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Trade Show Task Force Develops Environment Impact Framework in U.S. and Canada to Support Industry's Sustainability Initiatives

Industry stakeholders collaborate on research report to set baseline and move industry toward a more sustainable future

WASHINGTON (September 14, 2022)—A broad, cross-industry task force today released a report identifying key focus areas to support the B2B trade show industry's transition towards a more sustainable, low-carbon economy. The report, titled ***Finding the future, together: Towards a more sustainable B2B trade show industry in the U.S. and Canada***, creates a foundation of data and knowledge for decision-making, knowledge-sharing, and action, highlighting the industry's most significant environmental impacts. It also showcases steps the industry has already taken to address those impacts and identifies 30 near- and long-term steps to secure a more sustainable future. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

"The B2B trade show industry delivers enormous social and economic benefits," said Heather Farley, Chair, SISO Sustainability Committee and COO at Access Intelligence, "and is an essential engine for connection, knowledge transfer, trade, education, and employment. Like all industries, we know that our impact extends to the environment as well, and that, through working and partnering in a collaborative way, we can keep progressing towards a more sustainable, lower-carbon future. To support and inform these efforts, it was important to conduct authoritative independent research to evaluate the most material environmental impacts of the U.S. and Canadian B2B trade show industry."

The report's two-year independent research program identified the largest environmental impacts of the U.S. and Canadian B2B trade show industry as:

- **Carbon:** Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from participant transport, particularly flights, as well as energy use at venues, and logistics, where the study focused on the shipping from the warehouses of general service contractors (GSC) to the venue.
- **Waste:** Generated at venues (e.g., show floor waste, catering waste) and at GSC warehouses where many of the materials and booths are built and supplied.
- **Booth construction:** Inclusive of booth materials (such as carpet), construction methods, transport, reuse, and other variables.

With these impacts identified, the task force explored 30 near- and long-term actions for industry-wide adoption that will help improve the industry's collective sustainability, inclusive of:

- Transitioning to renewable electricity at all parts of the transportation supply chain
- Creating time-bound targets to reach net zero carbon and move to a more circular model by phasing out unsustainable materials
- Implementing industry-wide agreement on design and material specifications of booths and commonly used equipment and materials

- Optimizing logistics, saving fuel, time, and money, and reducing air pollution
- Collaborating with host cities and key partner industries, such as airlines and hotels, to transition to a lower-carbon transport system and reduce generated waste
- Investing in infrastructure to support waste recycling and energy efficiency
- Optimizing industry standards for sustainable design, data, and metrics

“We are passionate about building a sustainable future for the industry and helping the markets we serve embed sustainable practice into their own communities and activities. Through collaborative efforts, we have made great progress,” expressed Charlie McCurdy, CEO of Informa Markets. “And through the task force, we now have a platform to showcase emerging best practices and continue to innovate and evolve together. This is only the beginning, and we look forward to more industry stakeholders joining this effort.”

The task force hopes that the report—and its foundational research—will prove a significant contribution to other collaborative programs supporting transition to a net zero carbon, circular economy-led and responsible events industry. Early collaboration programs of note include:

- Net Zero Carbon Events (www.netzerocarbonevents.org)
- EIC’s Centre for Sustainability and Social Impact (www.eventscouncil.org/sustainability)
- UFI’s Sustainable Development Group (www.ufi.org/susdev)

For more information and to read the full report, please [click here](#).

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Notes to Editors:

1. About the task force

The task force, created in 2018, is an informal collaboration between 14 organizations drawn from across the sector including event organizers, venues, general service contractors (GSC), and associations. The task force’s sponsoring organizations and their nominated representatives were:

Ben Wielgus	Informa
Cathy Griffith	Emerald
Christian Druart	UFI
Courtney Muller	SISO Board Representative (left Nov 2020)
Heather Farley	SISO Board Representative (joined Nov 2020)
Helen Sheppard	RX (joined Nov 2021)
Katarina Tesarova	Sands
Kevin Bird	Shepard
Mariela Mcilwraith CMP, CMM	EIC
Marisa Heller	Freeman (joined July 2020)
Melinda Kendall	Freeman (left June 2020)
Nalan Emre	IMEX (left February 2022)

Nancy Drapeau IPC	CEIR
Rita Ugianskis	SISO Board Representative (left Nov 2020)
Roger Lehner	IMEX (joined February 2022)
Scott Craighead CEM	IAEE (left August 2022)
Sheila LeMaster CMP	GES
Jyoti Chopra	MGM Resorts (joined 2021)

2. About the report

The report consolidates and simplifies a series of internal research reports into the environmental impacts of the U.S. and Canadian B2B trade show industry. These reports were conducted by sustainability consultancy Little Blue Research with the support of strategic consultancy A Bird's Eye View (referred to in the report as LBR). Their insights and evidence were supplemented by direct contributions from 40 industry stakeholders and by thousands of responses to two industry surveys conducted by the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) and UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

3. Further information & resources

In addition to the report itself, further background information and other resources are available from [here](#).