

Prepared by the Middle East Africa Division, New Zealand's Embassy in Abu Dhabi, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and the New Zealand at Expo team in Dubai.

Summary

- Expo 2020 Dubai is a platform and festival for people from all over the world to come together and experience the best of art, culture, geography, science, technology, innovation and invention. Expo 2020 Dubai's theme is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' and New Zealand is one of 192 countries participating. This 6 month global event is two thirds of the way and so far more than 12 million visitors have been to the Expo Park. The New Zealand Pavilion has to date attracted over 800,000 visitors and its restaurant, Tiaki, is amongst the most popular at the Expo Park. A large number of events have been hosted at the Pavilion and at venues throughout the park, in support of New Zealand priorities and business interests.
- New Zealand companies are making the most of the opportunities that Expo is presenting for their connections in the UAE and the Gulf region. NZTE is currently working with 149 exporters that are engaged with Expo whether virtually or in, and the number is expected to increase for the remaining weeks, with events and thematic weeks focused on sectors of major potential for New Zealand, including agriculture, food and beverage. NZTE has also facilitated 96 new introductions/leads for New Zealand exporters to local and regional companies at Expo 2020.
- January was a busy month at Expo, with a number of New Zealand-led activities including a three week Taste New Zealand showcase with renowned New Zealand chefs, street artists and a world class cultural and entertainment programme in celebration of our National Day on 31 January. February includes Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods Week - a key focus for New Zealand exporters.
- New Zealand speakers have represented our voice in person and virtually on panels and debates on issues ranging from Climate and Biodiversity, Space, Tolerance and Inclusivity, and Knowledge and Learning. Minister Mahuta's visit and Te Aratini - Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas in November, were a highlight of our participation at Expo 2020 and brings great potential in terms of establishing indigenous connections and advancing business interests.

Report

Expo started on 1 October 2021. There has been a steady stream of activities, events and visits from New Zealand. This report provides a brief overview of what has been achieved so far.

The largest global gathering since the beginning of Covid-19

- Expo 2020 organisers have been steadfast in their original commitment to achieve 25 million visits across the six months of Expo 2020, despite the Covid-19 pandemic that saw the event postponed by a year. Overall Expo 2020 has achieved more than 12 million visits with events such as Alicia Keys, the Black Eyed Peas and Pakistani singer Atif Aslam's concerts, and the 'free entry' to mark the UAE's 50th Jubilee driving attendance. Expo 2020's virtual platform, virtualexpodubai.com, has seen more than 110 million virtual visits.
- There are strict health and safety measures and protocols in place to manage Covid-19 risks at Expo park and at the New Zealand Pavilion for visitors and staff. This includes requiring visitors to be fully vaccinated

or present a negative PCR to access the Expo Park, mandatory masking and social distancing and regular PCR testing of frontline staff.

New Zealand Pavilion

- The New Zealand Pavilion has welcomed more than 800,000 visitors so far. This is comparable with other countries, like our neighbours, the Netherlands and Spain. The average number of visitors to the New Zealand pavilion is in excess of 6,000 per day.
- Members of Whanganui Iwi travelled to Dubai in October to dedicate the mauri of the New Zealand Pavilion, story and experience. The mauri is centred on a toka or boulder that sits within the pavilion and was sourced from Mount Tongariro, the main stem of the Whanganui River. A dawn dedication service took place the day before the pavilion opened and included cultural performances of welcome including from Emirati hosts and feature incantations and poi from Whanganui Iwi. The Minister of Foreign Affairs gave the opening address virtually.
- Inspired by the story of the Whanganui River and its world-first legal personhood status, the pavilion shows how New Zealanders are driven to innovate because we *Care for People and Place* (the pavilion's theme). An immersive experience and short film demonstrate how it is this understanding of our connection and responsibility to the environment that motivates us to do better for future generations.

Visits and Events

- The **visit by Minister Mahuta** and hosting of **Te Aratini - Festival of Indigenous and Tribal Ideas** in November was arguably the highlight of the first half of Expo, successfully advancing our bilateral objectives with the UAE, promoting and profiling our presence at Expo 2020. Minister Mahuta highlighted in her opening address that this is more than just an event - it is a movement toward indigenous and tribal peoples' knowledge, know-how, and aspirations for, and around, the world.
 - Also in November, New Zealand in collaboration with the India Pavilion, the Women's Pavilion, and the United Nations at Expo hosted a **screening of India's National award-winning documentary 'Son Rise'** in support of UN Women's 'Orange the World' initiative. The event, which took place at Expo's largest stage, Jubilee Park, brought together the diplomatic community, business leaders, cultural figures, academics and change-makers to spotlight a shared human rights and women's rights issue — violence against women. Minister Mahuta recorded a video introduction for the screening. Following the film, members of the diplomatic community took a pledge to end gender-based violence.
 - New Zealand's outstanding film making talent has also been showcased with a **short film festival** featuring popular and critically acclaimed films from New Zealand's Show Me Shorts festival throughout December. For this, the pavilion's Cooperative Room was transformed into a boutique cinema and patrons could enjoy a wine and cheese selection from Tiaki while watching the films.
 - By early February, 57 events have been held by New Zealand exporters, sponsors and NZ Inc at the New Zealand pavilion including receptions, meetings, dinners, film screenings, product sampling and promotions.
 - The pavilion's restaurant Tiaki is a popular meeting point at Expo 2020 and we have regular, repeat customers from other pavilions and Expo 2020 staff as well as visitors to Expo. Tiaki has been rated one of the top 5 restaurants at Expo and has recently been nominated for the What's On Dubai "Favourite Expo Food Concept" award. The restaurant's menu showcases the premium quality of New Zealand's food and beverage offering in line with NZTE's Made with Care campaign.
 - The pavilion has received a **number of UAE and international delegations** during the first half of Expo 2020, providing a fantastic opportunity for face-to-face interaction, from senior UAE Ministers to the Prime Minister of Fiji, the ASEAN Secretary General and the Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste – to name a few.
-

Business leverage

- Expo 2020 is proving a valuable platform for New Zealand businesses, with interest increasing as the event gathers pace. NZTE is currently working with 149 exporters that are engaged with Expo whether virtually or in person. That number is expected to increase as we go into the final 6 weeks, with events and thematic weeks focused on sectors of major potential for New Zealand, like agriculture, food and beverage.
- NZTE has facilitated 96 new introductions for New Zealand exporters to local and regional companies at Expo 2020 so far (the target being 200).
- While it is too early to talk about deals – these outcomes will continue to be tracked for some time after Expo, NZTE is reporting positive results achieved by companies that are not a sale of goods and/or services but will provide a significant platform for future international growth.
- It is obvious that New Zealand companies are keen to make the most of these unique opportunities which Expo brings, including through the use of New Zealand pavilion. For example, New Zealand Winegrowers held a Masterclass event at the Pavilion with comprising sommeliers and trade professionals [Dubai Expo 2020 \(ruralnewsgroup.co.nz\)](https://www.dubaiexpo2020.com/ruralnewsgroup.co.nz). A company from the healthcare sector also hosted an event - an opportunity to thank its partners and buyers amid the challenges posed by COVID-19 but also the opportunities, given the significantly greater demand for its products in this region. Outside the pavilion, Les Mills held public fitness classes during the Dubai Fitness Challenge month and in March plan to host their infamous 'Les Mills Live' mega-fitness event at Expo.

January highlights

- January was a busy month at Expo for New Zealand, with a number of New Zealand-led activities, including:
 - **Taste New Zealand, 13-31 January:** A celebration of our food, beverage and culinary talent featuring high-profile New Zealand chefs Sid Sahrawat and Kasey and Kārena Bird, as well as Dubai-based New Zealand chef Jesse Blake. A range of events were held during the three weeks of Taste, including degustation dinners, mystery box challenges, demonstration kitchens and honey tasting, from project sponsor Comvita.
 - **Wonderland: Voice of Youth, 23-26 January:** Exploring the multi-faceted feelings and scenes which define one's "Voice of Youth" this powerful show featuring talented young New Zealanders is created for Expo and directed by world-renowned creative force Parris Goebel. Through this voice, the show explored themes and issues relevant to young people around the world today. The performance can be viewed here: [New Zealand: Voice of Youth - Wonderland | World Expo \(virtualexpodubai.com\)](https://www.virtualexpodubai.com/new-zealand-voice-of-youth-wonderland)
 - **National Day, 31 January:** The spotlight was on New Zealand across Expo Park on 31 January as we celebrated our National Day. The day began with a formal ceremony and flag raising at Al Wasl Plaza, including a kapa haka and Sol3 Mio performance. Following the ceremony there were guided tours of the New Zealand and UAE pavilions for the delegations, bilateral meeting for the head of delegation (Ambassador Hawkins) and an official luncheon hosted by the UAE. There was an evening receptions at the New Zealand Pavilion for VIPs including project sponsors, business leaders and representatives from the UAE, Expo 2020 and other countries. Also on National Day, a number of entertainment and cultural performances were held at venues across Expo Park, including Six60, Sol3 Mio, Ngāti Rānana and [live street art](#).
 - [New Zealand National Day Ceremony | World Expo \(virtualexpodubai.com\)](https://www.virtualexpodubai.com/new-zealand-national-day-ceremony)
 - [New Zealand: Atmos | World Expo \(virtualexpodubai.com\)](https://www.virtualexpodubai.com/new-zealand-atmos)
 - [New Zealand: Sounds of Aotearoa - Six60 | World Expo \(virtualexpodubai.com\)](https://www.virtualexpodubai.com/new-zealand-sounds-of-aotearoa-six60)
 - January also included former Prime Minister Helen Clark participating in Expo 2020's Global Goals week
-

and student entrepreneurs from the Young Enterprise Scheme visited Expo to showcase their companies and meet business leaders.

- NZ G2G has been leading the partnership with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce for New Zealand's co-curation role in the **Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods Business Forum** to be held on 21 February. The Forum will look at how we sustainably meet future food demand. MPI is also hosting a one day event on **Agritech and global food security**.

Value of Expo for New Zealand

- The first two thirds of Expo has gone extremely well, despite the challenges that the ongoing pandemic continue to pose to the successful delivery of Expo 2020 and New Zealand participation. Numbers of visitors to the Expo site, the New Zealand Pavilion and New Zealand businesses attending and events held at the Pavilion and Tiaki met expectations, reflecting the strong convening power the Expo and Pavilion have.
- The opportunity to engage with other high-level delegations during Ministerial visits or simply through visits to the Pavilion demonstrates the platform that Expo has created for Aotearoa to share our story with the world.
- The level of interest from New Zealand companies and their ability to leverage our presence at Expo is in itself reinforces the significance of the government's investment in Expo 2020 and the opportunities that connections in this part of the world represent for our export-led economic recovery and trade diversification.

More reports

View full list of market reports from MFAT at www.mfat.govt.nz/market-reports

If you would like to request a topic for reporting please email exports@mfat.net

To get email alerts when new reports are published, go to our [subscription page](#).

To contact the Export Helpdesk

Email exports@mfat.net

Call 0800 824 605

Visit Tradebarriers.govt.nz

Disclaimer

This information released in this report aligns with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. The opinions and analysis expressed in this report are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views or official policy position of the New Zealand Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the New Zealand Government take no responsibility for the accuracy of this report.