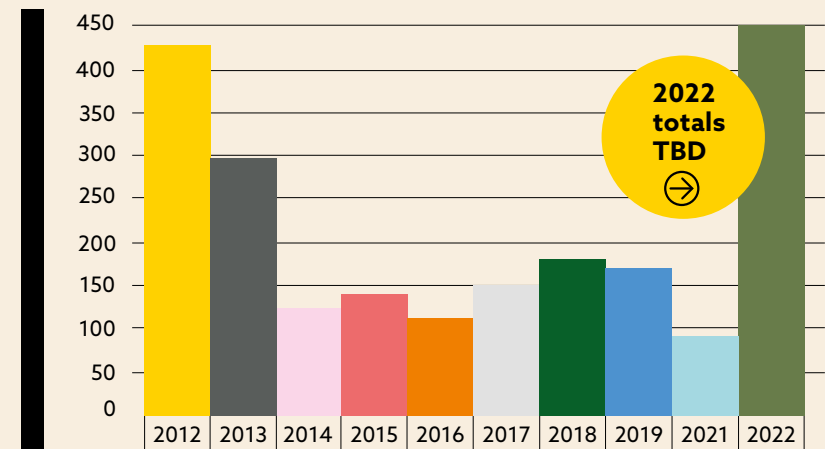
### Did you know?

According to the World Bank, flying business class emits about three times more carbon than flying economy.<sup>(8)</sup> If even **50** attendees opted for economy over business class when flying from the Eastern United States to Las Vegas it would reduce the emissions equivalent to the carbon sequestered by **437** tree seedlings grown for 10 years!<sup>(9)</sup>



➔ The **IMEX America** carbon footprint graph shows a significant increase in 2022, given the inclusion of indirect emissions and event travel (scope 3) as well as major methodical shifts this cycle.<sup>(7)</sup>

## IMEX America carbon footprint (metric tons)



Reduction and reuse is at the core of IMEX America's environmental design strategy. Less single-use items, often means less waste, transport, and upstream manufacturing.

REDUCTION AND REUSE



## CARPET, SIGNAGE AND GRAPHICS

91%

of all IMEX printed signage was reused, repurposed, or recycled. This is made possible by IMEX's commitment to re-use nearly all branded elements for a 3-year+ usage cycle

1,898<sub>kg</sub>

The Food Court in 2022 was designed to be uncarpeted, saving an estimated 111 square meters of carpeting that would have been sourced, installed, and transported. We estimate savings of **1,898kg** of CO<sub>2</sub>e through this action alone, which is equivalent to about **4.5 barrels** of oil consumed.

81%

of event carpet, **34,171** square meters, was returned directly to storage inventory in Las Vegas, ready for reuse in 2023.

100%

of the People & Planet Village's hard-wall construction was fabricated with high-density Neenah ConVerd paperboard instead of styrene-based substrates.

IMPACT



**POSITIVE  
IMPACT**

### Supporting event equity

**60%**

women, **40%** men speaker program parity

**261**

attendees joined the She Means Business education sessions



IMEX's Inclusive Language Guide developed and shared to support a more inclusive onsite experience

### Supporting education and literacy

**\$229**

donated by attendees, sponsoring **114** books purchased

### Supporting attendee wellbeing

**200**

enthusiastic attendees participated in the 2022 IMEXrun

**600**

attendees were rejuvenated at the Be Well Lounge



**61**

books donated by attendees to Spread The Word Nevada

**\$500**

donations for attendee drawings on the Piccles platform, sponsoring 250 books purchased



# SUPPORTING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



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## 600

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Clean the World hygiene kits were assembled by attendees. These kits are comprised of upcycled room amenities and soaps recovered from participating hotels.

Did you know?

**6,358 IMEX America** Clean the World kits have reached those in need since 2012.



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## \$1,000

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in financial resources donated to The Shade Tree, providing safe shelter to homeless and abused women and children in crisis.

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## \$1,000

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in financial resources donated to Noah's Animal House, dedicated to removing the 'No Pets Allowed' barriers at women's shelters.

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## \$1,000

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in financial resources donated to Opportunity Village benefitting their four employment training centers in Southern Nevada.



## Event performance

As an additional tool to help measure and assess event sustainability year over year, we use the MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0 to further drive continuous improvement and benchmark performance.

The calculator is divided into **13** key event categories and is one of the most rigorous and comprehensive of its kind. Scoring is in four tiered levels that progress from Change Agent to Champion, to Leader and ultimately to Visionary. This cycle MeetGreen is proud to present **IMEX America 2022** with the highest level of achievement: 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.”



Given IMEX America’s exemplary performance in waste management and registering a diversion rate from landfill of 92%, IMEX America 2022 also received recognition as a MeetGreen Zero Waste Verified Event to commemorate this achievement.

PERFORMANCE

# OPPORTUNITIES AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

OPPORTUNITIES

While **IMEX America** has successfully eliminated most PET plastics across its contracted food and beverage, opportunities remain for further reduction and elimination. The highest priority for 2023 is revisiting alternatives to single-use creamers and condiments mandated by venue in cash concessions settings.

There is an opportunity to successfully deploy **100%** paper 'compostable' coffee cup lids in disposable vessel settings. These lids were ordered in 2022 as a pilot initiative with MGM Resorts but did not arrive in time for the event due to supply-chain challenges.

Rethinking curved carpet cuts in the Hosted Buyer Lounge aisles could help to maximize ability to recover and reduce waste across installation and removal.

**IMEX America** eliminated nearly all paper attendee guides in 2021 and 2022 but could consider the feasibility of moving its Essential IMEX Guide and **IMEX America** Navigation Guide to digital-only formats.

Donations program logistics could continue to be refined so that **100%** of materials for pickup are removed from the show floor by 10am the morning of exhibit hall move-out. Given the high volume of exhibitors, contractors, and motorized equipment on the show floor during show-strike, charities would benefit from a consolidated single pickup point near vehicle entrance to Bayside Expo Hall.

**IMEX** could consider feasibility of adhesive decal reduction in Mandalay Bay Convention Center and North Convention Center pre-function spaces as well as removal of single-use branding on exterior of exhibit hall meeting pods.

**IMEX** could also discuss potential offset strategies for air travel as well as long-range plan for increasing renewable energy at Mandalay Bay Convention Center to **100%**.



# Thank you



THANK YOU



**IMEX America** would like to thank our valued venue and supplier teams. Event sustainability is built on the power of partnership, and these achievements would not be possible without your tremendous support, engagement, and commitment.



**MGM RESORTS**  
INTERNATIONAL™



# Appendix

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## APPENDIX

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1. Source: Maritz Global Events and EPA for equivalency
2. [swana.org](http://swana.org)
3. [made.vegas](http://made.vegas)
4. Badge totals were estimated by dividing individual (single) badge holder weight by total recovery weight
5. Assumes 23,040kg for weight of charter bus and 147kg for weight of baby elephant
6. [mgmresorts.com](http://mgmresorts.com)
7. IMEX America carbon footprint onsite footprint elements were derived from the Venetian Expo 2012-2019 and from the Mandalay Bay Convention Center 2021 and 2022
8. [reuters.com/business](http://reuters.com/business)
9. ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator and EPA