

COP 26 Side Events and Exhibits Survey: Report

The survey was conducted in January-February 2022 to assess observers' experience of attending and/or organizing side events and exhibits at COP 26.

The survey was sent to the Designated Contact Points of active observer organizations (2,610), 795 side event organizers and co-organizers, and 278 exhibitors and co-exhibitors.

- Total number of respondents: 251.
- Number of respondents by category:
 - o Side event attendees: 230.
 - o Visitors of virtual exhibits: 76.
 - o Side event organizers: 116 (15% response rate).
 - o Exhibitors: 49 (18% response rate).

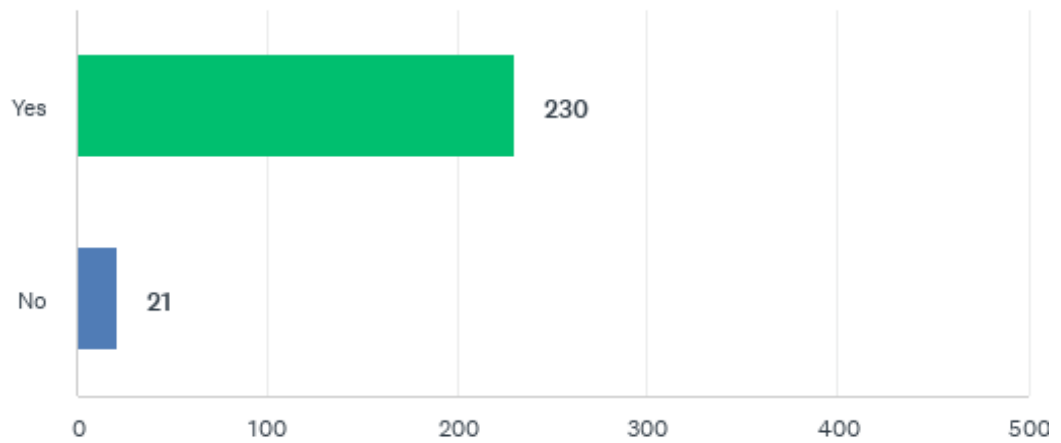
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Part 1: Side event attendees

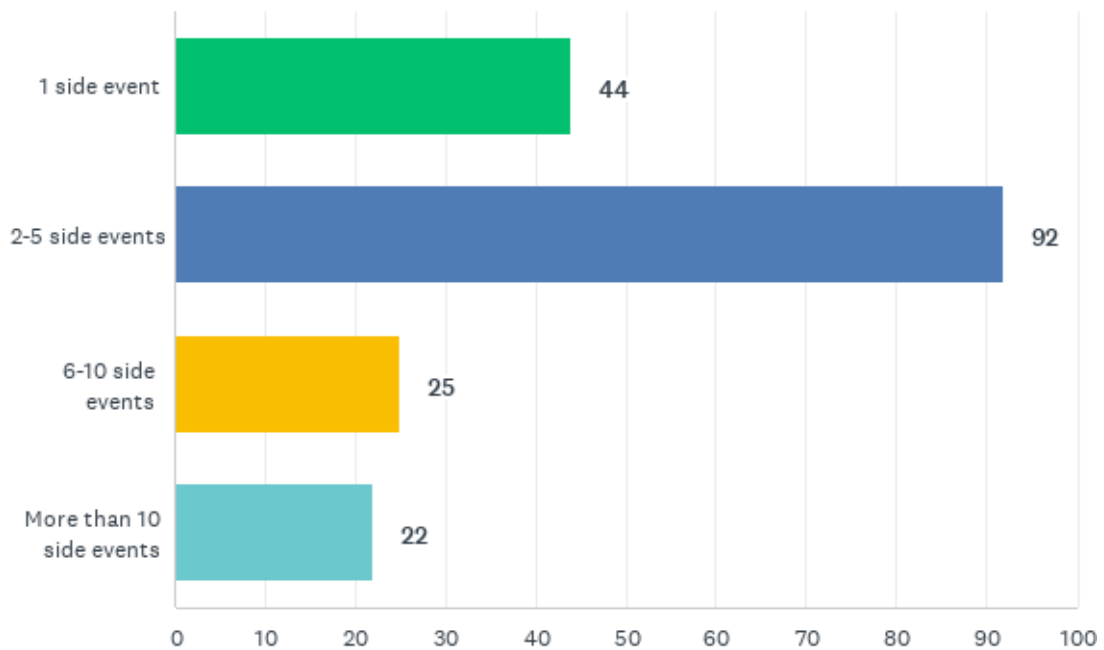
- **92%** of respondents (230 respondents) **attended at least one side event** at COP 26.
- It is most common to attend **from 2 to 5 side events per session**.
- The majority of respondents (82,5%) found that those side events that they had attended had gender-balanced panels. *(However, according to the evaluation conducted by the local staff, only 21% of the official COP 26 side events had gender-balanced panels, with the panels at 49,3% of side events being male-dominated).*
- Respondents gave an average score of **2.9 out of 4.0** for the **overall quality of COP 26 side events with 4.0 being the highest quality**.
- **53%** of side event attendees attended at least one multimedia studio side event via the COP 26 platform.
- For multimedia studio side events, **the average score of the quality of viewing is 2.42 out of 4.0**, and **the average score of the agility of interaction with the audience is 2.01 out of 4.00 with 4.0 being the highest quality**.
- **96%** of respondents found **livestreaming and recording side events via YouTube** useful, and **78%** of respondents **used YouTube** to watch COP 26 side events on demand.
- **82%** of respondents found the practice of **side event organizers uploading their presentations and other relevant materials to the official side events schedule in SEORS** useful, however, only **47%** of surveyed side event attendees have **accessed these materials**.

Q2: Did you attend any side events at COP 26?



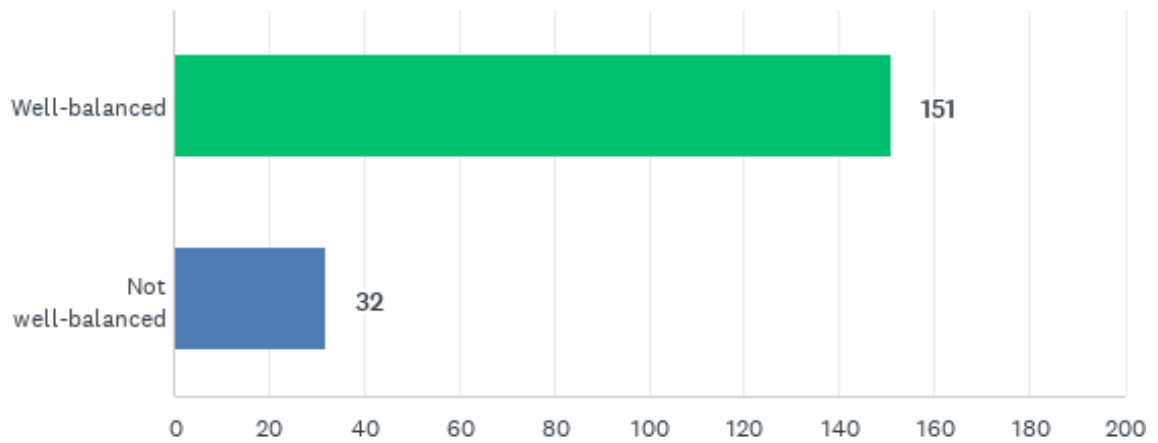
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.63%	230
No	8.37%	21
TOTAL		251

Q3: How many official secretariat-managed COP 26 side events did you attend? (Side events organized by the secretariat took place in rooms Loch Lomond, Strangford Lough, Derwentwater, South Downs, Skomer, Glen Affric)



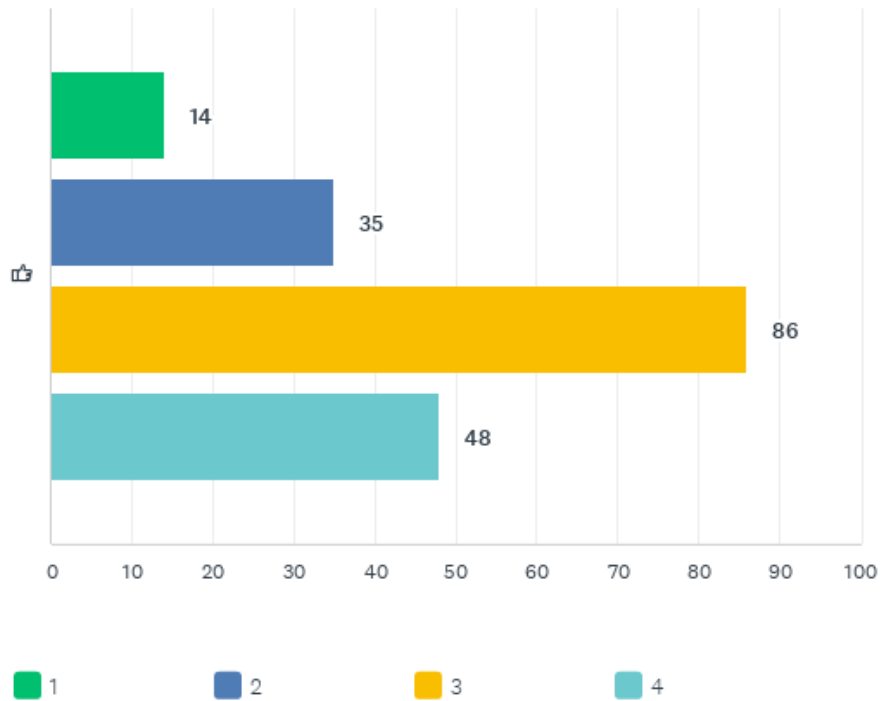
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 side event	24.04%	44
2-5 side events	50.27%	92
6-10 side events	13.66%	25
More than 10 side events	12.02%	22
TOTAL		183

Q4: How do you rate the gender balance of the panels at the events that you attended?



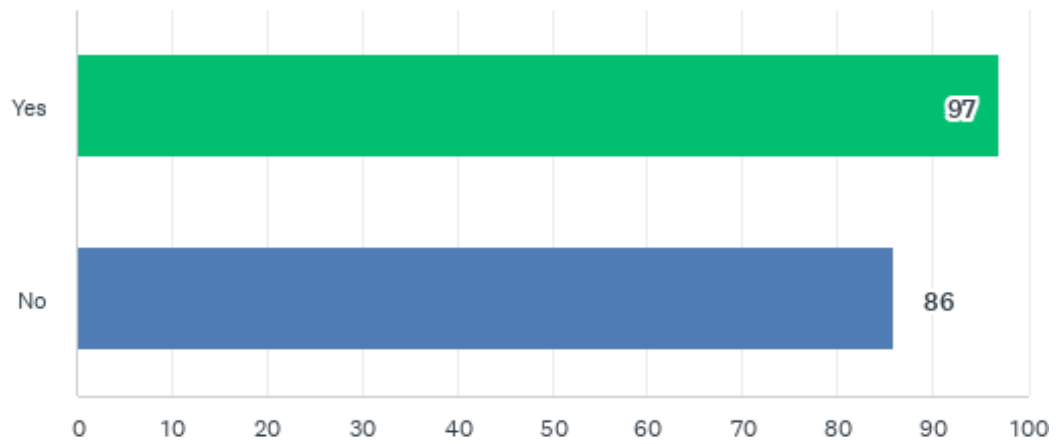
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Well-balanced	82.51%	151
Not well-balanced	17.49%	32
TOTAL		183

Q5: How do you rate the quality of COP 26 official secretariat-managed side events overall?



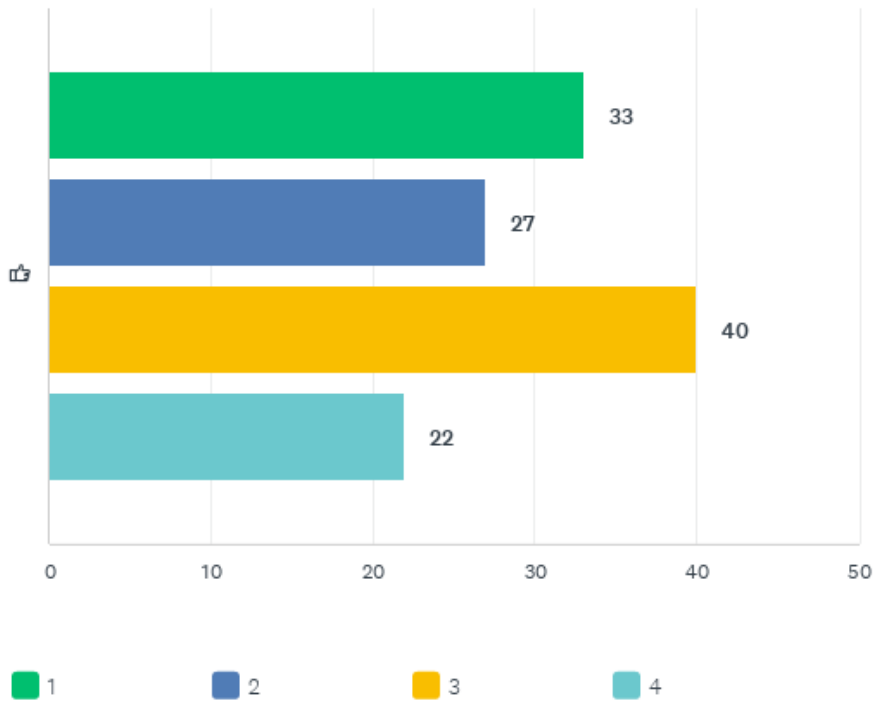
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	7.65% 14	19.13% 35	46.99% 86	26.23% 48	183	2.92

Q6: Did you attend any of the virtual side events held in the multimedia studios via the COP 26 platform? (Virtual multimedia studio side events were held in South Downs, Skomer, Glen Affric side event rooms and could only be accessed via the COP 26 platform).



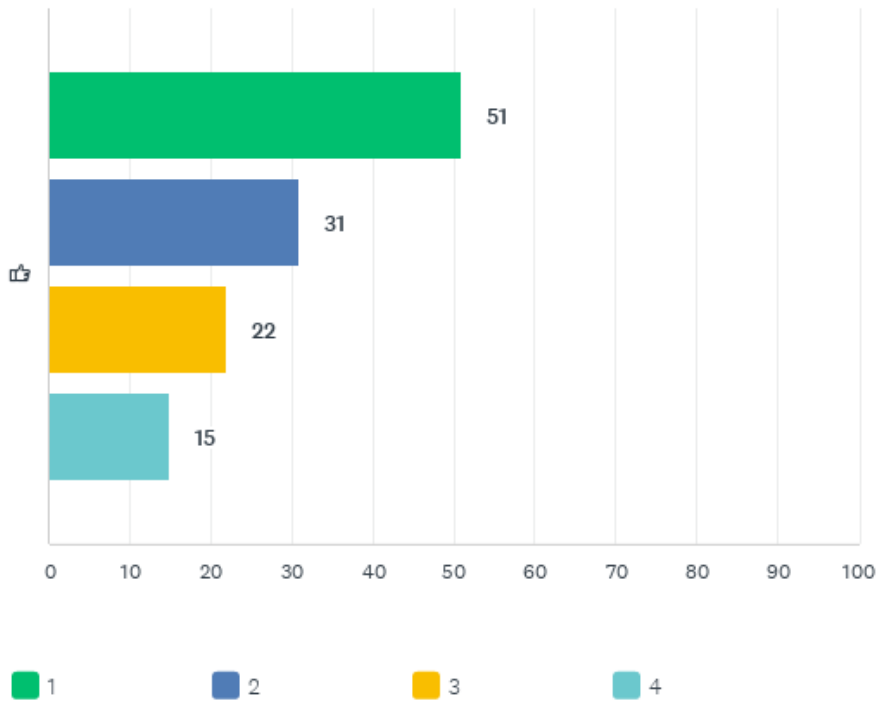
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	53.01%	97
No	46.99%	86
TOTAL		183

Q7: How was your experience of attending a virtual multimedia studio side event? Please rate the quality of viewing:



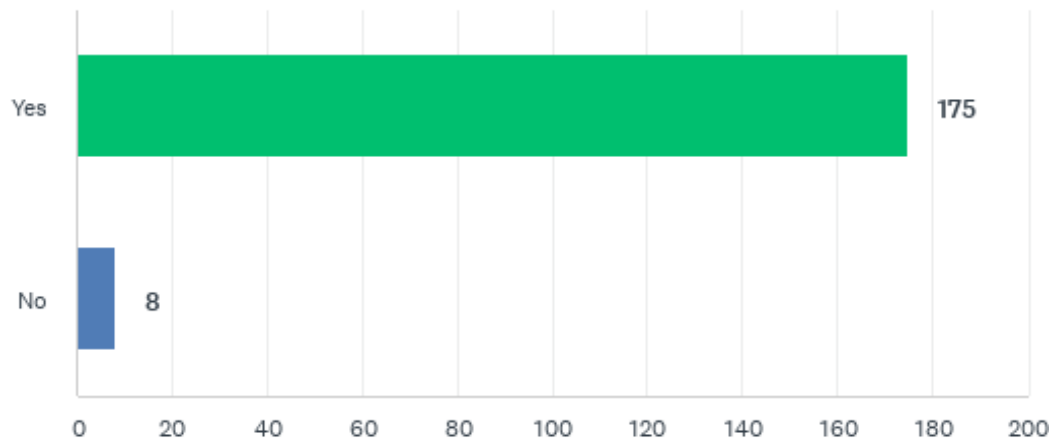
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	27.05% 33	22.13% 27	32.79% 40	18.03% 22	122	2.42

Q8: How was your experience of attending a virtual multimedia studio side event? Please rate the agility of interaction with the audience:



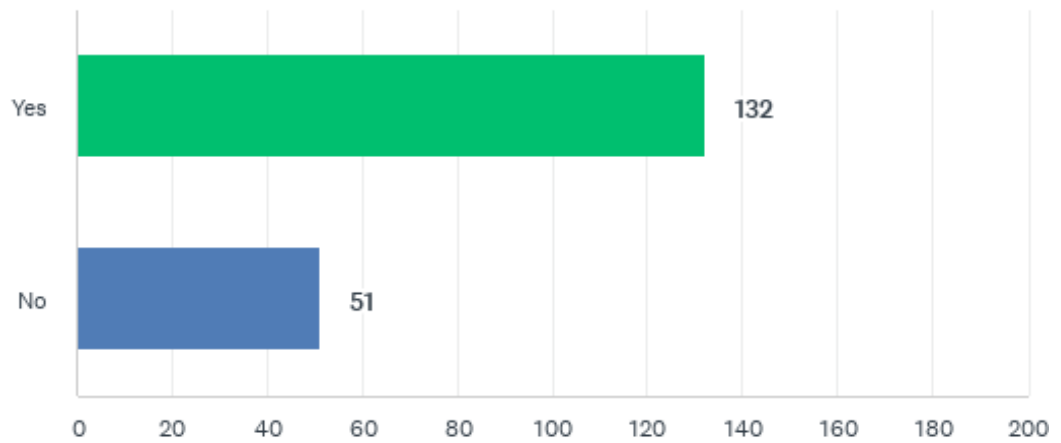
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	42.86%	26.05%	18.49%	12.61%		
	51	31	22	15	119	2.01

Q9: All side events are streamed and recorded through YouTube. Do you think it is useful?



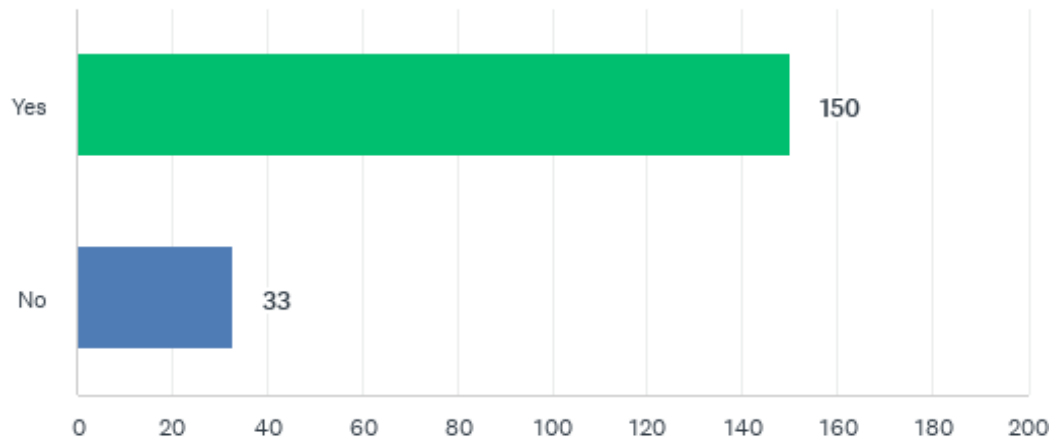
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.63%	175
No	4.37%	8
TOTAL		183

Q10: Have you used YouTube to watch COP 26 side events on demand?



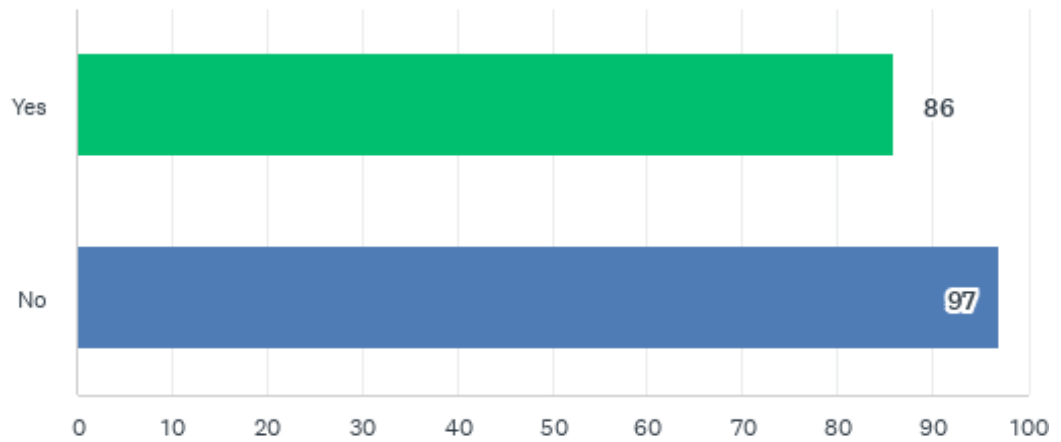
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.13%	132
No	27.87%	51
TOTAL		183

Q11: Side event organizers are encouraged to upload the presentation files and other materials to the side event schedule. Do you find it useful?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.97%	150
No	18.03%	33
TOTAL		183

Q12: Side event organizers are encouraged to upload the presentation files and other materials to the side event schedule. Have you accessed these materials?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.99%	86
No	53.01%	97
TOTAL		183

Q13 In case there is anything else you would like to share about your experience of attending COP 26 side events, please let us know.

Summarized responses.

Complaints:

- Limitations of virtual events (internet connectivity, lower levels of engagement, lack of networking opportunities). It is preferable to have in-person side events in the future.
- Parties not being interested in attending virtual events.
- Virtual side events are only very useful for participants who are not in person at the COP, otherwise it is not at all practical to follow a virtual side event when you are on site.
- It was not clear that side events held in multimedia studios are virtual and cannot be attended on-site.
- Complaint about a side event held in a multimedia studio not appearing on the COP 26 platform.
- Limited number of seats and headphones.
- Insufficiency of the information presented on maps and signs.
- The chat functionality could be made available in YouTube during the livestreaming session.
- Difficulty in keeping track of the schedule: no notifications of changes in the schedule.
- The COP 26 platform was confusing, not working on all devices. Make the virtual platform more inclusive.
- Virtual participation limitations in China.
- The location of the side event was too peripheral/distant from the main place/activities of COP26 in the Blue Zone.
- Noise disruptions: headphones could be used.
- Duration of side events: too short.
- Inadequate sizes of side event rooms: some were too large, some were too small.
- Event organizers could use more guidance on diversifying the voices and representation on their panels beyond gender.
- There was no one-agenda for all events.
- The issue of “SOERS having out-of-date (i.e. pre-merged) information about events during the COP. This makes it hard to plan which events to attend, and many end up very different events to how they were advertised.”

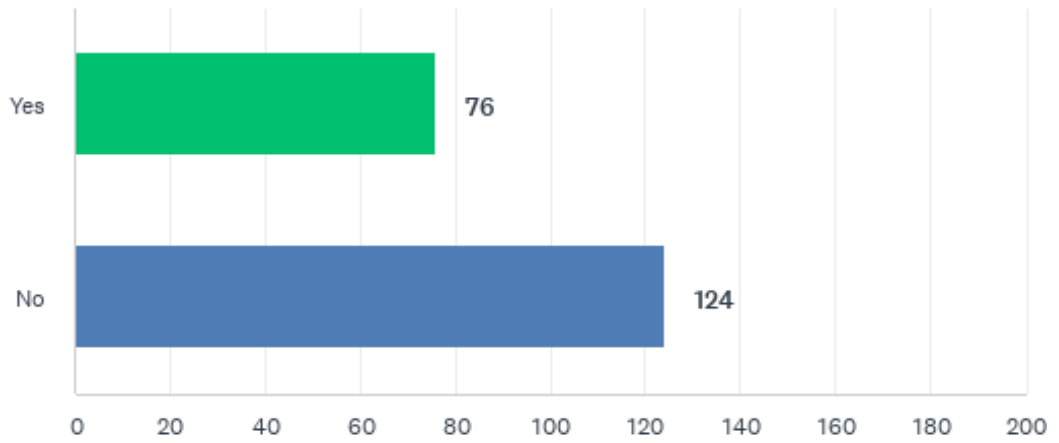
Positive highlights:

- It is useful to have access to the recordings of side events and presentations. Please continue the sharing on YouTube live and on demand.
- Many good choices, interesting topics, and speakers.
- The physical side events were very interactive. Networking opportunities.

Part 2: Virtual exhibits' visitors

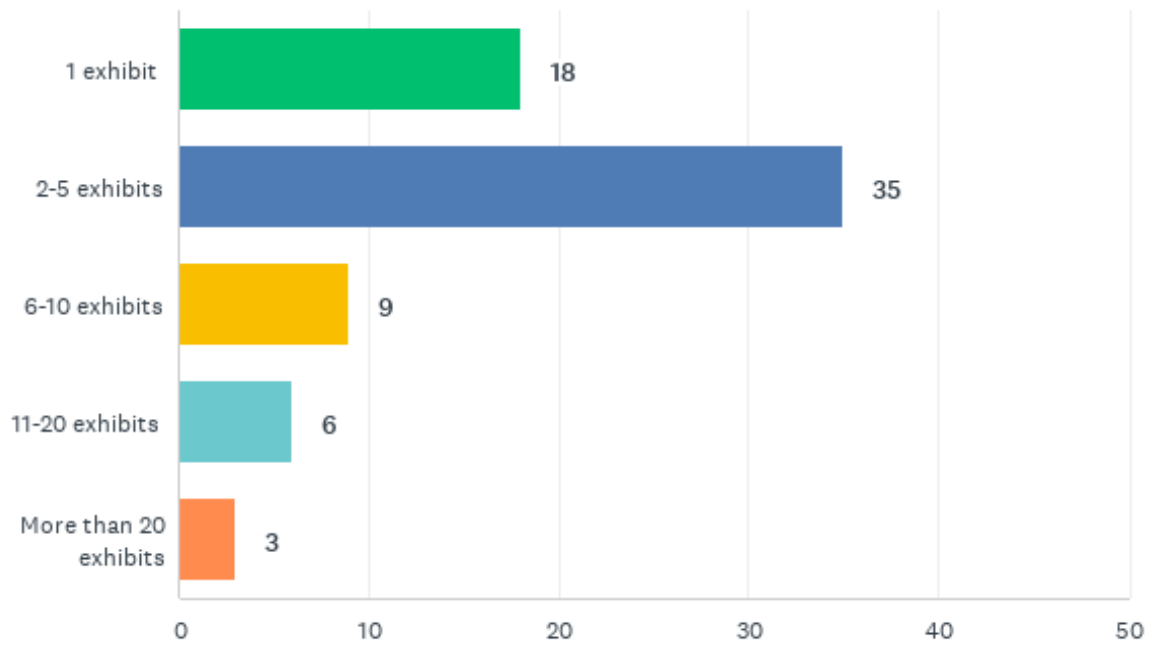
- **38%** of respondents (76 respondents) visited COP 26 **virtual exhibits**.
- The majority of these visitors attended **from 2 to 5 virtual exhibits**.
- **The user-friendliness of the virtual exhibits' setup** scored **2.3 out of 4.0**. (4.0 being the highest quality).
- **The overall quality of virtual exhibits** scored **2.38 out of 4.0**. (4.0 being the highest quality).
- **76%** of these visitors found the practice of **exhibitors uploading their presentations and other relevant materials to the official list of exhibits in SEORS** useful, and **63%** of these visitors have **accessed these materials**.

Q14: Did you visit any COP 26 virtual exhibits?



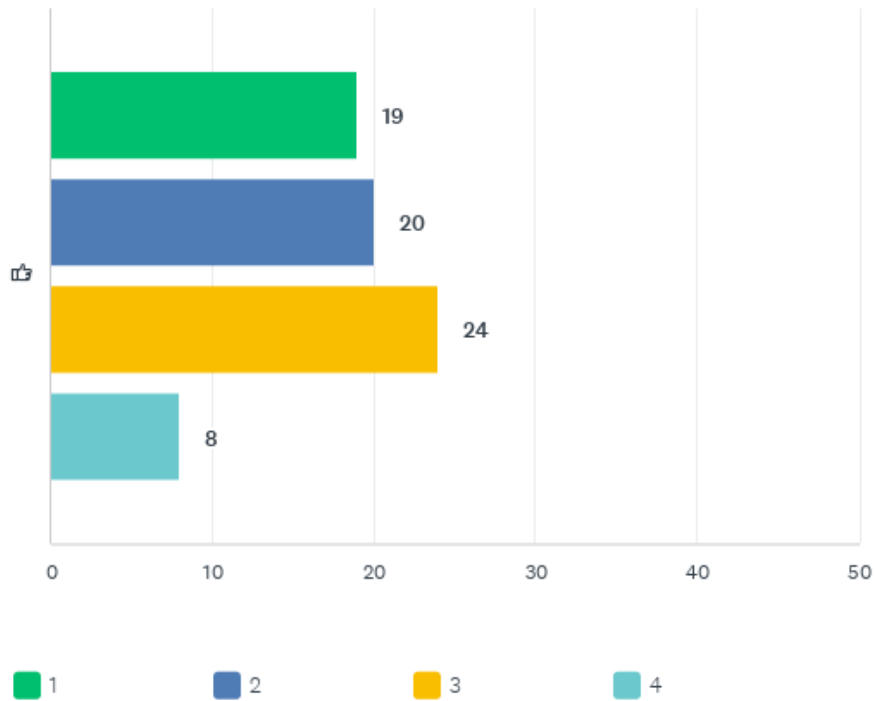
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	38.00%	76
No	62.00%	124
TOTAL		200

Q15: How many virtual exhibits have you visited on the COP 26 platform?



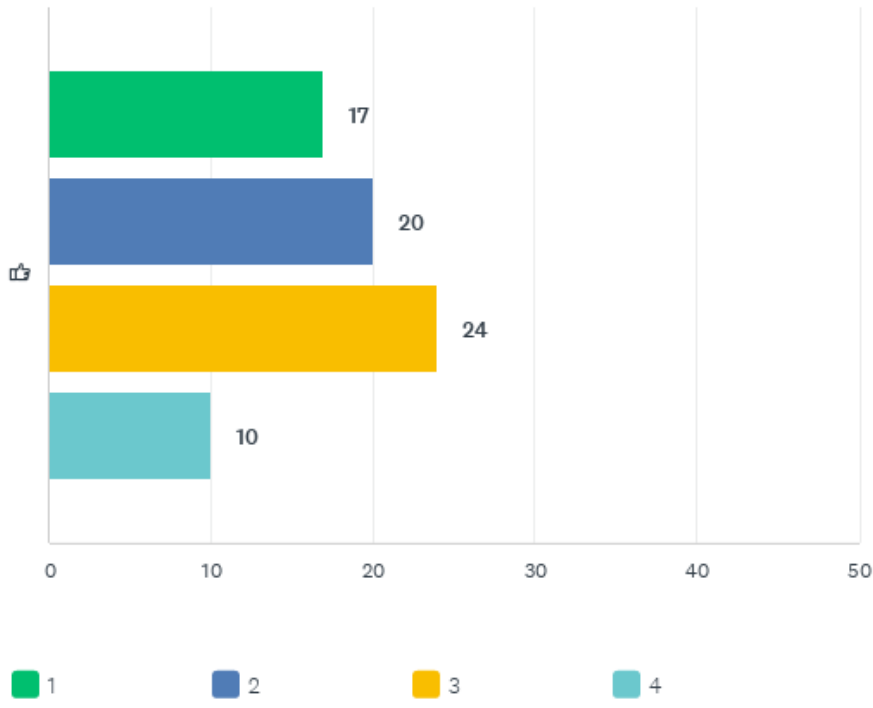
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 exhibit	25.35%	18
2-5 exhibits	49.30%	35
6-10 exhibits	12.68%	9
11-20 exhibits	8.45%	6
More than 20 exhibits	4.23%	3
TOTAL		71

**Q16: How user-friendly did you find the virtual exhibits' setup on the COP 26 platform?
Please rate your experience of attending virtual exhibits.**



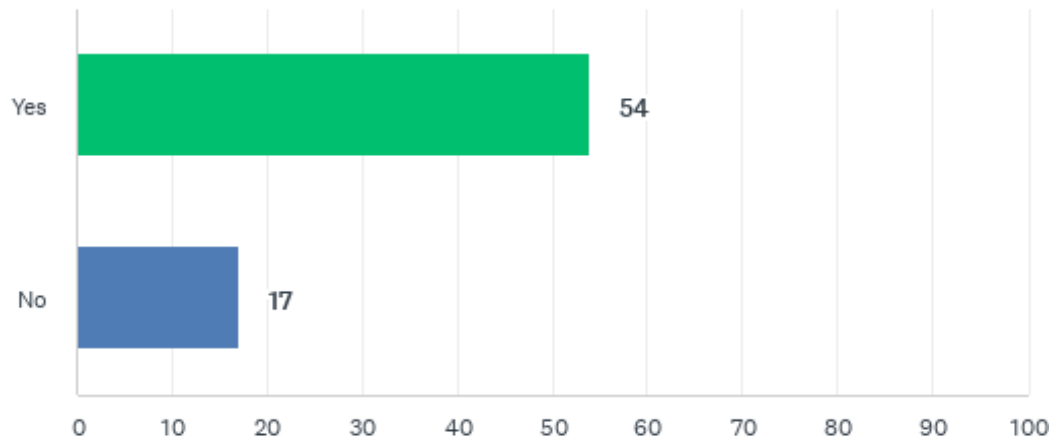
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	26.76% 19	28.17% 20	33.80% 24	11.27% 8	71	2.30

Q17: How do you rate the quality of virtual exhibits overall?



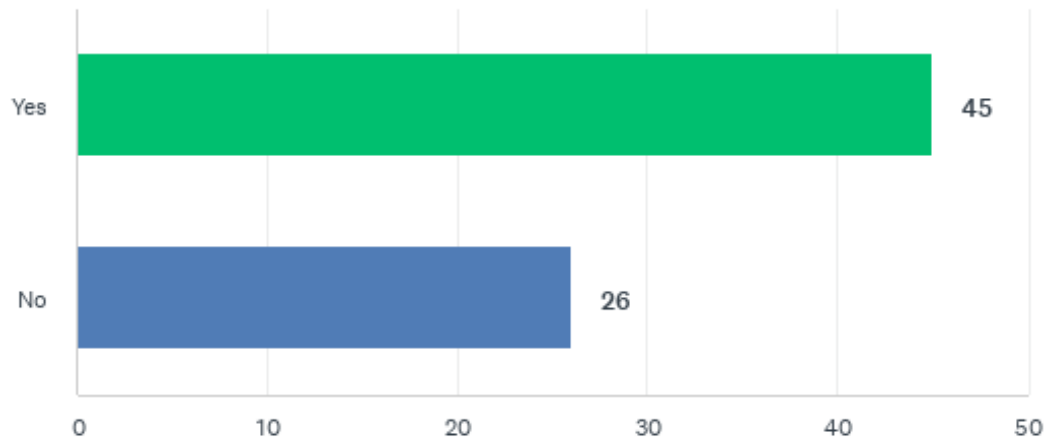
	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	23.94% 17	28.17% 20	33.80% 24	14.08% 10	71	2.38

Q18: Exhibitors are encouraged to share the presentation files and other materials to the list of selected exhibits page. Do you find it useful?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.06%	54
No	23.94%	17
TOTAL		71

Q19: Exhibitors are encouraged to share the presentation files and other materials to the list of selected exhibits page. Have you accessed these materials?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	63.38%	45
No	36.62%	26
TOTAL		71

Q20 In case there is anything else you would like to share about your experience of attending COP 26 virtual exhibits, please let us know.

Summarized responses.

Complaints:

- No opportunity for interaction.
- Technical problems on the platform. Virtual exhibits were not always available.
- The virtual nature of exhibits has led to a significant decrease in NGOs' visibility. "We were very disappointed by not being able to exhibit in Glasgow, when we surprisingly saw that countries, UN and some bodies and companies were allowed to exhibit."
- Virtual exhibits not being available to the wider audience. This has lowered the impact of exhibits.
- It was hard to find exhibits on the platform. It was not clear how to interact with exhibitors. The platform was not easy to navigate.
- Not being able to use the chat functionality on the platform.
- Some content was not accessible from a smartphone.
- The same content remained on the platform for 2 weeks.
- There is no way of knowing how many people viewed the exhibits.

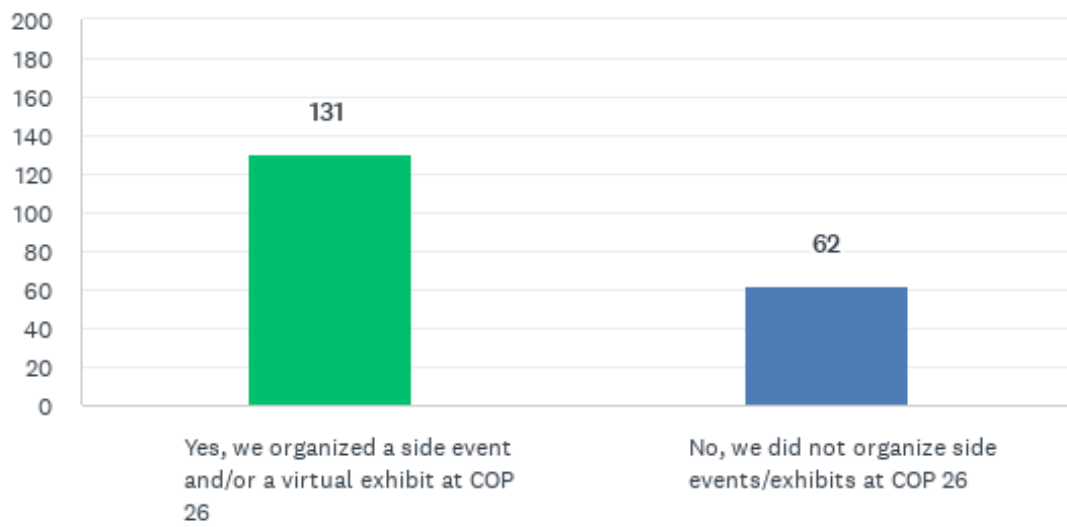
Positive highlights:

- "Wonderful innovation, but we badly missed the exhibit halls and booths."

Part 3: Side event organizers and exhibitors

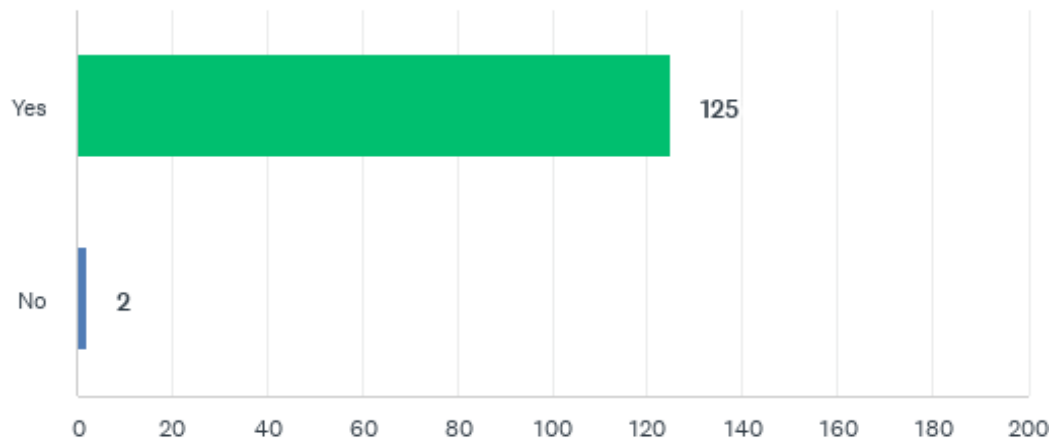
- **68%** of respondents (131 respondents) were **side event organizers and/or exhibitors** at COP 26.
- **98%** of these side event organizers and/or exhibitors found **the practice of the secretariat informing observers and Parties of the SEROS opening via a notification and through UNFCCC official websites** useful.
- On average, **the responsiveness of the secretariat** scored **2.46 out of 4.0**. (4.0 being the highest quality).

Q21: Did your organization/Party hold a side event and/or exhibit at COP 26?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we organized a side event and/or a virtual exhibit at COP 26	67.88%	131
No, we did not organize side events/exhibits at COP 26	32.12%	62
TOTAL		193

Q22: The secretariat sent a notification to all Parties and observers of the opening of the SEORS application period and through UNFCCC official websites. Was this useful and should be continued?



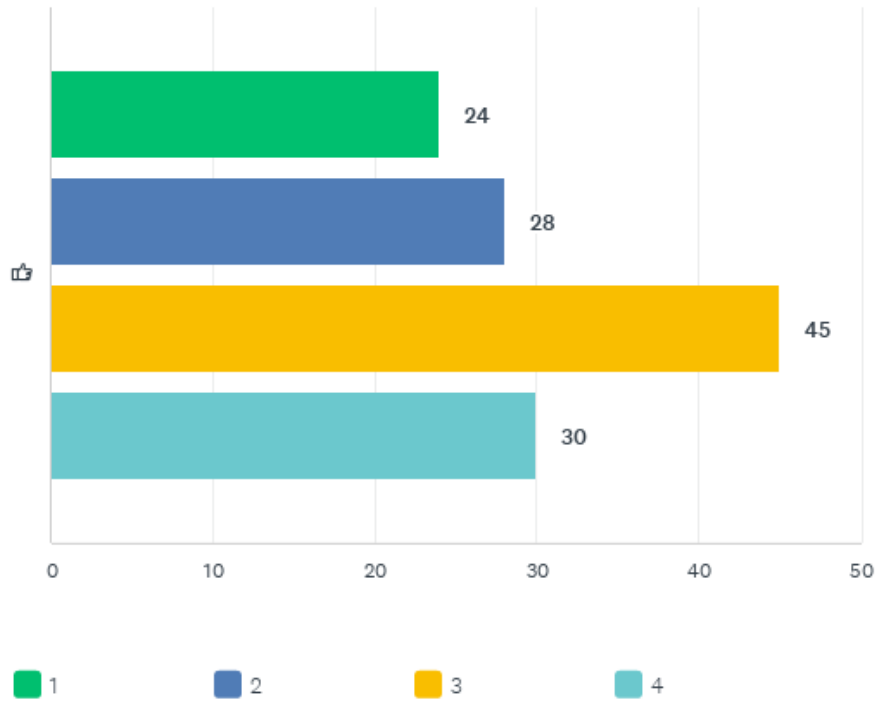
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.43%	125
No	1.57%	2
TOTAL		127

Q23 If not, which other means of communication do you suggest the secretariat use to notify Parties and observers of the opening of the SEORS application period?

Summarized responses.

- Emails;
- Social media;
- Live letters;
- Increase the user-friendliness of the application website;
- Improve the timing of communication.

Q24: Please rate the responsiveness of the secretariat.

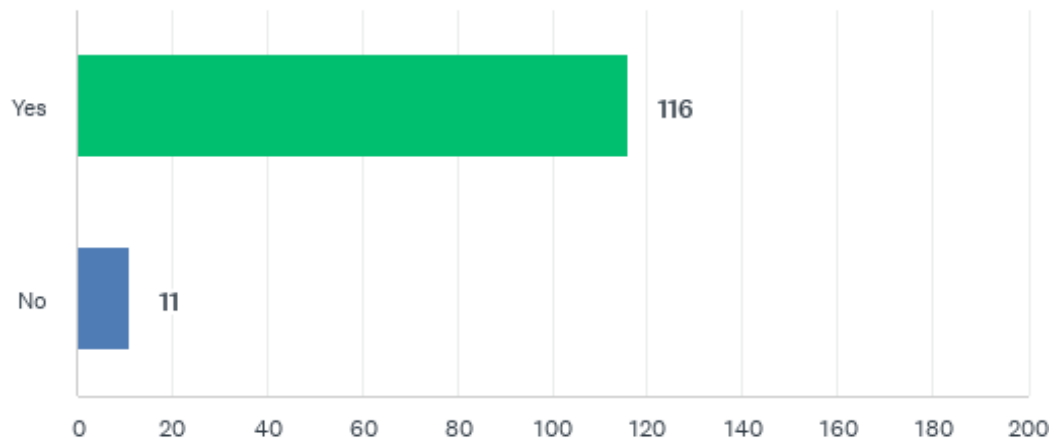


	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	18.90% 24	22.05% 28	35.43% 45	23.62% 30	127	2.64

Part 4: Side event organizers

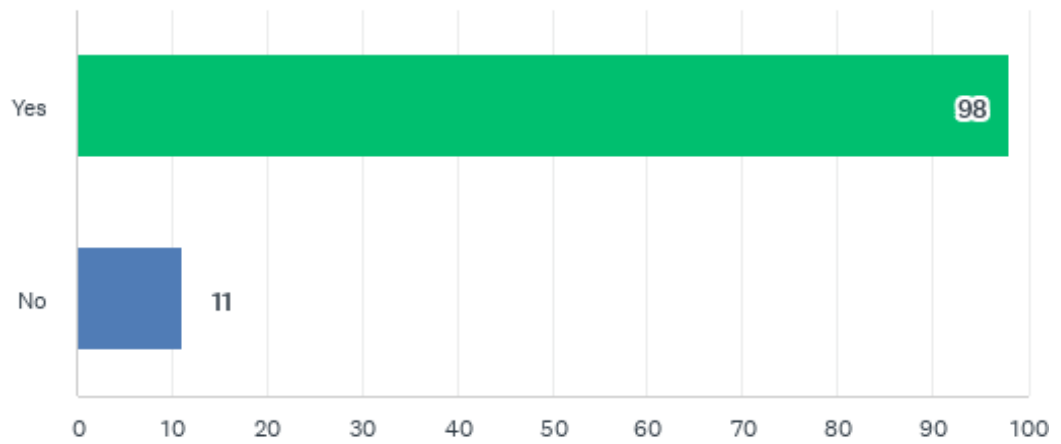
- **91%** of respondents (116 respondents) were **side event organizers** at COP 26.
- **90%** of these side event organizers used the **handbook for side event organizers** and ranked its **usefulness** as **2.83 out of 4.0**.
- **56%** of these side event organizers planned to have **virtual speakers** at their side events. However, **40%** of these side event organizers **did not have their speakers duly registered as part of a delegation**.
- **33%** of these side event organizers planned to have **1-2 virtual speakers** at their side event, and **24%** expected to have **3 virtual speakers**.
- **21%** of these side event organizers confirmed that virtual speakers joined their side events **by duly using the COP 26 platform**, while **29%** of these side event organizers reported that at least some of their virtual speakers had to use **one-time access links provided by digital clerks/the secretariat to access the event**. **5%** of these side event organizers indicated that **virtual speakers were not able to join their side events**.
- The majority of respondents allocated to **“conventional” side event rooms (62%)** confirmed that they only **interacted with the on-site audience**.
- **25%** of respondents allocated to **multimedia side event studios interacted with the virtual audience** solely via the **COP 26 platform**. **28%** also turned to **alternative online platforms** to collect questions and/or comments from the virtual audience.
- **47%** respondents allocated to **multimedia side event rooms** confirmed that they had **no interaction with the audience** compared to **5%** of respondents allocated to **“conventional” side event rooms**.
- **25%** of these side event organizers planned to have **interpretation** at their side event.
- **52%** of these side event organizers **invited an interpreter who was duly registered as part of a delegation**, and **32%** **booked interpretation services from the on-site company**. **16%** of these side event organizers invited an interpreter who was **not in possession of a conference badge**.
- Side event organizers planned to have interpretation in **English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Arabic, and Russian**.
- **36%** of these side event organizers reported that **technical and/or logistical problems prevented them from having interpretation at their side event**.
- The following **solutions** were identified to tackle these technical and/or logistical problems:
 - an interpreter interpreted from the multimedia side event studio (8 respondents);
 - one of the panel members conducted the interpretation (3 respondents).

Q25: Did your organization/Party organize a side event at COP 26?



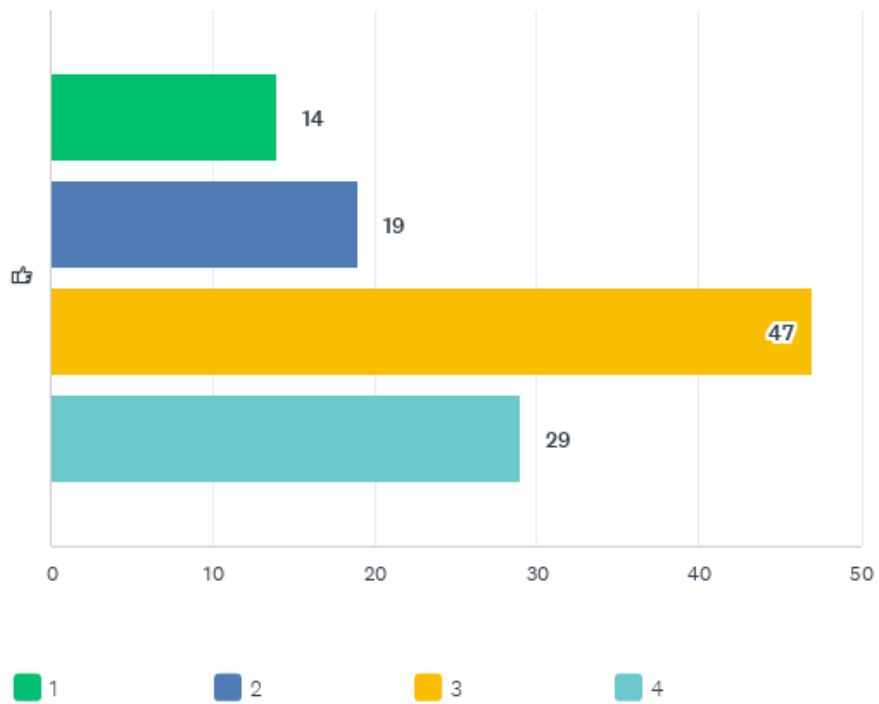
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.34%	116
No	8.66%	11
TOTAL		127

Q26: The secretariat prepared a handbook detailing the information needed for side event organizers, posted it on the home page of SEORS, and sent it to the organizers. Did you use it?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.91%	98
No	10.09%	11
TOTAL		109

Q27: How do you rate the usefulness of the handbook for side event organizers?



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	12.84% 14	17.43% 19	43.12% 47	26.61% 29	109	2.83

Q28 Please let us know if you have any suggestions on how we could improve communicating the logistical information to side event organizer.

Summarized responses.

- The logistical information needs to be communicated more in advance.
- The handbook was a useful source of information.
- Handbook should be supplied much earlier to facilitate preparation.
- Handbook could be sent as an attachment to all side event organizers.
- There needs to be a better way to inform side event organizers in case handbooks get updated.
- The logistical information should also include guidelines for side event attendees.
- There should be more information from the secretariat on how to join side events online.
- The amount of email communication during COP should be minimized.
- A hotline with interactive communication.
- A virtual app containing with maps and event programs.
- Assign each organization a contact person.
- Creating a social media group to post information and a forum-style chat to respond to questions.
- More guidance needs to be provided on who can be contacted on-site.
- Emails could be sent to DCPs and side event contact points.

Q29 At COP 26, those who had applied for side events in the online system (SOERS) were sometimes not the same colleagues who actually organized side events on-site. This created communication problems as the critical information sent to the applicants through the online system or by email had not been passed on to the actual colleagues on site. What do you suggest to better facilitate communication of such information to the colleagues in charge of organizing side events?

Summarized responses.

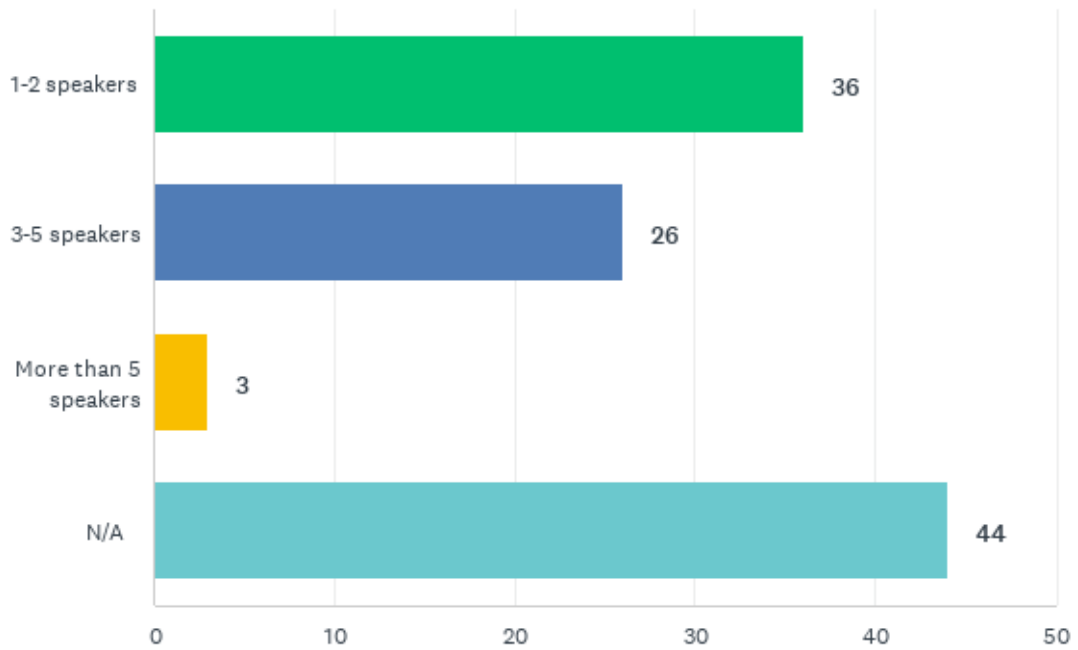
- Make it possible to send information to more than one person per organization. / Allow having two contact points per side event.
- Provide a phone number or a hotline to solve issues.
- Allow to change the contact information of the applicant.
- Also communicate the information to co-organizers, not just the leads.
- Create an "organizer" e-mail list and communicate side event or exhibit information only to this list.
- Those who apply should be responsible and accountable.
- Consider using social media platforms, closed groups for organizers.
- The lead applicant should be able to nominate additional email addresses to ensure all relevant people get the communication
- Instead of emails, post all the information on a platform and ask side event organizers to check it.
- "Make a distinction between the person who is applying on behalf of an organisation and the person who will organise the side event/exhibit."
- "Enable the applicant to declare/confirm the name of the side event organiser once the side event is approved by the UNFCCC secretariat through a short form to complete that would introduce this new person to the SEORS system as well."
- Highlight the critical information that must be passed on.
- "If people are going to have a different person for each then they should be asked to provide a joint email such as info@ to make sure they can pick it up."
- Create a communication app that includes not only the representative but on-site people.
- It should not be the responsibility of the secretariat to manage this.

Q30: Did you plan to have virtual speakers at your side event?



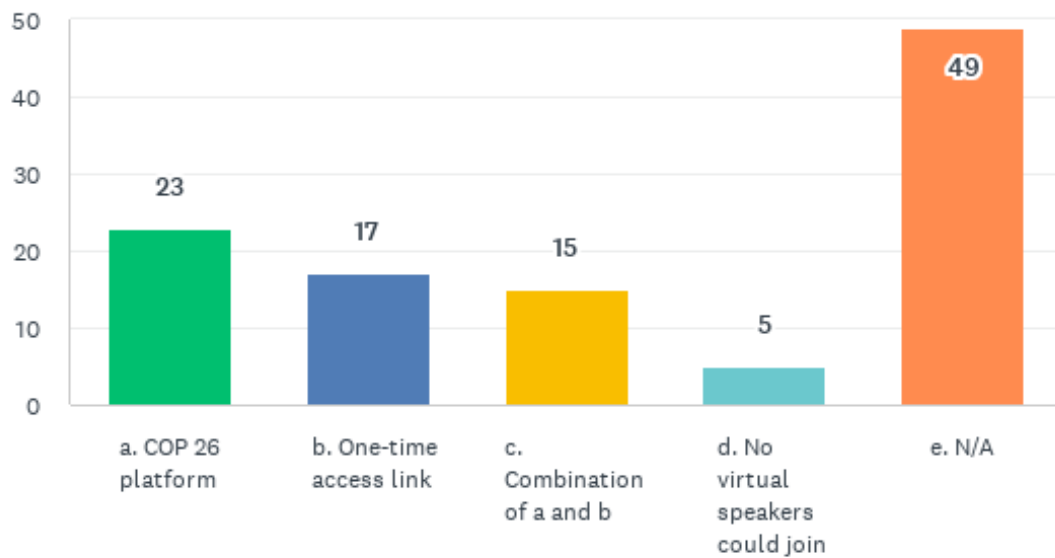
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, and these speakers were duly registered as part of a delegation	34.86%	38
Yes, and these speakers were not duly registered as part of a delegation	22.94%	25
No	42.20%	46
TOTAL		109

Q31: How many virtual speakers did you plan to have?



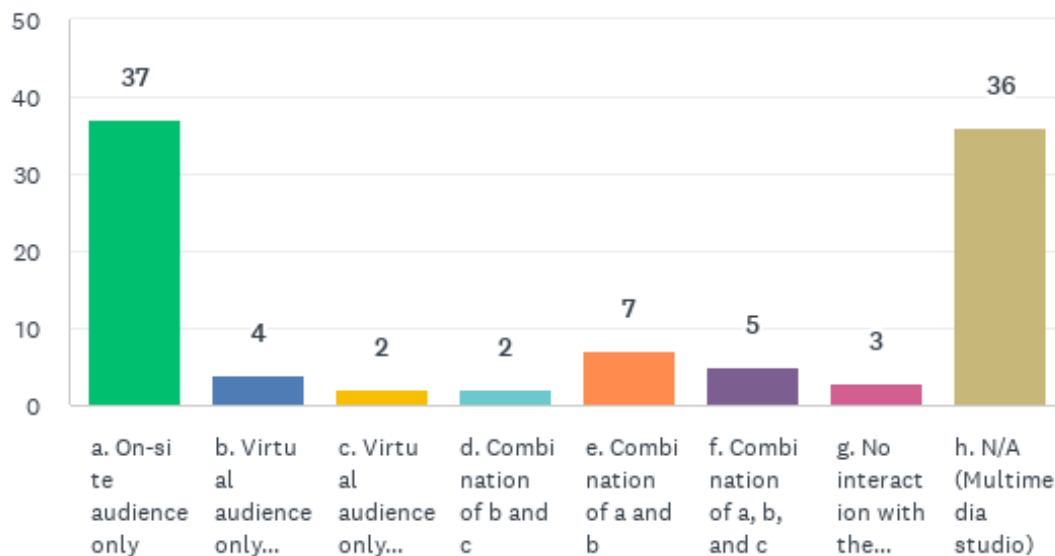
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1-2 speakers	33.03%	36
3-5 speakers	23.85%	26
More than 5 speakers	2.75%	3
N/A	40.37%	44
TOTAL		109

Q32: How did your virtual speakers join the side event?



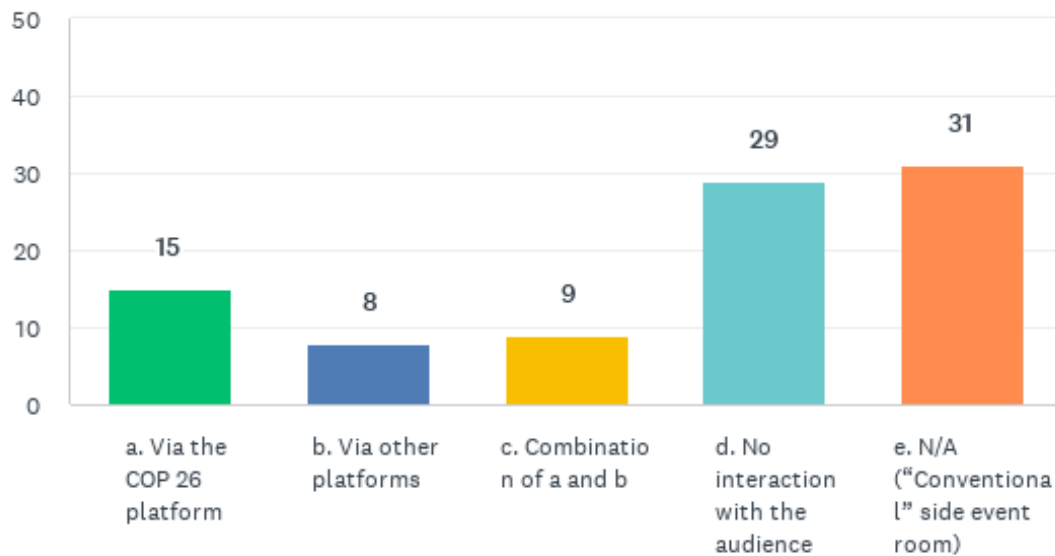
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
a. Via the COP 26 platform	21.10%	23
b. Via a one-time access link provided by the digital clerk/the secretariat.	15.60%	17
c. Combination of a and b.	13.76%	15
d. None from the list of the expected virtual speakers was able to join the side event.	4.59%	5
e. N/A	44.95%	49
TOTAL		109

Q33: In case you had been allocated to a “conventional” side event room (Loch Lomond/ Strangford Lough/ Derwentwater side event rooms), how did you interact with the audience?



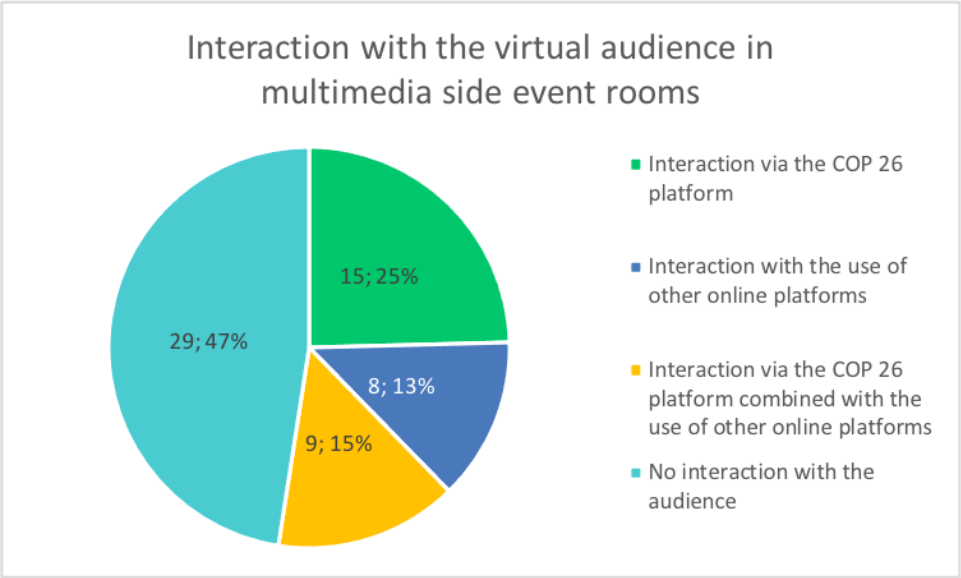
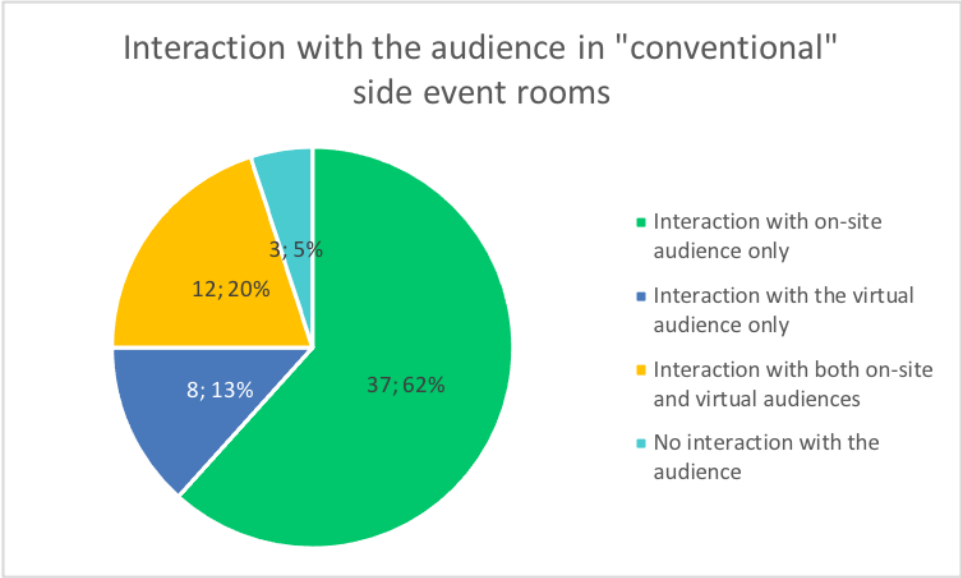
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
a. We only interacted with the on-site audience	38.54% 37
b. We only interacted with the virtual audience by using the COP 26 platform	4.17% 4
c. We only interacted with the virtual audience by using other platforms (social media, our own website, etc.)	2.08% 2
d. Combination of b and c	2.08% 2
e. Combination of a and b	7.29% 7
f. Combination of a, b, and c	5.21% 5
g. We did not interact with the audience	3.13% 3
h. N/A (Our side event was allocated to a multimedia side event studio)	37.50% 36
TOTAL	96

Q34: In case you had been allocated to a multimedia side event studio (South Downs/ Skomer/ Glen Affric side event rooms), how did you interact with the audience?

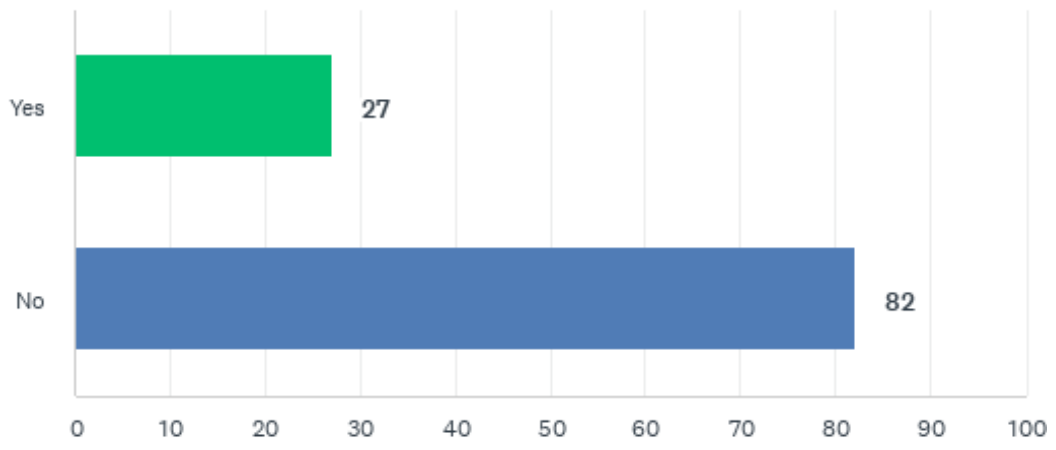


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
a. We interacted with the virtual audience by using the COP 26 platform	16.30%	15
b. We interacted with the virtual audience by using other platforms (social media, our own website, etc.)	8.70%	8
c. Combination of a and b	9.78%	9
d. We did not interact with the audience	31.52%	29
e. N/A (Our side event was allocated to a "conventional" side event room)	33.70%	31
TOTAL		92

Interaction with the audience in conventional side event rooms v. in multimedia side event rooms

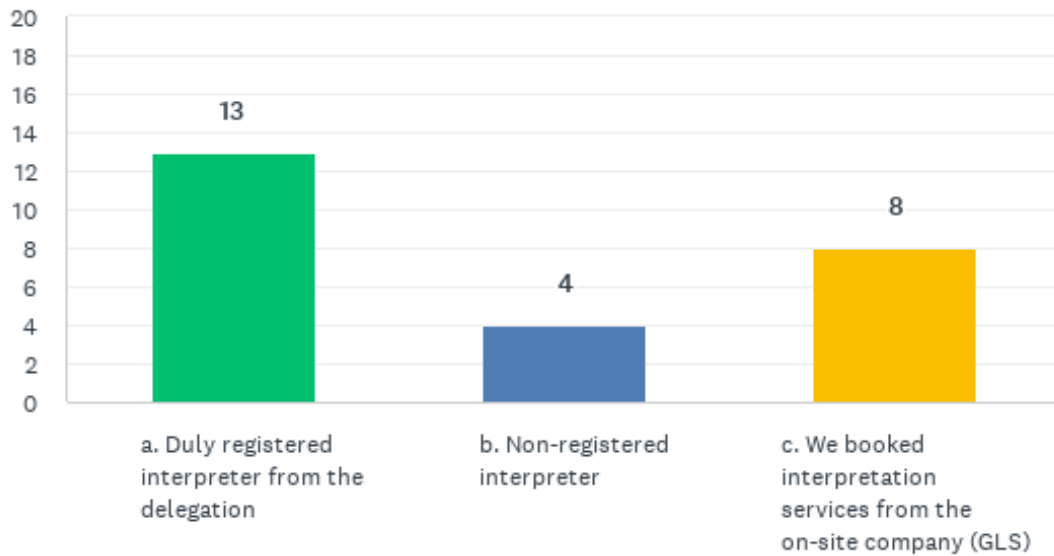


Q35: Did you plan to have simultaneous interpretation at your side event?



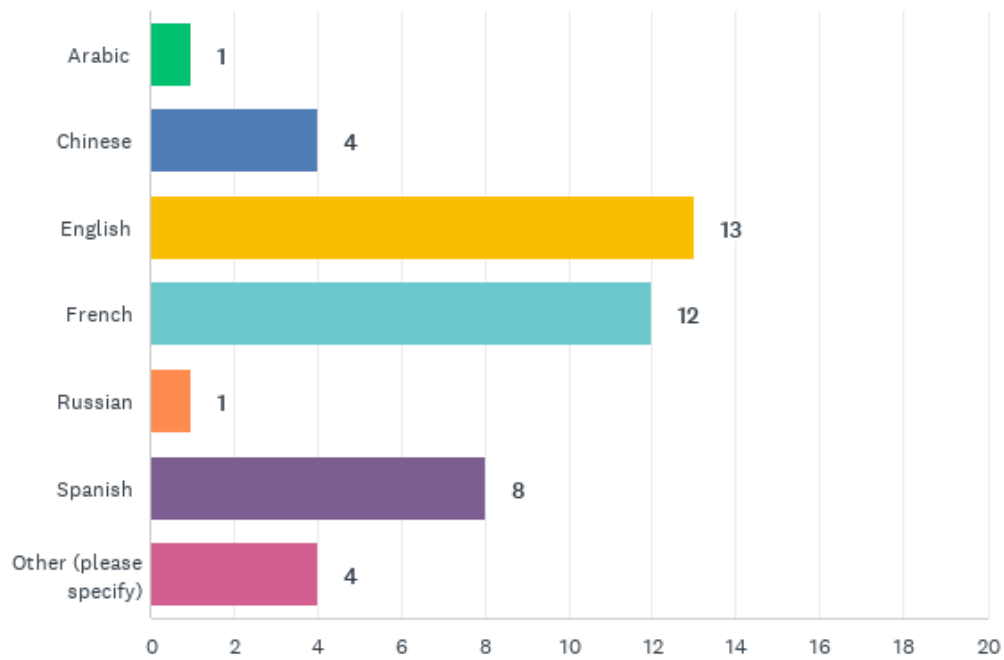
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	24.77%	27
No	75.23%	82
TOTAL		109

Q36: Did you invite an interpreter by yourself, or did you book interpretation services from the on-site company (GLS)?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
a. We invited an interpreter by ourselves, and this interpreter was duly registered as part of a delegation	52.00%	13
b. We invited an interpreter by ourselves, and this interpreter was not duly registered as part of a delegation	16.00%	4
c. We booked interpretation services from the on-site company (GLS)	32.00%	8
TOTAL		25

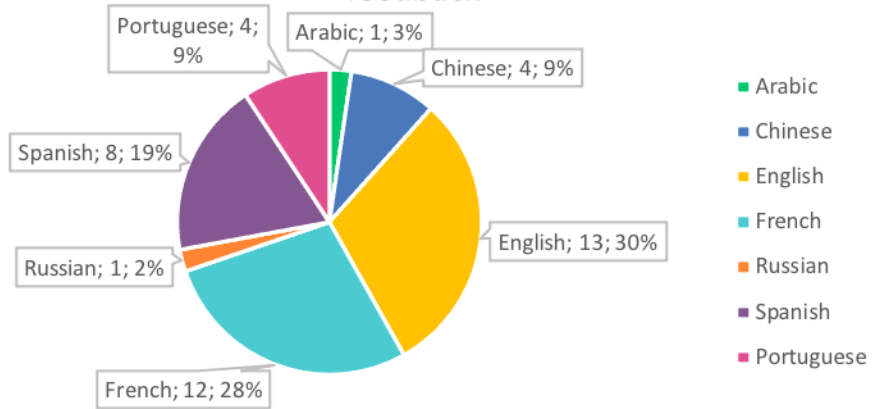
Q37: Which languages did you plan to have simultaneous interpretation in?



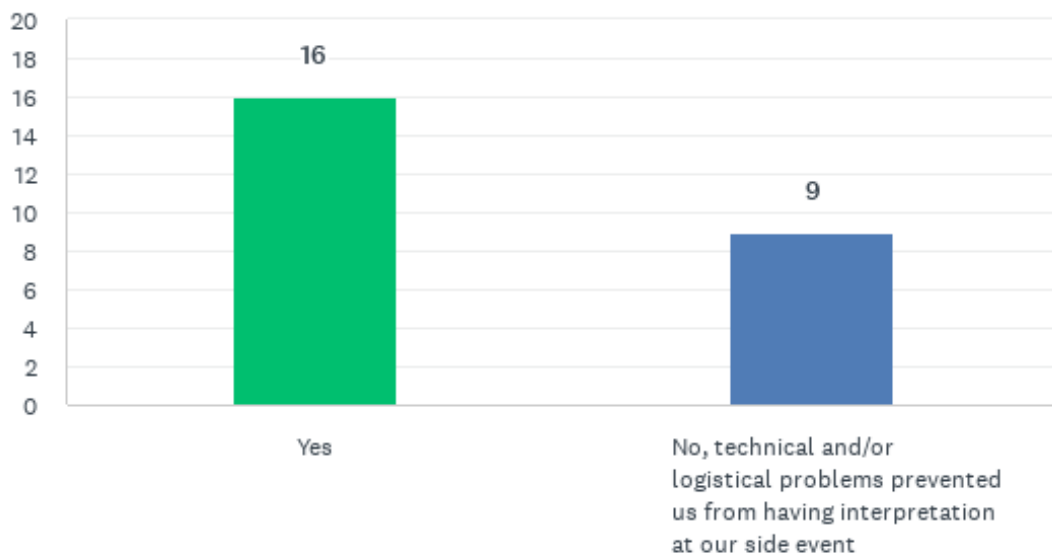
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Arabic	4.00%	1
Chinese	16.00%	4
English	52.00%	13
French	48.00%	12
Russian	4.00%	1
Spanish	32.00%	8
Other (please specify)	16.00%	4
Total Respondents: 25		

Other languages indicated: Portuguese.

COP 26 side events: initial interpretation requests by language according to side event organizers' feedback



Q38: Were you able to have interpretation services at your side event?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	64.00%	16
No, technical and/or logistical problems prevented us from having interpretation at our side event	36.00%	9
TOTAL		25

Q39 If no, please specify which problems prevented you from having interpretation at your side event.

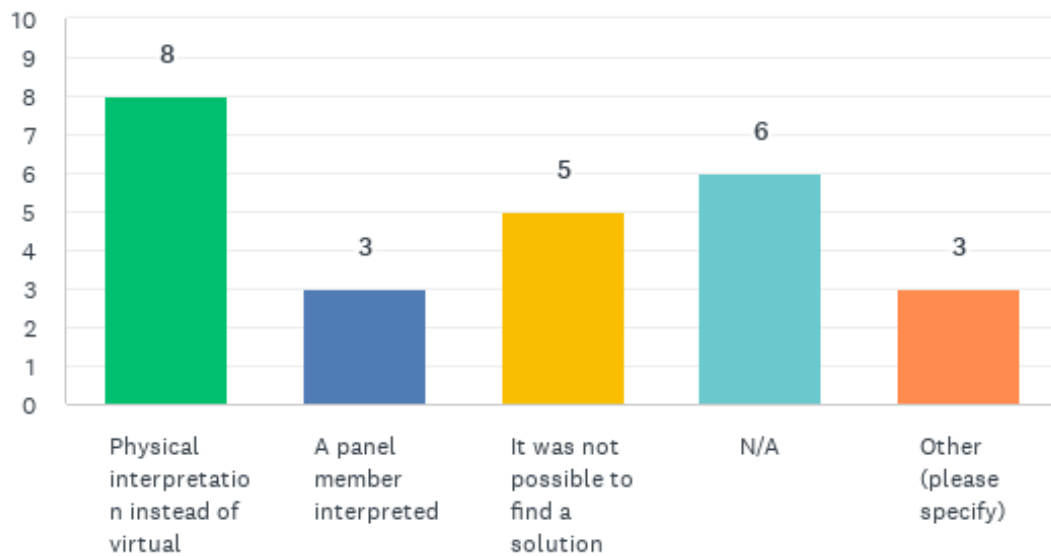
Summarized responses.

- Connection problems, including internet connection problems on-site;
- Lack of sufficient information about how interpreters could join the session, or whether non-observers (i.e., the public) would have access to interpretation.
- Technology was difficult to use for first-time users. (For example, a duly registered interpreter could not find out how to access the software).
- The delay in the announcement of the selection and allocation results prevented from booking interpretation services.
- It was not possible to have virtual interpretation in “conventional” side event rooms.

Other messages on interpretation:

- Small NGOs not being able to afford interpretation services: too expensive.

Q40: In case technical and/or logistical problems prevented you from having interpretation at your side event as planned, were you able to find a solution?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, the interpreter interpreted from the side event room.	32.00%	8
Yes, one of the panel members interpreted during the event.	12.00%	3
No, it was not possible to find a solution to have interpretation at our side event.	20.00%	5
N/A	24.00%	6
Other (please specify)	12.00%	3
TOTAL		25

Other responses:

- Decided not to have interpretation.
- Requested the secretariat to provide a video recording after the side event had taken place.

Q41 In case there is anything else you would like to share with us on your experience of holding a side event at COP 26, please let us know.

Summarized responses.

- On the platform, it was difficult to differentiate between virtual speakers and attendees.
- It was hard to promote the event not being able to have a YouTube link to the livestreaming session well in advance.
- Complaint about the late announcement of the schedule.
- “The side event schedule should be clearly informed to the Presenter Partner before the starting date and the studio places should be described to the Partners beforehand the presentation activity to be held.”
- Problems faced by virtual presenters (not being able to share their slides).
- The information on how to hold a side event in a multimedia studio was not provided in a timely manner. Instructions could have been made clearer.
- Contact email addresses from side event organizers were published online without prior consent. This led to an extreme increase in SPAM for me and was a huge burden. Please consider using encrypted e-mail addresses only in the future to avoid such nuisance.
- An appeal that the speakers joining the events (only) online are not requested to fully accredit themselves for the COP itself.
- In some side event rooms, it was difficult to hear the panelists talking.
- Lack of transparency regarding room allocation decision.
- More transparency of the selection criteria and to be communicated to the failed applicants.
- It was taking long to receive a response from the secretariat. Automated responses did not cover everything.
- The chat support on the platform was not able to answer any question related to side events.
- Lack of information provided in French.
- Having hybrid side events makes side events more inclusive.
- Some side event rooms were too big.
- Complaints about disadvantages of being allocated to a multimedia side event studio: “not having in- person audience meant a lower level of engagement, which did not balance the efforts put in setting up the agenda, coordinating with other organizations and panelists, etc.”
- The use of headphones to minimize microphone noise was very helpful.
- The application process: complaints about the complexity of the merging procedure.
- The window for merging is too short, and perhaps more guidance (including testimonies of how people approach this) would be helpful.
- The merging system negatively affects the quality of side events: “You end up getting a bunch of events that are BS talks with tons of individuals presenting very vague talks because there are too many speakers and organization. Why don’t you survey the community to ask what emerging topics are important, and

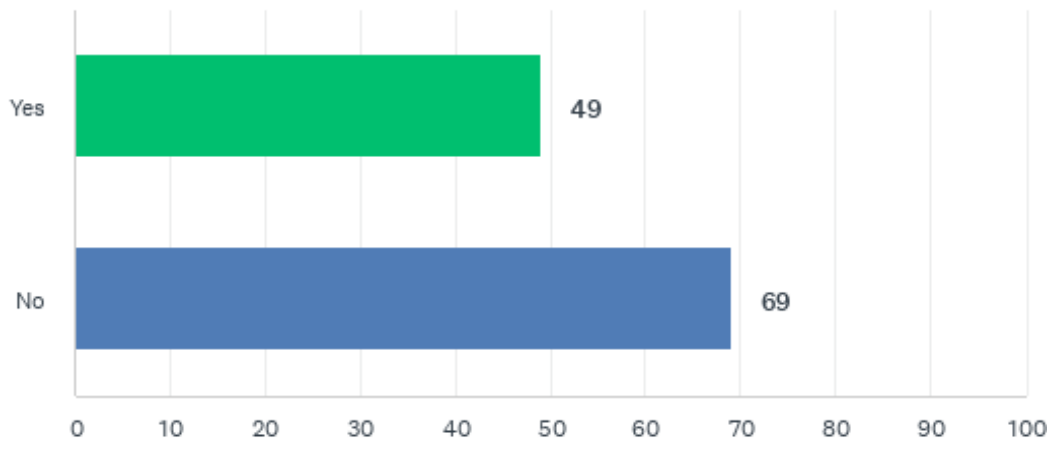
ask the Parties and chairs of committees what topics they need input on, and ask experts to apply? Make the application a bit longer so there is space to explain an event. Half the events could be top down and half could be proposals - the community could vote on the proposals.”

- The procedure of approving side event applications: inconvenience in case DCPs’ contact details are outdated.
- It would be helpful to have a daily e-calendar with all events, including side events, Pavilion events, etc. “This calendar should be text-searchable, and (ideally) also by tags.”
- Tight deadlines for registration and small quotas for observers. “It felt like all speakers should have been provided a day pass to attend on the day of the side event.”
- Online/virtual speakers should not be obliged to be accredited for the COP itself.

Part 4: Exhibitors

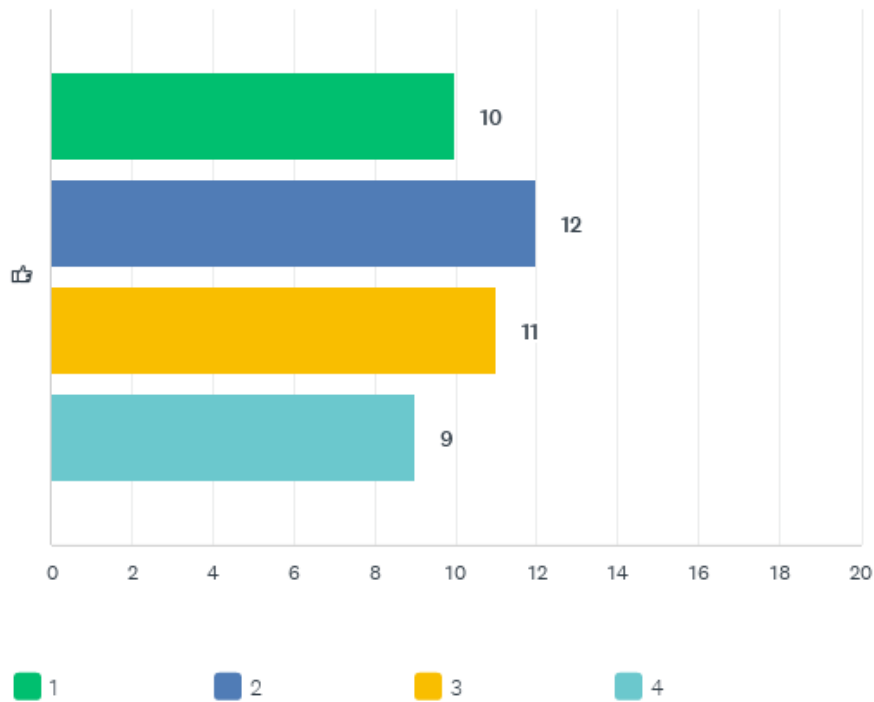
- **41.5%** of respondents (49 respondents) **organized a virtual exhibit** at COP 26.
- These exhibitors rated their **experience of working with the service provider** on creating their virtual exhibit as **2.45 out of 4.0**. (4.0 being the highest quality).
- Only **44%** of these exhibitors confirmed that they **did not experience any problems concerning their virtual exhibit on the COP 26 platform**.
- **76%** of these exhibitors confirmed that holding a virtual exhibit at COP 26 **did not lead to reaching out to/networking with other conference participants**.

Q42: Did your organization/Party organize a virtual exhibit at COP 26?



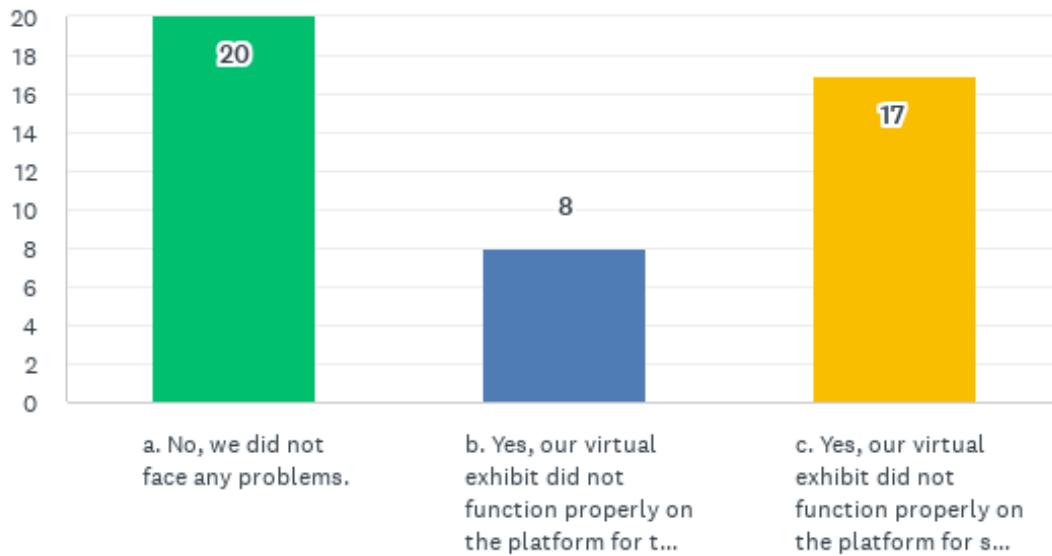
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.53%	49
No	58.47%	69
TOTAL		118

Q43: The service provider requested timely submission of digital content for them to upload onto the COP 26 Platform. Please rate your experience of working together with the service provider on creating your virtual exhibit.



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
👍	23.81% 10	28.57% 12	26.19% 11	21.43% 9	42	2.45

Q44: Did you experience any problems concerning your virtual exhibit on the COP 26 platform?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
a. No, we did not face any problems.	44.44%	20
b. Yes, our virtual exhibit did not function properly on the platform for the whole duration of the conference.	17.78%	8
c. Yes, our virtual exhibit did not function properly on the platform for some time during the conference.	37.78%	17
TOTAL		45

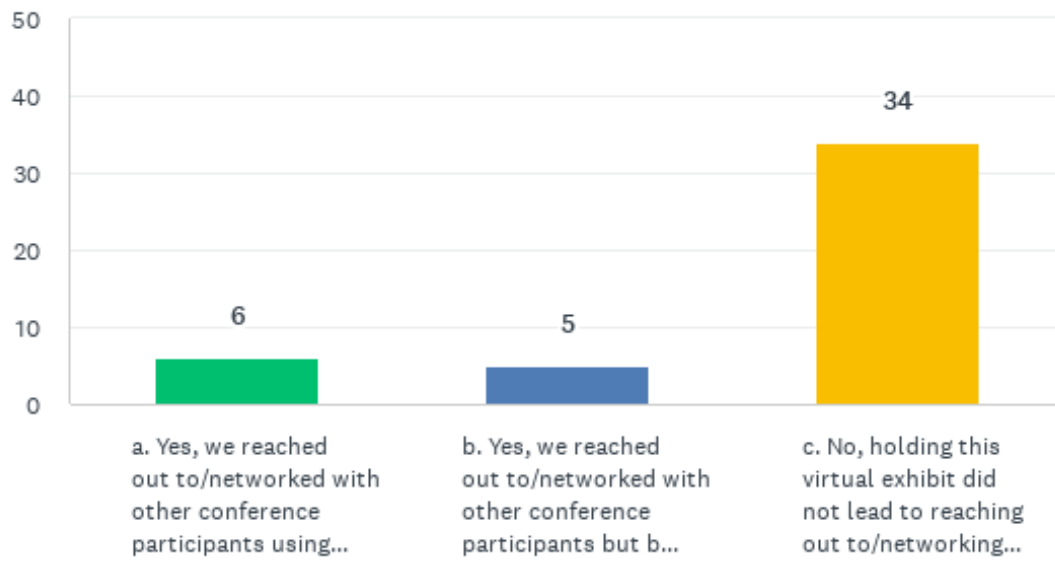
Q45 If your answer is b. or c., please describe solutions offered by the service provider/the secretariat:

Summarized responses.

No solutions offered. Problems identified:

- The submitted content did not get uploaded properly/on time.
- Problems in the communication with the service provider: different staff members communicating on the same issue.

Q46: Have you/your co-exhibitors used your virtual exhibit to reach out to/network with other conference participants?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
a. Yes, we reached out to/networked with other conference participants using the chat functionality on the COP 26 platform	13.33%	6
b. Yes, we reached out to/networked with other conference participants but by using other communication channels outside of the COP 26 platform	11.11%	5
c. No, holding this virtual exhibit did not lead to reaching out to/networking with other conference participants	75.56%	34
TOTAL		45

Q47 In case there is anything else you would like to share with us on your experience of holding a virtual exhibit at COP 26, please let us know.

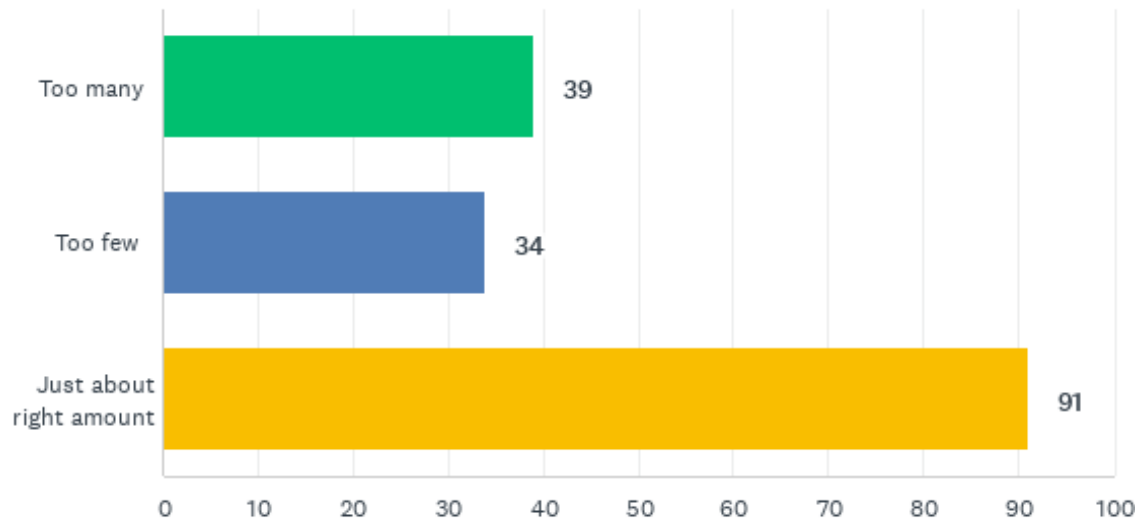
Summarized responses.

- Virtual exhibits received little outreach.
- “Establishing a Facebook-like community on climate conferences is a great idea,” but needs more efforts.
- Revert to physical exhibit booths. “This experiment was not successful.” / “Exhibits are an essential tool for observer organizations seeking a substantive role in COPs.”
- Tight timelines for content submission. Next time, there should be more realistic deadlines.
- Disappointment that the virtual exhibits could only be accessed by registered COP participants. Make virtual exhibits accessible to the general audience (for example, on the website).
- Virtual exhibits could not be updated during the conference.
- Participants need to be alerted when virtual exhibit has been posted and directed to the link.
- More instructions on how to interact virtually need to be provided.
- “The initial request to provide materials for the virtual exhibit was confusing, and it wasn't clear what the virtual exhibit "was" exactly. Having some sort of example to look at would have been extremely helpful. [...]”
- The inability to use the chat functionality, the platform not functioning properly, submitted digital content not being properly uploaded by the service provider.
- “It would be good if notifications from virtual exhibits could go directly to emails.”
- No information on the schedule of virtual exhibits provided in advance.

Part 5: General questions on the operation of side events and exhibits

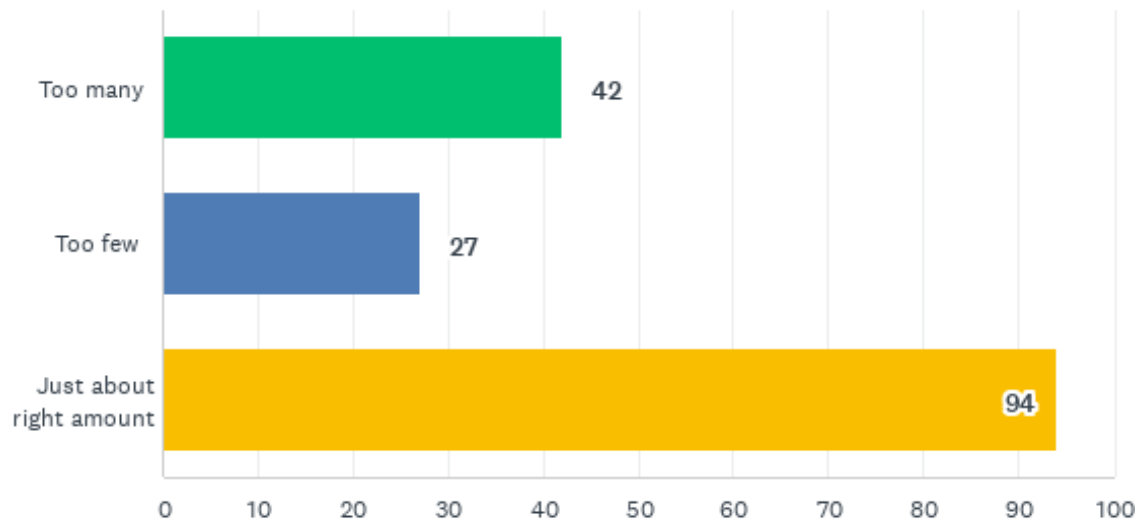
- More than half (**55.5%**) of respondents (91 respondents) agreed that having **240 secretariat-managed side event slots** is **just about right amount**.
- Similarly, **58%** of respondents (94 respondents) agreed that having **200 virtual exhibits** is **just about right amount**.

Q48: There were 240 secretariat-managed side event slots at COP 26. Do you think this number is:



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Too many	23.78%	39
Too few	20.73%	34
Just about right amount	55.49%	91
TOTAL		164

Q49: This year, the secretariat selected 200 virtual exhibits. Do you think this number is:



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Too many	25.77%	42
Too few	16.56%	27
Just about right amount	57.67%	94
TOTAL		163

Q50 Side events and exhibits are the primary mode of engagement for observers who do not have speaking access to the negotiation. To ensure observers have access to this platform, Parties are required to partner with observers to be eligible to apply. There were 1,100 applications for 240 slots available for COP 26. Even the merged applications had to be declined. In order to ensure access to the side event avenue, the selection criteria are set to prioritize developing country perspectives, balance among topic themes, balance among NGO constituencies, etc. Given the resources available in the secretariat (one staff), what other enhancement measures can be taken in order to enable a wider range of observers to have access to the side event platform at future COPs?

Summarized responses.

- The secretariat needs more resources / increase the number of the secretariat staff, invite volunteers.
- There should be more time for applying and merging.
- There should be more time for the selection process.
- The selection criteria should be more clearly communicated.
- Allow submitting joint applications to reduce the need to merge.
- “The Secretariat could encourage mergers between observer organisations from developing and industrialized countries, e.g. by giving such combinations a priority to those of purely industrialized country combinations.”
- “Building a functional, user-friendly platform to run side events on the ‘virtual’ sidelines of COP, perhaps modeled on the SDG Action Zone, to increase global participation; including a non-event option where observers could post information or some other kind of cool digital interaction.”
- “How much of an overlap is there between GCA events and side events?”
- “What is the ‘value’ of the exhibition space?”
- “I am always surprised at the number of UN agencies running side events?”
- More venues could be provided.
- “The principle of selection is to organize in equal geographical coverage, taking into account the degree of vulnerability of these countries due to climate change.”
- “Easier way to navigate the side events: [...] an interactive app.”
- Introduce a rotation principle: “Rotate slots over multiple COPs (e.g: a party can apply to 1 side event every 2 or 3 COPs).” / “Organisations organising a side event in one year may not be under the first ones to get a slot for a side event in the next year.”
- “Open the platform, try and provide more resource to support NGOs, appoint champions amongst observers who could support other (newer and unexperienced) NGOs, open fora and communications channels.”
- More collaboration with Pavilions.
- Reduce the duration of side events.
- “Propose videos recorded beforehand and put online with a chat session (or even organize specific chat slots associated with such or such pre-recorded side event).”
- “Geographic diversity. E.g. we were the only NGO from Australia to host a side event.”
- Engage in improving the quality of exhibit materials.

- Increase the number of side event slots. / Allow having more side events, especially virtually (e.g., in the form of pre-recorded webinars).
- Allow speakers/participants without COP badges to participate.
- “Introduce call for selected topics to acquire more targeted submissions.”
- Simpler platform for virtual interaction (e.g., Zoom).
- Side events should be “relevant and accessible.” The logistical information included in the schedule needs to be clear.
- Introduce special slots only for representatives from the Global South.
- Applying for side events via constituencies.
- “Create a committee of party and NGO constituencies to help review and expedite the selection instead of leaving it all on one staff member.”
- Designate a few observer organizations to assist secretariat.
- “Sharing the YouTube links with as many people as possible with contact information for virtual observers to use to make contact with presenters during or post COP.”
- “Provide a central platform for those hosting non-UNFCCC side events to post events (with coding to indicate different topics or streams). Events don't need to be hosted by the UNFCCC if we could have better access to what observers and delegations are hosting. The secretariat's role in giving extra support to developing country, youth, etc issues would then be more understandable.”
- Give official status to off-site events organized by observers. / “Partner with an appropriate local venue such as a university to co-host and manage "official" side events at their facility or on site.”
- “Provide opportunities before and after COPs for groups to have a UN platform even virtually to share their work and experiences.” / “Establishment of Platform at the level of each country with observer organisation.”
- “Including youth speakers at every event.”
- “Advance planning and release of side-event "brochure" to share when and where things are hosted.”
- “To provide more venues for observers who have willing to host side-event. It can considerate to move timeline of side events earlier than the conferences, it could be 2 to 3 day ahead or even 1 week earlier than the conference, thus there are more slots available for applicants.” / “Enable to organise events 1 week before the COP starts.”
- “There will be always the need to limit the number of side events. Otherwise there may be an overload of offers that can not be properly used.”
- Most side events can be held online/virtually.
- Extend the duration of COP to 21 days. Have bigger venues.
- All COPs could be held in Bonn.
- “Make the stakeholders vote for the most important issues and helpful side events.”
- “Encourage merging.”
- “A list of subjects should be shared among the organisations asking for an exhibition or a side event just at the beginning in order to help merging organisations. More attention should be given to subjects involving various countries than subjects on particular countries, developing or developed countries. It would be much more interesting events if they are really international.”

- Give access to the virtual platform to people that do not have an official badge/ registration. “This is key for inclusivity.”
- “Gender equality should be prioritize , especially Female criteria should be given priority.”

Q51 The selection criteria for side events and exhibits promote perspectives of developing country observers and Parties. This year, 92% of all merged developing country side event applications were accepted. All merged side event applications on youth, gender, and indigenous peoples involving developing countries, as well as the topic of disability and climate change, were selected. How do you suggest strengthening the quality of side events further?

Summarized responses and quotes.

- Increase the number of developing country side events.
- More representation of small organizations from the Global South
- “It is difficult to have generic selection criteria. We do not see why gender/disability should have a thematic prioritization. Instead of having a gender/disability-topic related criterion, the actual participation of females/disabled people as speakers should be used as a prioritization criterion (that leads to a mainstreaming of gender/disabled perspectives in climate change discussions, not a marginalization in a “gender/disability corner”. We strongly support upholding the priority for developing country-observer combinations.”
- “Provide additional time for events with more merged partners to provide ample time for perspectives to be presented. Additionally, more time between decisions about mergers and actual events so that partners have more time to try to make disparate pieces fit together smoothly would be helpful.”
- “Maintain focus on developing countries as well as youth, gender, and indigenous peoples.”
- “Have each side event show their one sentence message to the world.”
- “Increase diversity of speakers to get broader range of perspectives.”
- “Avoid duplications to give space to less mainstream issues.”
- “What is your definition of quality? I understand that young people and IPs were a focus for the COP26 presidency but how do you pick and choose? The farmers constituency barely featured in the COP26 presidency's work/themes, though many farmers are youth, genders other than male and/or are indigenous peoples.”
- “Being careful not to offer lots of space to niche areas of science or technology. Or where individual academics working on niche technology are included, make sure they are well balanced with others working in other areas. There was too much time given to projects that will have a very minor impact in limited geographical settings.”
- “Since the climate affects all countries and peoples, regardless of their status (developed, developing, least developed, partially recognized and unrecognized), to invite and admit representatives of civil society organizations from these countries to side events.”
- “I think if there is a way to ensure that criteria of the events are being met from the diversity point of view would be good. For UN staff to actually check that diversity commitments are met.”
- “[T]hese are crucial subjects, and it would be interesting to associate a solution to one of these issues with a perspective on how it can help other countries [...].”
- “Open the submission system earlier, set a deadline for speaker lists/agendas well ahead of the meeting, use historical performance of compliance with criteria to select events in the coming two (or so) years.”

- “Focus on human dimensions as well as technical issues.”
- “This is not equitable in fact, and results in exhibits or side events that are skewed. A lot of the science and research is coming from developed countries. How about a fair breakdown based on population of the country where the organization is based, or regions? You also need to have selection criteria for the key issues that need input, like soil health, carbon sequestration, climate justice/disadvantaged communities. How about half of the topics are curated from above for what input is needed and invite applications on those topics, and half of the events can be suggestions from the bottom up. The Merging process doesn't work and you end up with vague, watered-down presentations trying to cram too many talks into limited time, that often don't present new information.”
- The criteria in place are good.
- Have thematic days.
- “Make the side events as visible as the pavilion spaces.”
- Communicate information to side event organizers and exhibitors more in advance.
- “As already mentioned - allow more time to apply, look for partners, and prepare, maybe give more space to describe the side event to the secretariat in advance. Communicate more clearly and efficiently with the applicants.”
- “Take into account the energy transition and access to energy and provide more opportunities to hear about new technologies that are delivering the energy transition.”
- More focus on oceans and indigenous peoples.
- “Promoting the events via social media and encouraging networks to share events and engage with presenting bodies.”
- “Include faith based organisations in the criteria, make tickboxes that above criteria are met.”
- Avoid having side events on similar topics at the same time.
- “The criteria is admirable, and the merger process innovative and also effective in building new international partnerships. While side event quality can be further strengthened through greater engagement and guidance provided at each step of the process, this could be very time consuming and challenging for the secretariat, especially with only one staff person available. Perhaps inviting a committee of experts to provide a resource guide, based on the experience, contact lists of organisations and networks from 26 COPs, might provide useful advice and suggestions for side event organisers, without overburdening the secretariat?”
- “Side events to be selected by the topic - adaptation, mitigation, slow onset events, etc.”
- “Provide guidelines on how a good side event can be planned and implemented, ideally including insights on different styles and methods and some "do's" and "don't's." ”
- Focus on disability and climate change.
- Improve accessibility of side events: “Inclusive selection criteria is great; however, if the event spaces themselves are not inclusive then what is the point? For example; the side-event space was not wheelchair accessible and difficult to get around for those with disabilities. A suggestion to strengthen inclusionary spaces would be to involve people from minority communities in decision making processes such as

event planning and coordination.” / “Encourage events that focus on unrelated topics to also reflect on their accessibility. It is of limited use to discuss disability if those experiencing the often implied barriers cannot attend and share experiences/perspectives. Adapt the context (that is venue and facilities, bathrooms, available foods etc) to meet demands.”

Summarized responses and quotes.

- “Including youth speakers in all events, particularly from the global south.”
- A more detailed selection process conducted earlier: “Ask for a more detailed outline of the event. Pick topics which often don't get coverage elsewhere.”
- Better merging: “Better match-making to suggest different groups to work together who are working on the same problems/sectors from different perspectives.” / “One session I went to was obviously merged and it felt a bit disjointed - none of the talks really went together. There needs to be a way of ensuring that the merging isn't just "for the sake of it.”
- “Providing web pages that allow side events organizers to promote theme, issues and main ideas of their side event. the web-pages can provide channel that allow participants to engage observers.”
- Facilitate attendance of under-represented groups.
- “Limit the participation of [P]arties, which usually have pavilions at their disposal to host any number of events. Prioritize participation of observer organizations.”
- “This is a space for observers, there were a lot of merged side events using observers to present positions of Parties (Countries).”
- Make presentation-skills training available on request.
- “Try to ensure more balance across all NGO constituencies. All voices are important.”
- “What is the most important issues that was raised at COP26 for follow-up, make a poll, invite and approve those topics most relevant to go forward.”
- Encourage developing and developed country partnerships. “Developing and developed countries should be hand in hand in order to create the solidarity.”
- “Keep the focus on youth, gender and indigenous people.”
- Better gender balance monitoring: “I liked that one of the important factors was gender balance of the events. I would suggest to continue in this direction, making it a hard condition to equitably involve women not only in the events about gender etc., but especially in the "traditionally male" parts of the climate-energy discussion, such as technologies, energy policies and systems, data, modelling, industry, etc.”

Other messages received:

- “A closer relationship to the negotiation process would be welcome. Ideally the side events would be a vehicle for negotiators to hear from wider constituencies on matters directly relevant to the negotiations. What often happens is that observers at events speak with each other but have little influence on the UNFCCC process.”
- “We are against allowing the nuclear industry to exhibit/side event similarly as Fossil industry is not allowed to greewash. When we were asked to merge I noticed that the Nuclear industry established several "NGOs" and the same organisers are behind. I also saw that about 2 x 3-4 organisations gathered to make side events/exhibitions, which basically was the same organisers behind.”
- “More representation of small organizations from the Global South.”
- “The LCIPP group had access issues initially to their meeting space in the few days leading up to COP26 formal session. This was really inappropriate and all efforts should be made to ensure that coordination with LCIPP folks is clear and that access is NOT limited in any way for their membership.”