

# SA exhibition industry expects to recover in 2021

During a web panel discussion hosted by the Association of African Exhibition Organisers (AAXO) to mark Global Exhibitions Day, representatives of leading local exhibition organisers said that despite postponements or cancellations, they were still hard at work through the lockdown, to deliver shows in 2021.



Image source: [Gallo/Getty](#)

Following a year of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and global lockdown, South African exhibition organisers are confident that the industry will bounce back next year.

Speakers noted that exhibitions were again starting up in Asia and looking set to become stronger than before. This was due to so-called 'revenge attendance', lockdown fatigue and digital fatigue, they said.

Dain Richardson, senior exhibition manager at Messe Muenchen South Africa's food & drink technology (fdt) Africa and analytica Lab Africa said: "We are optimistic that the sector will come through the current challenges.

"We know exhibitions are crucial – they are an ideal platform for companies growing their markets; they bring people together in ways that other channels cannot. With clever co-location, which Messe Muenchen does at fdt Africa, analytica Lab Africa and IFAT Africa, organisers can also give exhibitors and sponsors an opportunity to significantly broaden their network and range."

AAXO Chair Projeni Pather noted: "Exhibitions drive us, connect people and connect Africa. The virus won't go away anytime soon, so we need to adapt and work around it, and change visitor and exhibitor expectations so they still see an ROI.

"The industry is already a very regulated one, and the Event Safety Council is currently working on draft regulations to support exhibitions and events going forward," she said.

In 2021, IFAT Africa, fdt Africa and analytica Lab Africa will be staged at the Gallagher Convention Centre from 13-15 July.

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