



RVC 2024 Post-Event Sustainability Report

2024 Rendez-vous Canada Post-Event Sustainability Report

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Prepared for: Rendez-vous Canada 2024



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1. Introduction

Since the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, environmental, economic and sociocultural sustainability has become a global priority, with increased attention on climate change issues, waste and other resource conservation efforts. The tourism and events sector holds great potential for aiding in regeneration in alignment with the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Rendez-vous Canada (RVC) is Destination Canada's signature event, co-produced with the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC). This event has taken place across Canada for nearly 50 years, providing a platform for international travel buyers to connect with Canadian tourism businesses. The 48th annual RVC welcomed guests to Edmonton, Alberta from May 14 to May 17, 2024. The event attracted more than 1,500 attendees, including 394 buyers from 22 countries. Throughout the week, international travel buyers and Canadian sellers of tourism products conducted more than 47,000 appointments. The 3,500 room nights booked for the event significantly boosted Edmonton's economy, an impact that will continue to be felt as buyers and their clients return for years to come.

As the local hosts for RVC 2024, Travel Alberta and Explore Edmonton worked together with Destination Canada and TIAC to create an incredible RVC experience.

In organizing RVC 2024, sustainability was established as a key priority for the event moving forward. As such, the RVC Planning Committee of Destination Canada, TIAC, Travel Alberta and Explore Edmonton worked together to implement sustainability measures, assess the event's environmental and community benefits, and—for the first time—track the event's carbon footprint.

Edmonton's destination development approach is increasingly focused on sustainable and purposeful growth, and as an organization Explore Edmonton is striving to ensure regenerative tourism development is at the forefront. This means prioritizing practices that not only sustain, but actively improve, the environment, economy and community wellbeing. The goal is to create a thriving, resilient tourism sector that benefits both visitors and residents, while preserving and enhancing the city's natural and cultural assets. As such, Explore Edmonton brought valuable expertise in sustainability to the RVC planning process, and Destination Canada and TIAC benefitted greatly from this leadership at the start of RVC's sustainability journey.

2. Sustainability Actions

2.1 Sustainability Committee

To understand the event's impact on sustainability and aid future planning, the RVC 2024 Planning Committee formed an RVC Sustainability Committee for the first time. This committee, bringing together a range of expertise, began work in October 2023, during the planning phase, to establish the principles and sustainability priorities for the event.

The aim was for the Sustainability Committee to develop a roadmap for the 2024 event, using the expertise and guidance of the Explore Edmonton team, to set a precedent for future RVC events in other cities across Canada. It was also decided that RVC would measure its carbon footprint for the first time in 2024.

The Sustainability Committee drafted a Sustainability Commitment Statement, which served as a guide for RVC organizers, vendors and attendees in all planning for the event.

Sustainability Committee members met with various sub-committees to facilitate the integration of sustainability into all aspects of RVC.

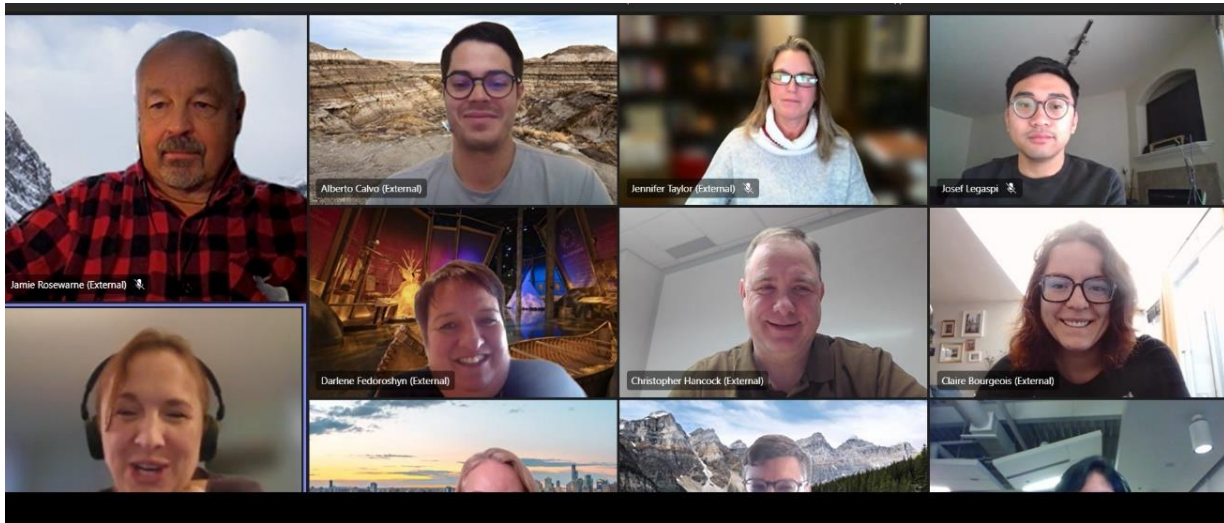


Figure 1 The RVC Sustainability Committee's first meeting

2.2 Communications

Communication was key to following the sustainability roadmap successfully . The Sustainability Commitment Statement, including an outline of sustainability measurements, was communicated to all event organizers, hosts, vendors and attendees.

The detailed document was highlighted not only in RVC newsletters for attendees and posted on the RVC website, but also shared through the RVC attendee portal, mobile app and 'Know Before You Go' communications.

In line with the commitment statement, the RVC communications team also shared the following additional recommendations with attendees:




- Bring your own reusable water bottle
- Visit the city by foot
- Check out and support local businesses
- Explore Edmonton's North Saskatchewan River Valley

 **Sustainability**



2.3 Activities and Outcomes

The Sustainability Commitment Statement was used as a reference during every phase of planning RVC 2024. The activities carried out under each section of the statement—and the resulting

Category	Activities	Outcomes
 Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected Edmonton Convention Centre as the host venue Selected 10 host hotels with an average walking distance to the main event venue of 10 minutes, with six hotels less than a 10-minute walk away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potentially reduced environmental impact, due to the venue’s sustainability features described in Section 2.4: Host Venue Approximately 400 delegates walked to the host venue from their hotels, reducing the need for carbon-intensive transportation
 Reduce/Reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used reusable materials throughout the event Repurposed decor Went paperless and used digital signage Asked delegates to bring reusable water bottles/coffee mugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See results outlined in Section 3: Environmental Impact and Section 4: Social Sustainability 91.8 per cent of attendees were happy with going paperless
 Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with event planners managing Welcome Night and Host Night to prioritize sustainable options Used RVC app and online RVC news for communications instead of a printed directory Distributed aluminum water bottles from local company The Earth Group to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See results outlined in Section 3: Environmental Impact and Section 4: Social Sustainability

Category

Activities

Outcomes



Food and Beverage

attendees upon airport arrival

- Properly planned food and beverage menus at the venue according to guest count
 - Pre-plated meals at the venue to prevent food waste from buffets
 - Used the Second Helping program to ensure leftover food could be donated to Edmonton's Food Bank
 - Promoted plant-based menu among food and beverage sponsors
 - Prioritized local food and beverage ingredients
- Zero to minimal food was left over at venue
 - 700 kilograms of organic waste was composted
 - Out of the 9,260 total meals served at the venue's showcase events, about 3,600 were vegetarian, compared to 1,394 beef plates
 - More than 10 local food suppliers and chefs were featured in the venue's lobby and at Host Night
 - Close to zero food items were served that were not produced in Canada
 - Some booth activators brought their key regional ingredients with them to avoid shipping emissions



Transportation

- Promoted active transportation options such as walking, biking, e-scooters, etc. through communications to attendees
 - Organized shuttle buses for airport pick-ups and drop-offs, trips to and from venues, as well as for the city tours
- Car use was avoided, as the shuttle buses transported groups for a total of 14,127 kilometres, reducing carbon emissions by up to 12 tonnes of CO2 equivalent (tCO2e)

Category

Activities

Outcomes



Community Benefit

- Featured activities such as biking, e-scooter, kayaking and group paddle bikes in the city tours, rather than just bus tours
- Represented Indigenous cultures and operators throughout the event
- Invited volunteers to help execute the event logistics, including students from tourism programs at Edmonton's post-secondary institutions
- Invited Indigenous makers and artisans to sell their products at the event and gave all attendees a \$25 voucher to spend at these vendors

- 1,654 volunteer hours were recorded
- See Section 4: Social Sustainability for further details of social benefits



Teamwork

- Highlighted sustainability messaging in pre-event, during event and post-event emails
- Shared the Sustainability Commitment Statement with vendors, venue staff, event planners and other stakeholders

- Information required for carbon calculations was available from all sub-committees within a week post-RVC



Carbon Impact

- Provided data collection templates to each sub-committee for carbon calculations post-event

- See carbon summary provided in Appendix 2
- Carbon data was verified through a third party

Category

Activities

Outcomes



**Familiarization
(FAM) Tours**

- Calculated baseline Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions for RVC 2024
- Invited FAM hosts and operators to prioritize sustainability throughout the 22 FAM trips around the province
- Not measured in 2024

2.4 Host Venue

The Edmonton Convention Centre , located in the heart of the city and neighbouring Edmonton's vast North Saskatchewan River Valley, was selected as the host venue for the main event.

The convention centre, a model of environmental responsibility and visionary design, is certified by BOMA BEST, Green Key Global Meetings, Climate Smart and On the Road to Zero Waste. The building also has several sustainable features such as 696 solar panels, water refill stations, a huge collection of indoor plants, source separation of waste into 10 categories and an aerobic food waste digester.

Managed by Explore Edmonton, the convention centre is committed to minimizing its environmental impact and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

- BOMA BEST-certified
- Climate Smart-certified
- Green Key-certified
- On the Road to Zero Waste-certified
- Source separation of waste
- 696 solar panels
- Indoor plant collection
- ORCA aerobic food waste digester
- Water refill stations

The convention centre played a crucial role in ensuring a sustainable RVC event through its exemplary practices. From effectively managing waste and maintaining healthy indoor air quality to using on-site renewable energy sources, the impact was evident to attendees through a sustainability monitoring wall. The staff, well-trained and knowledgeable in sustainability best practices, further supported these efforts. Additionally, the venue's downtown location offered a significant advantage, allowing many delegates who stayed in the nearby hotels to opt for walking each day.

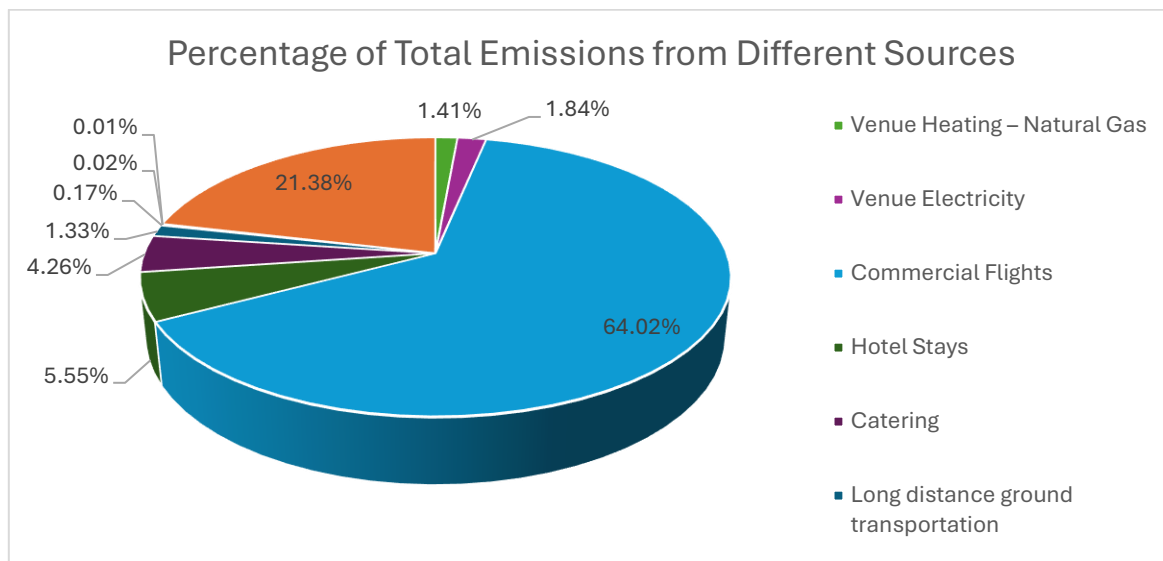
3. Environmental Impact

For the first time in RVC history, the event’s carbon footprint was measured. This carbon summary will serve as a reference and benchmark for future RVC events. The process of determining the emissions footprint involved data collection, calculations and third-party verification. Explore Edmonton led the data collection, with assistance from the Sustainability Committee and various sub-committees. The carbon inventory was finalized by Ostrom Climate.

3.1 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Overview

Appendix 2 provides a comprehensive list of RVC 2024’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, broken down by source. Key findings include:

- Commercial flights were the largest contributor of GHGs. More than 900 flights were taken, accounting for 64 per cent of all GHG emissions.
- Air shipments significantly increased overall shipping emissions.
- By organizing shuttle transportation for airport transfers, event venues and city tours, the RVC transportation committee reduced the release of approximately 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).
- Edmonton Convention Centre’s effective waste management practices significantly reduced landfill waste, thereby decreasing the release of methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Total GHG emissions from waste were limited to 0.4 tCO₂e.



ENVIRONMENTAL INSIGHTS

- 1,710 kilograms of total waste produced at Edmonton Convention Centre over the five-day event
- 53 per cent of waste diverted away from landfill
- About 75 event attendees travelled by rail or bus
- More than 130,000 kilograms of shipments
- No heating/cooling used for outdoor event
- 4,545 sheets of various sizes of paper used
- A total of 16,402 square metres (176,554 square feet) of space used
- 100 per cent LED lights and screens for Welcome Night
- All food menus/tags were recycled
- Repurposed centrepieces throughout the event from themed lunches
- Modular reusable booth structures, furniture made from recycled materials, 10 water refill stations with eco-friendly cups
- LED lights installed throughout the booth stations
- Exhibitors provided eco-friendly swag, such as reusable water bottles and bamboo/glass utensils with minimal packaging
- 15 digital signs and QR codes across the venue to guide attendees

3.2 Methodology

RVC's process for collecting and calculating carbon emissions data adheres to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol standard. RVC's environmental impact captures all emissions under Scope 1 and Scope 2, and as much of Scope 3 as reasonably possible. This comprehensive GHG measurement included emissions from delegate travel and accommodation, energy use at event venues, waste production, food and beverage, paper usage during setup, shipping emissions and emissions from city tour travel.

For GHG calculations, Explore Edmonton used a carbon calculator compliant with the CSA Group, with verification provided by the third-party organization Ostrom Climate.

The following sections detail the calculation methods and assumptions applied for each source of emissions:

Travel: Attendees provided transportation information during the registration process, including mode of transport, city of departure, flight class and approximate travel distance. Assumptions supporting these calculations include:

- Attendees travelled directly between their hometown and the host city
- Domestic flights were assumed for visitors from within Canada and international flights for those from outside Canada, when information was insufficient

- All visitors were flying round trip from the closest airports by distance
- Distances were calculated from city centre to city centre
- A conservative approach was taken when the city of departure was not available

Accommodation: The sub-committee managing hotel stays provided accommodation information.

The following assumptions were made when needed:

- Single occupancy for each room
- Heat and electricity consumed in the room throughout the stay
- Standard room size considered for all calculations

Energy: The Edmonton Convention Centre consumes an energy mix of solar power generated on site as well as energy purchased from Capital Power. The carbon calculator used considers both factors and provides results based on the space occupied by the event. Set-up and take-down time were included in the quantification.

Food: The carbon calculator uses different emissions factors for each food type (e.g., vegetarian, fish, beef, chicken). The sub-committee responsible for meal planning (breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner) provided the food type and quantities with quantity measured per person.

Assumptions for calculations included:

- The quantity of food was evenly divided among all the guests
- A chicken meal contains at least one chicken item
- When multiple food types were present in a meal, the food type with the highest emission factor was used

LIMITATIONS

Although Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions were measured as thoroughly as possible and sustainability was integrated into all organizing activities, there were a few exclusions and limitations, as follows:

- Familiarization (FAM) tours
- Externally produced ancillary events
- Materials produced or distributed by exhibitors in the marketplace (unless ordered through the Edmonton Convention Centre)
- Shipping emissions associated with external partners and suppliers
- Tourism activities individually arranged by attendees

4. Social Sustainability

For RVC organizers, giving back to the community through opportunities and resources is just as crucial as any other element of sustainability. While many associate event sustainability solely with environmental impacts, the RVC planning team recognizes the importance of generating lasting benefits for the host community. This includes focusing on key aspects such as community engagement, equity and inclusion, local economic support, cultural respect, and opportunities for volunteering and skill development. The following sections detail how RVC 2024 achieved these social sustainability goals.

INDIGENOUS INCLUSION

Representatives from the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) are members of the RVC Provincial / Territorial Planning Committee.

As hosts of the Destination Indigenous pavilion, ITAC showcased Indigenous tourism and its members, highlighting the diversity and richness of Indigenous experiences across Canada. ITAC representation included:

- 110 ITAC delegates registered to attend
- National representatives from nine provinces and three territories
- 32 Indigenous sellers completed appointments in ITAC's Destination Indigenous pavilion and 56 other ITAC members were represented by their respective provinces

As a Gold Level sponsor of RVC 2024, ITAC co-hosted the Opening Reception, alongside Accor, on Tuesday, May 14 at the iconic Fairmont Hotel Macdonald. The evening immersed attendees in Indigenous cultures, featuring culinary delights, signature spirits and captivating performances by renowned artists. The program included:

- Indigenous-inspired culinary offerings
- Spirits, signature cocktails and mocktails from Hawke Prohibition Distilleries
- Craft beer from Dog Island Brewing
- Cultural hoop dance performances from local Edmonton based Cree influencer @NotoriousCree
- Entertainment provided by DJ Kookum
- Cultural dance performances from the Métis Child and Family Jiggers

On Wednesday, May 15, ITAC led the Indigenous Welcome Ceremony, which honoured Indigenous protocols and set the stage for RVC appointments. Distinguished speakers, including Elder Lorraine Makokis (Explore Edmonton Advisory Circle member) and President Andrea Sandmaier of the Métis Nation of Alberta, attended the ceremony, which was accompanied by traditional song and drumming from Matricia Bauer of Warrior Women.

RVC city tours showcased three Indigenous tourism businesses: Rural Rivers, Talking Rock Tours and Bernadette's by Pei Pei Chei Ow.

Additionally, senior leadership from Enoch Cree Nation joined Explore Edmonton for RVC 2024.

DONATIONS

- Donated florals used for Welcome Night to a hospice
- Recirculated 1,000 crayons to a community organization

VOLUNTEERS

- More than 1,200 volunteer hours logged, including more than 50 hours from tourism students
- 346 volunteer shifts completed



LOCAL SUPPLIERS

- Rented or purchased decor from local suppliers
- 22 Edmonton-based experiences showcased in the city tours
- 64 local partners involved, including colleges, restaurants, etc.
- 10 local food suppliers (Zwick's Pretzels, Yelo'd Ice Cream + Bake Shoppe, Doughnut Party, cupcakes from Crave, Rosewood Foods, coffee from Credo, water from The Earth Group, 7 Summits Snacks, Kind Ice Cream and JACEK Chocolate Couture)
- Bars at the Host Night, Edmonton Convention Centre and Welcome Reception featured locally crafted beers and spirits from local distilleries

5. Familiarization (FAM) Tours

FAM Tours are a significant part of Rendez-vous Canada. In 2024, these were operated by Travel Alberta and their local DMO destinations around the province in advance of the event. This year, Travel Alberta encouraged FAM tour operators to take measures so that attendees could enjoy Alberta's landscapes and communities, while reducing negative environmental and sociocultural impacts.

Outcomes for the FAM tours were qualitative and not included in the overall measurement framework this year. Some key activities on this year's FAM tours included:

- Used group bus transportation, instead of individual transportation options
- Swag and gifts were locally produced and/or sustainably made
- Emphasized Indigenous-led tourism experiences and stories
- Proactively shared sustainability key messages with FAM hosts and participants
- Included sustainability messaging in travel itineraries
- Invited attendees to reduce waste by bringing reusable mugs and water bottles
- Promoted winter and rural travel to reduce the long-term impacts of over-tourism
- Invited participants to take a "Leave No Trace" pledge to encourage personal stewardship of the land and local communities

Recommendations for future RVC FAM tours:

- Meet early with FAM host destinations, so itineraries are planned with sustainability in mind
- Work with Indigenous leaders to incorporate Indigenous practices and ways of knowing into FAM tours
- Explore opportunities for sustainable transportation, including passenger rail, electric or hybrid vehicles, etc.
- Provide "Know Before You Go" sustainability content, so attendees can pack accordingly
- Collaborate with event sponsors and hosts to better track local impacts
- Identify two or three indicators of success that can be quantitatively measured and reflected in the measurement framework

6. Moving Forward

Since RVC is a recurring event, Destination Canada and TIAC now have the advantage of being able to progressively work towards the event's sustainability goals at future events with the respective local host destinations. This report will serve as a guide for RVC organizers to realize their vision for sustainability. Along with the successes achieved this year, several learning opportunities can be considered for upcoming years:

- Include FAM tours when evaluating sustainability
- Consider a more complete, mandatory input of transportation details from attendees for more accurate data
- Provide options for sourcing exhibition items locally, instead of shipping from coast to coast
- Offer at least one entirely plant-based food menu
- Select electric vehicle shuttle services if available in location
- Conduct a post-event survey or develop an app to track how attendees adhere to sustainability guidelines, such as the number of steps walked to the event instead of using a taxi, or how many times they refilled their water bottle instead of purchasing single-use bottles.

Appendix 1 – RVC 2024 Sustainability Commitment Statement

<https://rendezvouscanada.ca/about/sustainability/>

Appendix 2 – 2024 RVC Carbon Footprint

Scope	Source	GHG Emissions (tCO2e)
1	Venue heating – natural gas	25.8
2	Venue electricity	33.6
3	Commercial flights	1,167.5
3	Hotel stays	101.2
3	Catering	77.6
3	Long-distance and city ground transportation	24.3
3	Shuttle transportation (including airport trips, main and side events, and city tours)	3.1
3	Waste	0.4
3	Paper consumption	0.2
3	Shipping	389.8
	Total	1,823.6