

Sustainability Report

January 2024 - December 2024



BIOSPHERE



GLOBAL
DESTINATION
SUSTAINABILITY
MOVEMENT

Bilbao Convention Bureau

Contents

Introduction	4
Partner participation	6
GDS - Index	8
Actions taken	10
Alignment with the SDGs	14
Measurement of KPIs	16

This document has been prepared with the collaboration and knowledge of all of the Bilbao Convention Bureau team and the approval and signature of its director.

Kepa Olabarrieta

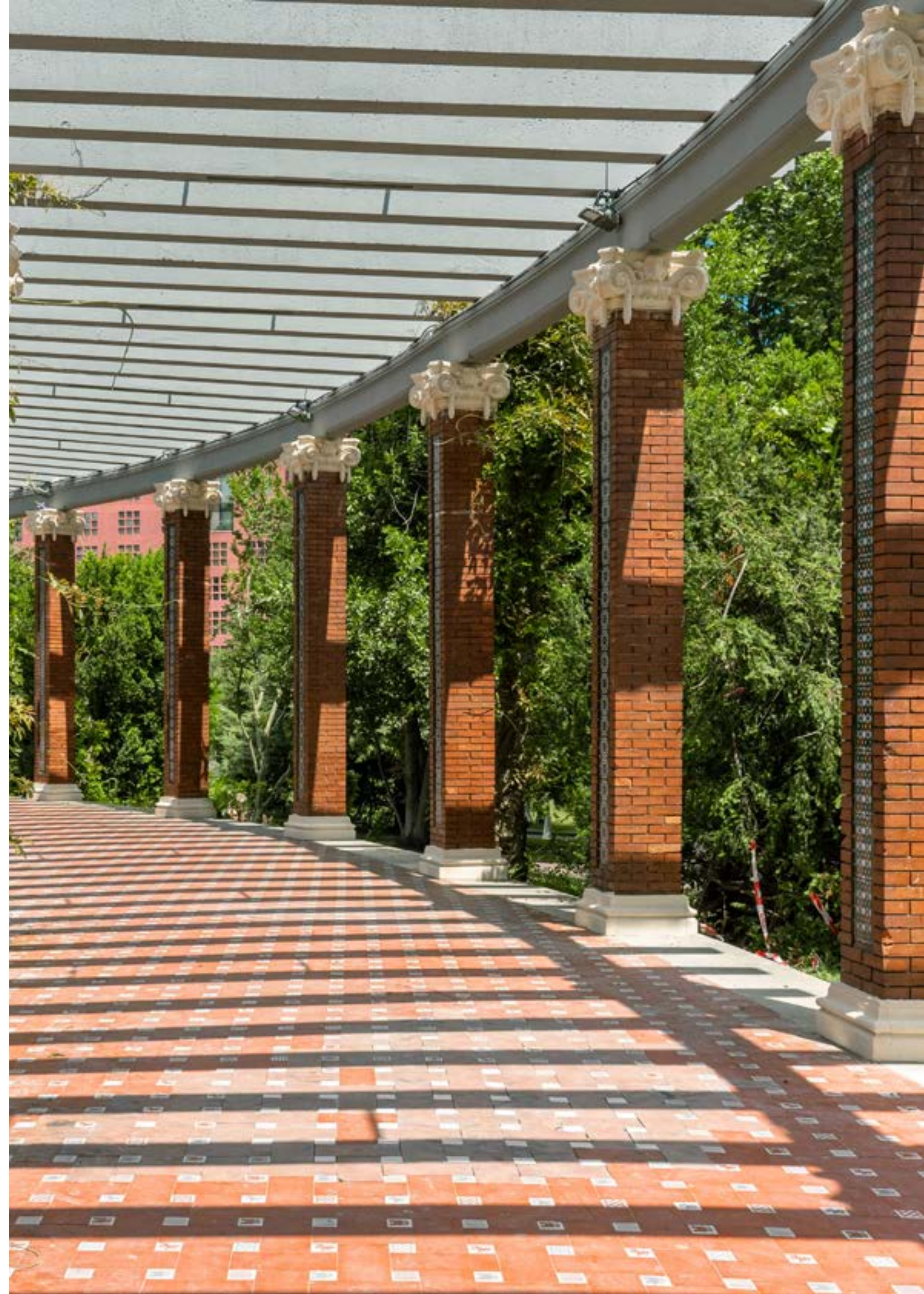


Introduction

This report outlines the progress made by the Bilbao Convention Bureau (BiCB) and its partner organisations in sustainability throughout 2024. It follows the framework outlined in BiCB's Sustainability Strategy 2021–2027 and its accompanying Action Plan.

In 2024, the MICE sector began to stabilise following the upheaval of the pandemic. This has enabled the development of new initiatives and projects, particularly in the field of sustainability.

In 2024, the Bureau's focus has extended beyond environmental sustainability to social sustainability, with particular emphasis on the positive impact and lasting legacy of meetings and congresses held in Bilbao.





Partner participation

Our permanent working group, #BilbaoArimaBerdea, brings together BiCB partner companies and key local stakeholders to collaborate and share experiences, challenges, and best practices in sustainability. Activities include regular meetings, training sessions, and engagement through our LinkedIn group #ArimaBerdea.

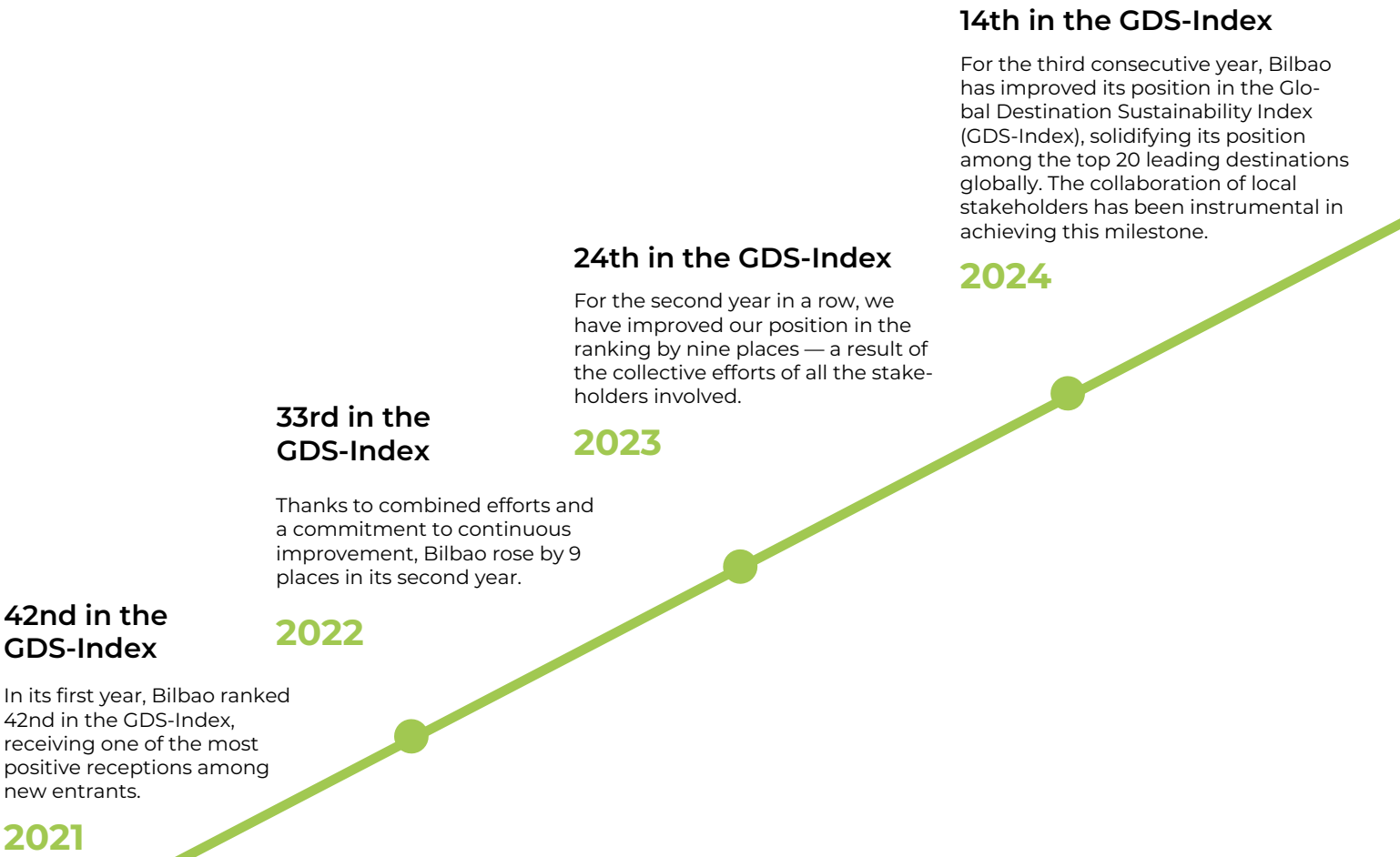
This group is formed by hotels, venues and agencies as well as local associations, universities and members of the City Council.

Together, they form a well-rounded ecosystem that enriches and strengthens BiCB's path towards sustainability.

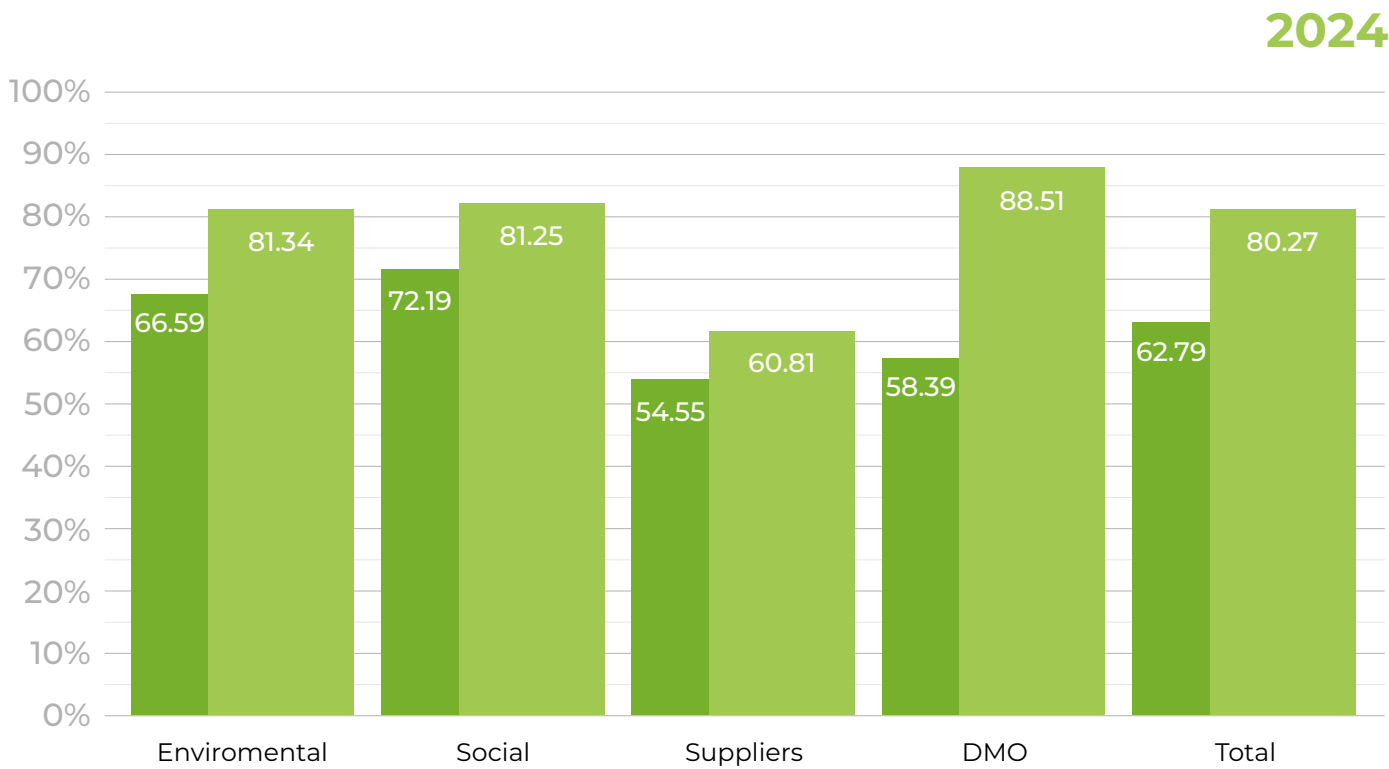
GDS - Index

At the same time, for the third year running, Bilbao's participation in the GDS-Index has been managed. This international ranking measures the sustainability of cities as a MICE destination based on different environmental, social and economic indicators.

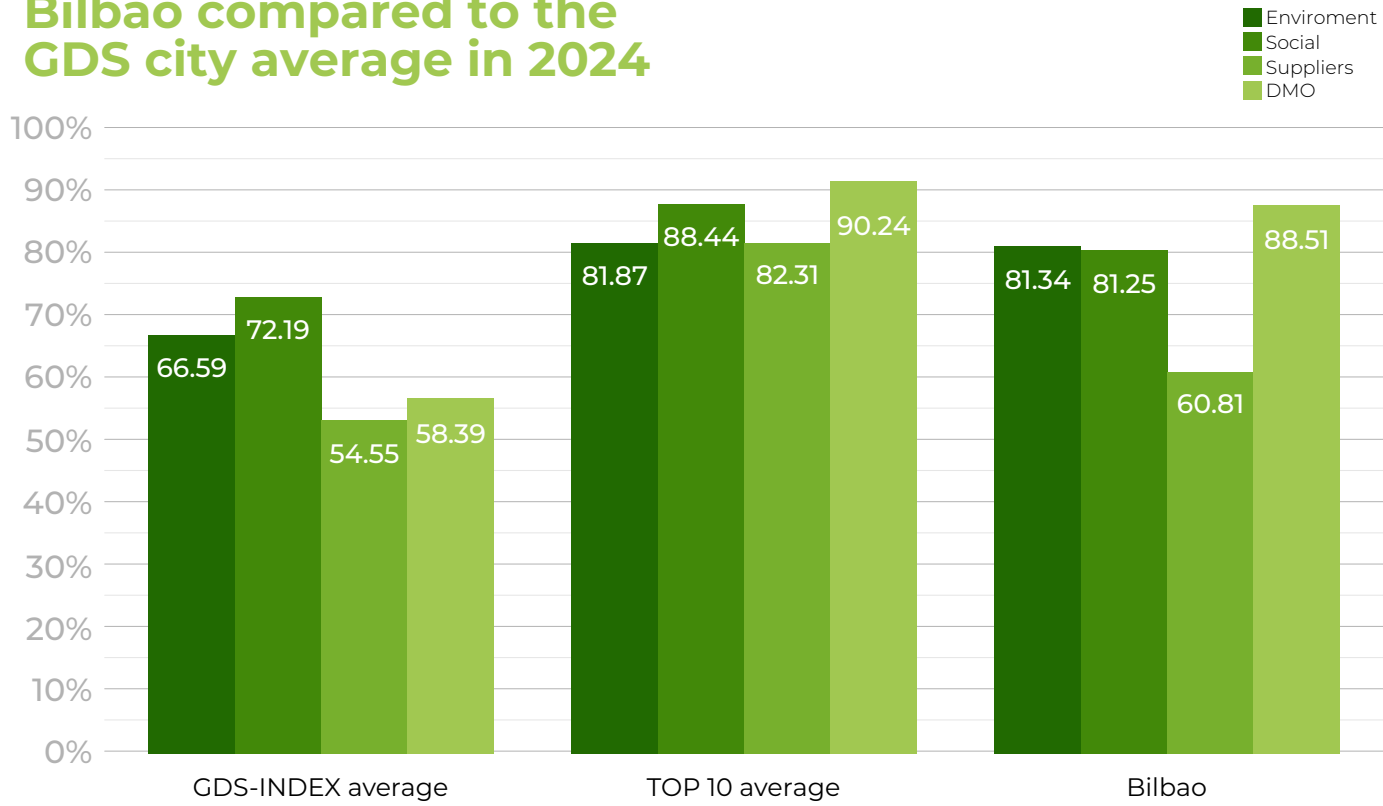
Bilbao achieved an excellent score, reaching 14th place and securing a spot in the TOP 20 of the ranking, with a two-point improvement on the previous year's score.



GDS-INDEX Results



Bilbao compared to the GDS city average in 2024



Actions taken

Bilbao Convention Bureau has successfully driven several initiatives that provide partner companies and the destination with more tools and resources to become a more sustainable MICE destination.

- **Calculation of the carbon footprint** *(Action 9.4A)*

With the ambitious goal of measuring the carbon footprint of MICE events, we have collected transport-related emissions data via delegate surveys. Additionally, we calculated the carbon footprint of the BiCB office using the IPCC methodology to assess its CO₂ emissions.

In addition, the carbon footprint of the BiCB office was measured based on the [lhobe methodology and the impact of its activity](#) on CO₂ emissions.

Efforts continue to align with our KPI “CO₂ emissions avoided” and the City of Bilbao’s goal of achieving climate neutrality. Steps are being taken to reduce and offset emissions associated with office operations.

- **Door-to-door selective waste collection** *(Action 6.2C)*

Together with the City Council, an initiative has been launched to change and improve waste collection from large producers, starting with more than 20 hotels in Bilbao.

Following a year-long pilot project, this initiative has been extended to implement a permanent door-to-door selective waste collection system for hotels.

The Bilbao Convention Bureau monitors hotels and actively promotes and disseminates the initiative among its partner companies.

- **Process of continuous improvement and digitalisation** *(Action 8.1)*

As part of its ongoing improvement process, Bilbao Convention Bureau has updated its website with the latest developments in sustainable resources, including event certifications such as Erronka Garbia and the new lhobe carbon footprint calculator, as well as new training sessions, news, and best practices from both the Bureau and its partner companies. In parallel, the Bilbao Convention Bureau has updated its portfolio of sustainable tools for event organisers.

To minimise our environmental impact, we have eliminated paper surveys and conducted all surveys digitally since the beginning of the year.

- **Donations** *(Action 4)*

Progress has been made in social sustainability through collaboration with the Red Cross to manage donations, particularly in the area of furniture. Additionally, efforts are underway to increase the number of certified companies.

Furthermore, awareness workshops and the promotion of solutions for donating surplus food have been carried out in partnership with our associate, Oreka, at meetings and conferences.

- **Certifications** *(Action 3.2)*

Bilbao Convention Bureau has launched a programme of subsidies to help hotels, venues and partner agencies, together with the BiCB, access the BIOSPHERE certification.

This certification focuses on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and is specifically for organisations from the tourism industry.

- **Positive impact and legacy** *(Action 8.1)*

Work has taken place to create a portfolio of sustainable tools to enable event organisers to have a vision of the key associations in the city and to develop measures with the aim of creating a positive impact on the city and a legacy for residents.

In addition, Bilbao Convention Bureau has joined a Learning Community on Impact measurement, organised by **ESADE and BBK-Kuna**, to train the organisation in monitoring and measuring the impact of actions carried out or promoted by the Bureau. Training sessions for the Kuna learning community were also conducted in 2024.

- **“For a Social Contract Agenda 2030” Declaration** *(Action 8.1B)*

In 2021, the Agenda 2030 Euskadi Forum was established as a multi-agent and interinstitutional governance platform. In September 2022, the United Nations decided that the global headquarters of the Local 2030 Coalition Secretariat would be in Euskadi, specifically in Bilbao.

In 2024, the Agenda 2030 Euskadi Forum continued to make progress by forming the Basque Alliance for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through the declaration “For a Social Contract Agenda 2030 Euskadi,” which includes a series of commitments and responsibilities related to the 2030 Agenda. Bilbao Convention Bureau has joined this initiative, along with 50 other Basque associations, to continue advancing its commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

- **Training** *(Action 1.4)*

It is worth highlighting that BiCB offers continuous training internally for its staff, while also providing open training sessions for partner companies through various online platforms, such as Anfitriones, as well as in-person training in Bilbao on environmental and social sustainability.



Alignment with the SDGs

Any decisions taken aimed to be in line with the SDGs defined in the Sustainability Strategy at all times.

In addition, Bilbao Convention Bureau has signed up to the Glasgow Declaration and to the Basque Alliance for the SDGs.

- Carbon footprint calculation



- Selective collection on request of non-domestic waste



- Various training sessions



(Sustainability Policy for agencies, sustainable food, reuse of materials and circular economy)

- Donations of food and materials



- Various measures with positive impact and legacy



- Update of the Web page





Measurement of KPIs

Environmental KPIs

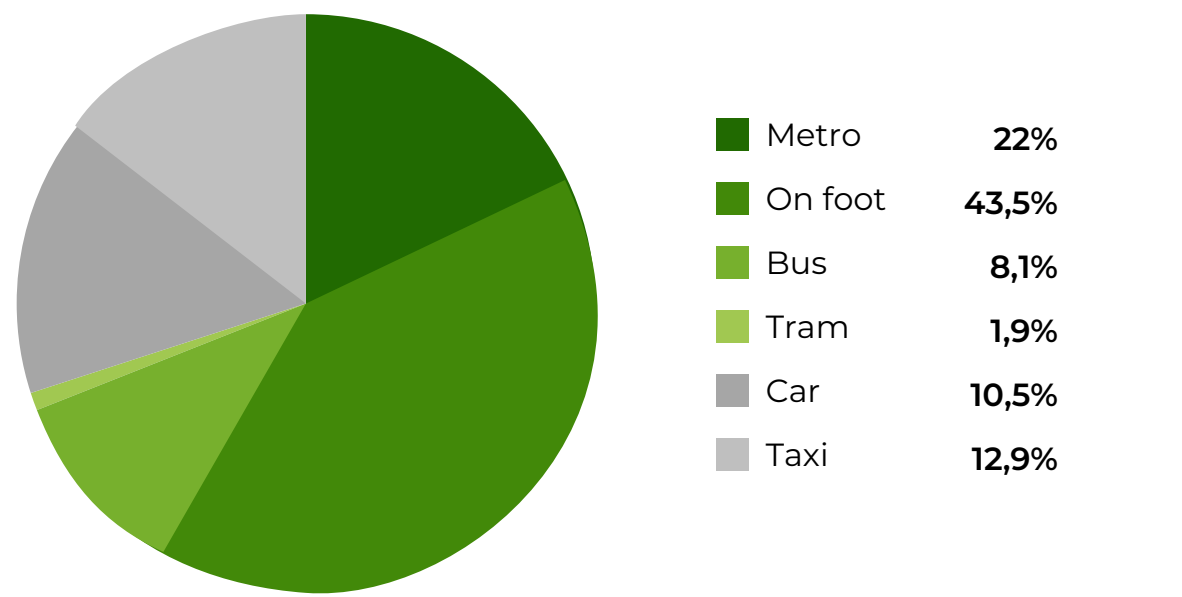
Carbon footprint

In line with the City Council of Bilbao’s commitment to reach carbon neutrality, at BiCB we continue to move forward in the measurement and offsetting of the carbon footprint in the following segments of our activity:

- BiCB Office Carbon Footprint in 2024
This was calculated based on areas 1, 2 and 3 **6,93 t_{eq} CO₂**
- Offset Carbon Footprint in Famtrips
Emissions from transport and accommodation were considered **1,72 t_{eq} CO₂**

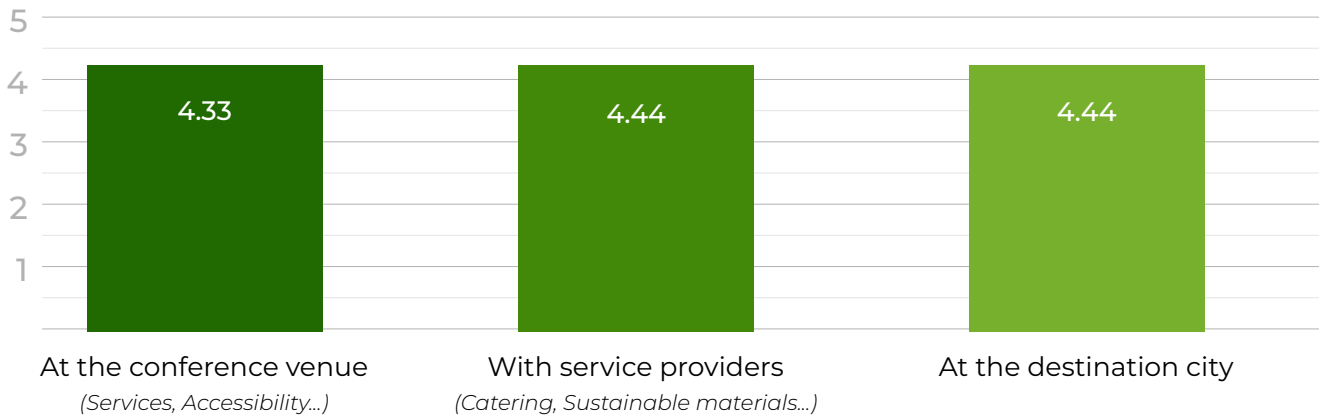
Mobility of conference participants

Seventy-five percent of conference attendees used public transportation or walked to the venue.

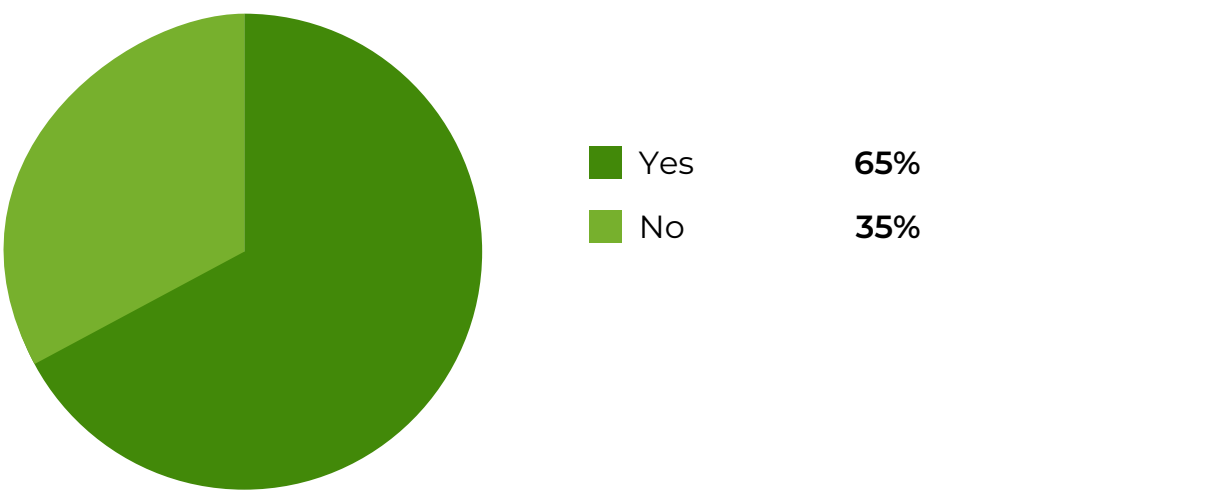


Environmental sustainability by conference organisers

A survey was conducted with event organisers regarding their commitment to sustainability in the MICE segment in Bilbao:



survey was conducted with event organisers regarding the importance of sustainability certifications and policies when choosing a destination or selecting suppliers:



KPIs Sociales

• Training

In 2023, the BiCB trained a total of 66 individuals through various sessions organized for BiCB staff, partner companies, and the MICE ecosystem of Bilbao.

In 2024, 55 people received training through the #Meet4impact programme at the World Summit.

• Accessibility

Delegates gave an average rating of 4.71 out of 5 for perceived accessibility in Bilbao.

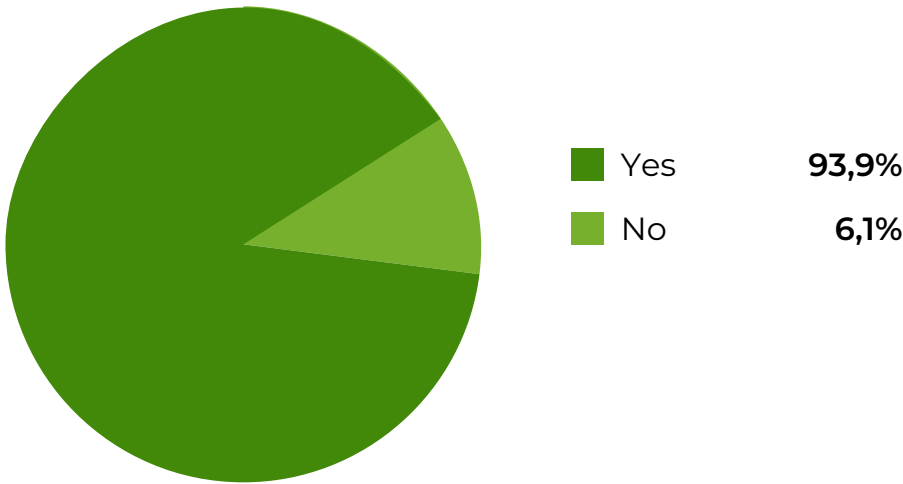
• Equality and Inclusion

Regarding equality and inclusion in recruitment, event organisers gave low scores for efforts to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities or those at risk of social exclusion.

In response to this feedback, steps are being taken to encourage organisations to adopt inclusive employment policies, supported by a dedicated portfolio of sustainable tools developed specifically for event organisers.

• Positive impact measures

While most organisers did not incorporate impact actions into event design, this KPI improved by 7 points compared to the previous period.



Economic KPIs

The direct expenditure generated by delegates and accompanying persons at congresses held in Bilbao in 2024 exceeded €377 million.

The average daily spend per delegate was €785.27.



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