



Environmental Sustainability Study

**Commissioned by
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IMPRESSUM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the results of a survey on environmental sustainability in equestrian events held under the umbrella of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI). It has been written by Schwery Consulting, an international expert on sustainable event management. An online survey was sent to 1,246 FEI event organisers (EOs) in July 2015. A total of 216 responses were received (response rate: 17.3%), spanning all continents holding FEI events and each of the seven FEI disciplines.

Survey results demonstrate that EOs' opinion of environmental sustainability is positive. 63% of respondents ranked the importance of environmental sustainability at their events as 'high' or 'very high', and 59% thought that its importance would increase in the future.

The survey also showed that respondents regarded a number of specific issues relating to environmental sustainability as important for their events. Over 50% of respondents placed 'very high' importance on Animal Welfare (64%), Venue (infrastructure, stabling, etc.) (63%), and Waste Management (60%).

Despite this positive opinion of environmental sustainability and high regard for the issues, only 20% of events have a strategy guiding implementation, and only 15% communicate initiatives via a sustainability report. This is a very important finding.

Sponsors' general feeling towards events' sustainability initiatives appears to be quite neutral at first glance. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that sponsors react more positively towards the initiatives of events that have a sustainability strategy.

The attitude of the media towards the EOs' various initiatives is also seen in a more positive light when it is incorporated as part of a comprehensive sustainability strategy.

Most of the EOs see the need for a sustainability strategy. The two main reasons for not having one are: 45% state a 'lack of financial resources', and 42% a 'lack of human resources'. The report's major recommendation, therefore, is to support EOs in developing a comprehensive sustainability strategy. The FEI's Sustainability Handbook for Event Organisers was a first step in this process. The next step is to move ahead with developing online tools to empower EOs to realise their events' potential.

Due to the nature of its sport, the FEI has a special connection with the topic of sustainability; there is seen to be a good fit. It now has the opportunity to shape the future of sustainable event management for its sport, and for others, before it becomes a requirement from the IOC, governments and sponsors.

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability for future generations to satisfy theirs. It promotes the use of resources in an efficient and responsible way and thus requires the integration of environmental, social, and economic aspects.

The International Equestrian Federation (FEI) established a sustainability programme in 2013, born of its desire to make a serious contribution towards conserving the sound environment necessary for the practice and

continuity of equestrian sport.

It began with various initiatives to support event organisers in reducing the negative environmental impact and creating a positive legacy. As a first step, the FEI published a Sustainability Handbook for Event Organisers.

The FEI commissioned a survey to further understand the current status of environmental sustainability - and ascertain future needs - among event organisers (EOs).



2. Objective and methodology

This report summarises the results of a survey on sustainability in equestrian events that are held under the FEI's umbrella. Schwery Consulting, an international expert on sustainable event management, conducted this survey between July and August 2015.

The focus of the study was on the environmental aspects of sustainability, with the understanding that these aspects also always have social and economic components.

The objective of the survey was to:

1. understand the awareness and future assessment of sustainability by EOs;
2. understand the priorities of sustainability initiatives in the daily business of EOs;
3. understand the challenges and opportunities EOs see as part of their efforts to make their events more sustainable;

4. understand the reaction of different stakeholders such as sponsors, the government and the media to the sustainability initiatives and strategy of EOs; and to
5. provide advice in how FEI can support EOs in their efforts to make their events more sustainable.

To reach these objectives, an online survey was developed by Schwery Consulting in cooperation with the FEI's Education and Standards Department. A large database of EOs e-mail addresses was provided with a cover letter from the Executive Secretary.

The online survey was sent to 1,246 EOs in July 2015. By August 16, a total of 216 responses were collected, representing a fairly moderate response rate of 17.3%.

In order to dig deeper to gain further insight into some of the findings, hypotheses were posed and tested using the SPSS statistical package. The data for which can be found in the appendix of this report.



3. Scope of the report

This section looks at who was involved in the survey, what their role is in the organisation, the key attributes of their events, where they are located, and what disciplines their events cater for.

► Who participated in the survey?

The survey sample contained 216 unique responses. The top three positions/roles of respondents were **Event Organiser** (58%), **Event Director** (40%) and **Event Organiser Team** (25%).

The events they represent cater for a **cumulative total of 31,000 athletes, 45,000 horses and two million spectators**. At each event there is an average of 178 athletes, 253 horses and 17,992 spectators.

► In what continents are their events located?

Respondents represented events that are organised across all continents that hold FEI events.

► What disciplines do their events cater for?

The opinion of organisers covering **all seven disciplines of FAI events** were collected within the 216 responses.

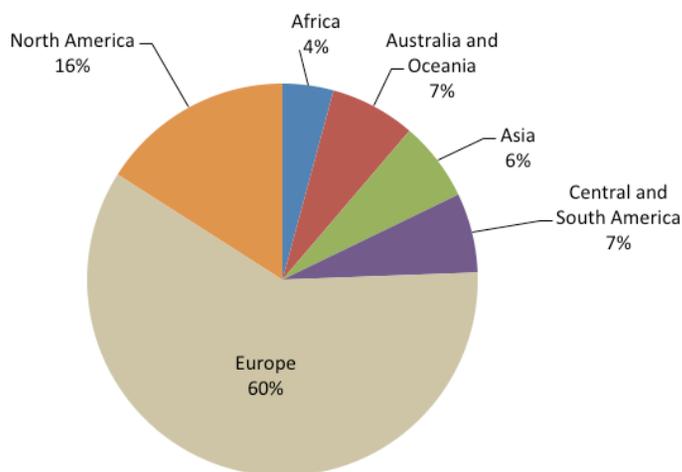
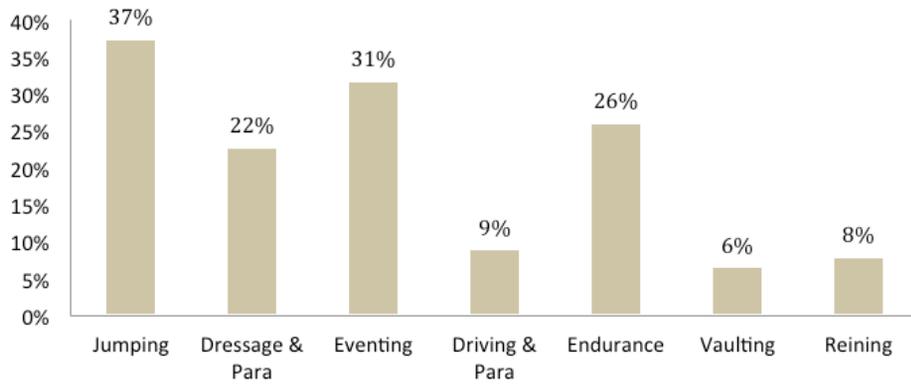


Figure 1: Regional split of respondents

Figure 2: Discipline split of respondents



4. Sustainability awareness

We wanted to know how highly regarded environmental sustainability was held among EOs. Looking more closely at the responses received, we isolated these opinions according to the location of the events. Then we looked at whether the duration of the event and the efforts made in sustainability were somehow linked.

► How important is environmental sustainability?

Results show that 63% (128) of EOs ranked the importance of environmental sustainability at their events as 'high' or 'very high'.

That was the current sentiment of EOs towards environmental sustainability. But what about the future importance of the topic? Did they see it increasing, decreasing, or staying on the same level?

Figure 3: How would you rank the importance of the environmental sustainability for your event?

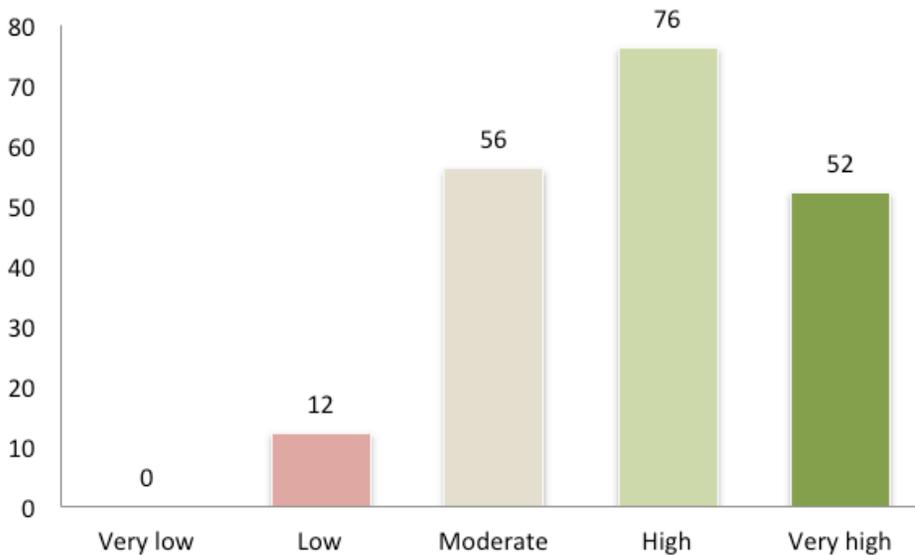
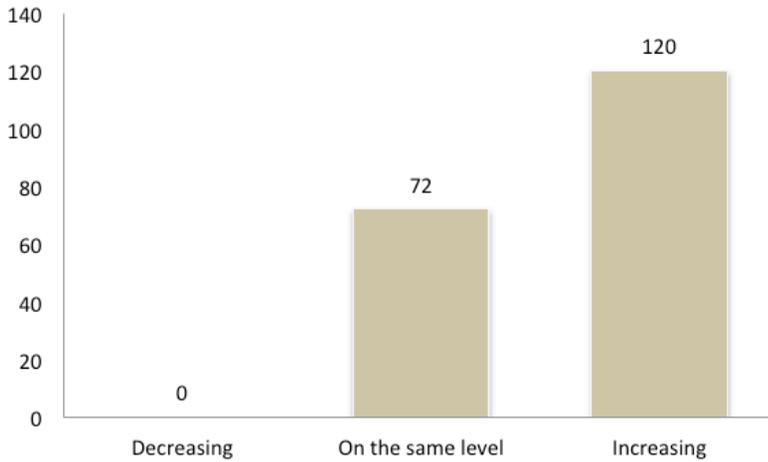


Figure 4: How would you rank the future importance of the environmental sustainability for your event?



As Figure 4 shows, 59% (120) of respondents stated that they **expected the importance of environmental sustainability to 'increase' in the future.**

The perspective towards environmental sustainability would probably change according to the location of the event. We crosschecked responses to the questions on the level of importance placed on environmental sustainability and location.

► Are there any regional variations in attitudes towards environmental sustainability?

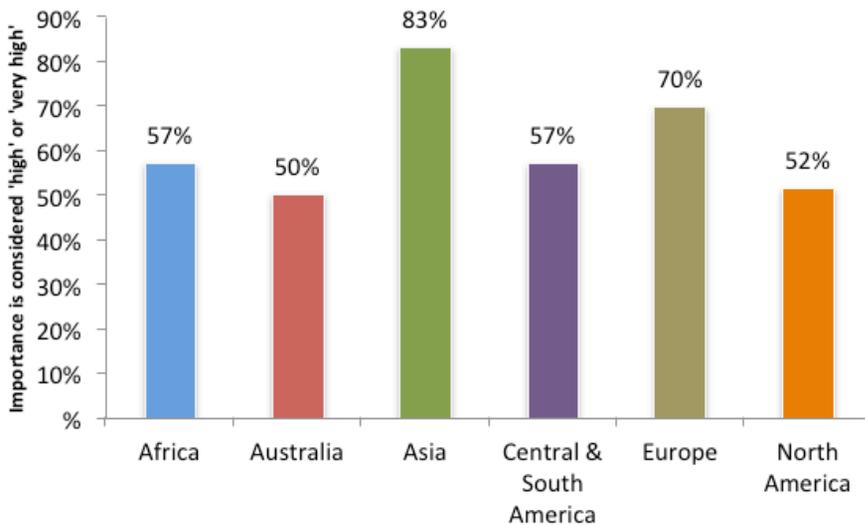


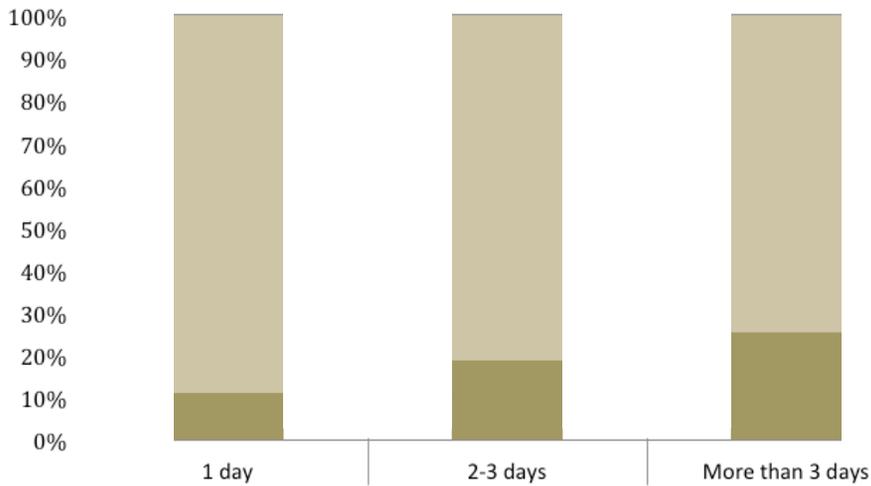
Figure 5: There are regional differences in attitudes regarding the awareness of sustainability issues

The outcome of this test tells us that events held in **Asia and Europe** place **higher importance on environmental sustainability** than in other continents.

► Does the duration of an event correlate with the event having a sustainability strategy?

The differences between the three durations are significant. Therefore, we can say that **the likelihood of an event having a sustainability strategy increases in relation to the duration of the event.**

Figure 6: Are longer lasting events more likely to have a sustainability strategy?



5. Sustainability initiatives

Over 90% of EOs responded to the question of how important various sustainability initiatives are for their events. This large sample size gives us a good indication of which initiatives EOs place the most importance on.

We can see from the results that the majority of respondents placed 'very high' importance on the three top issues: **Animal welfare** (64%), **Venue (infrastructure, stabling, etc.)** (63%), and **Waste Management** (60%).

- How important are different environmental sustainability issues for EOs' events?

Survey respondents were asked about the level of importance their events placed on various environmental sustainability issues.

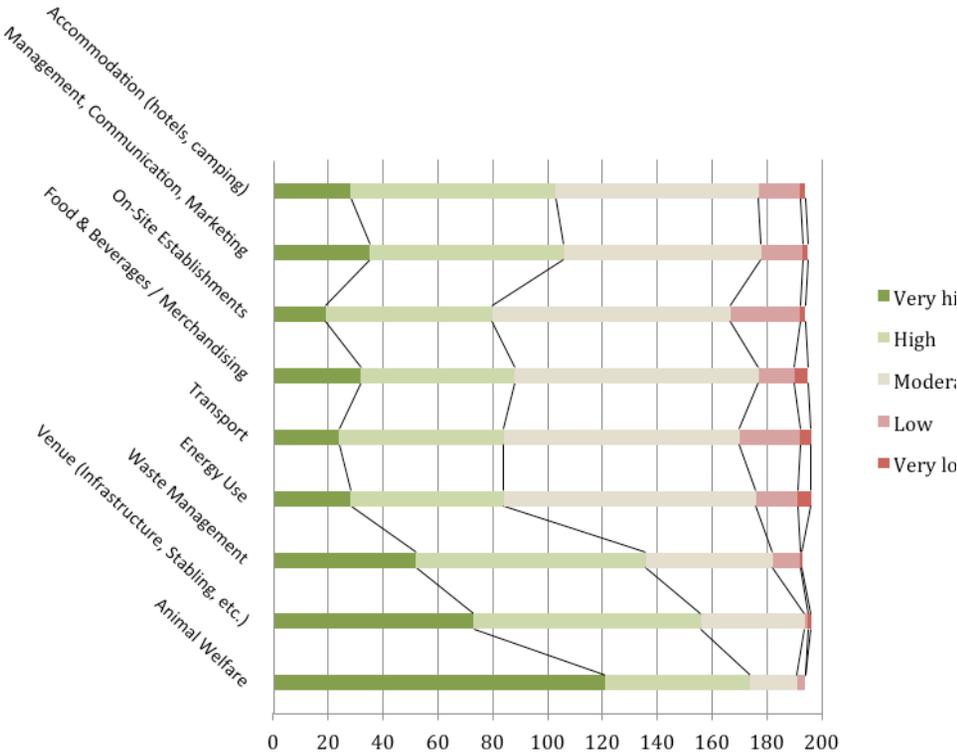


Figure 7: How important are the following issues regarding the environmental sustainability of your event?



6. Sustainability strategy

How far does events' involvement into environmental sustainability go? We were very interested to find out how many EOs have a strategy guiding the work they do in this field. Digging deeper still, we wanted to know why they had a strategy, who or what supported its development and, on the other hand, if there was no strategy, why not?

- What percentage of events have an environmental sustainability strategy?

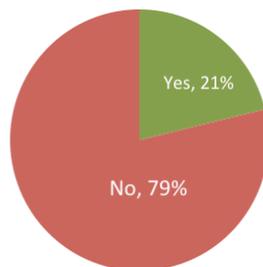
Only 21% of respondents currently have a sustainability strategy for their events – despite the fact that the majority places considerable importance on the current and future importance of environmental sustainability.

This figure is mirrored by the event disciplines: Roughly 20% of events organised for the three disciplines for which we have sufficient data – **Eventing, Endurance and Jumping** – have a sustainability strategy.

Of the 79% that do not have a sustainability strategy, 76% stated 'yes' (20%, 28) or 'perhaps' (55%, 79) to the question of whether they **plan to develop a strategy in the near future**.

These results raise the question as to why there is such a discrepancy between the emphasis placed on importance of environmental sustainability and the lack of strategic planning that goes into it.

Figure 8: Do you have an environmental sustainability strategy for your event?



► What are the reasons for not having a strategy?

The 79% of respondents who stated that their event did not have an environmental sustainability strategy were asked to indicate why.

Nearly a third of responses demonstrated that respondents do not see a necessity for having an environmental sustainability strategy. However, **87%** of responses to this multiple-choice question suggest that respondents do see a necessity, but **lack the human and/or financial resources** to create one.

► What led to the decision of implementing a strategy?

Of the 20% that do have a sustainability strategy, **68%** (26) stated that it was an **internal commitment** that led to the implementation.

61% (23) said it was due to the **welfare of the horse**, **32%** (12) said it was the **government's request**, and only **18%** (7) have one due to a **sponsor's request**.

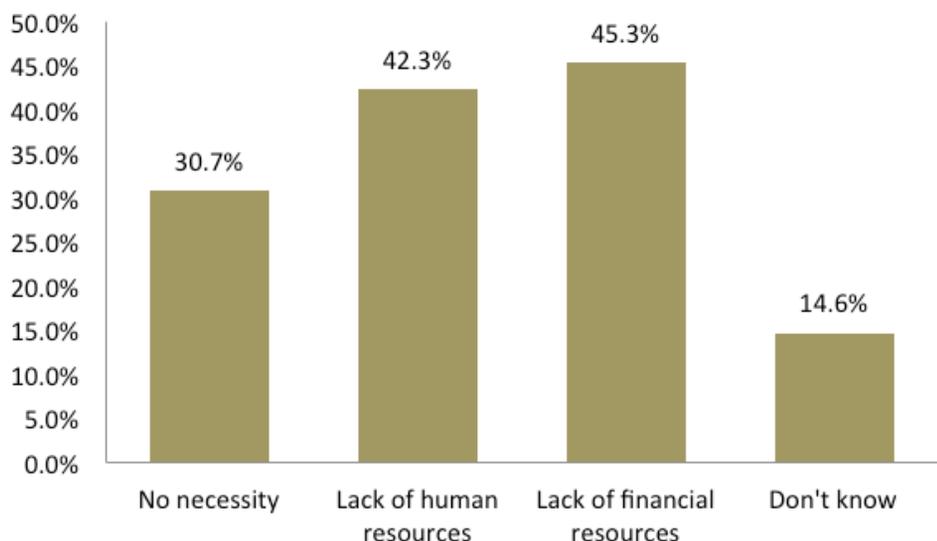
► What are the benefits of having one?

The **major benefits** to this sustainability strategy were deemed to be **Reputation/Image** (63%), **Strategic management** (45%), **Cost savings**, **Compliance with regulations** and **Smaller environmental footprint** (all 40%).

► Who funds environmental sustainability initiatives?

In **86%** (148) of the cases, the **organisation is covering the costs** of the sustainability initiatives. **Sponsors** cover the costs in **20%** (35) of cases and **government** in **12%** (20). In one case, the 'Riders' are covering the costs.

Figure 9: What is the reason for not having an environmental sustainability strategy for your event?



7. Sponsor and media reaction

To get a picture of how events' key stakeholders were reacting to the environmental sustainability initiatives implemented by EOs, we focussed on two key groups: sponsors and the media.

- ▶ What is the general feeling of sponsors and the media towards events' sustainability initiatives?

The majority of responses indicate that there is a 'neutral' response from sponsors and the media towards events' environmental sustainability initiatives.

- ▶ Do these stakeholders' reactions differ according to whether or not they have a sustainability strategy?

Figure 10: What is the general feeling of the event sponsor(s) towards your environmental sustainability initiatives?

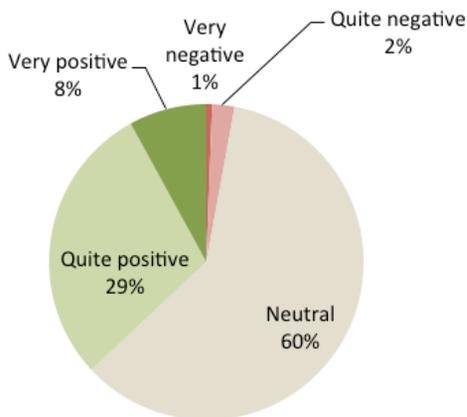
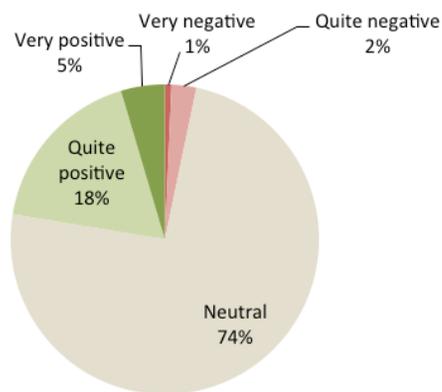


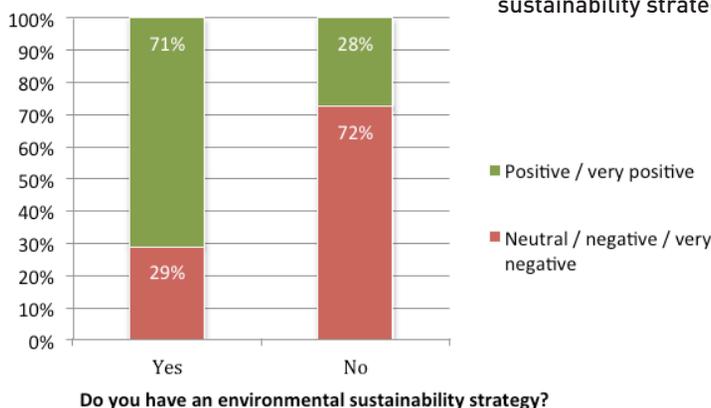
Figure 11: What is the media response to your environmental sustainability initiatives?



We looked closer to understand why there was not a more positive response for both groups of stakeholders. We carried out tests to see if there was any correlation between the reaction of sponsors and the media towards events' sustainability initiatives, and the existence of an environmental sustainability strategy.

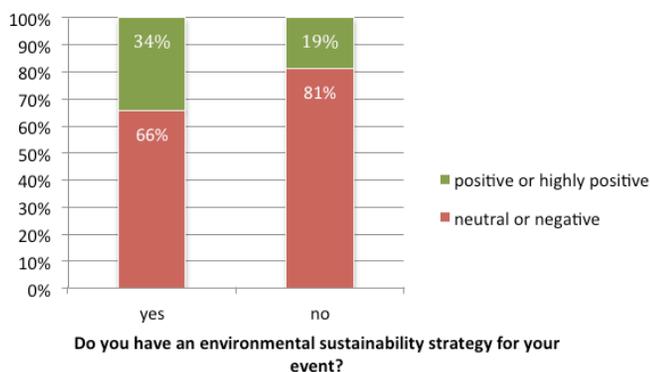
Looking first at sponsors, the graph demonstrates that **an event with an environmental sustainability strategy is much more likely to have sponsors that react positively to their initiatives than those without one.** This positive relationship is very strong and can be proven statistically (highly significant in the Chi-Square test).

Figure 12: Is the general feeling of sponsors towards the environmental sustainability initiatives of events with a sustainability strategy more likely to be positive than those without a strategy?



Looking now at the media, tests show that **there is also a very strong relationship – though statistically not significant – between a response from media towards environmental sustainability initiatives and the existence of an event's environmental sustainability strategy.**

Figure 13: The general feeling of media towards the environmental sustainability initiatives of events with a sustainability strategy is more likely to be positive than those without a strategy



8. Conclusions

- ▶ The majority of event organisers do see the importance of environmental sustainability and expect the issue to grow in importance.
- ▶ There is a clear discrepancy between the importance placed on environmental sustainability and the development of strategic planning.
- ▶ This discrepancy can be mainly explained by a lack of financial and human resources available to event organisers.
- ▶ There is a very strong relationship (statistically, highly significant) between the existence of an event's sustainability strategy and the positive reaction of sponsors towards its sustainability initiatives.
- ▶ There is also a positive relationship (though statistically less strong) between the existence of a sustainability strategy and a positive media reaction.



9. Recommendation

The FEI's vision regarding sustainability is to drive sustainability efforts, and expand environmental awareness in equestrian sports by establishing, and continually improving, the standards of sustainable equestrian sport management and its inter-relationship with society.

Based on this vision, and the conclusions made from survey results, the key recommendation is for the FEI to provide financial support and knowledge/expertise to its event organisers to assist in the development of sustainability strategies.

This knowledge/expertise should be easy to access, in the form of online tools, which train and empower event organisers and their staff to develop a sustainability strategy and, therefore, guide them in carrying out necessary tasks, such as implementing and reporting on their various initiatives.



Appendix

1. "Responses to the importance placed on environmental sustainability was crosschecked against location."

			Importance of Sustainability			Total
			low or very low	moderate	high or very high	
Regions ^a	Africa	Count	2	1	4	7
		% within region	28.6%	14.3%	57.1%	
	Australia	Count	1	6	7	14
		% within region	7.1%	42.9%	50.0%	
	Asia	Count	0	2	10	12
		% within region	.0%	16.7%	83.3%	
	Central & South America	Count	0	6	8	14
		% within region	.0%	42.9%	57.1%	
	Europe	Count	4	32	83	119
		% within region	3.4%	26.9%	69.7%	
	North America	Count	5	11	17	33
		% within region	15.2%	33.3%	51.5%	
Total		Count	12	58	129	199

Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

2. "The difference between the existence of a sustainability strategy is correlated to the duration of the event."

Do you have an environmental sustainability strategy for your event? (Q11)		What is the average duration of your event(s)? (Q4)			Total
		1 day	2-3 days	More than 3 days	
Yes	Count	2	17	18	37
	% within Q11	11.1%	18.7%	25.4%	
No	Count	16	74	53	143
	% within Q11	88.9%	81.3%	74.6%	
Total	Count	18	91	71	180

3. "An event with an environmental sustainability strategy is more likely to have sponsors that react positively to their initiatives than those without one."

		What is the general feeling of the event sponsor(s) towards your environmental sustainability initiatives?		Total
		Neutral (or negative)	Positive / very positive	
Do you have an environmental sustainability strategy for your event? (Q10)	Yes	11 (0)	27	38
	% within Q10	28.9%	71.1%	100%
	No	95 (5)	38	138
	% within Q10	72.5%	27.5%	100%
Total		106 (5)	65	176

Pearson Chi-Square: 24.224 (The minimum expected count is 14.03); p-value <0.01

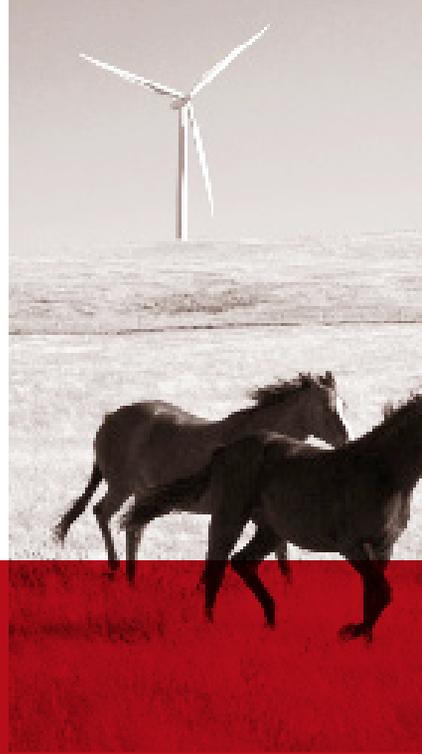
Cramer's V: 0.371 --> very strong relationship (above 0.25)

4. "There is a strong positive relationship between a positive response from media towards environmental sustainability initiatives and the existence of an event's environmental sustainability strategy."

			Media response		Total
			neutral (or negative)	positive or highly positive	
Do you have an environmental sustainability strategy for your event?	Yes	Count	23	12	35
		Expected Count	27.2	7.8	35.0
	No	Count	95	22	117
		Expected Count	90.8	26.2	117.0
Total	Count	118	34	152	
	Expected Count	118.0	34.0	152.0	

Pearson Chi-Square: 3.791 (The minimum expected count is 7.83); p-value <0.054 (tendency)

Cramer's V: 0.156 --> strong relationship (above 0.15)



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