



# IMEX FRANKFURT 2022

## SUSTAINABLE EVENT REPORT

# THIS IS WHO WE ARE...

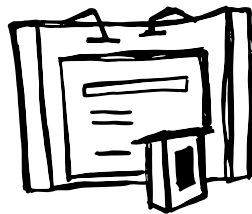
IMEX Frankfurt is where the world's meetings, events and incentive travel industry come together for the largest trade show of its kind in Europe. It's free to attend and our four day event provides business opportunities, specialist education, networking and more, on and off the trade show floor.

Here are some key stats before we get into the details.



**9,303**

**PARTICIPANTS**



**2,373**

**EXHIBITORS**

FROM 150 COUNTRIES



**2,268**

**HOSTED  
BUYERS**

FROM 76 COUNTRIES



**166**

**PRESS  
ATTENDEES**

FROM 20 COUNTRIES





# WE'RE ON A MISSION...

**Carina Bauer, CEO, IMEX Group**

We've been committed to improving and developing our sustainability practices at IMEX Frankfurt for many years and were able to share some key results prior to COVID. However, thanks to an expanded partnership with our sustainability consultants MeetGreen and a new partnership with isla, I'm delighted to share our first detailed sustainability report for IMEX Frankfurt 2022.

MeetGreen have been measuring and reporting on our sustainability efforts at our sister show, IMEX America since 2011. They will now apply the same rigorous data collection and measurement criteria to IMEX Frankfurt.

This initial sustainability report has been an important benchmarking exercise. Unearthing areas where we're performing well, such as waste diversion and recycling and presenting new opportunities for improvement. For example we're working with TRACE by isla to simplify and standardise carbon footprint measurement; sourcing more carpet with recycled content and expanding our donations to the local community.

REPORT DATE: FEBRUARY 2023







## HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from the report include, 100% of our venue electricity being powered by renewable energy; 99.5% of show waste was diverted from landfill; 95% of event service ware was recyclable or re-usable and 635kg of event material was recovered and donated to the Frankfurt community. We're proud to achieve MeetGreen's highest standard of sustainability scoring – Visionary level.

I'd like to thank the entire 'green' team collaboration for playing such an important role in gathering the data for this report, including our IMEX green squad and Ops team, our brilliant suppliers, including Accente and fairservices.net, our hosts Messe Frankfurt and of course everyone that attended. Your efforts made this show a sustainable event we can all be proud of.

## NET ZERO

As part of our commitment to the net zero carbon events industry initiative, (the event industry's campaign to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050) we're also working on our roadmap to net zero, which we'll publish this year. This roadmap will help set the course of our sustainability strategy leading up to 2030 and beyond.

I strongly believe sustainable events, that deliver a safe and inclusive environment for collaboration, education and partnerships to flourish, will be part of the solution to the big challenges our global community faces today.

Thank you for reading this report, I hope you discover some ideas you can put into practice at your own events. And a special thank you to our sustainability consultants MeetGreen for measuring our sustainability efforts, preparing this report and for helping us to do better.

**Carina Bauer, CEO, IMEX Group**

# OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

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 maximise their efforts.

## 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 our destination communities





# 2022 SUSTAINABILITY HIGHLIGHTS

100%

OF VENUE ELECTRICITY  
POWERED BY RENEWABLE SOURCES

LESS THAN

0.5%

OF ALL WASTE WAS SENT  
TO 'LANDFILL' POST-EVENT

99.5%

OF ALL WASTE WAS DIVERTED INTO  
RECYCLING AND DONATIONS OR  
CONVERTED INTO ENERGY

2,630<sub>kg</sub>

OF ORGANIC FOOD PREPARATION WASTE WAS  
RECOVERED FOR PRODUCTION OF ENERGY VIA  
BIO-METHANE CAPTURE

95%

OF EVENT SERVICE WARE WAS  
SINGLE-USE PLASTIC-FREE

1,500 TREES

PLANTED TO REDUCE EVENT EMISSIONS  
BY IMEX SUPPLIERS OR PARTNERS

1,400 TREES

PLANTED TO REDUCE EVENT EMISSIONS  
BY IMEX EXHIBITORS

635<sub>kg</sub>

OF EVENT MATERIALS RECOVERED AND  
DONATED TO THE FRANKFURT COMMUNITY

2,311

NAME BADGES COLLECTED FOR RECYCLING  
BY TERRA CYCLE EUROPE



# OUR VENUE – MESSE FRANKFURT

"Trade fairs and congresses are part of the solutions towards a climate-neutral economy. Together with its customers, Messe Frankfurt aims to create values and work closely with sectors to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable events. As the flagship event of the international MICE sector, IMEX plays a leading role in bringing about a global sustainable transformation. For Messe Frankfurt, the successful partnership that it has built up with the IMEX Group over many years makes a valuable contribution to a sustainable future for all."

**Wolfgang Marzin, Chairman,  
Messe Frankfurt GmbH**





# VENUE SUSTAINABILITY

**A sustainable venue:** 100% of IMEX Frankfurt's 2022 activities at Messe Frankfurt were powered by renewable electricity sources. Since 2012, we've worked closely with Messe Frankfurt to achieve 100% renewable electricity use for our event. However, after piloting this process with the venue, we couldn't be more excited that Messe Frankfurt has adopted **100% renewable sourcing as a standard operating procedure for all its events since 2020.**

**A sustainable location:** Given Frankfurt's central location within Europe, **an estimated 35 million people within a radius of 200 km can access the venue.** Its airport serves 311 destinations in over 97 countries and is the fourth largest hub in Europe. Every day the local public transport system of regional buses and rail, transfers around 2.5 million passengers across the entire Frankfurt region - *all of which make Frankfurt, Germany an accessible location for IMEX to convene*<sup>5</sup>.



## Supporting those in need:

Venues in the events industry often play a critical role during times of crisis. During IMEX Frankfurt 2022, **more than 800 Ukrainian refugees were sheltered in Hall 1 of Messe Frankfurt.** Material donations from the show were routed there directly after the event.



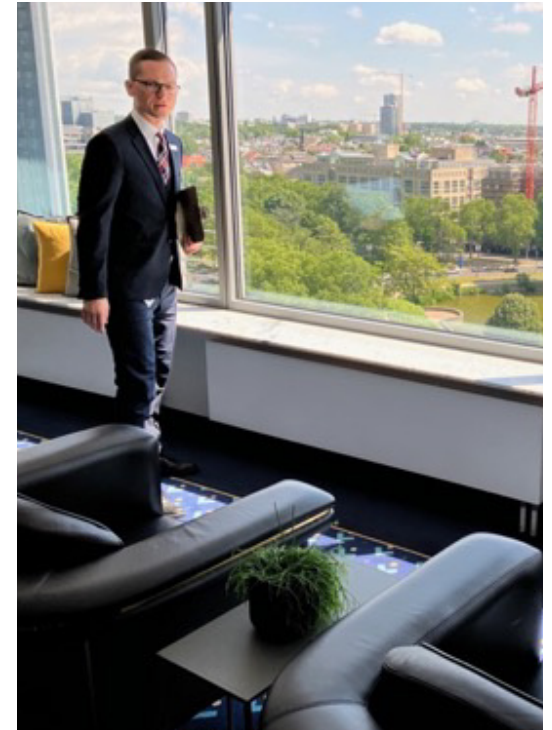


# SUSTAINABLE ACCOMMODATION

A more sustainable event begins with **sustainable site selection**, and an event's accommodation options play a critical part. The **Maritim Frankfurt Hotel**, connected to both Messe Frankfurt and the Congress Center, leverages renewable energy to power its guest accommodations. The Maritim reported **sourcing an estimated 50% of energy from renewable sources during IMEX Frankfurt 2022**.

The Maritim's innovative **"Pro Tomorrow" programme** gives guests the option to limit housekeeping and linen services. All cleaning fees saved through this initiative are **passed onto the Frankfurt community**.

According to the Maritim, the regional connection of this programme is particularly important to its impact, which is why **every Maritim Hotel decides for itself which local project should be supported in its community**. One example is supporting a series of workshops at the **Frankfurt Climate Workshop** for kindergartens and schools<sup>1</sup>.



The **Sheraton Frankfurt Airport Hotel & Conference Center**, which served as the venue for the IMEX Gala Dinner, **estimates powering 26% of its IMEX energy needs through renewable sourcing**. In addition to sourcing energy - the IMEX Gala Dinner focused on procuring foods **within a close regional proximity to the event, such as locally cultivated white wine** (Weißer Burgunder) of the Rheinhessen region.



# EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

## THE PEOPLE & PLANET PLEDGE

Event sustainability starts with education and engagement. During the show, **112 attendees signed the IMEX People & Planet Pledge and 67 exhibitor stands signed the exhibitor pledge.**

Attendees were challenged to perform four or more of the following actions at the show:

- Reading the IMEX Code of Conduct
- Visiting the IMEX-EIC People and Planet Village
- Attending a diversity, equity, and inclusion or nature + education session
- Bringing a pronoun badge to wear at the show
- Travelling responsibly by carbon offsetting travel, using public transportation, or walking to and from the show
- Downloading the TraffickCam App to help combat human trafficking
- Choosing sustainable food from the IMEX menus
- Talking to prospective partners about their sustainability options during their appointments
- Performing a random act of kindness
- Placing unwanted items in the donation bins and recycling their show badge





# EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT

Exhibitors were asked to choose four or more of the following actions:

- Talk to your stand constructor about using sustainable materials and what they can do to reduce waste
- Order sustainable catering (e.g. regional, organic, waterwise, vegetarian, plant-based)
- Reduce or remove all single-use plastics and paper, including brochures
- Only offer sustainable gifts or giveaways
- Read and share the IMEX Code of Conduct with your stand partners and staff
- Support the use of pronoun badges for your show team
- Encourage your show team to download the TraffickCam App (to help combat human trafficking)
- Travel responsibly by carbon offsetting your team's travel to the show



IMEX recognises the importance of supporting and developing our **future event leaders**. Their participation at IMEX Frankfurt is critical to building an inspired and innovative future for the industry. **38 students and young professionals participated in the 2022 IMEX-MPI-MCI Future Leaders Forum**



# WASTE MANAGEMENT

## Comprehensive Waste Reduction

We're focused on **reducing** waste event wide, and at all levels of planning and supplier engagement. In Germany, high emphasis is placed on **recycling and reusing**. Materials that cannot be recycled or re-used are incinerated to generate power.

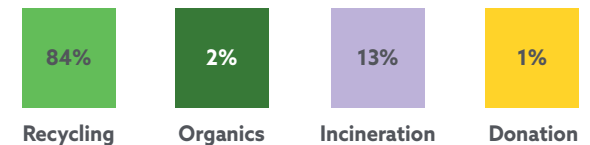
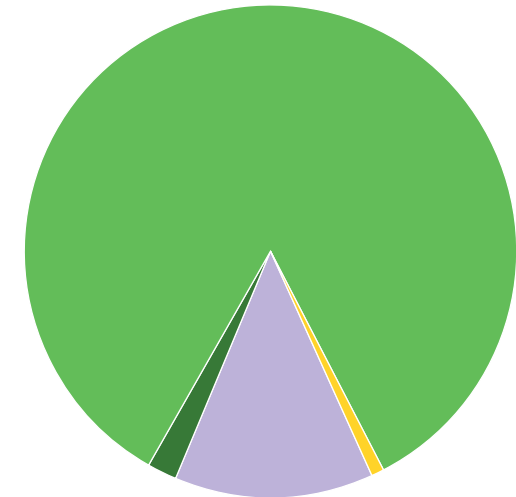
### At IMEX 2022:

- **Less than 0.5% of all waste, in the form of trace amounts of ash from thermal recycling incineration was 'landfilled' or buried in the earth post-event**
- **87% of all waste was diverted into recycling, organics, or donation channels**

Power generation from the incineration of waste is often referred to as **"thermal recycling"** as the process is essentially making a new product, "energy", from existing recovered materials. Organic "compost" waste in Germany is similarly used to generate energy through biomethane capture as well. **Under this interpretation, 99.5% of IMEX Frankfurt event waste was either recycled, converted to energy, or donated.**

**Where does IMEX's show waste go?** Working successfully within the regional waste infrastructure was critical to the success of our waste management programme. The **Meinhardt Group** owns and manages several recycling and waste management centers supporting Messe Frankfurt. Managing Directors, Frank-Steffen and Lukas Meinhardt, were happy to meet with our sustainability team to audit their operations first-hand.

Waste Management





# WASTE MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

**68,320kg**

of wood recovered for recycling and reuse

**41,560kg**

of event construction materials were recovered and sold to stand builders for use in future shows

**23,330kg**

of cardboard recycled into new boxes

**16,420kg**

of mixed papers were reclaimed as feedstock for recycled content paper

**2,630kg**

of organic food preparation waste recovered to produce energy via bio-methane capture and reuse

**6,490kg**

of event carpet, recycled post-event

**635kg**

of event materials donated to the Frankfurt community

**2,311**

name badges collected for recycling by Terra Cycle Europe<sup>4</sup>



# ENERGY AND WATER

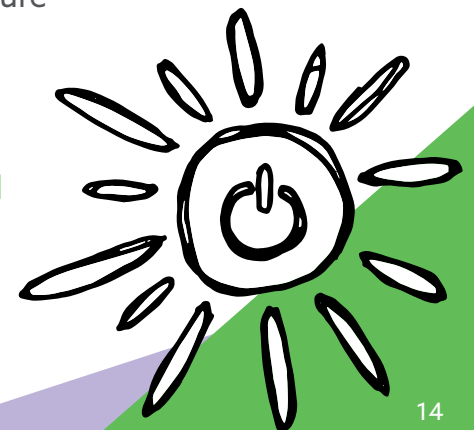
According to venue reporting records, a total of **167,609 kWh of venue electricity** and **33,756 kWh of booth electricity** was consumed during IMEX 2022. Given that this was from 100% renewable sources, **it is estimated that 87 metric tons of CO2 emissions were eliminated when compared to fossil fuel equivalents**. *To place this figure in context, it represents reducing roughly the emissions from driving 430 standard petrol vehicles from the IMEX office in Brighton, UK, to Messe Frankfurt!*

In addition, leveraging abundant **natural light** via ceiling skylights in Hall 8 helped reduce lighting intensity in exhibitor areas.



There is **no plumbed water** in IMEX show areas. Primary sources of water in Hall 8 and 9 metered spaces are lavatory, sink use, and food preparation in onsite commercial kitchens. Although we cannot directly control event water consumption, we worked in conjunction with Messe Frankfurt to measure our onsite water use to set a baseline for comparison in future event cycles

**In 2022 the IMEX show used an estimated 882,830 litres of water.**





# CARBON EMISSIONS

An event's carbon emissions are one of the most critical components of its environmental footprint and some of the most challenging to **measure and manage**. To help facilitate this, we're piloting the use of the **TRACE carbon measurement tool by isla** to serve as a software platform dashboard to store and visualise emissions data.

Historically, events have focused primarily on direct fossil fuel combustion related to the onsite experience, such as **venue and hotel energy, travel, and freight**. We're beginning the process of expanding our event accounting even further by looking up and down the supply chain for emissions sources that impact the event, but were not previously accounted for, such as **embodied emissions of build production, graphics**, and even the emissions of **food and service** were related to the IMEX menu.

IMEX Frankfurt 2022's carbon impact will be published along with our pathway to achieving net zero, during 2023.



# CARBON EMISSIONS

**It takes a team:** Managing and mitigating event carbon emissions includes not only the organiser, but also its venues, hotels, and even transportation. *Sustainability was a key vetting and selection criteria* when contracting IMEX's transport supplier, **Hanse Mondial GmbH**. Hanse Mondial **planted 1,000 trees through the Travel & Tree Programme<sup>10</sup> as part of its IMEX 2022 transport services**. While tree plantings absorb varying amounts of carbon depending on the species and the location, a typical hardwood tree can sequester about one metric ton of carbon within the first 40-50 years of its life.

**This means that these plantings could draw down an estimated 1,000 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>e during this period.<sup>2</sup>**

This is impressive given Hanse Mondial's onsite emissions from 7,406 km of shuttle emissions translate to *less than 1 MT of CO<sub>2</sub>*.



**An active baseline:** While emissions reduction and charting a credible long-term pathway to Net Zero is the primary objective for IMEX events, **it's likely that the baseline set in 2022 may increase in scope and accounting over the next few cycles** as we continue to identify and collect data from new sources across our event. In this way, IMEX in Frankfurt 2022 was the first step in a multi-year process to compile a **data-rich benchmark** to **track savings reductions** and **manage and mitigate** event emissions from.





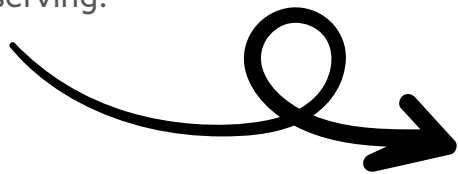
# FOOD AND BEVERAGE

**Sustainable Event Menu:** We try to balance the dietary needs and preferences of attendees with an awareness of the upstream environmental impacts of production and manufacture of menu items. For Messe Frankfurt activities, we coded foods in the following categories:

- **Low carbon:** Menu items that require lower greenhouse gas emissions to raise, produce, or manufacture
- **Waterwise:** Menu items that use minimal water to raise, produce, or manufacture
- **Veggie:** Plant-based and non-meat menu options
- **Vegan:** Menu items containing no meat, animal byproduct, eggs, or dairy
- **Regional:** Menu items raised, produced, or manufactured within 402 km (250 miles) of the event venue

## Our meal choices make a difference:

Vegetarian meals can offer a lower carbon option that reduces the upstream emissions of production and manufacture by an estimated 90% per serving.<sup>3</sup>



**Did you know?:** if everyone at IMEX selected just **one plant-based main** course during the event, it could save the upstream emissions of production and manufacture equivalent to driving a standard fossil fuel vehicle around the earth's equator five times!



# FOOD AND BEVERAGE

An event's **supply chain** and procurement choices matter, particularly at a scale of over 9,000 attendees over three days.

Through close communication with venue food services, items were **packaged as minimally and sustainably** as possible, such as the numerous sandwich, pretzel, and bun options that required nearly no packaging at all. The remainder of items were more than **95% single-use plastic-free**.

**Back of House Tour:** The IMEX team greatly benefitted from meeting with the Accente food services team onsite to **engage with and audit** their back of house operations first-hand. Tours like this can be critical to helping build true **collaboration** and **communication** needed to solve complex event sustainability challenges.



**Did you know?:** The cup pictured here is the **only core service ware vessel** in use at IMEX's contracted Food & Beverage outlets made of PET plastic? The cup is used for some custom coffee drinks at two Hall 8 outlets given the requirement to retain a warm beverage with the need to visibly see cup contents.





# ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

IMEX's waste reduction didn't rely on recycling alone. It required a **shared long-term vision with a comprehensive array of event teams:**

- The IMEX|EIC People & Planet Village signage banners, build construction, and overall "Vis ID" were **designed for re-use over multiple event cycles** (photo 1)
- The Hosted Buyer Lounge's large-scale digital projection wall, **eliminated the need for large banners to be printed, transported or disposed**. The projector was rented, returned to inventory, and all electricity powered by 100% renewable sources (photo 2)
- Wood is frequently a more environmentally preferable material when related to custom fabrication. According to Defra emissions factors, the wood trestles pictured below have roughly **80% lower emissions of production when compared to aluminum**, while wooden pallets can be **85% less emissions intensive to manufacture than plastic ones**<sup>6</sup> (photo 3)
- 120 sqm of natural grass turf used for the Hall 9 Food Court was installed instead of carpet and was donated to a private residence in Frankfurt post-event. By "not producing" standard carpet for this area, calculation models estimate we may have **saved as much as 2,040 kg/CO2e emissions**, pending brand and type<sup>7</sup> (photo 4)



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 3**



**Photo 4**

# EQUITY, WELLBEING, SOCIAL IMPACT

In addition to delivering significant business value through our event, we also do our best to **positively impact event and industry equity, social impact, and attendee wellbeing**. See below for 2022 highlights:

192

attendees participated in the *She Means Business* education sessions

59% 41%

FEMALE

MALE

speakers in the education programme

200

attendees took part in the IMEXrun

100

attendees participated in mindfulness sessions at the Be Well Lounge



1,000

EUR charitable donations to Caritasverband Frankfurt  
FAO Haus Lichtblick, benefitting those in need of accommodation and housing in Frankfurt

1,000

EUR in charitable donations to Stiftung Waisenhaus orphanage in Frankfurt

1,000

EUR in charitable donations to ShoutOutLoud, a Frankfurt-based food diversion network and social enterprise





# MATERIAL DONATIONS

Donating event materials is another way we can help **reduce both incineration and landfill waste**, as well as **benefitting our destination community**. Across the venue, suppliers, and attendees, we prioritise **reuse, rental, and reduction** wherever possible, followed by **recovery** and **donation**. Donation bins were placed across the venue to help recover items that might have reached their end of use. One positive sign for 2022 was that very few material items were left behind. See below for this year's donation programme highlights:

- 11 blankets, 3 backpacks, 6 binders donated to Ukrainian refugees in Hall 1
- High volume of atrium sponsored florals, 6 computers, and a flat screen TV to Weissenhaus Orphanage
- Hall 8 plants, florals, and table donated to Messe Frankfurt



# SUSTAINABLE EXHIBITING

**It takes everyone:** More than ever before, sustainability is being embraced and promoted by a truly global range of IMEX exhibitors:

- **Hilton International** planted **1,400 trees** at the Hessen Forest representing one for each IMEX appointment
- **Maritz Global Events Sustainability Challenge**, powered by Heka Health, featured an opportunity to learn more about the sustainability initiatives at IMEX by giving attendees a digital portal to participate in a sustainability-focused scavenger hunt throughout the show floor. As a group, Challenge participants walked over **1,246,900 steps in two days**. This action alone represented a reduction of an estimated **188.9 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions**, which is equivalent to saving the emissions from more than 22,000 mobile phones being charged<sup>8</sup>
- **IMEX worked with Piccles on an activation at the People & Planet Village - Draw a tree to plant a tree**. Using their web-based visual engagement tool attendees could draw a tree and for every tree drawn, IMEX paid for a tree to be planted. **500 trees were planted** through One Tree Planted<sup>9</sup>
- **Thailand** announced numerous sustainability targets and commitments while **saving an estimated 1,153 kg CO<sub>2</sub>e** through their 2022 exhibit design







# THIRD PARTY SCORING

In addition to planning, auditing, and measuring environmental efforts, we participate in third-party scoring of our sustainable operations and execution via the **MeetGreen® Calculator 2.0**.

This tool allows organisations to benchmark their progress against their own efforts and other events of similar size and type. This cycle, MeetGreen presented IMEX Frankfurt 2022 with their highest level of achievement: **VISIONARY**

For additional context, the MeetGreen Calculator 2.0 levels progress from:

**Change Agent** → **Champion** → **Leader** → **VISIONARY**

***Sustainable Event Visionary** leads within their own industry, prioritises measurement and works to move the sustainability dial.*

*They research and develop new initiatives to improve environmental performance and uses the organisation's buying power to drive change with venues and vendors.*



# OPPORTUNITIES

**As successful as our event was in terms of sustainability, we're always looking for ways to continually improve. Below are some opportunities to enhance our sustainability initiatives in future event cycles:**

## **Carbon**

- Increase exhibitor and stand construction material transport tracking to further inform carbon footprint data in this area
- Increase percentage of IMEX staff travelling to the event by train
- Consider enrolling Hanse Mondial shuttle buses for the Gala Dinner

## **Food & Beverage**

- Increase water bubblers and access to water refills at Messe Frankfurt
- Further enroll Gala Dinner team in sustainability goals, KPIs, and planning
- Continue to build pathways for potential food donation via Messe Frankfurt and Accente with local food banks
- Determine feasibility of expansion of reusable service ware in selected venue outlets

## **General Contractor Services**

- Sourcing event carpet with recycled content

## **Waste Management**

- As Meinhardt waste management covers multiple sites in the region, each with their own unique area of responsibility, recommend auditing a second key location to help build on IMEX's understanding of waste management infrastructure supporting the event.





# THANK YOU



Thank you to our venues, valued suppliers and partners for their time, energy, and contributions to our sustainability initiatives and reporting for 2022:

- **Accente**
- **Eventence**
- **Hansa Mondial**
- **Fairconstruction**
- **Fairservices**
- **Messe Frankfurt**



# APPENDIX

Please see below for key citations relevant to IMEX Frankfurt 2022's sustainability reporting:

1. [Gastronomie Report - Maritim launches "Pro Tomorrow"](#)
2. [Terrapass - What Is the Effectiveness of Tree-Planting Offsets?](#)
3. [Our World in Data - Greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of food product](#)
4. Badge estimate based on per badge weight of shipped collection boxes, minus box weight
5. [FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH](#)
6. [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors 2021](#)
7. MeetGreen® carpet calculator
8. Total steps, emissions data, and equivalency provided by Maritz Global Events
9. <https://onetreeplanted.org/collections/where-we-plant>
10. <https://www.hansemondial.de/en/ueber-uns/co2-kompensation>



