AN EXPO FOR ALL

CHAPTER 7

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 1-395 2/22/23 11:17 AM

AN EXPO FOR ALL

- Encompassing the sum of all outdoor spaces, the Public Realm was conceptualised as one of Expo's largest exhibition spaces. Both comfortable and stimulating, every sensory touchpoint was designed to serve as a constant reminder of Expo 2020 and that moment in time, while also reflecting the culture and heritage of the region.

- Expo 2020 Dubai used the language of art, culture and creativity in an emotional and engaging way to connect with people and expand on the universal themes of Expo 2020. It also celebrated the UAE's creative talent and cultural heritage, as well as its emergence as a burgeoning regional hub for the creative economy.

- Within the site's flagship pavilions and attractions, visitors enjoyed an array of multi-sensory, immersive experiences. From engaging exhibits to inspiring performances and exciting opportunities for interaction, these experiences brought the themes and values of Expo 2020 to life for visitors of all ages and interests.

- From sustainable on-site transport options to smart queueing to provisions for those with additional needs, Expo 2020 sought to deliver a smooth, seamless and efficient experience for everyone, covering the 'brilliant basics' and bringing 'moments of magic' to every visitor.

- Expo 2020's rich and varied events and entertainment programme was key in drawing a diverse demographic to the site and virtual platform each and every day. Guided by a spirit of openness, diversity and collaboration, the calendar included entertainment from every corner of the world, from globally renowned headline talent to emerging artists and schoolchildren.

- With more than 50 global cuisines served at 200-plus outlets, Expo's expansive food and beverage offering was designed to suit every palate and budget. A true celebration of global culture, Expo 2020 saw renowned local eateries join award-winning chefs from around the world to offer visitors everything from street bites to gourmet delights and sustainable dining.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 396-397 2/22/23 11:17 AM

VISITOR EXPERIENCE ON SITE

The Public Realm

A hive of pulsating energy and excitement from the moment the gates opened at 1000 GST on 1 October 2021, through to the final closure at 0300 GST on 1 April 2022, Expo 2020 Dubai revealed a whole new, immersive world for people of all ages and interests. Offering the guarantee of something new and surprising every single day, Expo 2020 proved to be a magical place that merged the fantasy of a vivid imagination with the reality of a world that needs everyone's help.

At the forefront of all planning was a commitment to an exceptional visitor experience that preserved the intent and objectives of hosting Expo 2020, while also encouraging repeat visitation. This involved considering the needs and expectations of all guest groups, striving to create a welcoming and memorable sense of place by including everything from 'brilliant basics' to 'moments of magic'.

For many previous World Expos, the heroes were the architecturally astounding country pavilions, and the innovative content they housed. While Expo 2020 Dubai was no different in this respect, from the outset it was also determined that the Public Realm – the sum of the outdoor spaces between buildings – should match these qualities.

With this in mind, the Public Realm was conceptualised as one of Expo's largest exhibition spaces, and the 'glue' that connected the whole site and experience together.

Encompassing more than six kilometres, the Public Realm was both comfortable and stimulating; it delighted while it educated; it provided spaces for rest and activity and it was a place that encouraged social interaction.

Every single sensory touchpoint – from the music that visitors heard, to the signage they saw and the aromas they smelled – was designed as a constant reminder of Expo 2020 and that moment in time. If the heart of the Expo beat in Al Wasl Plaza, the pulse radiated out across the Public Realm.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 398-399 2/22/23 11:17 AM

District personalities

Opportunity: Optimism, Joy, Collaboration

Central themes included innovation, potential and human betterment, with events, activities and performances exploring the extent of human possibility, empowerment and what humanity, at its best, can achieve.

Symbol: Sun

Mobility: Connection, Exchange, Movement

Focused on energy, speed and motion, with Dubai as a locus for the world's dialogue and trade, this is where surprising cross-cultural connections were made, with events and performances that emphasised movement, digital technologies and new methods of exchange.

Symbol: Sea

Sustainability: Curiosity, Wonder, Fun

Exploring the balance between what we take from the earth and what we give back, entertainment and programming probed both the power and fragility of the natural world, with the social moral of this district communicated through a sense of curiosity, wonder and fun.

Symbol: Earth

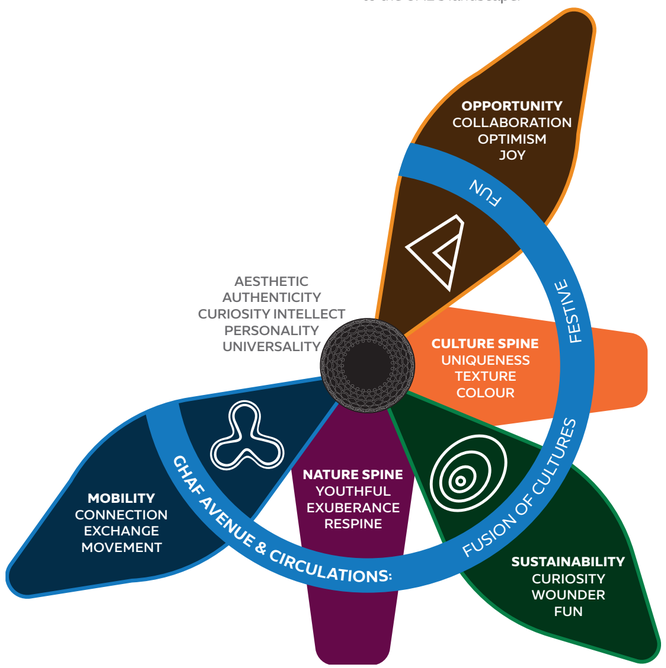
Ghaf Avenue

The circulation routes, walking pathways and spaces between buildings were where visitors spent much of their time, absorbing the spirit of the site and seeking both respite and recreation. Brimming with symbolism of the district in which they sat – from the design of shade structures made from natural materials, patterned pavements and whimsical drinking fountains, to a landscape filled with date palms, Arabian gums, wadi figs and jasmine and acacia trees. These were meeting spaces, spaces of exchange and interaction and a fusion of cultures, festivities and fun.

Culture Spine and Nature Spine

The Culture Spine and Nature Spine separated the three Thematic Districts. The Culture Spine entwined history, landscape and the arts and celebrated the falcon and the horse – iconic animals that speak to the culture and history of the region, connecting Al Forsan (a reference to horsemanship) to the Al Ghayath Trail (named after one of the UAE's most famous falcons).

Particularly appealing to families and youth, the Nature Spine, embodied by Jubilee Park, was populated with green spaces and was inspired by the palm trees and seasonal rivers (wadis) that shape and give character to the UAE's landscape.



Landscaping

The native Ghaf tree – the national tree of the UAE – has long played an important role in the history and traditions of the country, and was planted around the inner loop of Ghaf Avenue to create a pedestrian-friendly, green artery. Providing shade and respite from the urban environment, this continuous curtain opened at the entrance to the parks, creating a strong visual connection to these green spaces.

Across the site, planting reflected the personality of each District while highlighting the variety of species native to the region. The reference for the Opportunity District was the light, heat, and vastness of the desert and featured date palms, reflecting a precious desert oasis.

'Exploration' and the introduction of new species to the region as land and sea trade routes developed influenced landscaping within the Mobility District, which included palm groves, spices and the more recently introduced ornamental trees.

Meanwhile, the Sustainability District showcased the incredible adaptability and growth of vegetation in environments as extreme as the UAE. Acacia trees and shrubs represented the mountains; fruit trees and date palms reflected oases, while species that tolerate salinity echoed the coast, and wadi figs and broom brush recalled the ravines of the wadi landscape.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 400-401 2/22/23 11:17 AM

The Call to Prayer

The Call to Prayer (*Athan*) across the Public Realm was an immersive experience for all, and included both audio and visual elements. The programme began with 30 seconds of silence while screens displayed information about prayer times across the site.

Echoing the sound of neighbourhoods in old Dubai, the *Athan* was staggered slightly between Al Wasl and the rest of the Public Realm, giving visitors the impression of multiple voices calling at once. Even today, in many areas throughout the UAE you will hear a similar echoing of the call to prayer from different mosques in the same vicinity.

Throughout the three-minute Call to Prayer, performed by renowned muezzins from across the emirates and recorded by Expo especially for this programme, screens displayed a montage of time-lapse sequences of mosques from around the UAE, followed by another 30 seconds of silence before regular Expo programming continued.

Soundscape

A unique contribution to the Expo 2020 experience was the creation of the uplifting Expo song, an inspirational tribute to the themes of Expo 2020, and wonderfully adaptable in its instrumentation, making it suited to different locations and events. [See Chapter 5].

Much more than Expo's theme song, '*This Is Our Time*' welcomed visitors each day at the opening of the portals and provided the foundation for all the soundscapes, becoming the event's instantly recognisable sonic signature. These sounds of Expo 2020 were a unique, engaging way to permeate spaces across the site, giving them depth, vibrancy and emotions, with multiple soundscapes suited to specific environment and occasions.

The Expo 2020 sonic brand included a range of audio assets:

- **Sonic 'logo'** – variable soundscapes which responded to the thematic location in which they were used, including the layering of ambient sounds drawn from nature, designed to support the visual look and feel of the separate zones
- **Sonic music tracks** – the Expo Song, plus remixes and arrangements
- **Voiceover** – featuring a female Emirati storyteller as the 'voice of Expo', delivering messages in both English and Arabic, from generic welcome messages, to operational updates and health and safety information

Expo 2020 as an event also featured 600 different background music tracks, 110 soundscapes that varied according to Theme Weeks and major events, and 1,100 Public Address and Voice Alarm system (PAVA) messages.

Signage and wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding served as a critical tool in helping visitors navigate the vast site and included both static and digital elements, providing real-time updates and enabling visitors to make informed decisions and optimise their time at the Expo.

Reflecting cultural traditions and artisanal crafts, signage design was inspired by the UNESCO-protected Emirati craft of *Al Sadu*, a traditional form of weaving practised by Bedouins in rural communities of the UAE.

The graphic design for the signage also drew on local knowledge, creating a concept that blended recognised pictograms with calligraphic Arabic letterforms. These unique symbols were used throughout the signage system to speak an international visual language to Expo 2020's wide range of visitors.

Digitally, more than 80 onsite screens of varying sizes and specifications displayed content relating to concerts, events, promotions, holidays, and each of the National and Honour Days, as well as any operational changes.

Public Art Programme

Positioned thoughtfully throughout the site and a reflection of Expo's subthemes, the Public Art Programme featured 11 contemporary artworks – thought-provoking pieces that invited visitors to consider their place and role in the world.

Each work formed a response to the Expo themes, and was intended to start conversations and encourage dialogue. For example, Yinka Shonibare's Wind Sculpture, a huge sail-like structure covered with intricate Indonesian patterns, is a metaphor for a multi-layered, multicultural society such as the UAE; Olafur Eliasson's Presence of Absence is a statement on the climate crisis, while Monira Al Qadiri's Chimera reflects on the region's past and future economic, social and environmental relationship with oil.

Among Expo 2020 Dubai's top visitor attractions, the pieces attracted specialist art tours during the event, from creative entities such as Art Dubai, Abu Dhabi Art, and Guggenheim Museum, as well as art enthusiasts. Permanent structures, they will stay for future visitors to the site to enjoy and experience, becoming important legacy assets and iconic features on Dubai's creative landscape.

Wind Sculpture III – Yinka Shonibare

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 402-403 2/22/23 11:18 AM

Chimera – Monira Al Qadiri

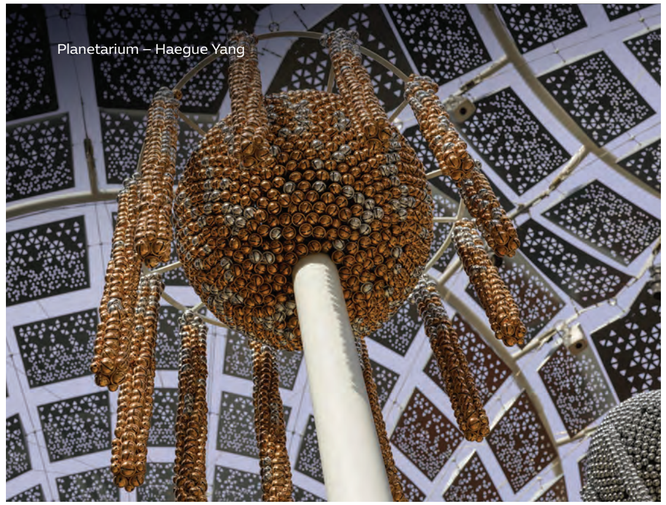
A Point in Time – Khalil Rabah

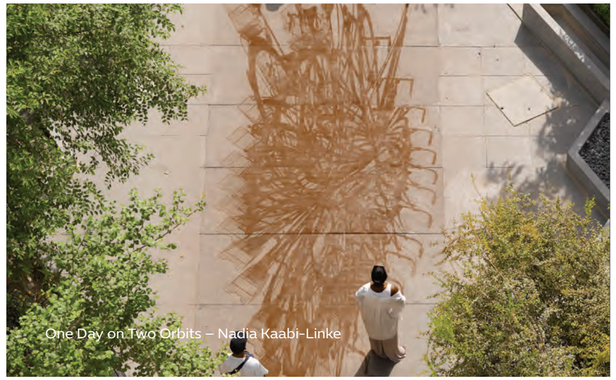
Garden – Hamra Abbas

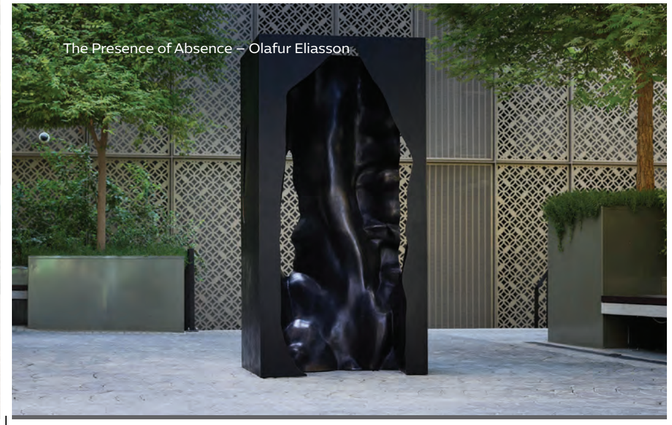
Pillow Fort – Afra Al Dhaheri

Terhal – Abdullah Al Saadi

The Plinth - Shaikha Al Mazrou


Planetarium – Haegue Yang


One Day on Two Orbits – Nadia Kaabi-Linke


The Presence of Absence – Olafur Eliasson

Distorted Familiarities – Asma Belhamar

Expo Closing Report – Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 404-405 2/22/23 11:18 AM

Sameem – Story of Our Culture

Beacons of Al Wasl

Sabeel fountains

Peace Memorial

The Desert Farm

Majlis structures

Beacons of Al Wasl

Adorning the circumference of Al Wasl Plaza, 42 bronze medallions set into the floor told the stories of the ideas, achievements, people and places that are part of the UAE's success and continued development. One metre in diameter, each beacon included an illustration and text, in both Arabic and English, that connected in some way to the vision and themes of Expo 2020. Significantly, the 42 medallions mark the number of years from the unification of the UAE in 1971 to when the nation was awarded the Expo in 2013.

Sabeel fountains

The 39 eye-catching drinking fountains located across the site – contemporary artistic interpretations of the traditional Emirati drinking fountain known as the '*sabeel*' – highlighted Emirati hospitality and generosity, enabling visitors to quench their thirst. They also carried a strong sustainability message by encouraging visitors to refill their own water bottles, and operated using hands-free sensor taps in a reflection of Expo's commitment to health and hygiene.

Designed in collaboration with regional artists and designers, through a partnership with Art Jameel, *Water in the Green* combines robust materials with plants, while *Nahel* features motifs of humankind, nature and technology connecting in harmony, illustrating the linkage between all three Expo 2020's subthemes. In addition, two contemporary artists created larger drinking fountains, known as Artistic Fountains: *Letter to Water* is a love letter to the precious resource, while *The Well* resembles a stone well.

Majlis structures

The majlis, which literally means 'sitting place,' is a traditional gathering space with deep significance to Arab culture. Building on this tradition, the majlis structures at Expo 2020 were conceived as individual welcoming lobbies, as well as areas for resting, chatting, eating, waiting or playing. The woven façades and roofs offered shade and seclusion, with textures and colours reflecting those found in natural landscapes. Each also contained a creatively designed 'poster', prompting conversations and ideas about the content and stories being told across Expo 2020.

Sameem – Story of Our Culture

Named from the Arabic word meaning 'innermost', Sameem was an open-air pavilion that took visitors on a journey through time, from the past to the future. It invited them to enter the traditional homes of the mountains, desert and coast and start a conversation with an artisan, a potter, and a boat-builder; sit with a henna artist; learn about the many species of dates; and understand how tradition is inevitably tied to the future.

The Desert Farm

Making the most of three of the UAE's abundant natural resources – the sun, the sea and the sand – the Desert Farm was a model farming solution that addressed the challenge of food security amid increasing desertification. Visitors learned how raising tilapia, a fish that can survive in hot, salty water, can benefit crops, and discovered tasty desert superhero plants such as salicornia (sea beans) and quinoa, which both thrive on saltwater.

Peace Memorial

Located next to the UAE Pavilion, the Peace Memorial honoured the brave Emiratis who gave their lives to bring peace and stability to the world. The memorial's columns symbolise strength in sacrifice and embody defence and protection. The gap between the memorial's two walls left space for visitors to close the circle – symbolically connecting the walls and building the nation. Sections of the walls were also inlayed with delicate pieces of mother-of-pearl, sourced by local fishermen, to represent the eternal light of the heroes it honours.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 406-407 2/22/23 11:18 AM

Calligraphy benches

As an artful means of communication, calligraphy holds an important place in the history of Arab culture dating to the sixth century. The calligraphy benches, designed by Asif Khan in collaboration with Arabic type designer and typographer Lara Captan and placed across the Public Realm, offered a place to stop and contemplate. The benches formed words that had been crowdsourced via Expo 2020's social media users, who were asked to select words that they felt best represented Expo and the cherished values of the UAE. They stand as a modern-day reminder to the world of the value of this beloved form of visual art from the past.

Arabic Word	English Word
احترام	*Respect*
اصالة	*Authenticity*
السلام	*Peace*
سعادة	*Happiness*
الحزم	*Decisiveness*
العز	*Distinction*
الخير	*The good*
الحب	*Love*
الجود	*Generosity*
الهمة	*Determination*
الفزعة	*Support*
العزيمة	*Resolution*
الكرامة	*Dignity*
الأمل	*Hope*
الأمان	*Safety*
التواصل	*Connecting*
التعاون	*Cooperation*
الإنسانية	*Humanity*
الرؤية	*Vision*
الحضارة	*Civilisation*
الفكر	*Pride*
الشراكة	*Partnership*
الحكمة	*Wisdom*
عطاء	*Compassion*
تسامح	*Tolerance*
صداقة	*Friendship*
معرفة	*Knowledge*
شهامة	*Chivalry*
تفاؤل	*Optimism*
أمن	*Security*
نصر	*Triumph*
بناء الإنسان	*Human development*
الإتحاد	*Unity*
الكرم	*Generous*
البركة	*Blessings*
إبتكار	*Innovation*
الفوز	*Victory*

MENASA
EMIRATI DESIGN PLATFORM

MENASA, the Emirati Design Platform

With MENASA, the Emirati design platform, Expo 2020 Dubai developed a dedicated programme to nurture and then showcase new contemporary objects created through the fusion of product designers from the UAE and around the world.

A range of original creations emerged from a melting pot of creative minds and hands from across the planet, revelling in collaboration and merging materials and processes with design and innovation. In one collaboration, UAE designers worked with their counterparts in Rwanda to produce a piece that uses Rwandan beads to depict UAE wildlife, and in another, haute couture garments were fashioned by international designers using traditional Emirati embroidery techniques.

Three distinct collections were presented, enabling the programme to welcome a diverse audience and offer a variety of products with a range of price points.

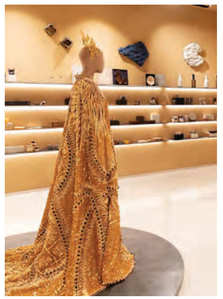
Craft Stories: A series of seven unique design collaborations showcasing bespoke design pieces and telling stories of today's UAE through a selection of crafts and traditional practices.

UAE Designer Collections: Exclusive collections from more than 40 designers, ranging from jewellery and homeware to fashion accessories and art pieces.

Lifestyle Products: A wide range of designs inspired by Craft Stories and customised on products such as notebooks, greetings cards, posters, coffee cups and tote bags.

In addition, a series of 26 mini documentaries, shot on location around the UAE, were exhibited alongside the design collections, drawing visitors further into the intimate worlds of the artisans and their crafts and traditions, including clay, *safeefa* (palm frond weaving), *talli* (embroidery), *sadu* (bedouin weaving), *gargour* making (wire-crafted fish traps), pearl diving and coffee making.

Merging artisanal skills with innovation and technology, the programme sparked a new appreciation for Emirati crafts as a contemporary and living expression of Emirati cultural identity.



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 408-409
2/22/23 11:18 AM

بيت الهامور
Hammour House

Hammour House

Bridging art, culture and engagement, Hammour House was a community-led project that welcomed diverse participants, from fishermen and scientists to artists and schoolchildren, to create and exhibit a number of visually striking and emotionally inspiring art installations.

These included a vibrant tapestry depicting marine life, created by school students using batik technique and sustainable dyes. It also featured the Hammour Fish, a sculpture made from fishing nets lost or abandoned at sea, known as ghost nets, by Australian artist Sue Ryan.

Raising awareness of endangered coral ecosystems, which are home to the local hammour species, this popular programme included film screenings, talks and almost 200 hands-on workshops including knitting, painting and music. Visitors also contributed to an ever-growing coral reef sculpture, made from recycled and sustainable materials, which will find a permanent home at Terra – The Sustainability Pavilion.

> **"The message that there is hope, and that each and every one of us can do something to create a better future for our planet, lives on."**
>
> Ahmed Al Enezi, Senior Manager, Arts & Culture

Site-wide mascot activations

Massively popular and much-loved, robot Opti cruised around Expo during the event, carrying out the crucial task of greeting and entertaining visitors of all ages. The brainchild of Expo's Official Robotics Partner Terminus – which deployed 152 programmable robots supported by cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) solutions across the event – one-metre-tall Opti was capable of standing upright for nearly 24 hours, could move freely in all directions and was equipped with an 18-degree backward angle to enable easy interaction with people.

Magical mascot shows, featuring siblings Rashid and Latifa, welcomed families to join in singalongs, dance-offs and theatrical productions that shared a special message of uniting to overcome adversity, and the role each of us can play in making that possible. These included an immersive show at Al Wasl that invited children to help Rashid and Latifa battle their evil arch-nemesis Mr Scrap; interactive booths where visitors could create their own avatar to be projected onto Al Wasl's canvas; and 'Mr Scrap's Scrapyard Idol' – a daily music, dance and story show at Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre.

Mascot-inspired play areas delighted younger visitors, with Rashid's Playground in Jubilee Park an ocean-themed adventure featuring sharks on springs, whale slides, ocean liners and an interactive 3D maze modelled on a humpback whale. Meanwhile, Al Forsan Park, with its interlaced network of paths, offered a rich mosaic of opportunities for cultural interaction and recreation, and included Latifa's Adventures in Space City, where kids could bounce over nets in the 'zero-gravity' chamber, leap into orbit around swings and hop aboard a replica of the UAE's Hope Probe.

For more on Expo's mascots, see Chapter 5.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 410-411
2/22/23 11:18 AM

Visitor services

Onsite transport

The Expo Explorer was designed as an entertaining, sustainable ride, taking visitors around the key locations and accompanied by an Expo host who relayed passengers with inside stories of the star venues.

The imaginatively designed, highly visible trains – painted the vibrant yellow of the Expo 2020 brand – came in multiple train types including Air Pod, Locomotive and the world's first compressed Air Train, and proved to be a favourite amongst families and schoolchildren.

Electric bicycles by vehicle-for-hire company Careem were available to rent onsite through the Careem mobile app, with 18 bike stations across the site. Some bikes came equipped with child safety seats, making them a great way for families with young children to explore Expo.

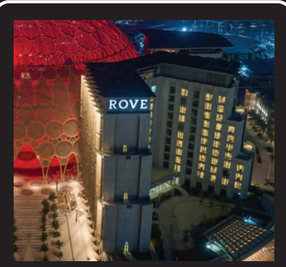
Baby strollers and standard and electric wheelchairs were also available for hire at the entrances and at Visitor Centres, with electric wheelchair chargers available across the site.

A number of white golf buggies, operated by trained drivers, also shuttled visitors around the site. The paid service was bookable for entire families or individuals depending on the size of the cart.

Visitor Centres

Seven Visitor Centres were located across Expo 2020 offering information services and assistance as well as a range of amenities, from charging stations and stroller and wheelchair rental, to Quiet Rooms (see Accessibility section on next page) and lost and found – all under one roof.

The restrooms throughout the site were also an opportunity for Expo 2020 to impart wisdom through its 'water wise' messaging, informing visitors about water scarcity and sanitation challenges. In the Opportunity District, the messaging was all about gender inclusion and innovation; in the Mobility District it focused on technology; while the Sustainability District focused on conservation and resource management.



Stay at the heart of Expo

The Rove Expo 2020 hotel – the only onsite hotel – launched on 1 October 2021 and is located at the centre of the action, right next to Al Wasl Plaza. The stylish hotel features 312 rooms and 19 suites, as well as a rooftop swimming pool overlooking Al Wasl. Part of Expo's legacy, it remains at Expo City Dubai.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_EXO.indd 412-413 10/5/22 11:18 AM

Accessibility

Emphasising Expo's commitment to inclusion, accessibility was woven into the fibre of the entire site, ensuring all visitors, including people of determination and senior guests, were fully supported and enjoyed a seamless Expo 2020 experience.

All guests eligible for a free Expo Senior Citizen Pass or a free people of determination pass could access dedicated parking spaces within each district and make use of a buggy drop-off to the Arrival Plazas.

For visitors with reduced mobility, the Expo Rider buses were wheelchair accessible and many of the buggies on site included accessible ramps. 'Changing Places' toilets were available with height-adjustable benches, hand wash basins and hoists to assist with transfers – a first in the UAE to be installed outside a medical facility.

Level, step-free access was available in every area and every pavilion, including key attractions such as the Garden in the Sky observation tower, while a range of service counters, ATMs and drinking fountains were at accessible heights. There were several dedicated viewing areas across the site and more than 150 evacuation chairs were on hand to safely and quickly evacuate those with reduced mobility in the event of an emergency.

Hearing Induction Loops (also known as Hearing Enhancement Systems) were provided within key locations for deaf or hard-of-hearing visitors, and communication cards were available at Visitor Centres for non-speaking individuals. Sign language interpretation was provided in International Sign for select official speeches, talks and ceremonies, open captions were available on select digital experience videos, and live captioning – either directly, onscreen or via a link and viewed on a personal smart phone – was provided at a number of events.

Tactile paving for wayfinding guidance and to warn for a change in level was built into the site for blind and low-vision visitors, and braille and tactile map boards and models – including embossed images and audio output – were provided within the Thematic Districts and in select areas.

Sensory Rating Cards were available for each of the pavilions measuring impact of sight, smell, light, terrain, touch and sound to ensure people who were neuro-diverse were able to make informed choices and fully enjoy the Expo 2020 experience. In addition, social narratives and visual stories were available for the Expo 2020 Thematic Pavilions, providing detailed information with sensory icons, and ear defenders and sunglasses were available to borrow.

The Quiet Rooms, located in the Visitor Centres, offered spaces for visitors who felt overstimulated, overwhelmed or anxious, and featured a Sensory Pod, quiet seating, and controllable sensory stimulation to enable them to take a sensory break. The Visitor Centres also provided sunflower lanyards, also known as 'Hidden Impairment Lanyards', to indicate additional assistance or access may be required.

Service dogs were also welcome on site, with Expo 2020 providing four relief areas.

Expo 2020 was certified a Sensory Accessible Event by Sensory Access, the first World Expo and the first event in the entire Middle East, North Africa and Asia to be granted this certification.

Smart queues

The Expo 2020 smart queue system allowed people to pre-book a time slot for up to 10 participating pavilions a day, available on the 'manage tickets' option on the Expo app and online. Advance bookings could also be made when visitors were already onsite if slots opened up after cancellations, and the smart queue system also became a key tool in managing visitors flow during the height of the pandemic.

Senior guests

Under the Senior Guests Programme, visitors aged 60 and above could pre-book certain services, free of charge, to enhance their Expo 2020 Dubai experience, including private buggies for up to five people; a meet-and-greet with a dedicated Senior Guest Concierge at the Arrival Plaza; a welcome pack that included recommended journeys based on particular themes; details of fast-track entry to selected pavilions; and a 30 percent discount on lunch at select restaurants across the site.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 414-415 2/22/23 11:19 AM

Taste the world

With more than 50 global cuisines served at 200-plus outlets, Expo 2020 Dubai's expansive food and beverage offering was designed to suit every palate and budget. An array of renowned local eateries joined award-winning chefs from around the world to offer visitors everything from street bites to gourmet delights and sustainable dining.

Highlights included African dining hall Alkebulan, curated by renowned chef Alexander Smalls, with 11 chef-led eateries offering a rich culinary journey through the continent.

David Myers, famed for his inventive international dishes with a Californian twist, introduced visitors to the renowned Adrift burger; Chef David Thompson transported the food markets of Bangkok to his Long Chim outpost at Expo 2020; Kutir, by Rohit Ghai, enticed diners with an aromatic menu paying tribute to India's rich heritage; and culinary tour de force Matthew Kenney inspired with three plant-based food concepts: Veg'd, XYST, and Mudra.

Al Fanar Restaurant & Café introduced the world to traditional Emirati cooking; famed Italian restaurant Scarpetta delighted with its Burrata Bar; Grand Beirut brought Levant cuisine and a vibrant Lebanese experience; and upscale restaurant Kojaki, proved to be a huge hit with its Korean Japanese fusion.

At the other end of the dining spectrum, Al Baik, the fried chicken phenomenon from Saudi Arabia, saw lines of eager diners spread out of the restaurant and across the Public Realm, while sweet-toothed visitors were also prepared to queue at the UK's Bread Ahead for incredible filled doughnuts, with the bakery also offering hugely popular cooking classes.

Many of Expo's 192 participating countries served up authentic national dishes at their pavilions, with standout F&B offerings including best-selling sushi chain Sushiro at the Japan Pavilion; Tiaki at the New Zealand Pavilion, featuring premium products such as Manuka honey, sustainably sourced hoki fish, grass-fed beef and free-range chicken; Al-Lusitano at the Portugal Pavilion, serving fresh Mediterranean cuisine on an expansive terrace overlooking Jubilee Park; and Dhaaba at the Pakistan Pavilion, which offered authentic street food from Pakistan in a colourful, contemporary café.

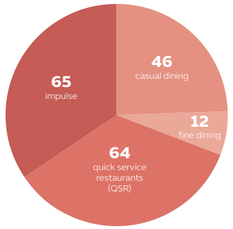
Further culinary highlights included the enticing line-up of festivals such as the Expo 2020 Dubai Vegan Food Festival association with Veganuary and Dubai Vegan Days; the Street Food Night Market and the BBQ Festival – which all took place at Festival Garden.

Expo's Food Rescue Programme

During the event, Expo 2020 Dubai launched its Food Rescue Programme (FRP) in partnership with Cisco, Expo 2020's Official Digital Network Partner. The initiative cut food loss and wastage by monitoring food operations at Expo 2020's restaurants, food halls, and workforce catering, repurposing it and distributing to local charities with the logistical support of the UAE Food Bank. Utilising Cisco's Replate – a state-of-the-art technology to automate the food rescue process, connect donors to charities and communities in need and track the environmental impact of all donations – participating vendors helped repurpose 44,000kg of food, producing in excess of 93,000 meals, preserving more than 90 million litres of water and saving approximately 90,000kg of CO2.

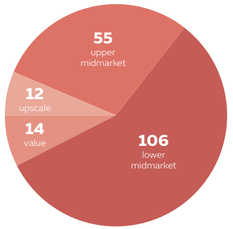
The Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MOCCAE) and Emirates Foundation, steadfast supporters of the Expo 2020 Dubai Food Rescue Programme, are adapting and expanding the initiative nationwide, supporting the UAE's goal to reduce food loss and waste by 50 per cent by 2030 and aligning with the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Expo outlets by dining style



187
total Expo outlets

Expo outlets by pricing category



187
total Expo outlets

36
licensed restaurants

7
with Shisha

(excludes 105 participant pavilion eateries)

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 416-417
2/22/23 11:19 AM

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 1 English_43.indd 418-419 2/22/23 11:19 AM

Licensing and retail

With purchasing a souvenir an important part of the overall visitor experience, Expo's distinctive product offering and retail experience included unique keepsakes and mementos that reflected the Expo 2020 brand and amplified its theme and subthemes. These products were also an important tool in increasing visitor engagement, generating revenue, and increased brand visibility, particularly across social media. All Expo 2020 official licensees and retailers were contractually obligated to follow Expo 2020 policies, including reporting their product design, manufacturing, supply chain, logistics and packaging as part of an exercise requested by the Sustainability team to be reviewed and measured against Expo 2020 Dubai's RISE guidelines [see Chapter 2]. The Licensing and Retail team also worked with supplier Natural Bags to deliver sustainable, tree-free shopping bags on-site as an alternative to paper or plastic shopping bags.

Top sellers

Expo Passport

The undisputed star of the Expo 2020 retail offering with almost two million sold, the 50-page yellow passport encouraged visitors to collect stamps at every pavilion they visited

Expo 2020 Dubai Monopoly

With the option for players to trade Expo 2020 pavilions and attractions, the UAE Pavilion was the most exclusive property on the board, with other prime locations including the Thematic Pavilions and Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC)

Site, Themes and Architecture book

Expo 2020 Dubai partnered with luxury book publisher Assouline to create a series of coffee table books

Opti Plush Clip-On

Opti, the much-loved orange AI-powered robot greeted visitors, gave directions, told jokes, often broke into synchronised dances – and had his very own line of merchandise, from toys and key chains, to jumpers, magnetic pins and hats

Others

Expo 2020 pins

Vintage Expo 2020 posters

Limited edition Al Wasl perfume (unisex)

Swatch special edition watches

New Zealand Mint fine gold and silver limited edition coins

The Camel Soap Factory custom-created Expo 2020 Dubai official cosmetic products

Locally-made date bars from The Dates Bar Company

Mascot souvenirs

Mascots featured across 14 categories of official Expo 2020 Dubai retail items, including digital games, watches, food, homeware, commemorative currency, apparel, infant toys, board games and puzzles, plush toys, ride-ons and books.

Expo Closing Report – Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 420-421 2/22/23 11:19 AM

Expo 2020 Dubai Passports

The AED 20 (USD 5.45) Expo 2020 Dubai passport came out on top as the most popular souvenir at Expo 2020 Dubai. The must-have memento encouraged visitors to see as many pavilions as possible during the 182-day event, while special stamps marked some of Expo's key events and milestones, including Mother's Day and 20 million visits.

The 50-page passport included space for personal details and a passport-sized picture, with a unique code number and watermarked images. Linking the past with the present, it celebrated the UAE's Golden Jubilee year with a special page stamped in gold foil featuring a photograph, taken in 1971, of the nation's Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, as well as illustrations of the three Thematic Pavilions, Al Wasl, Dubai landmarks and the city's iconic skyline.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 422-423 2/22/23 11:20 AM

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 424-425 2/22/23 11:21 AM

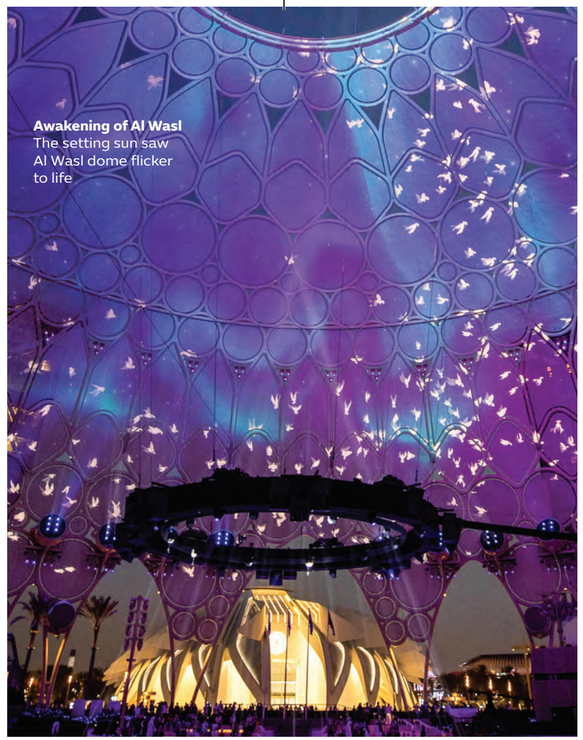
EXPO ATTRACTIONS

Al Wasl Plaza

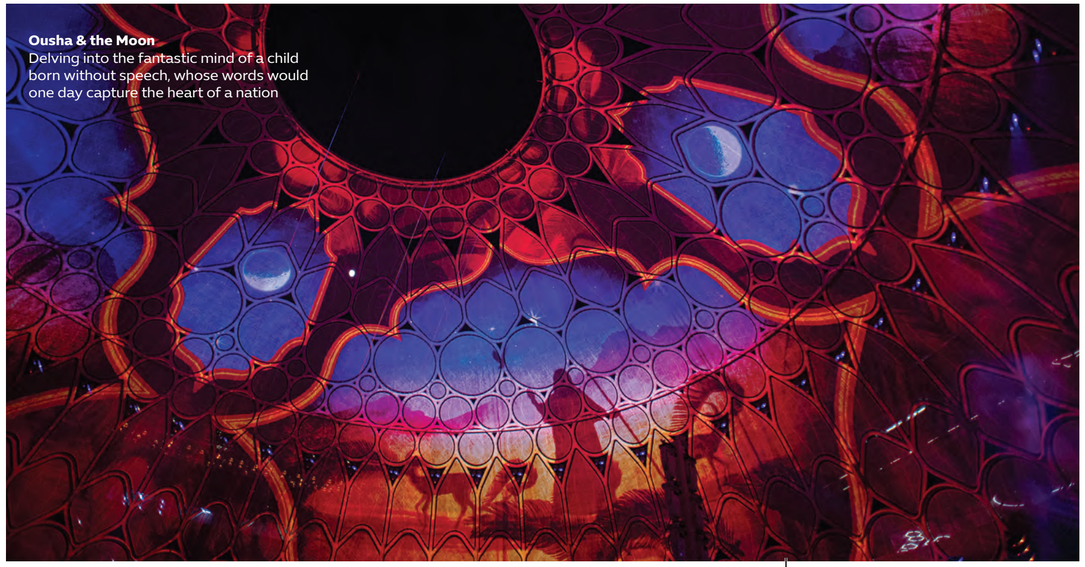
Expo's beating heart, Al Wasl Plaza's mood shifted from morning to evening, delighting visitors with an array of multi-sensory experiences, jaw-dropping immersive shows, spectacular ceremonies and performances spanning national cultures, young talent and international headline acts.

Pushing the boundaries of innovation
The creative philosophy behind Al Wasl was to create a tranquil, inviting garden that would enfold visitors; an outdoor space with an indoor feeling, with two different lives from day to night. Expo built and adapted the latest technologies, layering and mapping them in new, innovative ways to create a spectacular result: a total lights-audio-projection sphere and stunning, immersive and customised experiences for visitors.

- **WYSIWYG** to see, edit and 'feel' content in a form that appears as it would when displayed on the dome
- **Follow-Me** smart tracing system that allows light to track faces and figures as they move
- **Disguise Media Server** to integrate lighting fixtures, LED screens and projection surfaces
- **Notch** to integrate with Disguise to create interactive and video content in one unified real-time environment
- 42 air-conditioned pods
- 252 projectors, stacked to create spectacular vibrancy
- 30,000 LED garden lights that mimic the colours and mood of the projections
- 300 strobe lights
- 4,000 dome light fixtures
- 2,000 LED dome lights
- 27 invisible speakers



Awakening of Al Wasl
The setting sun saw Al Wasl dome flicker to life



Ousha & the Moon
Delving into the fantastic mind of a child born without speech, whose words would one day capture the heart of a nation

Isha Prayer
A moment of spirituality descends upon Al Wasl to mark the final call to prayer

Al Adiyat: The Story of a Boy and His Horse
A theatrical tribute to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, it offered a lesson in conviction and self-belief and highlighted the values of courage and commitment

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 426-427 2/28/23 11:22 AM

Mission Possible – The Opportunity Pavilion

Mission Possible – The Opportunity Pavilion welcomed 1,477,099 visitors, taking them on a journey of inspiration that demonstrated everyone's ability to make a difference, no matter how small, in creating a better world for tomorrow. The experience and pavilion design built on the rich urban history of the traditional plaza and its universal significance as a place for people to connect across age, culture and language.

Across three dedicated tracks through the pavilion, visitors found inspiration in three individuals – Emirati engineer Mariam Al Juneibi, Peruvian innovator Abel Cruz and Mama Fatma, a solar energy pioneer from Zanzibar – whose seemingly small actions have created big impacts and enabled meaningful change in their communities in the areas of food, water and energy.

Mission Possible also connected the theme of Opportunity to the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a roadmap to a brighter, more sustainable future for all. Forming the bedrock of the experience, educating people about the SDGs was central to the Opportunity Pavilion's purpose to raise the level of citizen engagement, ultimately inspiring action towards achieving the global goals by 2030.

The experience emphasised that small actions by each one of us can have a big impact, and ended with an invitation to every visitor to embark on a personal mission of their own, so that they left with a sense of optimism, hope and a commitment to ensure a brighter, more dignified future for everyone on this planet.

Mission Possible was also home to the #UNHub, which hosted a series of events and activities reflecting the values of multilateralism, showcasing the role of international cooperation and joint action to overcome global challenges and achieve the SDGs. It also housed Expo 2020 Dubai's Best Practice Area [see Chapter 6].

In Expo City Dubai, Mission Possible – The Opportunity Pavilion will become a museum celebrating the success and reliving special memories of Expo 2020 Dubai.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 428-429 2/22/23 11:22 AM

ALIF

Alif – The Mobility Pavilion

Taking its name from the first letter of the Arabic alphabet and symbolising the beginning of progress and new horizons, Alif – The Mobility Pavilion enthralled visitors with an awe-inspiring, thought-provoking experience that demonstrated how mobility has driven humanity's development from our humble beginnings to the interconnected world of today and beyond.

Some 1,375,971 visitors saw how Dubai and the UAE have long exemplified the notion of mobility through trade, culture and innovation as they journeyed through the past, present and future of movement.

Beginning 4,500 years ago in Saruq Al Hadid, a settlement in the Dubai desert with strong ties with the Gulf, the Levant and West Asia, the experience invited visitors aboard the world's largest elevating platform to the House of Wisdom in ninth-century Baghdad. Here they met the historical 'giants of mobility' – nine-metre-tall photo-realistic figures from the Golden Age of Arab Civilisation – including ancient navigator Ibn Majid, geographer and cartographer Al Bakri and explorer Ibn Battuta, whose innovations helped navigate and understand the world and paved the way for the technology we use today.

Encountering a pearl diver – a symbol of the region and the lengths people went to provide for their families – on the way, visitors travelled forward in time to the 21st century and discovered how the UAE is reaching for new horizons through the ambitious Emirates Mars Mission programme.

Visitors entered a virtual world brimming with data, and learned how today's tools have enabled us to optimise the increasingly complex movement of goods, people and ideas in the physical world, before stepping into a vision of the city of tomorrow, geared towards enhancing our happiness.

Alif was one of the first attractions to re-open in Expo City Dubai, welcoming visitors of all ages, including school students.

Expo Closing Report_Chapter-7_English_210.indd 430-431 2/22/23 11:22 AM

Terra – The Sustainability Pavilion

Welcoming 1,803,037 visitors of all ages, Terra highlighted the urgency of addressing negative environmental impacts, caused in large part by human behaviour, through an engaging, playful and personal experience designed to empower visitors to understand their impact on the environment, break the cycle of consumerism and become advocates for change.

Immersive spaces designed as theatre sets used the latest storytelling techniques to nurture our innate connection with the environment and inspire us to live a more sustainable life. Visitors were invited to walk through time in an Arabian wadi, where cheetahs and mega elephants once roamed, and marvel at huge installations inspired by iconic fairground attractions that explained key sustainability issues and concepts, including a giant balance maze requiring visitors to collaborate to bring the Earth into balance.

Inside, Terra offered two journeys: An interactive stroll through the intertwined roots of the forest, where every footstep affected the 'wood-wide-web', the amazing symbiotic network of roots and fungi that allows trees to communicate and share resources; or a dive under the ocean to discover the beauty and the mysteries contained within.

Visitors then entered the 'consumption halls', where they uncovered the hidden harmful impacts of our choices, including our obsession with excessive consumerism. They met 'Gnasher' – a giant consumption machine that showed how natural resources are being destroyed to make consumer products, and a deep-sea fish whose system was clogged with discarded plastic waste. A series of 'would you rather?' scenarios then challenged visitors to consider how individual behaviours directly impact our planet and understand how the choices we each make can add up to big results.

Finally, The Laboratory of Future Values was a place of ideas – a hopeful space that presented solutions to the challenges, issues and worries raised earlier in the experience, inspiring visitors to become agents of change.

Terra remains as a flagship attraction in Expo City Dubai, welcoming visitors of all ages, including through the Expo School Programme.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 1 English_210.indd 432-433 11:22 AM

VISION
PAVILION

Vision Pavilion

The Vision Pavilion was conceived as a tribute to His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, offering visitors an opportunity to discover more about His Highness's childhood and experiences that influenced his bold vision for Dubai. During the event, the pavilion recorded a visitor satisfaction figure of 96 per cent, the highest across all Expo 2020 Dubai's pavilions. Welcoming 179,229 visitors, it received the award for Best Small Pavilion at Exhibitor Magazine's World Expo Awards.

The emotional journey acquainted visitors with His Highness through a more personal lens and offered a glimpse into the influences that transformed a young boy into a visionary leader.

After entering through an imposing door, the design of which replicated that of the home in Shindagha of HH Sheikh Mohammed's grandfather, the journey included insight into His Highness's early years, the traditional Emirati values instilled in him, the tenets of the Bedouin lifestyle, and the traditions of the Bani Yas tribe.

'Exploring His Surroundings' reimagined Sheikh Mohammed's special childhood room at Zabeel Palace – a physical manifestation of the first explorations and discoveries of youth, while in the 'Passions and Values' room, visitors came face-to-face with an awe-inspiring 5.5m, 52-tonne marble sculpture replicating the neck and head of Dubai Millennium, His Highness's most-beloved race horse. 'Living Among the Pearl Divers' offered insights into life in Dubai before oil, and the harsh conditions that prompted His Highness to pursue economic diversification, with the experience culminating in 'The Journey Continues', reinforcing His Highness's legacy with a kaleidoscope of Dubai residents sharing their stories of their relationship with the city.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 434-435 2/22/23 11:22 AM

WOMEN'S PAVILION

IN COLLABORATION WITH Cartier

Women's Pavilion

Under the key message 'when women thrive, humanity thrives', the Women's Pavilion invited visitors to recognise the central role women have played throughout history and the often forgotten or undervalued contributions they have made. Curated by Expo 2020 Dubai in collaboration with Cartier, it reflected the belief that the only way to peace, prosperity and sustainability is through the full and equal participation of women in all aspects of society.

Visitors experienced a creative, multi-sensory journey that shone a light on women's achievements and impact on the world, acknowledged what is holding women back, highlighted solutions and initiatives enabling women to thrive, and encouraged visitors to become champions of gender equality and women's empowerment.

With contributors including Lebanese actor and Oscar-nominated director Nadine Labaki and French actor, filmmaker, singer and pianist Mélanie Laurent, the pavilion featured a series of artworks highlighting the universal link between women and their ecosystems, a Virtual Reality hall showcasing female changemakers who have made great strides towards gender parity, and an audio-visual art piece that reflected women's voices across the globe.

It included the Women's Pavilion Majlis – a convening space for everyone to engage in constructive and solution-oriented dialogues on women's empowerment – and hosted an array of events and programming on the role of women in politics, diplomacy, business, arts, music and more, with the objective of enhancing understanding of equality and driving tangible, collaborative action.

The first of its kind in a World Expo in more than 50 years, the Women's Pavilion welcomed 342,234 visitors and became a critical space for reflection, discussion and collaboration on one of the most important issues of our time.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 436-437 2/22/23 11:22 AM

Garden in the Sky

Soaring 55 metres above the ground in Expo's Jubilee District, the Garden in the Sky observation tower offers sweeping, birds-eye views of the wonder-filled Expo site and beyond. The tower features a two-level circular cabin that rotates as it ascends and descends. The upper level houses 10 *Peltophorum Inerme* or yellow flame trees, and is linked by stairs to the lower floor, with its floor-to-ceiling glass windows.

Surreal water feature

Located between Al Wasl Plaza and Jubilee Park, the awe-inspiring Surreal water feature was designed to engage and entertain visitors and quickly became one of Expo 2020's must-see attractions. Merging water, fire and earth, the iconic feature sits within an amphitheatre and vertical garden, where sheets of water tumble down the 12m high walls, cascading into a mysterious, multi-hued circle of fire and appearing to defy gravity by flowing upwards. The whole experience is beautifully accompanied by an orchestral score from the award-winning composer of the Game of Thrones theme music, Ramin Djawadi.

Expo Closing Report_Chapter 1_English_Final.indd 438-439 2/22/23 11:22 AM

EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Staging 30,000-plus events across the site, Expo 2020's rich and varied events and entertainment programme was an integral part of an delivering an exceptional visitor experience, drawing a diverse demographic to the site and virtual platform every single day for the full 182 days.

The extensive programme was guided by a spirit of openness, diversity and collaboration, reflecting the historical role of World Expos as global celebrations of culture. Rejoicing the past and embracing the future with unbounded curiosity and optimism, the programming calendar included entertainment in every shape and form and from every corner of the globe. This was an incredible opportunity to showcase the UAE as a hub for creativity and culture, but also to provide a unique platform for all participants to showcase their talent, creativity, culture and unique skills to the world.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 440-441 2/22/23 11:22 AM

FIVE CORE PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY

STORYTELLING

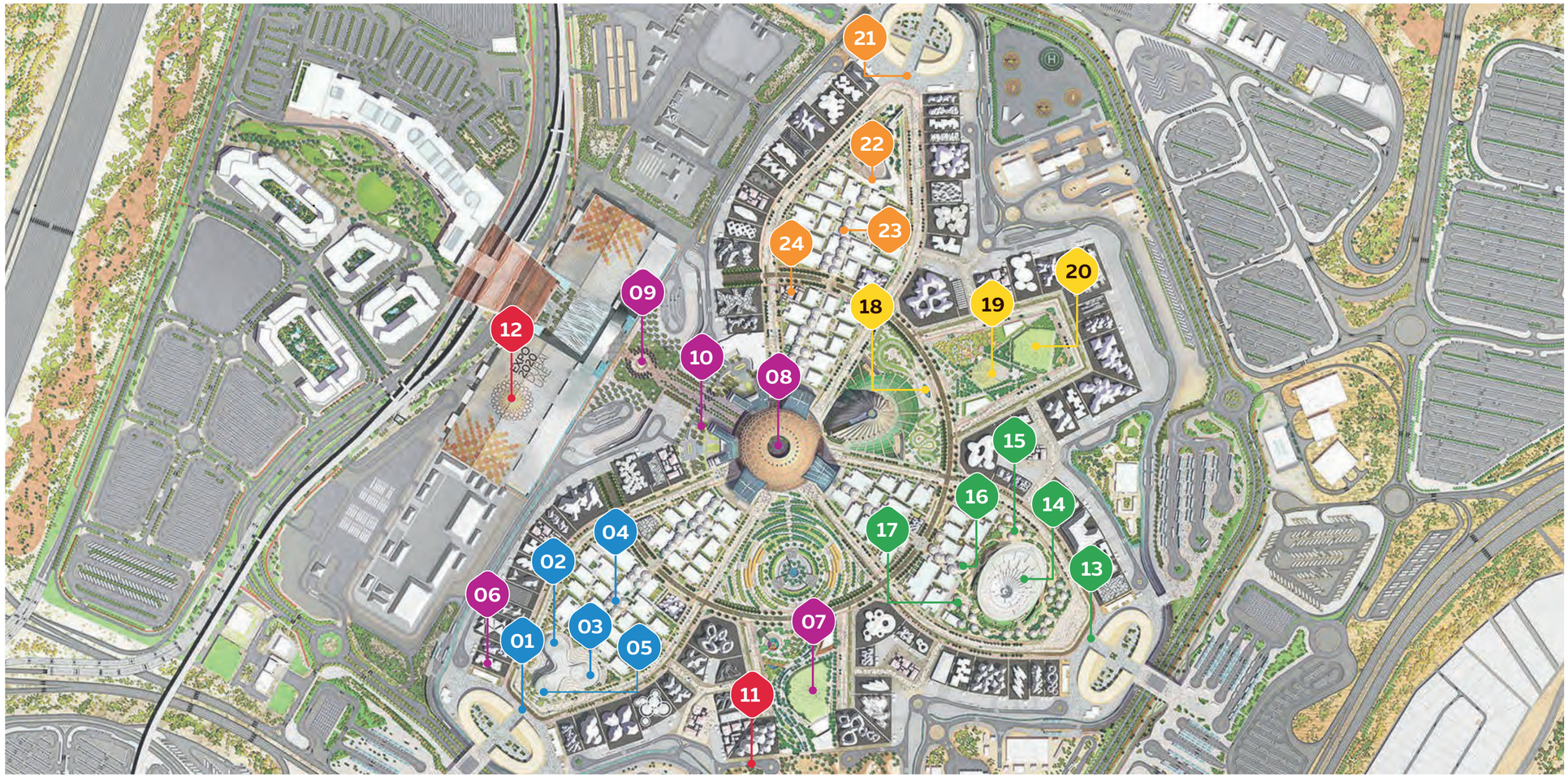
Programming led by international participants, Partners, UAE government entities and other stakeholders across pavilions, the Public Realm and the site's dedicated event venues was crucial to Expo's spectacular cultural and entertainment offering.

These events enabled participants to increase their visibility and visitor reach, and were essential opportunities for them to achieve their goals – such as supporting nation or corporate branding or promoting exclusive tourism destinations and cultural diversity. From sustainable fashion shows in the UK Pavilion to cooking masterclasses in the Peru Pavilion, Bulgarian folk music concerts in Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre to Manchester City kids' football camps at the Sports, Fitness and Wellbeing Hub, participants created experiences that allowed visitors to make connections with people and traditions they may never have encountered before. They also served to highlight Expo's spirit of collaboration while bringing its themes to life.

Expo Closing Report – Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 442-443 2/22/23 11:23 AM

Venues

01. Sea Plaza
02. The Bowl
03. The Stage
04. Sea Stage
05. The Tracks
06. Sport, Fitness and Wellbeing Hub
07. Jubilee Stage
08. Al Wasl Plaza
09. 2020 Plaza
10. Al Wasl Avenue
11. Festival Garden
12. Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC)
13. Earth Plaza
14. Terra Auditoruim
15. Ghaf Circle
16. Earth Stage
17. Wadi Circle
18. The Campfire
19. Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre
20. Al Forsan Park
21. Sun Plaza
22. Opportunity Forum
23. Sun Stage
24. Expo Live Pavilion (The Good Place)



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 444-445 2/22/23 11:23 AM

Crowd management

Ensuring a safe and enjoyable visitor experience at Jubilee Park – a busy venue that, across the six months of Expo 2020 welcomed more concert-goers than any other similar venue – was a priority.

From the original venue design and layout, new infrastructure, barriers and other measures were added in response to the ever-growing number of concert-goers and to reflect the diverse nature of the performers and demographics of the guest groups, from VVIPs to schoolchildren and the general public.

A series of different venue modes was created to accommodate a range of set-ups, including standing, formal seating and a blend of relaxed settings. One of the key challenges was maintaining a free-flowing park space during the day, while preparing for a concert set-up in the evenings. Expo also considered maximising sightlines for visitors while adhering to evolving COVID-19 capacity limitations and social distancing requirements.

As a venue originally designed for 8,000-plus visitors, attendance around the perimeter at times trebled in number, as footfall swelled in the closing weeks of Expo. With a 'Safety First' policy in place from the start, Expo also established a dedicated, permanently staffed Events Control Room from November 2021. That, plus a resilient and adaptable mindset shaped in a collaborative working environment that included Dubai Police and other emergency services, proved an ultimate success for the number and variety of events.

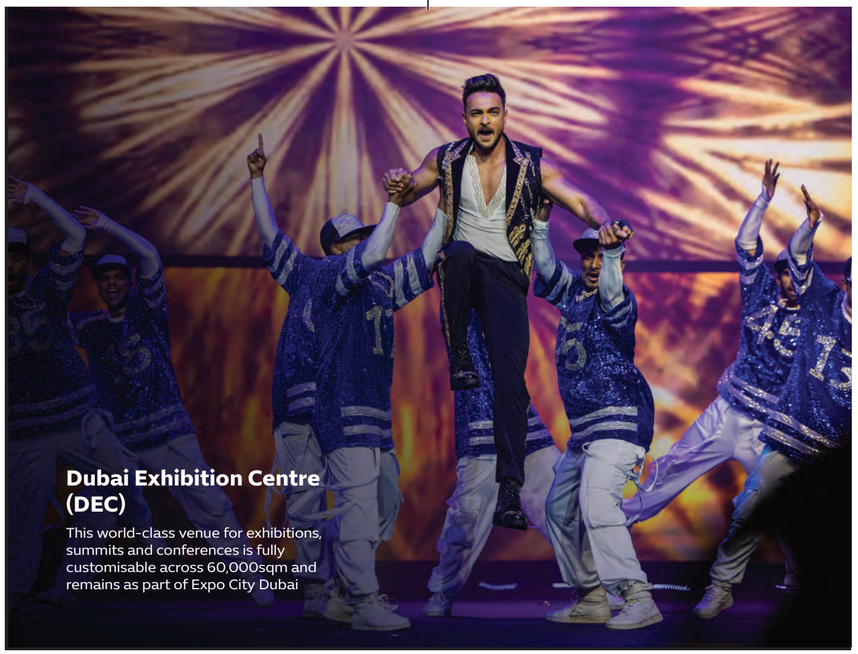
Jubilee Park

Expo's largest performance venue offered an open-air festival experience with a capacity of 6,800, rising to 8,500 without COVID restrictions

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_EN0.indd 446-447 2/22/23 11:23 AM

Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre

This intimate outdoor venue, with a capacity of 1,280 (1,600 without COVID restrictions) featured bespoke, prestige programming



Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC)

This world-class venue for exhibitions, summits and conferences is fully customisable across 60,000sqm and remains as part of Expo City Dubai

Expo Sports Arena

Offering flexible configuration, including FIFA regulation 7-a-side football pitch, this venue had a capacity of 3,800

Sports Fitness and Wellbeing Hub

A multi-purpose sports venue with 'Big Bash' cricket nets, a global fitness stage and fitness centre

Festival Garden

A relaxed family outdoor venue capable of hosting 1,500 visitors

In addition to the main venues, the outdoor Sea, Earth and Sun Stages – each exuded their own unique personality for uplifting performances, shows and workshops, while the site was peppered with other intimate settings such as Ghaf Circle, Wadi Circle, The Bowl and The Tracks. Regular small performance troupes and occasional larger 'Expo Street Music' concerts took place at the Welcome Plazas and on Al Wasl Avenue, while Terra Auditorium, Opportunity Forum and The Good Place – Expo Live Pavilion each offered versatile indoor spaces.

Expo Closing Report_Chapter 1_English_Volume 1_Arabic 11:23 AM

Opening Ceremony

An incredible roster of international, regional and home-grown talent performed at Expo 2020's Opening Ceremony, staged at Al Wasl Plaza on 30 September 2021, the evening before Expo opened its doors to the world.

Spectators enjoyed a masterful 90-minute display of stunning visuals, music and performances, as some of the world's most creative minds, internationally renowned artists and emerging talents came together in a dazzling performance shared with audiences around the world on Expo TV, Virtual Expo and multiple channels.

The Opening Ceremony celebrated the collaborative, creative and optimistic spirit of Expo 2020 Dubai, and combined some of the most sought-after names in the world of music, live events and entertainment with the awe-inspiring, world-first technologies of the iconic Al Wasl Plaza to set the scene for the 182 days that would follow.

Drawing inspiration directly from Expo's theme of *'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future'*, the evening took the audience on an incredible journey across the subthemes of Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability, showcasing the deep-rooted values of the UAE and the vision and purpose of Expo 2020 Dubai.

International participants were welcomed in spectacular fashion, with 192 country flags revealed via a domino effect as they opened one by one in a proud and visually stunning moment that also signified a reawakening of the world.

The star-studded line-up included world-famous tenor Andrea Bocelli; Grammy nominated, Golden Globe-winning actress, singer and songwriter Andra Day; Platinum selling singer-songwriter Ellie Goulding; international mega-star pianist Lang Lang; and four-time Grammy winner Angelique Kidjo.

3,000
audience in
Al Wasl Plaza

3 million+
virtual audience
(as of 31 March 2022)

747 million
broadcast views across
175 countries

3,000+
lighting fixtures

1,000+
speakers

1,300+
costumes

30,000
individually controlled
fairy lights

1,000+
participating performers
and volunteers

72
nationalities in
the creative team

Highlighting the creative diversity and talent of the region, performers also included the 'Artist of Arabs' Mohamed Abdo, much-loved Emirati singing sensation Ahlam Alshamsi; Emirati Artist and Expo 2020 Dubai Ambassador Hussain Al Jassmi; rising UAE singer-songwriter Almas; and Grammy-nominated Lebanese-American singer Maryssa Karaa.

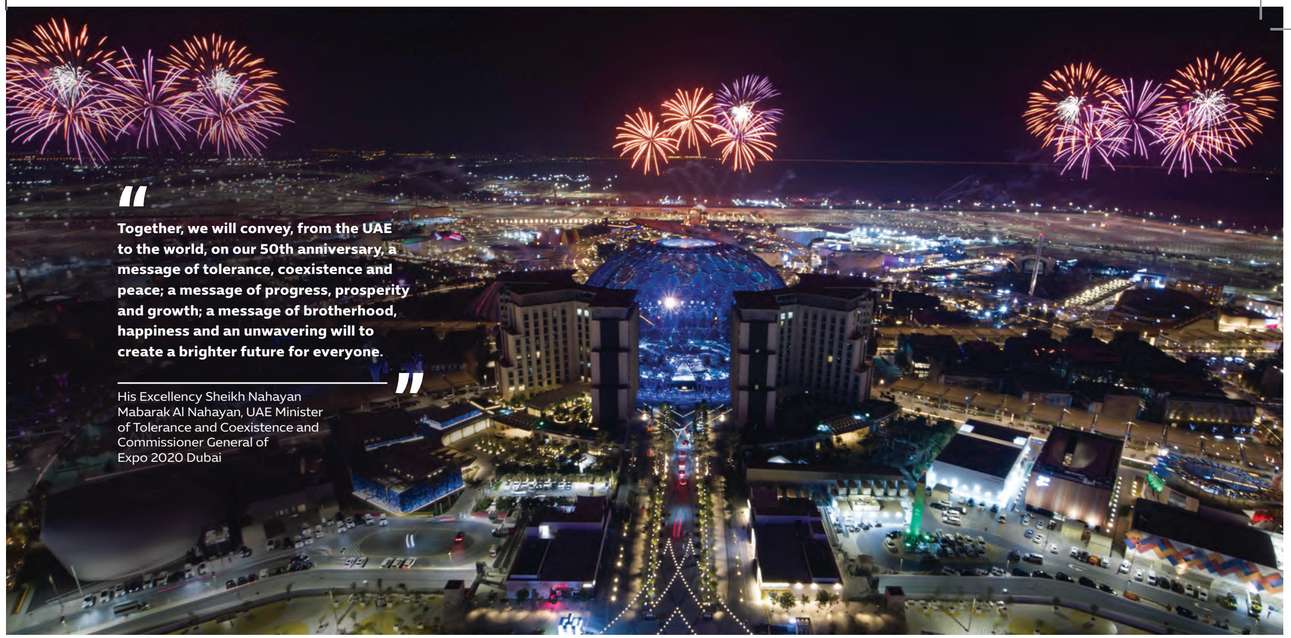
The artistic prowess of Oscar-winning composer A.R. Rahman's all-women Firdaus Orchestra, comprising 50 musicians from across the Arab world, also proved a pivotal part of the ceremony's inspiring journey.

Behind the scenes, creative minds from different geographies, industries and backgrounds formed a world-class team, including a talented in-house crew of Emirati and international creatives, with event organisers not only commissioning, but also actively co-curating and co-producing the collaborative spectacle.

Award-winning global audio-visual firm Christie, Expo's Official Projection and Display Partner, created the life-like visuals on Al Wasl Plaza, with more than 250 laser projectors illuminating the iconic dome, visible from the sky. Every second person in the audience had their own speaker, creating an intimate experience by giving everyone their own sound environment.

The event was shown live on the oversized screens of Times Square in New York, including the 37m high Nasdaq screen, and the 23-storey-high Thomson Reuters display.

> **I hope this event will help instil in everyone a sense of optimism, a desire to achieve and to put what has been behind us.**
>
> Andrea Bocelli



> **Together, we will convey, from the UAE to the world, on our 50th anniversary, a message of tolerance, coexistence and peace; a message of progress, prosperity and growth; a message of brotherhood, happiness and an unwavering will to create a brighter future for everyone.**
>
> His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence and Commissioner General of Expo 2020 Dubai

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 450-451

2022/05 11:23 AM

Opening the portals

At 9am every morning, traditional ayala dancers provided an authentic Emirati welcome as invited guests – including government ministers and schoolchildren, Expo Partners, staff and volunteers, as well as selected participants and performers – ceremoniously opened the stunning Expo Entry Portals, welcoming the world to a new day at Expo 2020 Dubai.

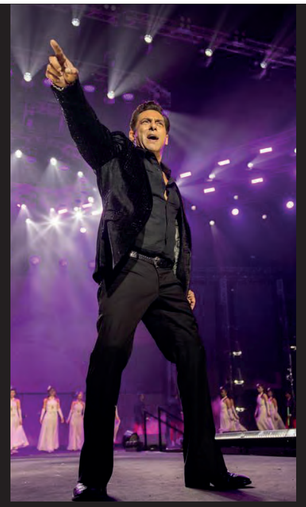
Roving performers

Roving entertainers engaged with visitors from the moment they stepped onto the Expo site. From bustling businesspeople tottering on stilts to kaleidoscopic schools of fish and flowers bursting into bloom, these larger-than-life performers provided moments of surprise, wonder and delight at every turn.

As Expo re-awakened every day, so did the 'Enchanted Flowers' in the Sustainability District, with performers dressed as flowers springing to life. Visitors who arrived via the Mobility Gate enjoyed the wonders of the natural world with 'Fishy Wishy', a parade of lively schools of fish gliding through the District Pavilions. 'The Golden Guardian', a giant mechanical golden falcon stopped visitors in their tracks and radiated the pride of the UAE.

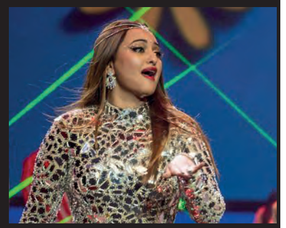
After the sun set, 'Illuminate' lit up the 2020 Plaza in Al Wasl Zone with glowing butterflies fluttering through the night sky, leaving behind a series of electrifying patterns. Combining music and wonder, 'Flying Piano' took music to new heights as a female pianist dressed in a white gown, playing music on a white piano, was slowly lifted up into the air.

Expo Closing Report – Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 452-453 2/28/23 11:23 AM



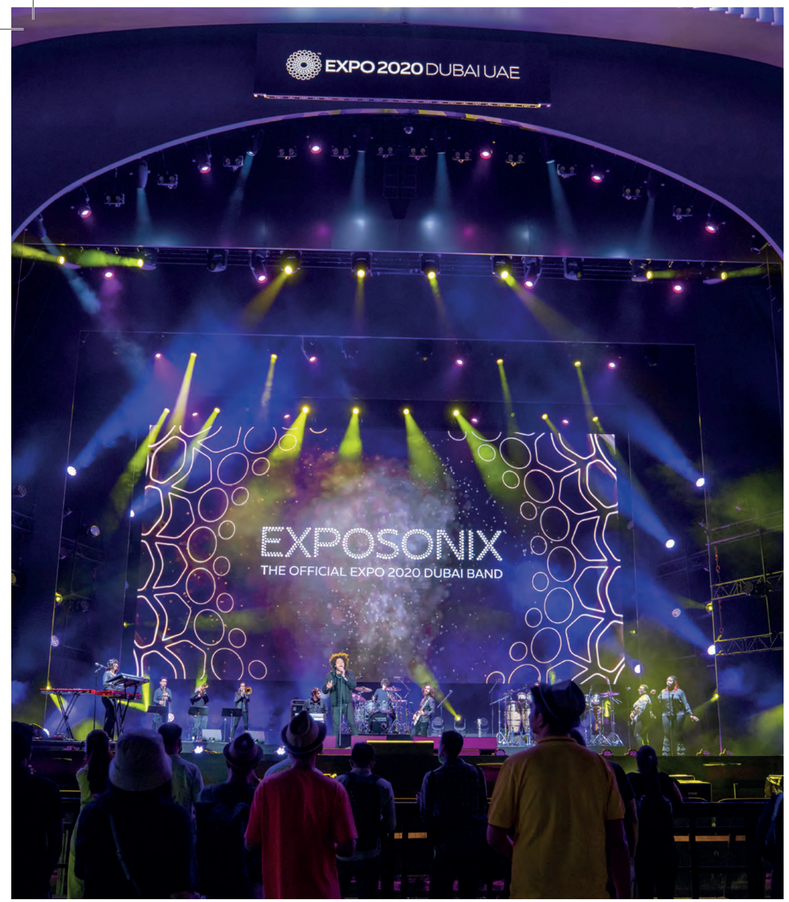
Local and global talent

Reflecting both the multiculturalism of the UAE and Expo 2020, Expo welcomed performers from around the globe, appealing to the broadest audience possible.



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_340.indd 454-455 4/21/22 11:23 AM

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 1 English_548.indd 456-457 2023-05-11 11:24 AM



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_SHO.indd 458-459 2/22/23 11:25 AM

Firdaus Orchestra

One of Expo's many spectacular success stories, the all-women Firdaus Orchestra delighted audiences with its six headline shows across the event.

The pioneering ensemble was formed by Expo 2020 Dubai and mentored by Oscar-winning composer, producer and singer-song writer A.R. Rahman and brought together 50 professional female musicians from the Arab world.

Firdaus (the Arabic word for 'paradise') was created to inspire and empower female musicians across the region, while also boosting the orchestral culture in the Middle East and offer a new platform for collaboration between musical genres and different cultures.

Conducted by Yasmina Sabbah, the Firdaus Orchestra was a huge hit, playing a starring role in both the Opening Ceremony, where it accompanies famed opera singer Andrea Bocelli, and the Closing Ceremony. It also featured in a number of musical collaborations across Expo's wider events calendar, including performances of much-loved Disney classics as part of the celebrations for World Children's Day and a tribute to female musical legends as part of International Women's Day.

A collaboration with a local designer saw the musicians dress in sustainable fabrics for all performances, reflecting Expo's wider commitment to sustainability, while its world-class rehearsal space – Firdaus Studio by A.R. Rahman – hosted some of the world's biggest musical artists, is the first fully-functioning music recording studio to be featured at a World Expo, and a first-of-its-kind facility in the region.

Why? The Musical

Commissioned by Expo 2020 and directed by world-renowned filmmaker Shekhar Kapur, Why? The Musical was a landmark musical spectacle – a story about humanity, the power of connection across cultures, and our responsibility to planet Earth.

Premiering in Al Wasl Plaza in January 2022, the 45-minute show included eight original compositions by A.R. Rahman, with popular Indian actor, dancer and comedian Jaaved Jaaferi playing one of the leading roles.

Featuring 100-plus performers and stunning visuals, the show was inspired by the rich cultures and diverse nationalities that came together at Expo 2020. Every song had an influence from a different area of the globe, reflecting the power of music to connect the world.

Why? The Musical quickly became a highlight on Expo's programming calendar, receiving critical acclaim from around the world.

> **"Have you forgotten what it was like when you were a child? When the world was full of wonder? When you reached out to the stars and held them in your heart? When the earth was your playground, and not something to destroy?"**
>
> Shekhar Kapur, filmmaker

100+ performers | **26** performances | **65,000+** audience

Al Wasl Opera

In a cultural milestone for the UAE, Expo 2020 Dubai commissioned Al Wasl Opera, premiering at Dubai Opera from 16-19 December 2021.

Celebrating the diverse cultural heritage of the UAE, its impressive achievements to date and its aspirations for the future, the opera also explored the shared values that connect us all, spanning thousands of years of history and featuring the Saruq Al Hadid gold ring, one of the treasures from the Iron Age found in Dubai and the inspiration behind the Expo 2020 logo.

Composed by Mohammed Fairouz and co-authored and written by Maha Gargash, Al Wasl Opera was a collaboration with the world-renowned Welsh National Opera. Directed by Sir David Pountney and conducted by Justin Brown, it brought together more than 100 artists and musicians and a production team of 70 professionals, reflecting some of the world's best operatic talent.

The Opera360 installation in Al Forsan Park took visitors on an immersive behind-the-scenes journey as they stepped inside and experienced the magic of the Opera and gained a unique insight into how the production was brought to life.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 460-461 2/22/23 11:25 AM

Kaleidoscope

As day turned to night, Kaleidoscope offered a new dimension of storytelling that celebrated Expo's global community and the power of nature, creating an immersive experience that enabled Expo's rich content to shine in a new light. Featuring image projections, light installations and inflatables located around the site, Kaleidoscope offered an experience that went beyond pure information, engaging visitors physically, intellectually and emotionally. The initiative aligned with Expo's overarching themes and supported the event's programming.

Themed events

Expo's Theme Weeks saw a number of bespoke programming elements, bringing together talent from around the world in novel and inspiring ways. This included a collaboration between Grammy Award-winning composer, Steve Sidwell and SFX Choir (Human Orchestra), creating a visually stunning soundscape of Planet Earth as part of Climate & Biodiversity Week.

Urban & Rural Week also bought together a mix of top athletes, world-class street artists and dynamic DJs for Urban Jam, as an ode to urban culture, whilst Brainiacs took spectators on a journey of curiosity and imagination with their live science show during Knowledge & Learning Week.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_540.indd 462-463 2/22/23 11:25 AM

Children's programming

Expo 2020 quickly became established as a leading family entertainment hub in the city, with a plethora of events and activities designed specifically for younger visitors, in addition to parks, playgrounds and an indoor entertainment venue, The Family Place.

For example, Ghinwa and The Magical Garden told the story of a butterfly's transformation, requiring the help of young audiences to dance and sing along. A unique performance by Mr Balloon Man saw a magician showcase his tricks from with a bubble, while Air Head was a multi-talented circus performer who created unique shows with a huge balloon.

Two bespoke musical productions featuring adventures with Arabic cartoon favourite *Adam wa Mishmish* provided opportunities for audience participation, and Blippi's Dance Party, hosted by the world-famous preschool entertainer Blippi, inspired curiosity by inviting children aged 2-6 to explore through learn and play.

Roving entertainment created specifically for children included the Mad Lab Bikes – roaming science experiments that engaged more than 340,000 children over six months – as well as caricaturists and bubble artists.

Expo also delivered workshops every weekend and during school holidays, including a Young Coders Workshop, Build Your Own Terrarium and Solar Art Workshop, which welcomed more than 22,000 children.

Holiday Camps

Coinciding with the school holiday period, Expo offered a free-of-charge camp for visitors aged 6-12. This drop-and-play experience invited children to explore some of the site's most child-friendly pavilions, take part in games, arts and crafts and team sports.

DEC: A world-class exhibition space

Spread across two multipurpose halls, including the vast Dubai Exhibition Centre (DEC) Arena, DEC hosted a wide array of concerts, forums and conferences – laying on more than 280 events and welcoming more than 250,000 visitors across the duration of Expo 2020 Dubai.

Highlights included the Expo Comedy Club series, the 2021 FIDE World Chess Championship, K-Pop concerts and the 2022 World Police Summit.

In March 2022, in the final days of Expo 2020, DEC hosted the World Government Summit. Taking place under the theme 'Shaping Future Governments', it brought together thought leaders, global experts and decision-makers from around the globe to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies and models essential in shaping future governments. Speakers included His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Sultan of Brunei; Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund; and Arvind Krishna, CEO, IBM.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 464-465
2/22/23 11:25 AM

Sports and wellness

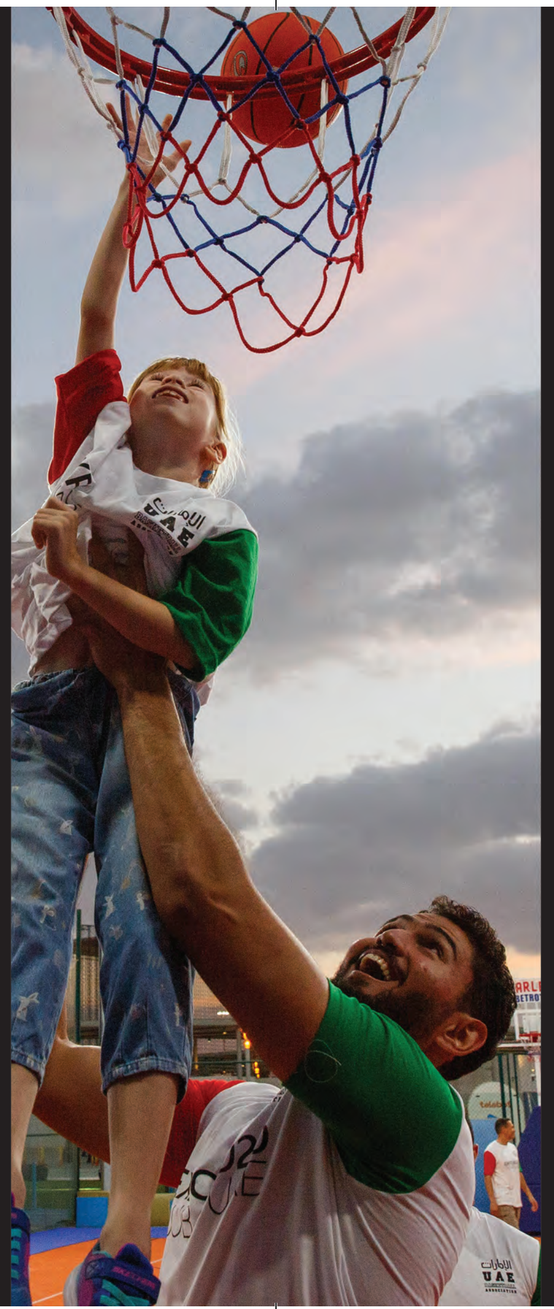
Fitness and wellness events, training camps for children, international competitions, sporting exhibitions, and some of the world's greatest athletes actively engaged more than 500,000 participants and spectators throughout Expo 2020 Dubai – making it the most active World Expo ever.

The Expo 2020 site was a hive of sporting activity, with the Sports, Fitness and Wellbeing Hub alone providing more than 3,000 hours of sports programming and activities, playing host to some 6,000 sports, fitness and wellbeing classes and sessions.

Offering a diverse range of activities for all ages, interests and fitness levels, the Sports, Fitness and Wellbeing Hub included a state-of-the-art gym, a five-a-side football pitch, two 'Big Bash' cricket nets, a multi-purpose court for basketball, netball, volleyball and tennis, and a global fitness stage with daily classes. It also played a crucial role in hosting a range of activations across the 30 days of the city-wide Dubai Fitness Challenge 2021.

The Hub's extensive children's sports programme also saw Manchester City, AC Milan and Rajasthan Royals provide once-in-a-lifetime sessions for children, equipping them with essential life skills such as teamwork and sportsmanship.

An eclectic mix of sporting events were hosted across the Expo 2020 Dubai site more widely including the World Aerial Gymnastics Championships, World Ten Pin Bowling Championships, World Muay Thai, World 3x3 Basketball, and the World Chess Championships. The Expo 2020 Dubai Run trilogy saw thousands of runners cross the finishing line in 3km, 5km and 10km categories, while Expo also hosted 22 family-friendly 'Run the World' events and launched the Expo 2020 Running Club.



The Surreal water feature offered a serene setting for 21 morning yoga classes, while local and international yoga communities came together for the XYoga Festival, with the opening session led by famed actor and producer Anil Kapoor.

More than 3,000 visitors joined Les Mills Live at the Sports Arena for 12 consecutive hours of group fitness classes and Expo's Tennis Week saw champions including John McEnroe and Kim Clijsters battle it out in singles and doubles matches.

Expo 2020 Dubai wasn't short of visiting international sporting superstars, including two of the world's greatest footballers – Portugal international Cristiano Ronaldo and Argentina's Lionel Messi; iconic American exhibition basketballers The Harlem Globetrotters; Giro d'Italia Criterium cyclists Peter Sagan, Egan Bernal and Marc Hirschi; American professional golfer Collin Morikawa; the world's fastest man Usain Bolt; two-time former world heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua; seven-time-World Champion F1 superstar Lewis Hamilton; pioneering chess Grandmaster Nona Gaprindashvili; and UEFA Women's Player of the Year Alexia Putellas.

> **"Sport has been used for many, many years to unite people across the world. And if there's one thing that Expo 2020 Dubai has triumphed in, it's been connecting people from across the globe to create a happier, healthier planet."**
>
> Usain Bolt, November 2021

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_EN0.indd 466-467 03/08/22 11:25 AM

BIE Day

The penultimate day of Expo 2020, 30 March 2022, marked BIE Day. The last of 195 National and Honour Day ceremonies, BIE Day was a celebration of the World Expo as it drew to a close. It was also an opportunity for the BIE's Member States to reaffirm their commitment to the World Expo values of education, innovation and cooperation, and to mark the continuity from one Expo to the next.

The day began with a dedicated ceremony in Al Wasl Plaza, with UAE and BIE dignitaries as well as representatives of Member States gathering for the flag-raising and BIE anthem. This was followed by cultural performances representing the UAE, as host of Expo 2020 Dubai, and Japan, the host of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai.

A final, special edition of the World Majlis was held in Al Wasl Plaza. Gathering a broad range of international thought-leaders around the subject of 'A Shared Future', the discussion explored the world's uncertain future while taking into consideration the insights of the World Majlis series held so far.

Concluding the festivities, the BIE Day Awards Ceremony announced the recipients of the Expo 2020 Dubai Official Participant Awards, the BIE-Cosmos Prize, the BIE Medals and the UAE Innovates Awards. In the evening, Al Wasl Plaza lit up with a specially created immersive experience paying tribute to the history of World Expos and the BIE.

> **"Taking place in a period of uncertainty, Expo 2020 Dubai has been a beacon of optimism, imbued with the BIE's founding values of cooperation and progress. It has shown that more than ever before, the world is calling out for all that Expos stand for: a desire for fraternity, audacious innovation, and optimism in the future"**
>
> His Excellency, Dimitri S. Kerkentzes, Secretary General of the BIE (30 March 2022)

BIE Day Awards Ceremony

Official Participant Awards
The recipients of the Official Participant Awards were decided by an international jury composed of nine experts in a range of relevant fields. Split into five different categories according to the size and type of pavilion, the Official Participant Awards recognise three aspects of pavilions: architecture and landscape (for self-built pavilions only), exhibition design, and theme interpretation. A total of 51 Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards were handed out during the ceremony, which took place in Jubilee Park.

BIE Medals
The BIE Medals and Innovation Awards recognised the organisations and individuals who made extraordinary contributions to the success of the Expo.

BIE Cosmos Prize
The BIE Cosmos Prize has been awarded at all World and Specialised Expos since 2008. This edition, jointly awarded by BIE, the Expo '90 Foundation and Expo 2020 Dubai, was open to citizen projects exemplifying Expo 2020 Dubai's theme and subthemes.

UAE Innovates Awards
The UAE Innovates Awards, an initiative first launched in February 2021 to celebrate innovative ideas in the UAE, dedicated awards to the Expo 2020 Dubai pavilions that showcased impressive innovations with regards to Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability.

Awarding participation is a longstanding tradition of Expos, dating back to the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London – the first World Expo.

[See Appendix for a list of all Expo 2020 Dubai winners]

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 468-469 2/22/23 11:25 AM

UAE National Day and Golden Jubilee

As declared by the late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, former President of the UAE, the year 2021 was to be known as 'The Year of the 50th', commemorating 50 years since the nation's formation in 1971. This was an exceptional opportunity to celebrate the people of the UAE, reflect on the remarkable journey of the nation's 'early dreamers', while also looking forward to the transformative change that lies in the next 50 years and beyond. Coinciding with this poignant date in the history of the UAE, Expo 2020 Dubai served as a unique global platform for celebrating the spirit of the nation, while also speaking to the importance of worldwide collaboration for the sake of a better future.

Running from 1-4 December, the site-wide celebration took each and every visitor on a journey of authentic Emirati experiences and stories, including a jaw-dropping flyover by the UAE Air Force aerobatics team, appearances by the UAE Ministry of Interior Police Marching Band, traditional Al Azi poetry performances, drone shows, special food and beverage offers, and cultural and craftmanship displays and demonstrations. Visitors also enjoyed a live-stream of the UAE Golden Jubilee celebrations from Hatta Dam in the Hajar mountains on large screen in the Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre and Jubilee Stage.

An ode to the people of the UAE, the flagship immersive theatrical 'Journey of the 50th' show at Al Wasl Plaza beautifully portrayed the nation's progress during the last half-century and the timeless values that will continue to carry it forward.

Told through the eyes of an elderly woman and her granddaughter, the young girl learns the story of her people, from pearl divers to astronauts – both symbols of the UAE's ambition to reach for a better future.

A choir of children from UAE schools, accompanied by an orchestra and the entire cast, gave a stirring performance of the UAE National Anthem as flag bearers from participating countries entered the plaza in a moment of unity, with Expo 2020 a symbol of the UAE's progress and role as a global connector.

With a rousing rendition of the culturally significant *Ya Hayaha*, the performance ended on an optimistic, and suitably patriotic, note.

To celebrate, entry to Expo 2020 was free for all on 2 December, enabling as many people as possible to be part of the festivities.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 470-471 12/22/23 11:25 AM

Special occasions

Christmas | 20 Dec 2021 - 7 Jan 2022
Christmas at Expo saw the entire site come alive with festive spirit, including a 20m high tree in Al Wasl Plaza, giant baubles and gingerbread houses and a chance to send letters to Santa via a giant post box staffed by a team of elves.

New Year's Eve | 31 Dec 2021
Reflecting its international diversity, Expo celebrated the New Year across different time zones, with round-the-clock family fun, fireworks and artists Dimitri Vegas and Armin van Buuren turning up the volume to usher in 2022.

Haq Al Laila | 18 Mar 2022
A time of celebration that symbolises giving in preparation for the arrival of the Holy Month of Ramadan two weeks later, the traditional Haq Al Laila neighbourhood setting came to life in a day-long, site-wide series of activities including the distribution of 20,000 goodie bags for children.

Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 472-473 2/22/23 11:25 AM

Closing Ceremony

Expo 2020's moving Closing Ceremony, on 31 March 2022 in Al Wasl Plaza, was a celebration of everything the event had achieved and all those who made it happen. This time, the live audience included hundreds of school children from across the UAE, representing the next generation that would take the legacy of Expo 2020 forward.

With a team led by Franco Dragone, one of the world's leading creative visionaries, the Closing Ceremony reflected upon how Expo 2020 Dubai had touched the lives of all who visited, and heightened the myriad of memories made on site.

Viewers were taken on one last journey, with the hero from the Opening Ceremony – a young girl – returning to represent the spirit of optimism that rests within each of us. Over the six months of Expo 2020, she had grown, learned and connected with people from around the world, with the Closing Ceremony marking the final step before she awakened to her full potential.

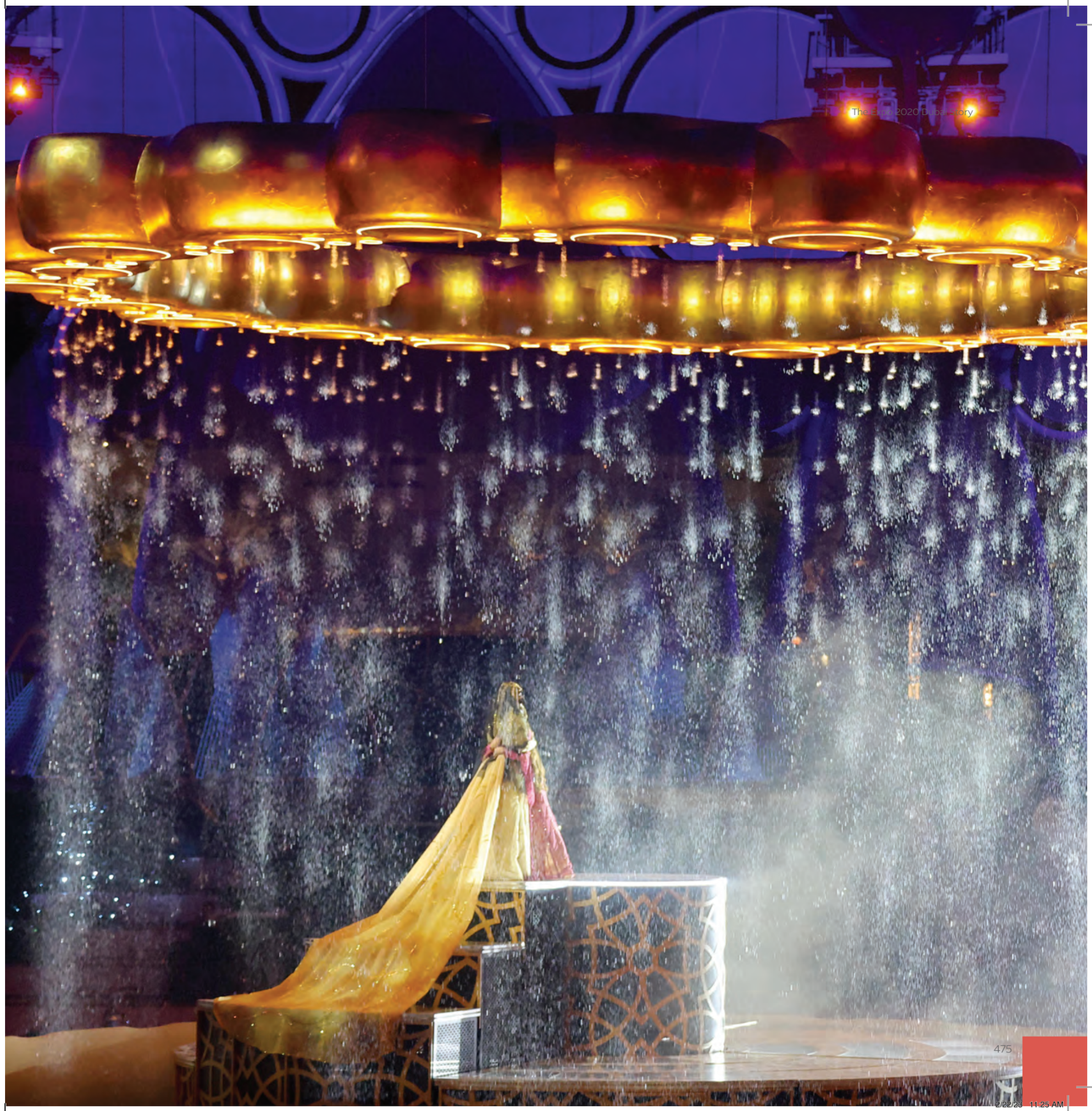
The evening began with a children's choir performing *Ishy Bilady*, the UAE National anthem. Celebrated cellist Yo-Yo Ma gave an emotional performance before Al Wasl was transformed into a galaxy of stars, and singers, backed by the Firdaus Orchestra, performed the Expo 2020 Dubai theme song, *This is our Time*. As a huge golden ring descended from the top of the Al Wasl dome, Grammy award-winning singer and songwriter Norah Jones, appeared at a grand white piano to perform *As Tears Go By*. And as fireworks erupted, pop icon Christina Aguilera delivered an emotionally charged rendition of The Greatest Showman's *A Million Dreams*.

The ceremony also saw the BIE flag returned to the President of the BIE and passed to representatives from the next World Expo hosts, Osaka.

The spellbinding evening was shared with audiences around the world on Expo TV and Virtual Expo, and enjoyed by tens of thousands of visitors on the Expo site itself, with more than 20 giant screens in Jubilee Park, Dubai Millennium Amphitheatre, Festival Garden and various Country Pavilions creating a celebratory atmosphere.

A final firework display at 3am signalled the end of the event, just before members of Expo 2020 Dubai's senior leadership came together to close the iconic Entry Portals for the last time.

> **"We started with the sunrise when Expo 2020 Dubai opened, and the Closing Ceremony is the sunset. But this is not the end; it's the start of something new."**
>
> Amna Abulhoul, Executive Creative Director, Expo 2020 Dubai



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 474-475

2/20/23 11:25 AM

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

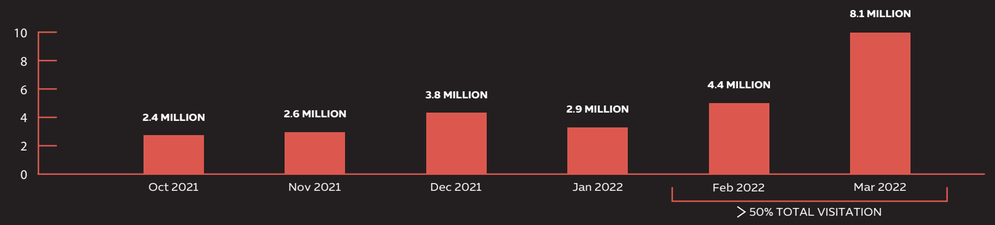
We dreamed, we dared we, astonished, and this is just the beginning of the new world we started making together. We may have closed our doors, but our promise still stands. Connecting minds, creating the future.

Her Excellency Reem Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director General, Expo 2020 Dubai

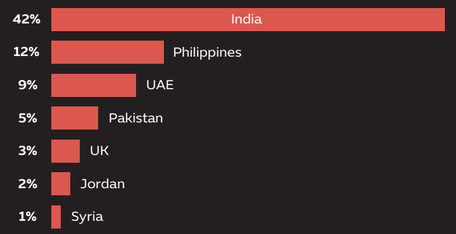
Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_v13.indd 476-477 2/22/23 11:25 AM

VISITATION HIGHLIGHTS

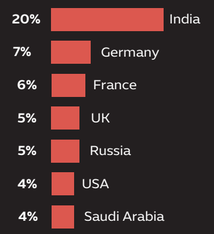
24,102,967 VISITORS 195 NATIONALITIES



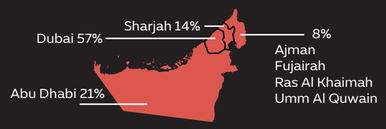
DOMESTIC VISITORS TOP 7 NATIONALITIES



INTERNATIONAL VISITORS TOP 7 MARKETS



VISITATION BY EMIRATE



AVERAGE TIME ON SITE

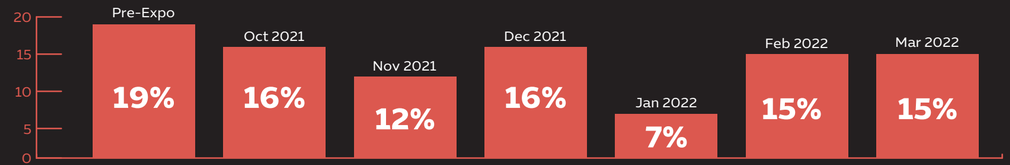
6.5 hours international visitors
6.1 hours domestic visitors

Thu
2021 PEAK VISITATION DAY

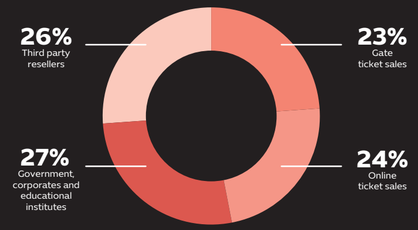
Sat
2022 PEAK VISITATION DAY*

*From 1 January 2022, the weekend in the UAE changed from Friday and Saturday, to Saturday and Sunday

TICKET SALES BY MONTH

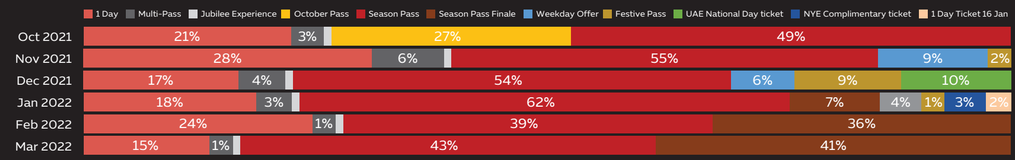


% OF SALES	TICKET TYPE	% OF VISITS
45.6%	SEASON PASS	70%
6.8%	MULTI DAY PASS	8%
47.6%	1 DAY TICKET	22%



49% Repeat visitors
18% Children under 18 years old
4% Citizens above 60 years old
107,000 Visits from people of determination
98 years Oldest recorded visitor
8 days Youngest recorded visitor
36% Free entry to healthcare workers, hospitality staff, low-income workers and tickets issued by selected airlines

VISITS BY TICKET TYPE



Expo Closing Report - Chapter 7 English_EXP.indd 478-479 2023 11:25 AM