Global Affairs Canada | Affaires mondiales Canada

Report on Canada's Participation in Expo 2020 Dubai (U.A.E.)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared for Global Affairs Canada

Supplier: Leger Marketing Inc.
Contract Number: 08A33-210095/001/CY
Contract Value: $123,413.70 (including HST)
Award Date: 2021-12-15
Delivery Date: 2021-09-15

Registration Number: POR 066-21
For more information on this report, please contact Global Affairs Canada at:
POR-ROP@international.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

Government of Canada | Gouvernement du Canada

Canada

Report on Canada's Participation in Expo 2020 Dubai (U.A.E.)

Executive Summary

Prepared for Global Affairs Canada
Supplier name: Leger Marketing Inc.
October 10, 2022

This report, conducted by Léger Marketing Inc. for Global Affairs Canada, provides a comprehensive evaluation of Canada's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The evaluation was conducted between February and April 2022. Along with the evaluation, the report provides information designed to assist in planning Canada's participation in future Expos. A portion of this evaluation consisted of a public opinion research conducted with an intercept face-to-face survey of on-site visitors (conducted by Leger Marketing Inc. and its United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) partner, Think Positive), interviews with key informants and on-site observation. The quantitative research study surveyed 1,502 visitors to the Canada Pavilion at the World Exposition site in Dubai between February 12 and March 25, 2022. The report also presents results of interviews with 43 key informants. Key informant interviews were conducted between March 21 and April 28, 2022. The report also includes observations that were made by a senior researcher on-site at Expo 2020 Dubai between March 16 and March 26, 2022. Finally, the report includes data that was collected at the Canada Pavilion by the Canada Expo 2020 Dubai team and by the Expo 2020 Dubai organizers.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre Rapport sur la participation du Canada à l'Expo 2020 Dubaï (ÉAU).

This publication may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes only. Prior written permission must be obtained from Global Affairs Canada. For more information on this report, please contact: POR-ROP@international.gc.ca

Lester B. Pearson Building Tower B3
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Canada

Catalogue number:
FR5-189/2022E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN):
978-0-660-44075-0

Related publications (registration number: POR 066-21**)**
Catalogue number: FR5-189/2022F-PDF
ISBN 978-0-660-44076-7

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Global Affairs Canada, 2022.

Executive summary

Leger is pleased to present Global Affairs Canada with this comprehensive report intended to provide an evaluation of Canada's Expo 2020 Dubai participation and information designed to assist in planning Canada's participation in future Expos. A portion of this evaluation consisted of a public opinion research conducted with an intercept face-to-face survey of on-site visitors (conducted by Leger Marketing Inc. and its United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) partner, Think Positive), interviews with key informants and on-site observation. This report was prepared by Leger Marketing Inc., which was contracted by Global Affairs Canada (contract number 08A33-210095/001/CY awarded December 15, 2021).

1.1 Background and objectives

Global Affairs Canada (GAC), on behalf of the Government of Canada, had the mandate to plan, coordinate and implement Canada's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai in the U.A.E. After a 1-year postponement due to COVID 19, Expo 2020 Dubai opened on October 1, 2021, and continued for 6 months to March 31, 2022.

International expositions provide an ideal venue where Canada can share, promote and celebrate its story on issues relating to the theme and sub-themes of the exposition. The theme for Canada's participation was "The Future in Mind."

This international event offered Canada an unparalleled platform to promote opportunities from across Canada's provinces, territories and cities and throughout all sectors of Canadian society.

Canada's overarching objectives for participation at Expo 2020 Dubai were to:

- increase awareness and knowledge of Canada's culture
- diversify its international markets
- attract foreign investment
- promote Canadian innovation, tourism and international education to build support for Canadian initiatives and values on the world stage (such as its leadership in promoting gender equality)
- garner support for Canadian priorities (e.g. social responsibility)
- deepen its relationship with the U.A.E. and other countries in the region

Canada's overall participation at Expo 2020 Dubai consisted of the following components:

- **Canada Pavilion**. The main component of the Pavilion was the public presentation area, which provided the thematic visitor experience
- **Cultural and complementary program**. Canada showcased a range of innovative and artistic activities showcasing Canada's arts and cultural sectors

- **Commercial program**. A VIP area within the Canada Pavilion supported the delivery of the business and public affairs programs

Research objectives

The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of achievements against objectives, with recommendations for Canada's participation in future events of this nature.

To achieve the objectives outlined previously, the design of the research included both qualitative (interviews with key informants) and quantitative (intercept face-to-face surveys with visitors) components and relied on factual data (collected on-site or by Expo 2020 Dubai organizers) as well as on-site visits (on-site observation).

1.2 Methodology

The report on Canada's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai included the following methods of study:

- direct observation during a 12-day field mission to Expo 2020 Dubai in March 2022
    - a researcher visited the Canada Pavilion and other pavilions and facilities at Expo 2020 Dubai to gather information and make observations, in support of the report
- on-site, face-to-face intercept survey with Canada Pavilion visitors
    - the survey was conducted by a team of interviewers from our research partner in Dubai (Think Positive)
    - data collection took place over a 40-day period between February 12, 2022, and March 25, 2022
    - a total of 1,502 Pavilion visitors were intercepted at the Canada Pavilion site after their visit to complete the survey
- approximately 40 key informant interviews were conducted as part of the evaluation
    - all of these interviews took place over a 2-month period between March and April 2022; half of the interviews took place in Dubai during the direct observation mission
- an analysis of factual data provided by the organizers of Expo 2020 Dubai and the Canada Expo 2020 Dubai team to provide context for this study

A full methodology is available in the appendix to this report.

The appendix also includes the detailed results of the survey that was conducted on site at Expo 2020 Dubai with visitors of the Canada Pavilion.

1.3 Overview of findings

- Data collected from the Canada Pavilion visitor survey and key informant interviews suggest that Canada's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai was mostly successful
- Canada was successful in reaching the targets it had set for the event. A large majority of the visitors to the Pavilion were from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Asia regions and were, for the most part, under the age of 35
- Survey data indicates that a large portion of visitors left the Pavilion with a positive perception of their experience and an increased interest in doing business, investing and studying in or visiting Canada. Most survey respondents also indicated that their visit to the Pavilion increased their interest in Canada's culture and cultural productions.
- The Canada Pavilion visitor experience had an impact on visitors' perception that Canada is a country that is respectful of diversity, has progressive human rights values, respects diversity and is innovative. Survey respondents were overwhelmingly inclined to say that their perception of Canada in these respects had improved following their visit.
- Results suggest that Canada was able to deliver its messages to different target audiences, although the high volume of different messages being delivered might have diluted their respective impact.
- Protocol, cultural and commercial programs each achieved an interesting level of success, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic context in which Expo 2020 Dubai was held.
- The evidence shows that the GAC team and mission were able to fulfill the goal of securing the presence of a high number of VIPs to the Canada Pavilion, including visits from U.A.E. government officials and several other foreign delegations. Canada's missions in the U.A.E. also hosted a series of business and networking events for the benefit of Canadian companies in many industry sectors. Through its cultural program, Canada has also been able to showcase many Canadian artists to new, international audiences.
- Feedback from the interviews indicated that the fruits of Canada's actions in Dubai might not reach their full potential within the upcoming few months or years, but rather on a longer-term horizon. Even if many interviewees were reluctant to say whether Canada had achieved its specific objectives, most informants were positive and believed that Canada would benefit from its participation in Expo 2020 Dubai.

1.4 Intended use of research

The reports allow Global Affairs Canada to assess the performance of Canada's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai and provide recommendations for improving Canada's participation in future events.

1.5 Notes on interpretation of research findings

The views and observations expressed in this document do not reflect those of Global Affairs Canada. This report was compiled by Leger Marketing Inc. based on the research conducted specifically for this project. This research is not probabilistic; the results cannot be inferred to the general population of visitors of the Canada Pavilion.

Since a sample of visitors who volunteered to participate in the surveys is not probabilistic in nature, margins of sampling error cannot be calculated for this survey. The results of such surveys cannot be described as statistically projectable to the target population. The results are directional in nature. The data have not been weighted in any way to reflect the demographic composition of the population of visitors at the Canada Pavilion.

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. Findings from in-depth interviews with key informants must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

This evaluation was finalized a few months after the end of Expo 2020 Dubai. Therefore, it was not possible to examine the impacts of Expo 2020 Dubai that are expected in the mid or long term. The survey and interviews focused on examining plausible effects, i.e. whether the visit to the Canada Pavilion reinforced or weakened any previously held beliefs about Canada. Since there is no available data on the perception of Canada in the U.A.E. prior to Expo 2020 Dubai, and no data collected after Expo 2020 Dubai, there is no way to compare whether Canada's participation in Expo 2020 Dubai will have had a lasting impact on the general U.A.E. population. Survey results and interview insights should not be taken as a definitive assessment of Canada's participation at Expo 2020 Dubai. We assume that the effects of this participation will be felt in Canada for months and even years to come.

1.6 Contract value

The contract value for this study was $123,413.70 (including HST).

1.7 Political neutrality statement and contact information

Leger certifies that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada's political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity* and the *Directive on the Management of Communications*.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

Christian Bourque, Senior Researcher; Léger