



IMEX America's

ECO-FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

Actions and Ideas to Use (and Pass Along)

2019 EVENT SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



Prepared by

MeetGreen®

THIS IS WHO WE ARE...

IMEX America is the biggest trade show in the United States for the global incentive travel, meetings and events industry. This annual, free, three-day experience also features a pre-show day of education and networking open to all.

It's a pretty huge deal! Here's a quick glimpse of some key stats, before we dive into the details.

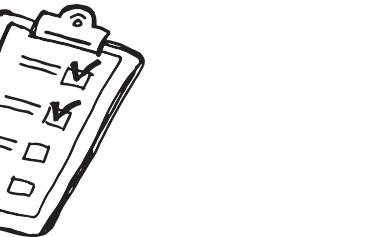
HELD AT THE SANDS EXPO IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, IMEX AMERICA 2019 WELCOMED:



13,500
PARTICIPANTS



3,500
EXHIBITORS
FROM 155 COUNTRIES



3,426
HOSTED BUYERS
FROM 68 COUNTRIES



132
PRESS ATTENDEES
FROM 14 COUNTRIES

...AND THIS IS WHAT WE STAND FOR

Carina Bauer, CEO, IMEX Group

"Ever since 2003, when we held our first trade show in Frankfurt, Germany, sustainability has been a mission close to our hearts. So, in 2011, when we launched IMEX America in Las Vegas, Nevada, we knew sustainability had to be front of mind.

During its growth over the years, we worked closely with our venue, the Sands Expo, as well as our other amazing partners, to deliver a sustainable trade show of which everyone involved can be proud. This year, as we move to our new venue, we're teaming up with Mandalay Bay to continue maximizing our efforts.

I'd like to say a special "thank you" to MeetGreen, IMEX's official sustainability consultants, who prepared the results you'll find in this report and continue to inspire and support us to do better each year.

Thanks to you, too, for taking time to read this report. We truly hope you unearth actions and ideas that can be put into practice at your own events. Trying just one could make a difference—and help drive planet-wide change. And please do share what you learn!"



MORE ABOUT OUR APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

We strive not only to lead through best practices in sustainability and local community support, but also to inspire every member of our industry to maximize their efforts.

Throughout this report, you'll see how activities at IMEX America 2019 closely support and follow the global priorities outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

WE'RE AIMING TO:

- **EDUCATE** attendees, exhibitors and hosted buyers about sustainable best practices
- Measure and decrease our show's **ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT**
- **GIVE BACK** to the Las Vegas community
- Increase our **ALIGNMENT WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS**, such as the current Events Industry Council (EIC) Sustainable Event Standards and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

THE GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. NO POVERTY



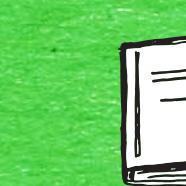
2. ZERO HUNGER



3. GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING



4. QUALITY EDUCATION



5. GENDER EQUALITY



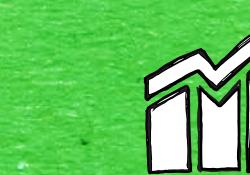
6. CLEAN WATER & SANITATION



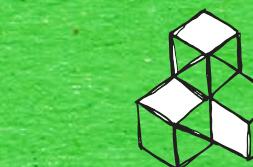
7. AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY



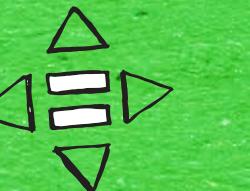
8. DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH



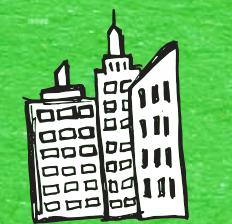
9. INDUSTRY, INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



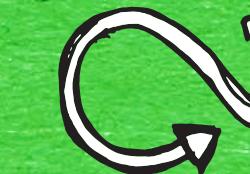
10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES



12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION



13. CLIMATE ACTION



14. LIFE BELOW WATER



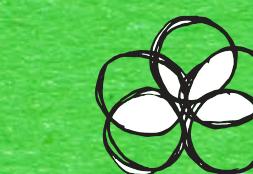
15. LIFE ON LAND



16. PEACE & JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



SUSTAINABILITY LEGACY

Our Talking Point, or central theme for IMEX America 2019, was **Imagination**. When imagining possibilities around show sustainability, our vision is for our efforts to transcend a single event seeking to continuously improve against itself—to participating in a global movement toward a thriving and sustainable planet.

IMEX AMERICA COUNTS:

472,356 kg

of show material recycled since 2012

81,927 kg

of organics composted since 2012

39,693 kg

of show material donated since 2012

600,348 kg

of combined material diverted since 2012

84 %

average landfill diversion rate since 2012

11,381

badge lanyards collected and donated since 2013

6,369 kg

of food donated since 2012

5,158 kg

Clean the World kits assembled since 2013

417

books donated to Spread the Word
Nevada since 2017



For the second year in a row, IMEX America collaborated closely with Sands Expo to create a time-lapse video of their outstanding back-of-house material recovery and recycling processes.

OUR COLLEAGUES ARE TALKING

As one of the leading General Service Contractors committed to sustainable efforts, it's always a pleasure working with the IMEX team, as they challenge us for each and every show to reach new heights of environmentally conscious practices that benefit the trade show industry and our one-and-only home, Planet Earth! ☺

Rob Noble
Director of National Accounts
GES

Collaborating with IMEX America and, in particular, their Future Leaders Forum has been very rewarding. It's so refreshing to see young faces interested in sustainability and its progression in the meetings, events and travel industry. ☺

Marc Komatsu, PE
Manager, Sustainability
Sands Expo, Venetian, Palazzo

Our Show Cleaning & Meeting Services team consistently rise to the challenge, raising the bar higher year after year. Many of these experiences transitioned into best practices and are now customary within our daily operations. ☺

Lisa Witherell, CMP, CEM
Director of Show Cleaning & Meeting Services
Sands Expo

2019 SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

94%

DIVERSION RATE FROM LANDFILL
—IMEX AMERICA'S HIGHEST EVER!

OUR FIRST SHOW AT THE
SANDS EXPO POWERED BY

100%

RENEWABLE ENERGY

100%

OF CARBON IMPACT OFFSET
FOR ALL HOSTED BUYER
TRAVEL AND ON-SITE SHUTTLES

56%

OF OUR MENU MET
SUSTAINABLE CRITERIA

1.7
KM

OF SINGLE-USE PET PLASTIC
STRAWS SAVED BY ELIMINATING
9,265 DRINKING STRAWS

12,000

SINGLE-USE, 16-OUNCE WATER
BOTTLES SAVED THROUGH WATER
REFILL STATIONS

98%

OF ALL CARPET, PADDING AND
VISQUEEN WAS EITHER SAVED
FOR REUSE OR RECYCLED

1ST

SHOW FOR WHICH WE
DID NOT CREATE AND GIVE AWAY
TOTE BAGS TO ALL ATTENDEES

2,591

BADGE-BACK LANYARDS
COLLECTED AND DONATED

368 kg

OF FOOD DONATED TO THE
LAS VEGAS COMMUNITY

13,145 kg

OF SHOW MATERIALS COLLECTED FOR
DONATION AND DISTRIBUTED TO THE
LOCAL PARTNERS BELOW



EIC STANDARDS

In IMEX America's role as the largest US trade show for the events industry, and as an educational resource provider, we embraced the opportunity to pilot test the brand-new Events Industry Council (EIC) Sustainable Event Standards.

During the show's previous eight years, we worked to achieve a **93% compliance with the APEX Standard**, which is being replaced by the new EIC Standards. IMEX America's 2018 APEX score remains one of the highest recorded across known events.

Pilot testing "round one" of the EIC Standards was beneficial to both us and the standards development team. In our first year assessing the show against the beta version, IMEX America scored a 90%, which would qualify at the **highest platinum tier rating**.

It's important to note that when IMEX America reconvenes, there will be a new and revised set of standards to score against from the EIC Committee, so 2019's data should be viewed in this fluid, unofficial and developmental context.

MEETGREEN CALCULATOR[®]

We use an additional method to assess our progress toward show sustainability: the MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0. This tool allows organizations to benchmark their progress against their own efforts and other events of similar size and type.

With more than 500 question combinations across 14 categories, it's one of the most rigorous assessments of its kind. Starting in 2019, MeetGreen transitioned from a numerical to a tiered scoring approach. The rating categories progress from Change Agent, to Champion, to Leader and to Visionary.

MeetGreen was proud to present IMEX America 2019 with its highest level of achievement: Visionary.

This ranks as one of only four Visionary badges awarded that year. By MeetGreen standards...

A VISIONARY:

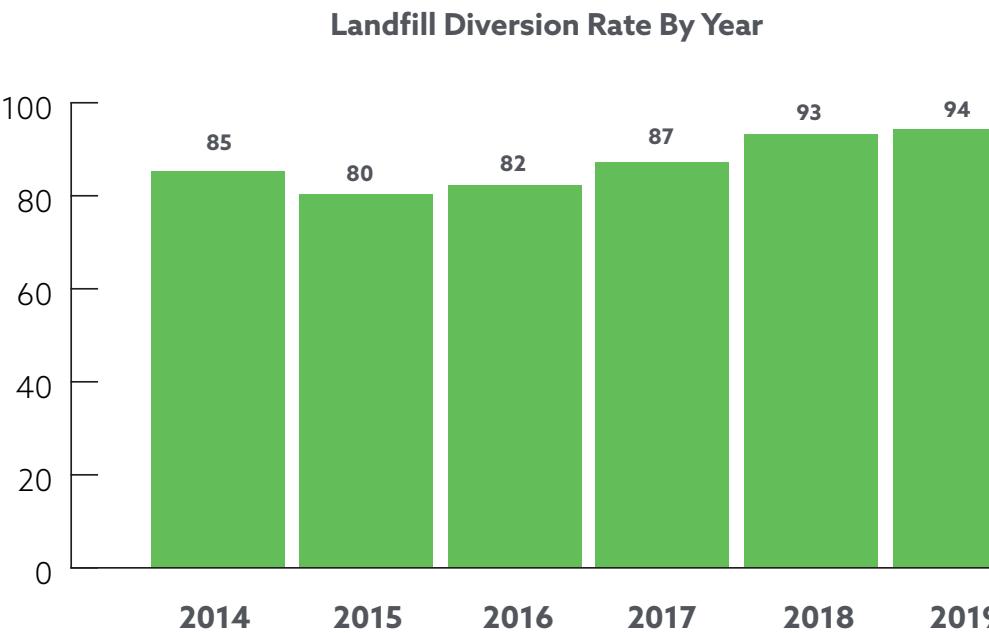
- Leads within their own industry, prioritizes measurement and works to move the sustainability dial
- Researches and develops new initiatives to improve environmental performance
- Uses the organization's buying power to drive change with venues and vendors



SHOW WASTE

This is one of the areas we work most diligently toward reducing. While the total volume of our overall waste stream rose slightly in 2019, our diversion rate—the percentage we kept from the landfill through recycling, compost and donation channels—**improved and increased by 1% to reach 94% this cycle.**

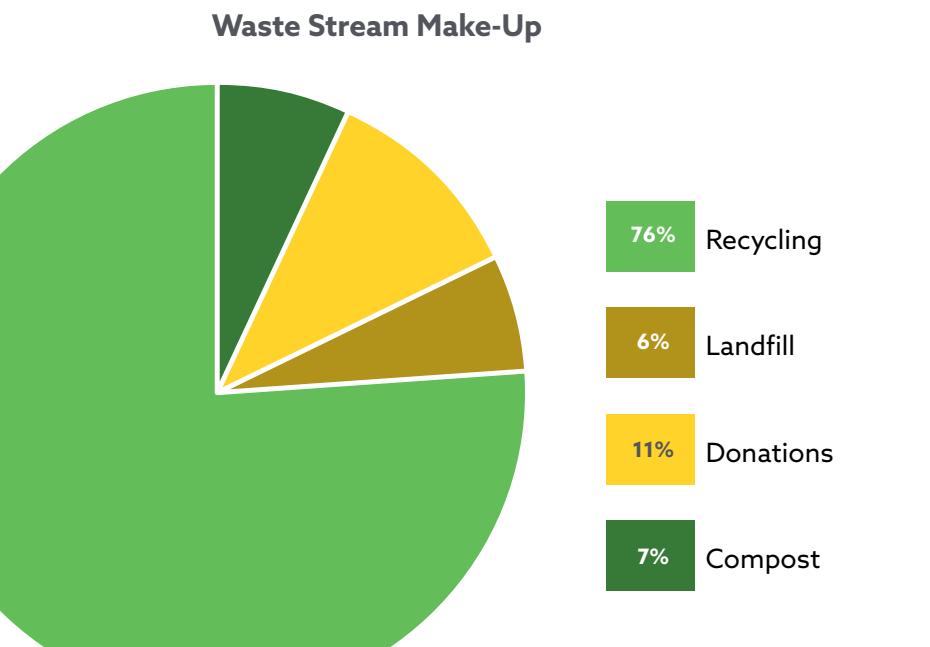
This impressive **achievement exceeds the minimum 90% threshold for a Zero Waste Event for the second straight year.** The graph below illustrates our progress in this area over time:



SHOW WASTE

When examining the four major components of our waste stream (landfill, recycling, compost and donations), of the 94% that was diverted, a full **76% of it was achieved through recycling efforts collected on-site**. This figure is then rounded out by both compost and donations in almost equal measure.

Our success in waste management categories can be attributed in large part to the sustainable material and supply-chain decisions driven by our planning team and General Contractor GES over the past eight years. Our diversion efforts are further bolstered by the outstanding work of the Sands Expo show cleaning and operations teams, who continue to refine and optimize their recovery processes both front and back of house.

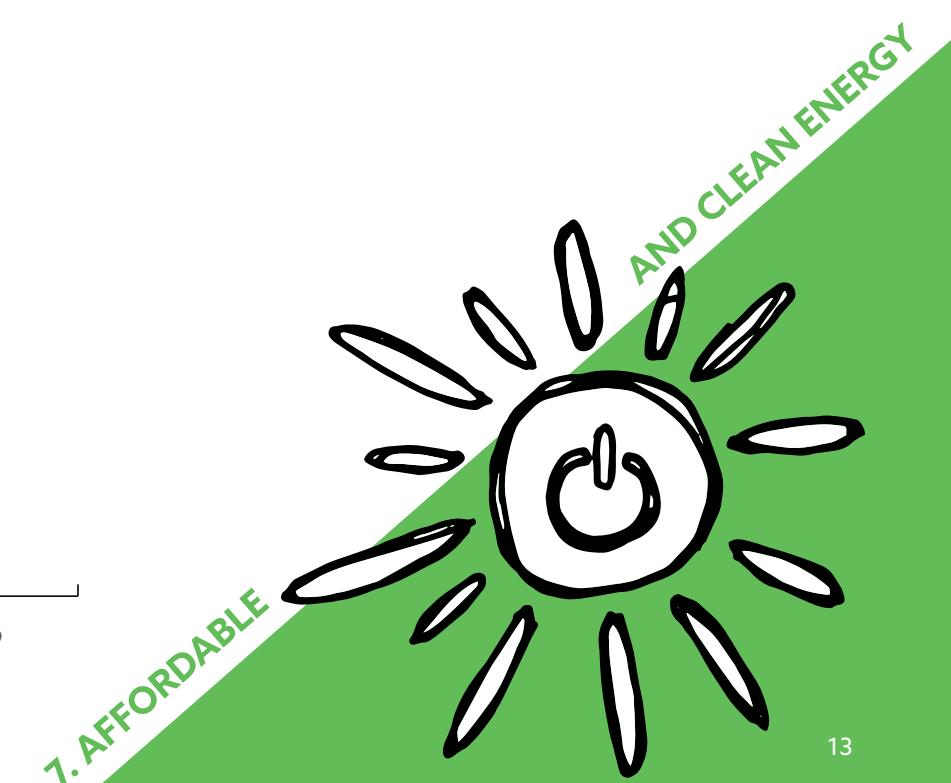
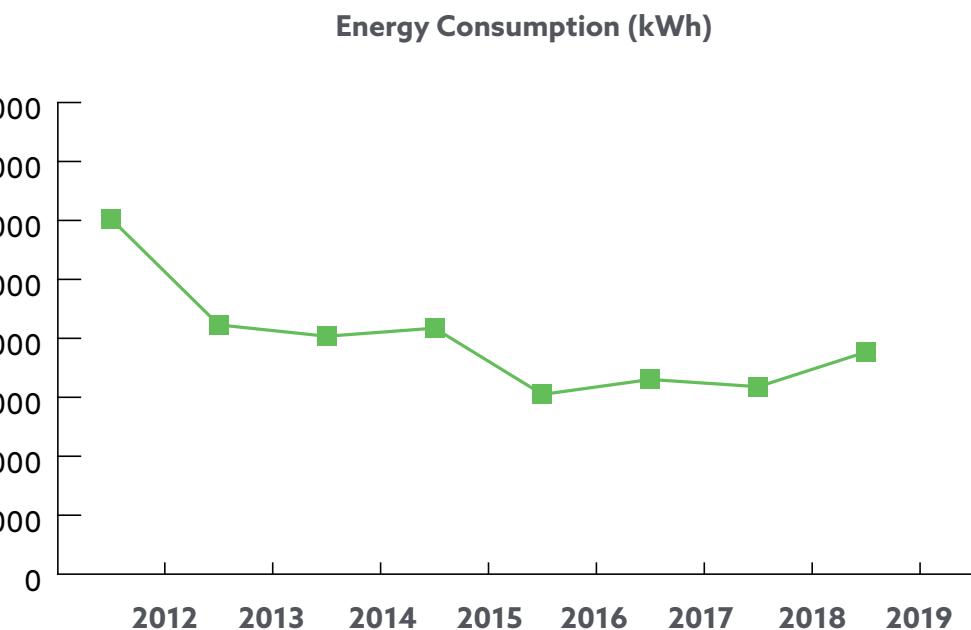


ENERGY

One of the most exciting developments: IMEX America 2019 was our **first show at Sands Expo powered by 100% renewable energy**. This is a major step forward for our program!

And we estimate that the **376,813 kWh that came from renewable sources**—instead of through fossil fuels—**eliminated greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to driving a car 1,048,487 km**. Fun fact: That's more than 266 times the length of iconic Route 66!

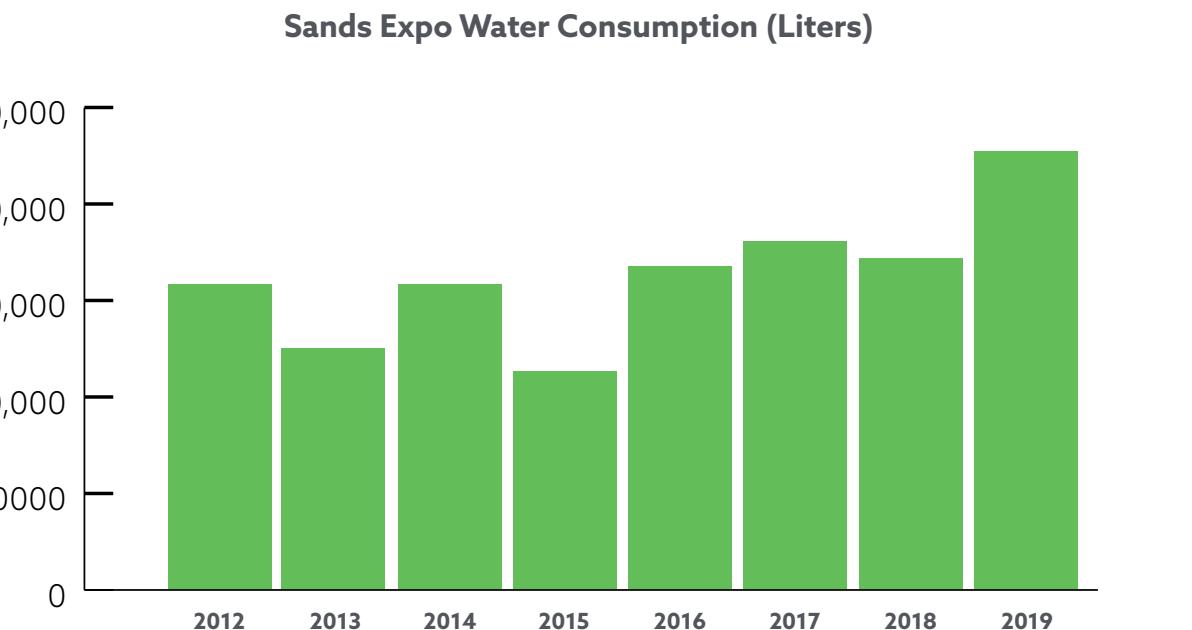
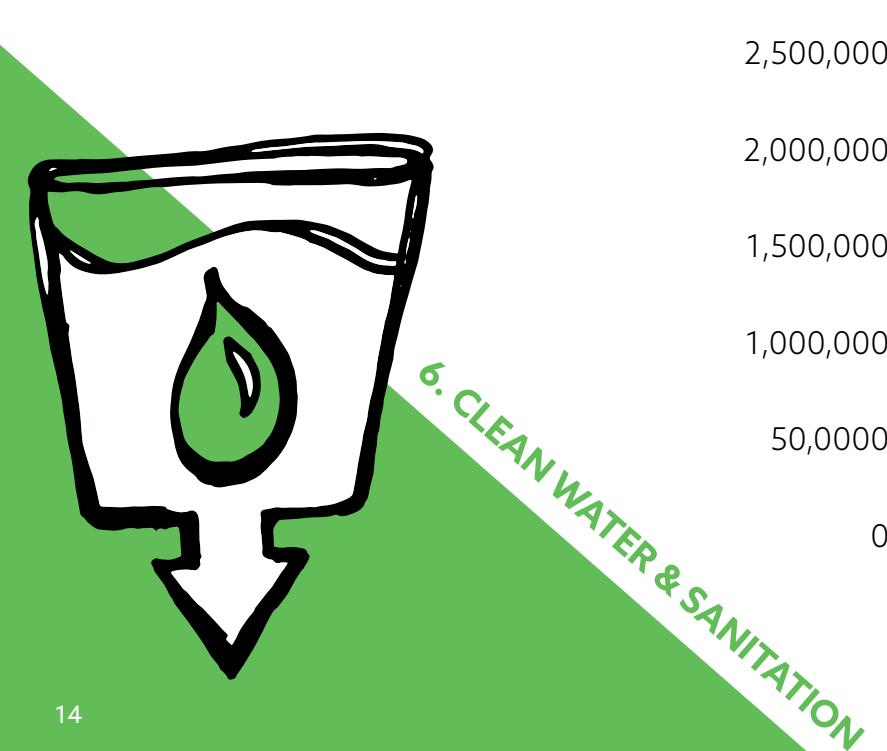
Overall energy consumption rose slightly for 2019 from 2018, an expected increase due to IMEX America being scheduled one month earlier in September, resulting in greater demands on HVAC air-conditioning and cooling.



WATER

Water consumption is one of the most challenging areas for our team to control on-site, because it relies so heavily on attendee choices and on Sands Expo infrastructure and capital improvements.

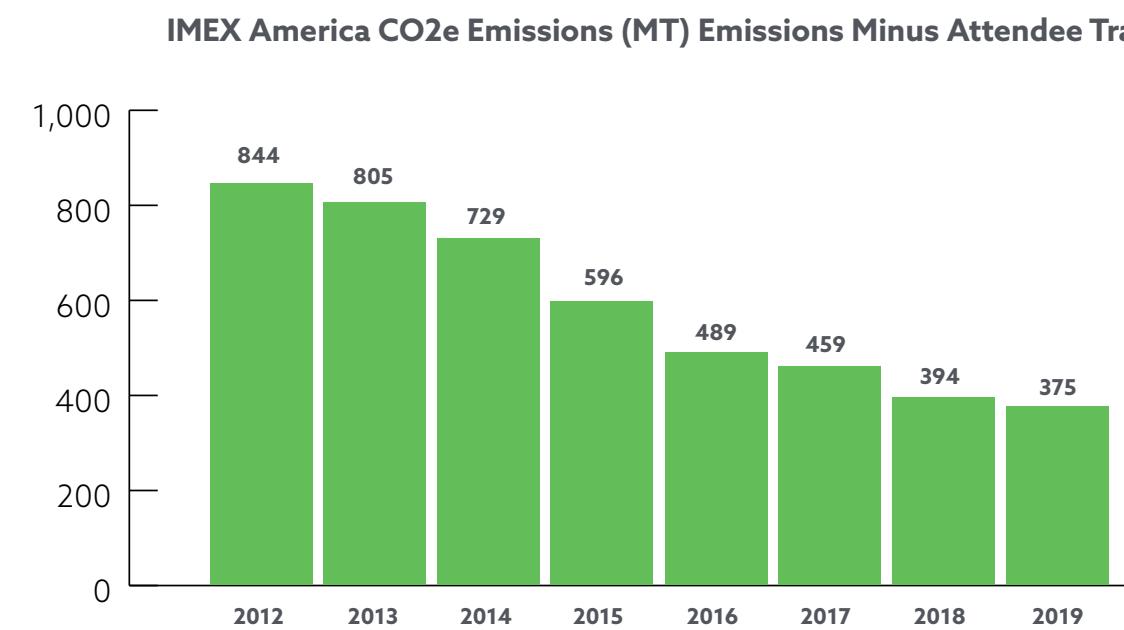
The 2019 show posted IMEX America's highest year for water consumption ever. However, within the confines of our show activities, we are aware of nothing unusual that drove it higher.



CARBON

Our carbon impact continues to decrease and is helped by first-time renewable energy sourcing by the Sands Expo. We also leverage Costa Rica's sponsorship to **offset 100% of all hosted buyer air travel and shuttles** during the show.

Similarly, the impact of on-site recycling programs helped reduce our carbon footprint by **79 metric tons of CO₂e**, equivalent to the carbon sequestered by **1,306 tree seedlings grown for 10 years**.



FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Food and beverage remains one of the front lines of our sustainability initiatives, as it intersects the worlds of supply chain, waste management and even climate action.

- Through an analysis of our menus at food outlets in the Exhibit Hall and Café Presse, the Sands Expo offered 32 options that were produced in the venue's own kitchen. Out of those, 18 or **56% met one of our sustainable criteria of regional, water-wise or sustainably produced.**
- Although we seek to reduce the availability and use of bottled water wherever possible, there are some areas, like grab-and-go concessions, that we cannot fully eliminate. As a result, another very important supply chain endeavor we have undertaken with the Sands Expo is working to source bottled water more locally.
- In years past, Sands Expo bottled water came from both Switzerland and Fiji, both over 5,000 miles away in either direction from Las Vegas. For 2019, we instead sourced Arrowhead Springs Water for food outlets, which is bottled just **320 km away** in Southern California's San Bernardino Mountains, and thus, a **major saving of transport carbon emissions.**
- Our 2019 show was the first time that Boxed Water was sourced for the Sands Expo. Boxed Water uses **80% less plastic in its construction than a standard single-use bottle.** As a result, Boxed Water has a **64% lower carbon footprint and uses 43% less fossil fuels to create** when compared to its plastic counterparts. Boxed Water is also sourced regionally from the Wasatch Mountains in Utah.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- **386 kg** of show food rescued and donated to Veterans Village
- **1.7 km** of single-use plastic avoided through a straws-by-request policy
- **106 students** participated in the Clean Plate Challenge, helping reinforce an enduring, fundamental environmental lesson: *Take only what you need.*
- Expansion of water-wise menu with two new and popular items:
 - Impossible Burgers comprised **32% of total burger sales**—a **43% increase in water-wise burger sales** since the addition of the Impossible Burger to the menu in 2019
 - Vegetarian Beyond Brats comprised **14% of total hot dog sales**



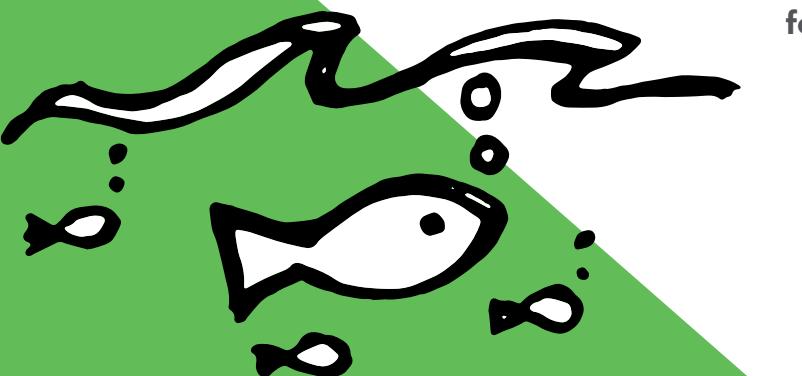
EXHIBIT HALL AND SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

We increased efforts to **reduce and eliminate single-use plastic** throughout all show areas, as well as advanced ways to influence and educate exhibitor behavior—one of the core areas of our show that's most difficult to control and regulate.

- **The Refill Movement expanded to 21 total water stations**, an initiative critical to reducing single-use plastic water bottle use show-wide.
- With the 300 water station refills that occurred on-site, we estimate savings of **12,000 single-use, 16-ounce bottles of water**.
- By not creating or using these bottles, our calculations **indicate a resource saving of 1,200 liters of water, 40,800 megajoules of energy, 5,280 kg of CO2 emissions and 4,320 kg of oil use**.

- **153 booths signed up for the first-time "Sustainable Exhibiting Pledge,"** challenging exhibitors to take part in three sustainable practices at their booths. This figure represents about **36% of all booths** and an outstanding first-year adoption by exhibitors.
- Wristbands for MPI Foundation Rendezvous at Drai's Beachclub and Nightclub were made of **PET/plastic-free material—a bamboo fabric—for the first time**.

14. LIFE BELOW WATER



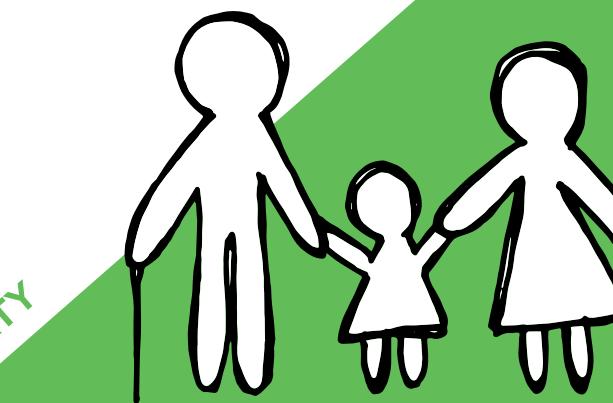
MATERIAL DONATIONS

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals remind us about the importance of donation programs at events and that one of the best ways to reduce poverty is to donate what you don't use.

WITH IMEX AMERICA 2019:

- We **donated 13,145 kg of show materials**, representing a 1,656 kg increase from 2018
- Our partnership with the Sands Expo also increased our community engagement by **expanding donation efforts with the Animal Foundation of Las Vegas, Hero School, New Day Adult Day Care, Las Vegas Rescue Mission, Teacher Exchange and Veterans Village**
- **816 kg of real grass turf** was sourced for the Exhibit Hall food court and then donated to GES show contractor staff for local use at employee homes
- For the first time, the Sands Expo saved **three pallets of single-use plastic Visqueen to donate** to Gilcrease Orchard to be reused as covers to keep bird cages warm in the winter
- **All Falconboard signs were saved for donation**, including a delivery to Clark County schools for use in constructing their homecoming float
- **2,591 badge lanyards were collected and donated** post-event to Teacher Exchange (25 more than 2018)

1. NO POVERTY





Volunteers collecting donations



of show donations



Volunteers collecting donations



INNOVATION

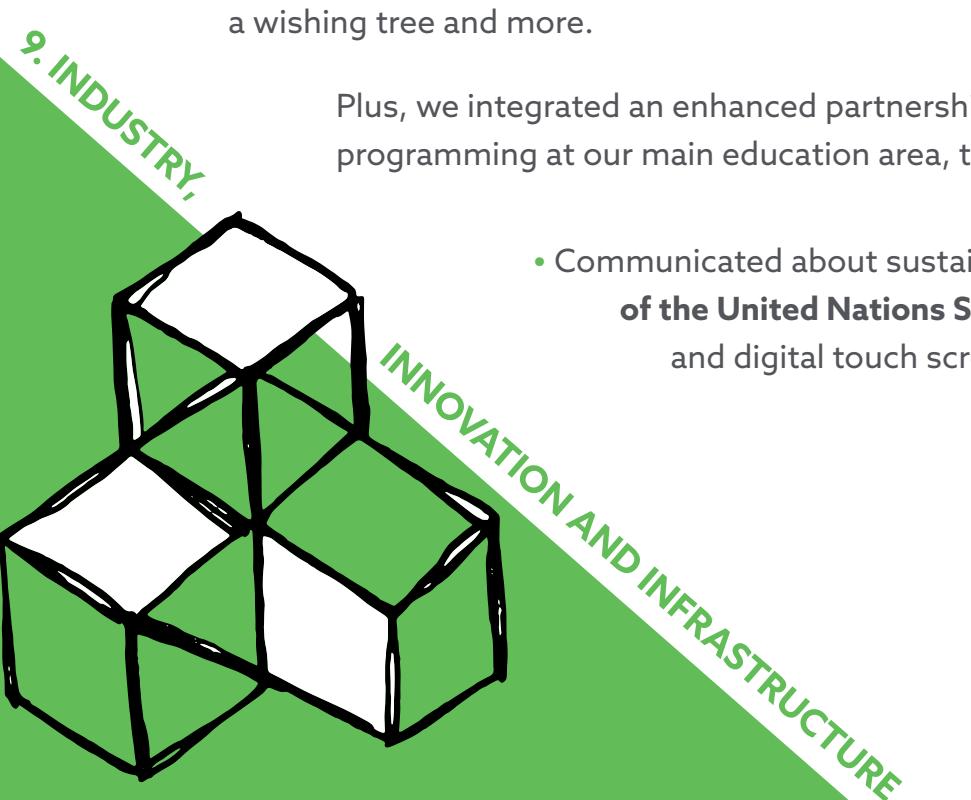
Innovation is at the heart of IMEX America. One of the most exciting parts of planning each cycle is asking ourselves how we can continue to try new initiatives, pilot new materials and expand sustainability into new and exciting directions.

FOR IMEX AMERICA 2019, WE:

- **Sourced bamboo fabric lanyards** for the first time, eliminating the PET plastic nylon versions of the past. These bamboo lanyards are significantly cleaner for the environment, both upstream and downstream, due to being created from a non-toxic renewable resource.
- Brought sustainability even more front and center into our Exhibit Hall through our **first-time IMEX-EIC Sustainability Village**, featuring info and hands-on displays about our initiatives, the IMEX-EIC Innovation in Sustainability Award winner and applicants, the Sustainable Exhibiting Pledge and "Eco Life Hack" products, a wishing tree and more.

Plus, we integrated an enhanced partnership with the Events Industry Council around sustainability programming at our main education area, the Inspiration Hub.

- Communicated about sustainability in new ways. For the first time, we **shared our support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to attendees** via both banners and digital touch screen stations



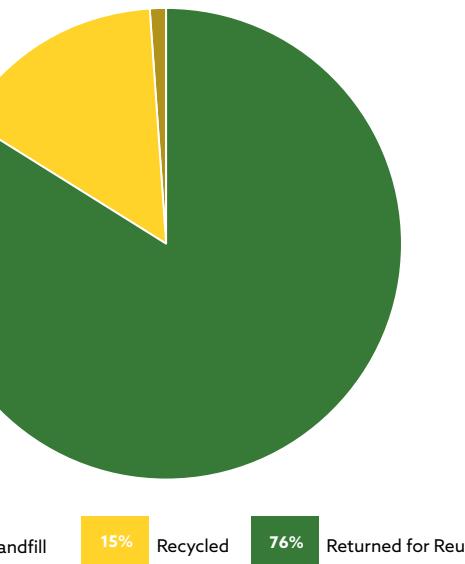
SIGNAGE AND CARPET

Another critical component of our sustainability efforts falls under the close collaboration with our General Contractor GES and through assessing the major show inputs and outputs of signage and carpeting.

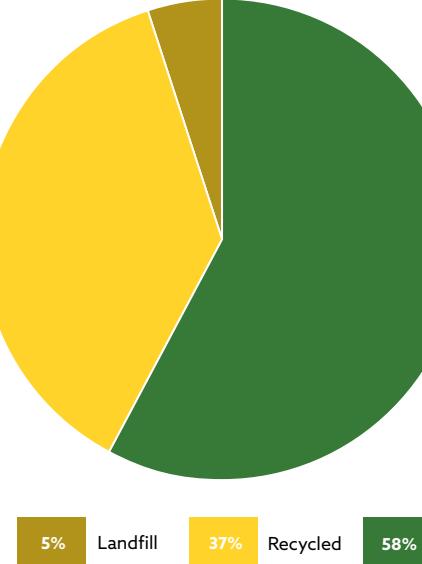
IN 2019:

- 98% of all carpet, padding and Visqueen was either saved for reuse or recycled—over 136,911 meters
- Of the 42,089 square meters of carpet used, 100% was made with recycled content
- 6,705 meters of Falconboard (100% recyclable, paper-based) signage was either donated or recycled on-site.

Carpet, Padding, and Visqueen Overview



Signage and Graphics Post-Event



12. RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SOCIAL IMPACT SUMMARY

We don't only measure our success in sustainability solely by the show's water, waste and energy consumption. We also support a holistic perspective that emphasizes the role our communities play toward a more sustainable future.

2019 SOCIAL IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS:

- **101** lightly used books and **\$100** were donated by IMEX America attendees to Spread the Word Nevada
- **\$2,000** was donated to The Shade Tree to support homeless and abused women and children in crisis
- **600** Clean the World Kits were assembled and donated to The Shade Tree
- **\$1,000** was donated to Opportunity Village, Nevada's largest not-for-profit organization serving citizens with intellectual disabilities
- **504** attendees took time to boost their well-being through visits to the IMEX America Be Well Lounge
- **700** attendees registered for the IMEXrun
- **374** registered for the Caesars Forum Walking Challenge by Heka Health with **7.1 million cumulative steps**—this represents a 1.7 million step increase from 2018!
- **Over 500 attendees** engaged in **She Means Business sessions** designed to help support diversity, gender equality and female empowerment within our industry
- Launch of the **first-ever Diversity and Inclusion Code of Conduct** as well as the **first-ever All-Gender Restroom** at IMEX America
- Out of 149 total speakers, 71 were female, 77 male and 1 non-binary



"I went to the Be Well Lounge twice today. It was such an enjoyable 20 minutes, and I felt so relaxed afterwards, I came back again."

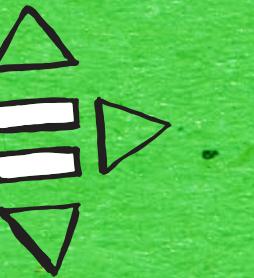
- Survey Response



3. GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING



5. GENDER EQUALITY



10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES



16. PEACE & JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS

OPPORTUNITIES

While we love to celebrate our sustainability achievements, we know we can always do better. Our team likes to take the time each year to explore opportunities we can address in future cycles.

BELOW ARE TOP-OF-MIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT SHOW:

- **Increasing both enrollment and rigor of the Sustainable Exhibiting Pledge.** We believe one of the keys to taking the next steps in our show sustainability is to partner more closely with our exhibitors around our green initiatives. Based on our success rolling out in 2019, we believe we can raise the bar even higher.
- Although we have trended extremely well in terms of our signage and graphics recyclability and reuse, there are **opportunities to address material choices in areas such as registration counters and some hard-wall architecture.**
- By moving to cardboard fabrication in these settings, we believe we will bring upstream production benefits to the environment as well as cleaner downstream outcomes post-show. For example, some communities in the United States no longer prefer PVC substrates (poly-vinyl chloride) to be donated to schools, due to its chemical composition.
- **Sponsorship clings and decals on stairs and glass panels** could also be rethought to either minimize their footprint or materials used. One of the emerging trends in green events is to brand and sponsor in more subtle ways and with natural elements. This could be an intriguing possibility for the future.
- One of the most powerful experiences at IMEX America is the collection of Exhibit Hall donation materials at show-strike through Las Vegas community partnerships. **Capturing material donation via IMEX social media** video could be a compelling avenue to share this story.
- **Continuing to show leadership around climate issues** through such initiatives as local sourcing through food and beverage, planting trees and even an invitation for attendees to an opt-in carbon offset.
- In preparation for our 2021 move, we are **working closely with the Mandalay Bay sustainability team on opportunities at our new venue.**

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED

SHOW SUSTAINABILITY TEAM

- **IMEX America Green Squad:** Nicola Campbell, Hilary Clothier, Sophie Lane, Roger Lehner, Emma Norman, Mary Rodgers, Milda Salciute, Ellie Scott, Lauren Walsh
- **Extended IMEX America Sustainability Team:** Lauren Barry, Nalan Emre, Dale Hudson, Mark Mulligan, Alex Webb

OUR DEEPEST, HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO OUR SUPPLIERS AND PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT...

- **Venue: Sands Expo** – Pranav Jampani, Lorraine Kalayanaprapruit, Marc Komatsu, Terry Salaices, Lisa Withee, Chef Emmanuel Zoppas
- **General Contractor: GES** – Steve Holst, Rob Noble
- **Other Key Suppliers:** Venetian Resort, Western Elite, PRA, Show Gear Productions, Spring Valley Food
- **Sustainability Consultants:** MeetGreen – Eric Wallinger, Della Green, Nancy Zavada

