

Exhibitions return to Dubai

By Messe Frankfurt Middle East

June 2021

Introduction

The UAE's thriving exhibition sector is well and truly on the comeback. For nearly one year, live physical events have returned to Dubai, beginning with the AI Everything Conference in July 2020, and followed up with several major global business events such as GITEX Technology Week in December 2020, Gulfood in February 2021, and Arabian Travel Market in May 2021.

These 'mega events' have been delivered to the highest possible safety standards, with attendees and stakeholders consistently reinforcing the urge to get back-to-business in a safe and controlled environment.

This document provides the latest updates on the UAE's positive pandemic response, including one of the world's fastest Covid-19 vaccination programmes, a recap of the return of some of the largest international trade fairs at the Dubai World Trade Centre, along with a preview of major events for the second half of 2021 (including Messe Frankfurt Middle East's own busy schedule).

It also provides the findings of the latest round of research conducted by MFME that points to a continued optimistic outlook for the global exhibitions sector in a post-pandemic world.

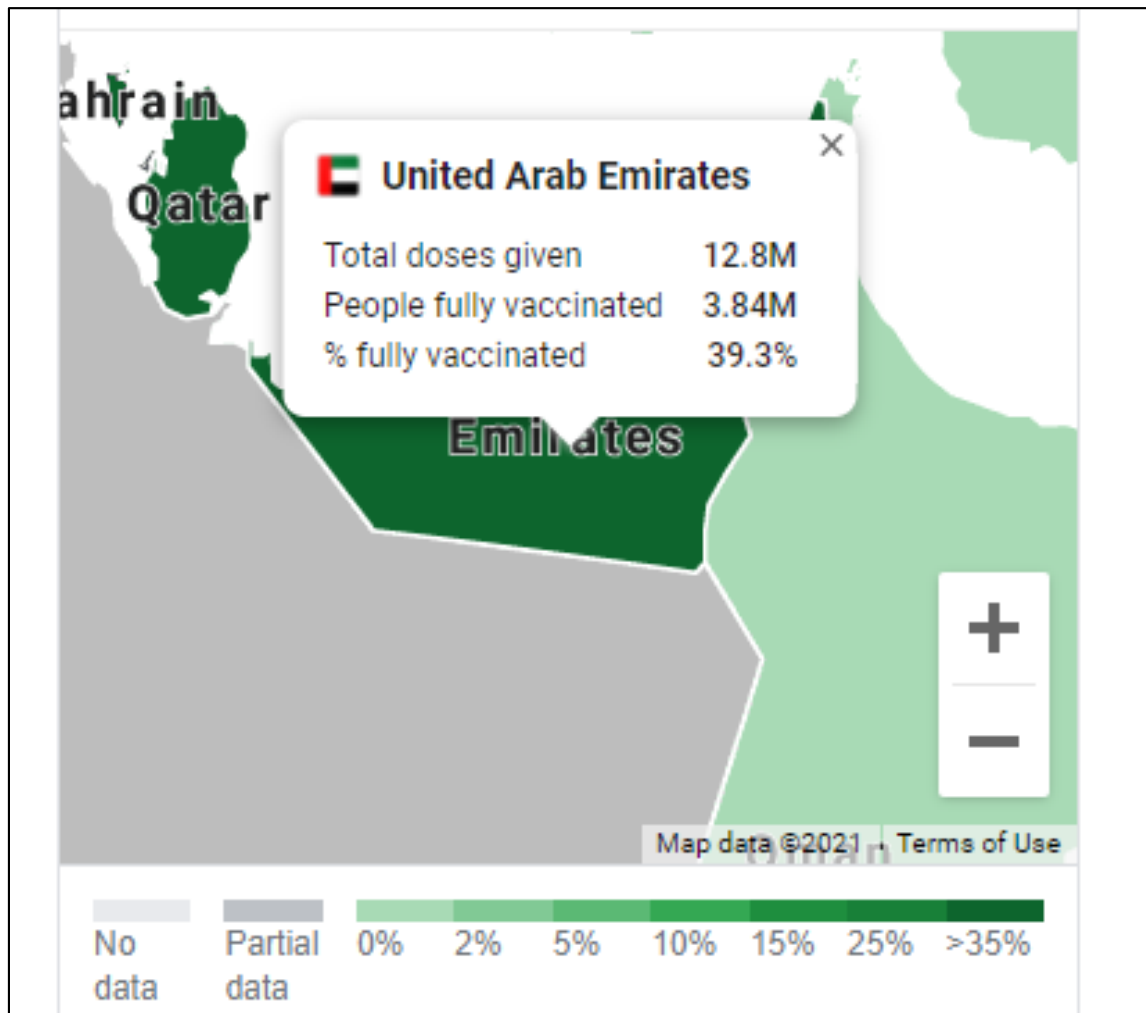
UAE's covid-19 vaccination rollout

The UAE has the highest vaccination rate per capita in the world, with more than 12.8 million Covid-19 vaccine doses administered across the country.

Close to four million people in the UAE has now been fully inoculated against Covid-19, comprising 40 percent of the population.

The UAE's rigorous testing campaign (more than 50 million PCR tests carried out so far), rapid vaccination rollout, along with the most thorough health and safety measures to curb the spread of the virus has been integral to the country's ongoing economic recovery.

Dubai's MICE sector is an integral part of this economic recovery, and the Emirate has led the way internationally in safely restarting exhibitions, trade shows and other business events, which play a vital role in economic and knowledge development locally.



Dubai exhibitions on the comeback trail

Physical, in person exhibitions and conferences have now been taking place in Dubai for almost one year, in what is one of the biggest comeback stories in the global events industry.

Dubai hosted its first 'in-person' event post-lockdown as early as July last year in the shape of the AI Everything conference in Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC). And more recently the DWTC has played host to the highly-successful GITEX and Gulfood and Arabian Travel Market.

These recent events attracted more than 70,000 business travellers from 160 countries, increasing business confidence and accelerating the revival of all major sectors in the country.

The events also scored highly in the safety ratings, with more than 95 percent of surveyed visitors indicating they felt safe amid Dubai's thorough precautionary measures, which included wider aisles between stands, contactless entries with thermal cameras and temperature readers, social distancing, regular sanitisation and cleaning, and the mandatory wearing of facemasks.

GITEX Technology Week – December 2020

While AI Everything marked the return of live events in Dubai, it was GITEX Technology Week in December 2020 at the Dubai World Trade Centre that provided the acid test as to whether full large scale exhibitions can safely return in a world that was still in the throes of a virulent pandemic.



The annual global consumer computer and electronics trade show and conference was the only in-person 'global tech and start-up event' in 2020, attracting more than 1,200 exhibitors from 60 countries, and many thousands more of visitors from 110 countries.

Countless health and safety wardens were dotted throughout the venue and more than 1,000 social distancing stickers were placed on floors and stands to remind visitors to keep safe.

Temperature screening at entrance points; social distancing stickers; contactless transactions; and frequent sanitisation of the venue were part and parcel of the event. Panel speakers wore face masks, disposable microphone covers were changed between each speaker and 809 hand sanitiser stations were placed throughout the venue.

As the first major event to be hosted in Dubai since the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020, GITEX made one clear statement: The live-events industry is back.

Gulfood (February 2021)

Gulfood 2021, the world's first and only live, in-person food & beverage sourcing event opened in February at Dubai World Trade Center, featuring 2,500 exhibitors from 85 countries covering 20 exhibition halls.

Gulfood 2021 was held under stringent safety and hygiene protocols. Wearing of masks was mandatory, with social distancing in place to ensure the wellbeing of all delegates. On-site registration wasn't available; with all registration completed in advance.

Exhibitors provided hand sanitisers to visitors before food sampling in a designated area within the exhibition stand. Live cooking demonstrations were permitted, however, food was served on individual plates.



Arabian Travel Market 2021 (May 2021)

The most anticipated event in the international travel and tourism sector, Arabian Travel Market opened its 28th edition in May 2021 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, attracting more than 11,000 attendees from across the globe who were keen to highlight that the industry is ready to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

Such was the excitement in the build-up for this event, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, tweeted: “62 countries are taking part participate in the Arabian Travel Market, the largest tourism event in the world since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.



“We welcome everyone to Dubai where the world’s tourism recovery process begins; where we can see the light at the end of the tunnel that humanity has passed through over the course of a year and a half.”

This year’s event hosted 1,300 exhibitors from 62 countries including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Germany, Cyprus, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea, the Maldives, the Philippines, Thailand, Mexico and the USA.

Themed ‘A New Dawn for Travel & Tourism’, ATM 2021 spread across nine halls of the Dubai World Trade Centre. The show again ranked highly in safety among all attendees, marking yet another milestone in Dubai’s mission to be the “meeting place of the world”.

Upcoming Dubai events

The business event season in Dubai is only just getting started, and while the traditional summer break over July-August will be a bit quieter, there are still plenty of exhibitions in the pipeline that will make their long-awaited return in 2021.

Dubai will continue to host major events including Arab Health in June 2021 at the Dubai World Trade Centre, as momentum builds towards Expo 2020 Dubai.

Messe Frankfurt Middle East's own busy Dubai events calendar for the 2021 – 2022 season commences in September 2021, when the 15th edition of Light Middle East makes its return. The 2021-2022 calendar of Messe Frankfurt Middle East's Dubai events is below:

Our trade exhibitions Dubai



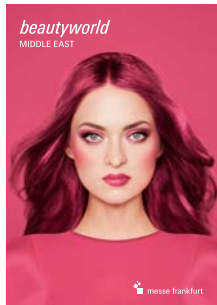
light

MIDDLE EAST

28 – 30 September, 2021

www.lightME.net

Providing the only dedicated platform for lighting professionals in the region, Light Middle East delivers three days of quality conferencing and an exciting exhibition with the world's premier lighting designers presenting best practice and sharing their know-how of lighting design.



beautyworld

MIDDLE EAST

5 – 7 October, 2021

www.beautyworldME.com

Beautyworld Middle East is the largest international trade fair for beauty products, hair, fragrances and wellbeing in the Middle East. The exhibition has grown in stature, from its inception over 15 years ago, as the key networking and sourcing platform for the beauty and cosmetics industries.



hypermotion

DUBAI

2 – 4 November, 2021

www.hypermotion-dubai.ae.messefrankfurt.com

Featuring a trade fair, conferences, tech talks and start-up pitches, Hypermotion Dubai is a multimodal innovation platform that brings together thought leaders, mobility service providers, government agencies, researchers, start-ups, urban planning specialists and others to shape the future of mobility of logistics.



materials handling

MIDDLE EAST

2 – 4 November, 2021

www.materialshandlingME.com

Materials Handling Middle East is the region's premier materials handling and logistics trade exhibition and conference. The exhibition reflects the latest trends and developments within the logistics and materials handling industries and receives strong interest from manufacturers, suppliers, agencies and government institutions from across the region.

Our trade exhibitions Dubai



paperworld

MIDDLE EAST

14 – 16 December, 2021

www.paperworldME.com

Paperworld is a vitally important business platform offering an ideal overview of current market themes and trends in the paper and office products sectors. With presence in Frankfurt, Shanghai, Moscow and Dubai, this trade exhibition is the platform for businesses to keep one step ahead. Running alongside Paperworld Middle East is Remanexpo Middle East – a platform for the global ink and toner remanufacturing industry.



gifts & lifestyle

MIDDLE EAST

14 – 16 December, 2021

www.giftslifestyleME.com

Launching for the first time in 2020, Gifts & Lifestyle Middle East is the ultimate platform for international brands that design innovative and creative lifestyle-related products. With dedicated sections for gifts, dining and finished leather goods, the show will provide a valuable opportunity to meet rising demand in these growing niches in the Middle East and Africa.



automechanika

DUBAI

14 – 16 December, 2021

www.automechanikaDubai.com

Automechanika Dubai is the region's largest automotive aftermarket trade fair. Part of a global portfolio of exhibitions, Automechanika hosts more than 1,000 manufacturers and distributors from more than 50 countries.



hardware+tools

MIDDLE EAST

2021

www.hardwaretoolsME.com

Hardware+Tools Middle East is the region's only trade exhibition for Tools, Hardware, Materials and Machinery. Every year the exhibition brings a comprehensive array of products and equipment and a large number of worldwide professionals, especially from the Middle East region.

Our trade exhibitions Dubai

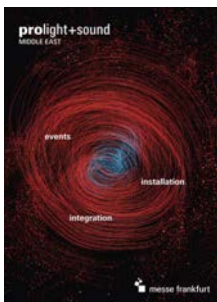


intersec

16 – 18 January, 2022

www.IntersecExpo.com

Intersec turns the spotlight on issues of concern in the global security, safety and fire industries. As the world's foremost trade exhibition for the security industry outside of Europe, it features security conferences, workshops, live SWAT demonstrations, the UAE International FireFit Championships and much more.



prolight+sound

MIDDLE EAST

September, 2022

www.prolightsoundME.com

Prolight + Sound Middle East is the only international trade show in the whole MENA region dedicated to technology and services for the entertainment, event, media and creation industry.

Survey points to vibrant recovery for global exhibitions industry

A survey tracking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international exhibitions industry has delivered an optimistic outlook for the sector.

Commissioned by Messe Frankfurt Middle East (MFME), which runs major events such as Automechanika Dubai, Intersec, and Beautyworld Middle East, the survey was carried out by GRS Explori in April 2021 and canvassed 2,132 professionals from over 110 countries.

Increasing importance

The positive news for the industry is that 75% of respondents believe exhibitions will be as or more important than they were pre-COVID, with the majority of respondents citing a lack of alternatives to the face-to-face business opportunities offered by sector-specific trade shows.

“This is clear validation of the business potential of trade exhibitions as platforms to unearth new products, services and suppliers that may otherwise slip under radars,” commented Simon Mellor, Messe Frankfurt Middle East’s CEO.

Furthermore, 66% of respondents are planning to travel by airplane for business this year, in line with on-going governmental efforts to open more international travel corridors, ease quarantine restriction and spur tourism – for both MICE and leisure.

When asked if the respondents believed that the COVID-19 situation is either stabilised or improving – a promising 73% responded with the latter, while a further 83% insisted they are comfortable with traveling to Dubai to attend exhibitions.

“What we are seeing is a shift towards a back-to-business mind-set, with people keen to start taking part in exhibitions again,” added Mellor. “The current event safety measures we have in place, coupled with the government’s ongoing efforts to make everyone as safe as possible, has had a really positive impact on participation levels, delivery and upscaling of our traditional trade show portfolios.”

Safety sentiment lifts

The survey indicates upticks in sentiment towards personal safety compared to September last year, as well as a 10% uplift - up to 74% - in the number of businesses now sanctioning travel abroad for business.

Some 60% of those surveyed, who were largely business owners, C-suite executives, senior and middle management, said they would attend an exhibition by the end of the year. Those not planning to participate in a trade show in the coming year cited health risks related to travelling and the need to quarantine on their return home as key considerations.

“We understand the concerns related to air travel, as well as health and safety on the ground, and we are happy to report that stringent measures across airplanes and airports in Dubai, as well as exhibition venues, have helped significantly boost exhibitor and visitor confidence,” added Mellor.

When asked about the main reasons behind attending exhibitions, 53% of respondents say it is to meet existing clients, with a further 50% identifying new leads as a key driving factor when participating.

Dubai receives confidence vote

With an 83% support rating, Dubai topped a list of eight leading international trade show destinations in terms of comfort value for business executives, while 47% of respondents feel the COVID situation within the UAE had improved over the past few weeks.

“This vote of confidence in the UAE and Dubai underlines local authorities’ efforts to curb the spread of the pandemic and safeguard visitors,” said Mellor.

In March, 89% of respondents in independent research commissioned by Dubai World Trade Centre dubbed Dubai as “the safest destination in the world.”

“Over the past nine months, the UAE has successfully hosted a number of large-scale exhibitions such as GITEX Technology Week, Gulfood and Arabian Travel Market. These ‘mega events’ have been delivered to the highest possible safety standards, with attendees and stakeholders consistently reinforcing the urge to get back-to-business in a safe and controlled environment,” added Mellor.

Although confidence is increasing, the report identified a number of safety measures important to respondents, including the provision of PPE/sanitizer; behaviour regulation from event organisers; guarantees on physical/social distancing best practices; attendees being vaccinated and no new cases in the city/country of exhibition.

The full survey and findings can be found below

Messe Frankfurt Middle East The effects of Covid-19

GRS Research & Strategy – 2nd May 2021

Business intelligence
Business strategy
Buyer personas
Competitor analysis

Consultancy
Customer journey
Customer satisfaction
Data analysis

Data collection
Data mining
Market outlook
Neuromarketing

The Effects of Covid-19

About the project



The goal of this project was to investigate **how Covid-19 affected businesses** and the **behaviour** of the stakeholders of Messe Frankfurt Middle East



The research was addressed to all former **visitors and exhibitors** of exhibitions organized by Messe Frankfurt Middle East (last two editions of each show)



A total of **2,132 professionals from 110+** countries took part in this research (2,784 in Sep '20)



Data were collected between 7-27 April 2021 via CAWI methodology (online survey distributed via email)

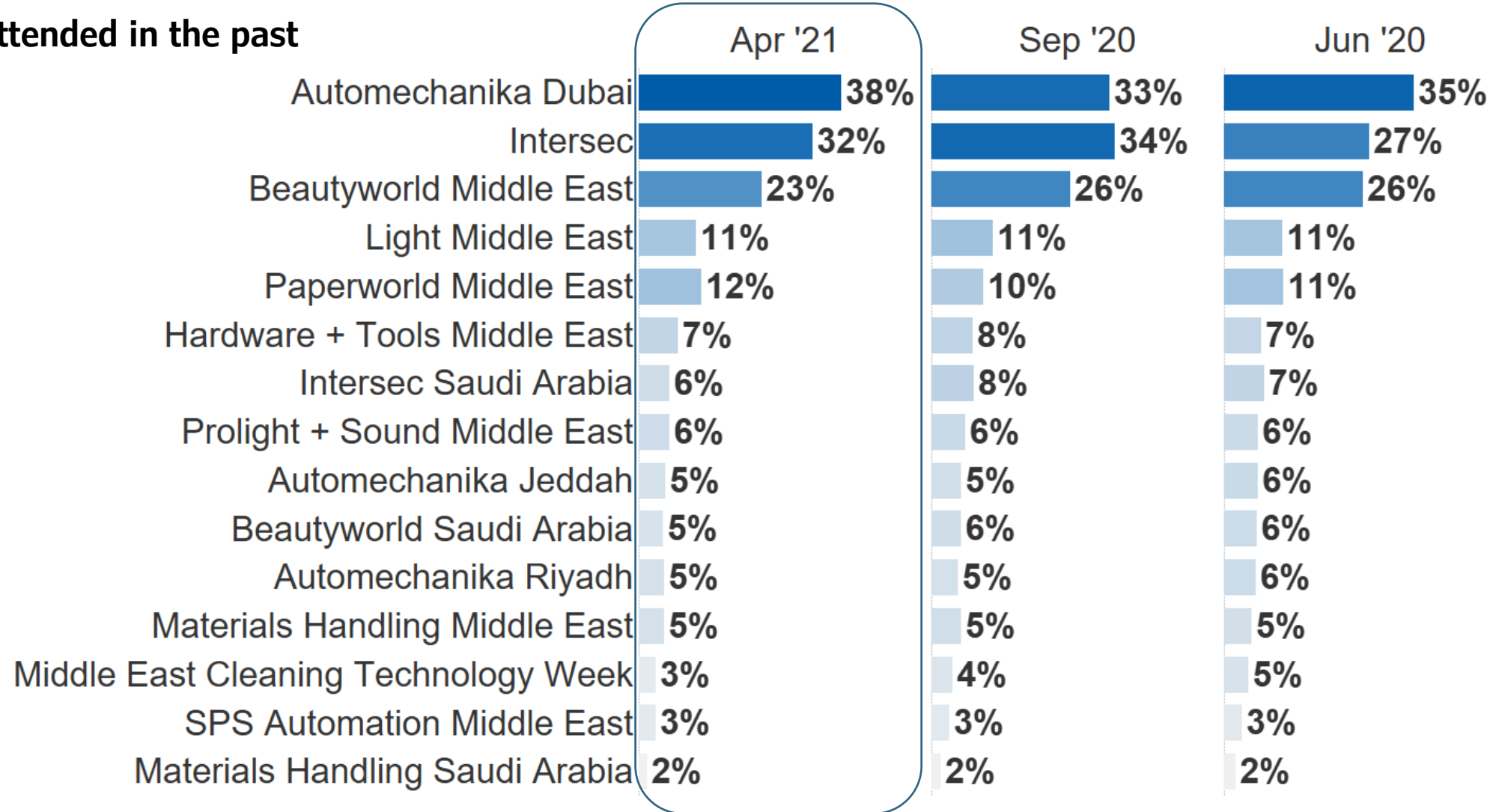


The panel



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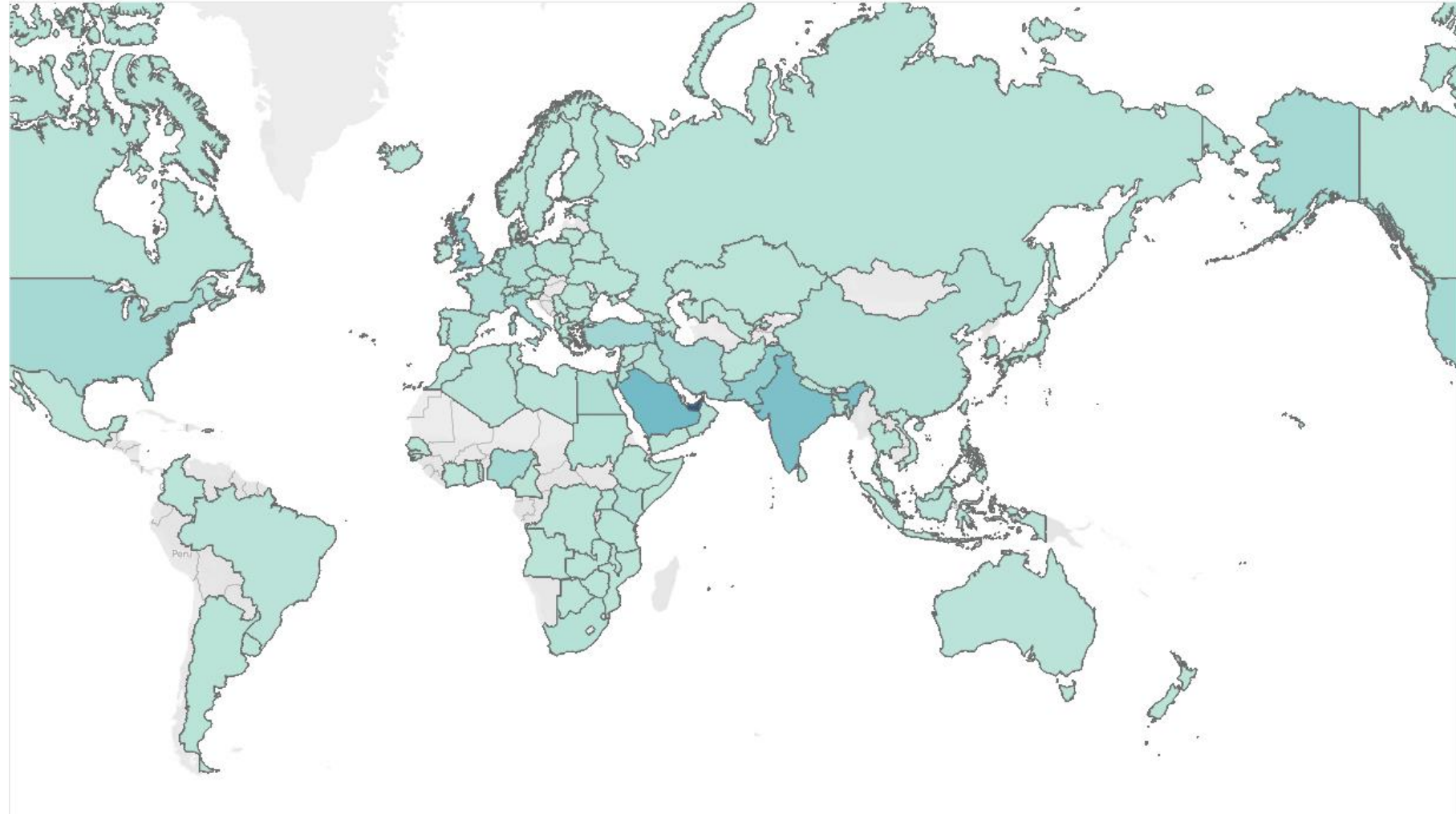
Events attended in the past



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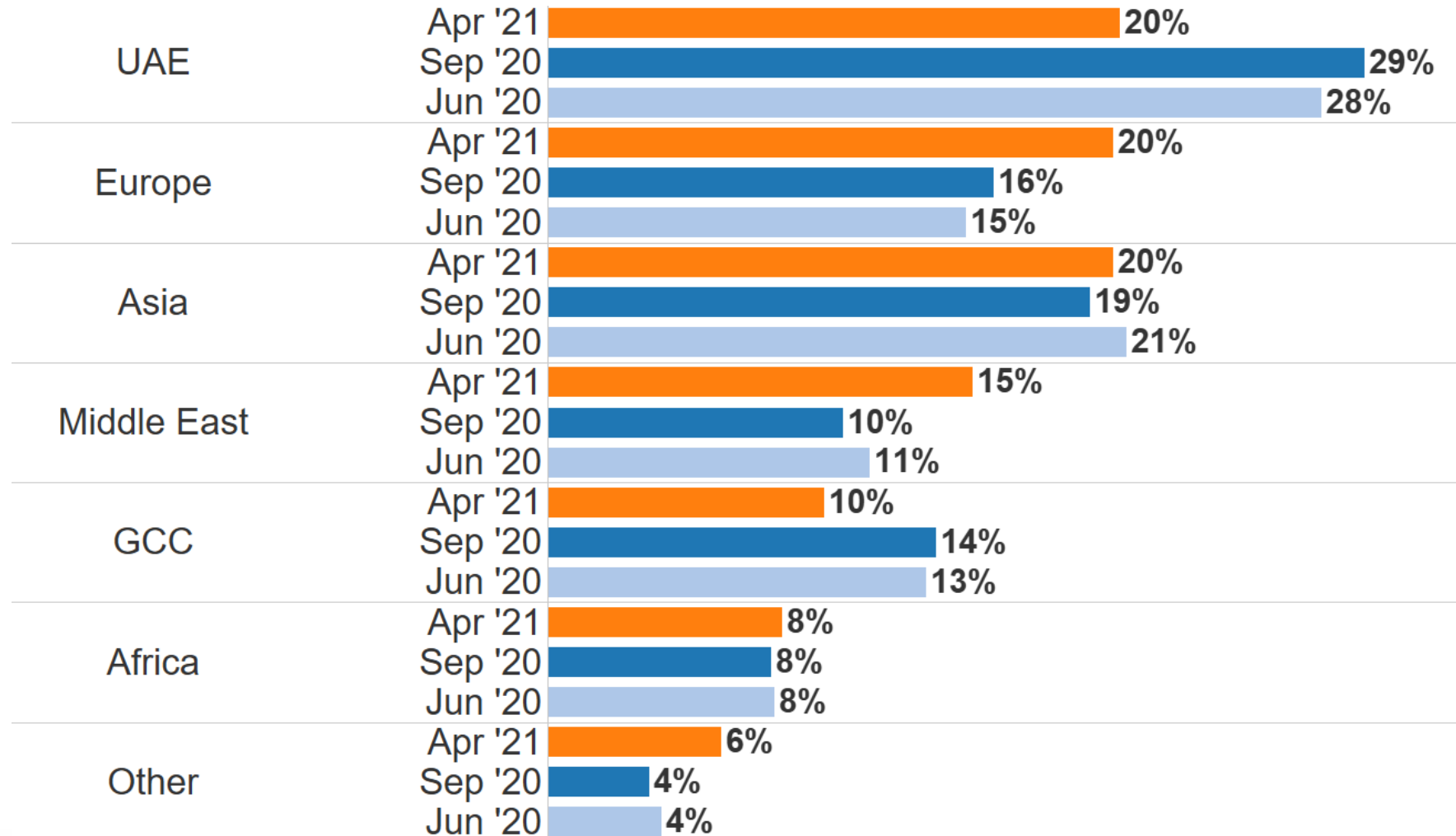
Top 15 countries

1. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (20%)
2. INDIA
3. SAUDI ARABIA
4. PAKISTAN
5. IRAN
6. UNITED KINGDOM
7. ITALY
8. UNITED STATES
9. GERMANY
10. TURKEY
11. NIGERIA
12. EGYPT
13. IRAQ
14. KUWAIT
15. FRANCE



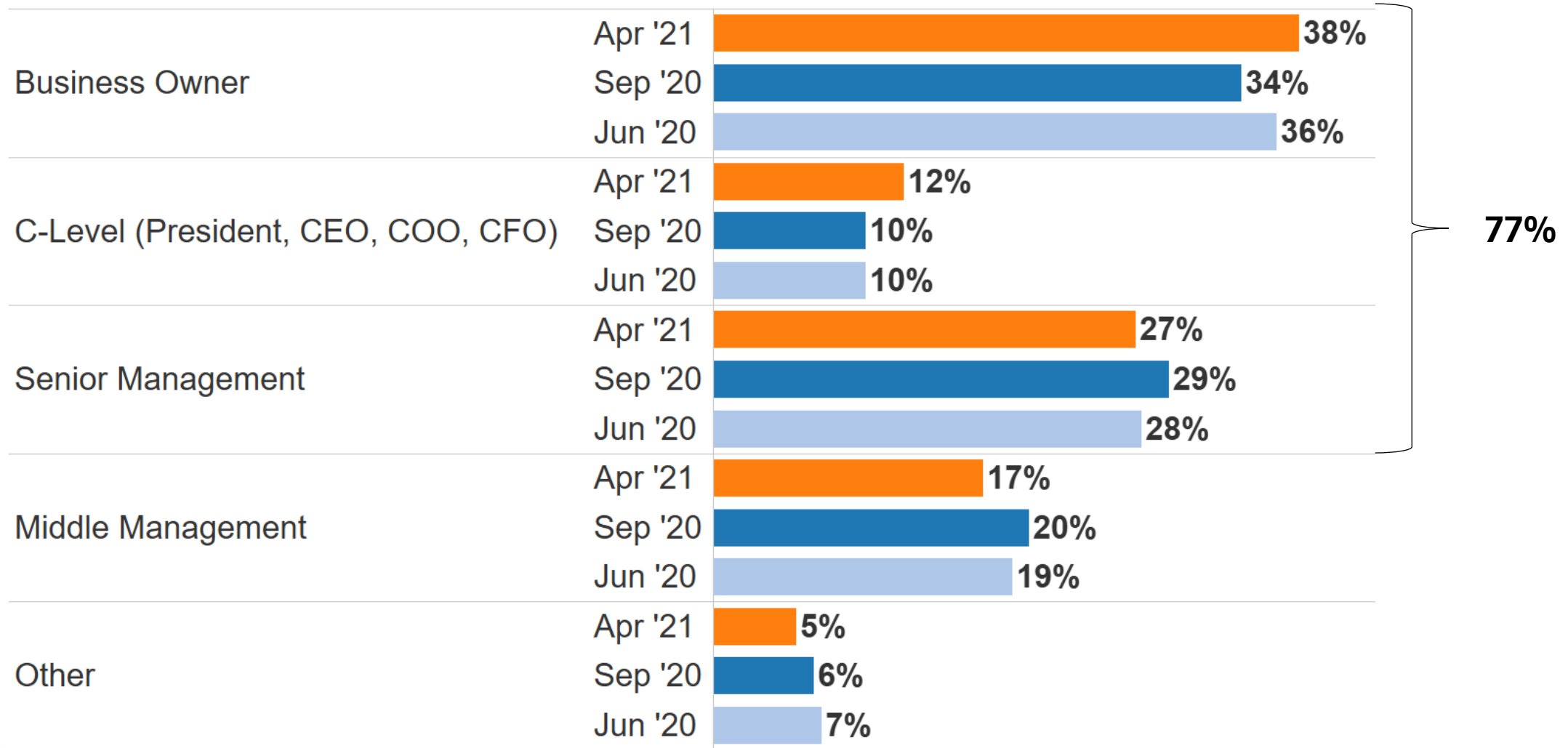
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Respondents by Region



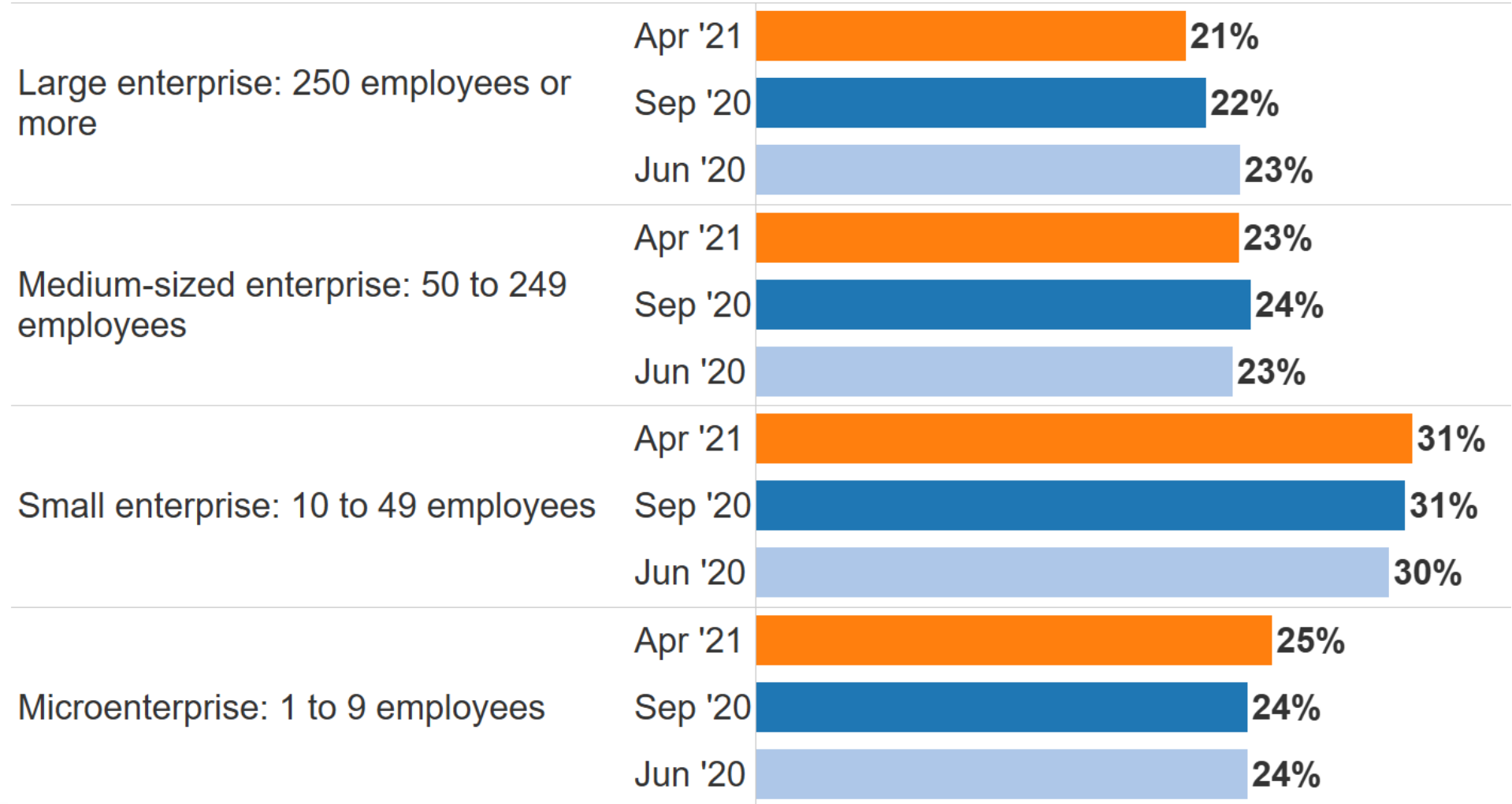
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Seniority of respondents



The Effects of Covid-19

Company size (number of employees)



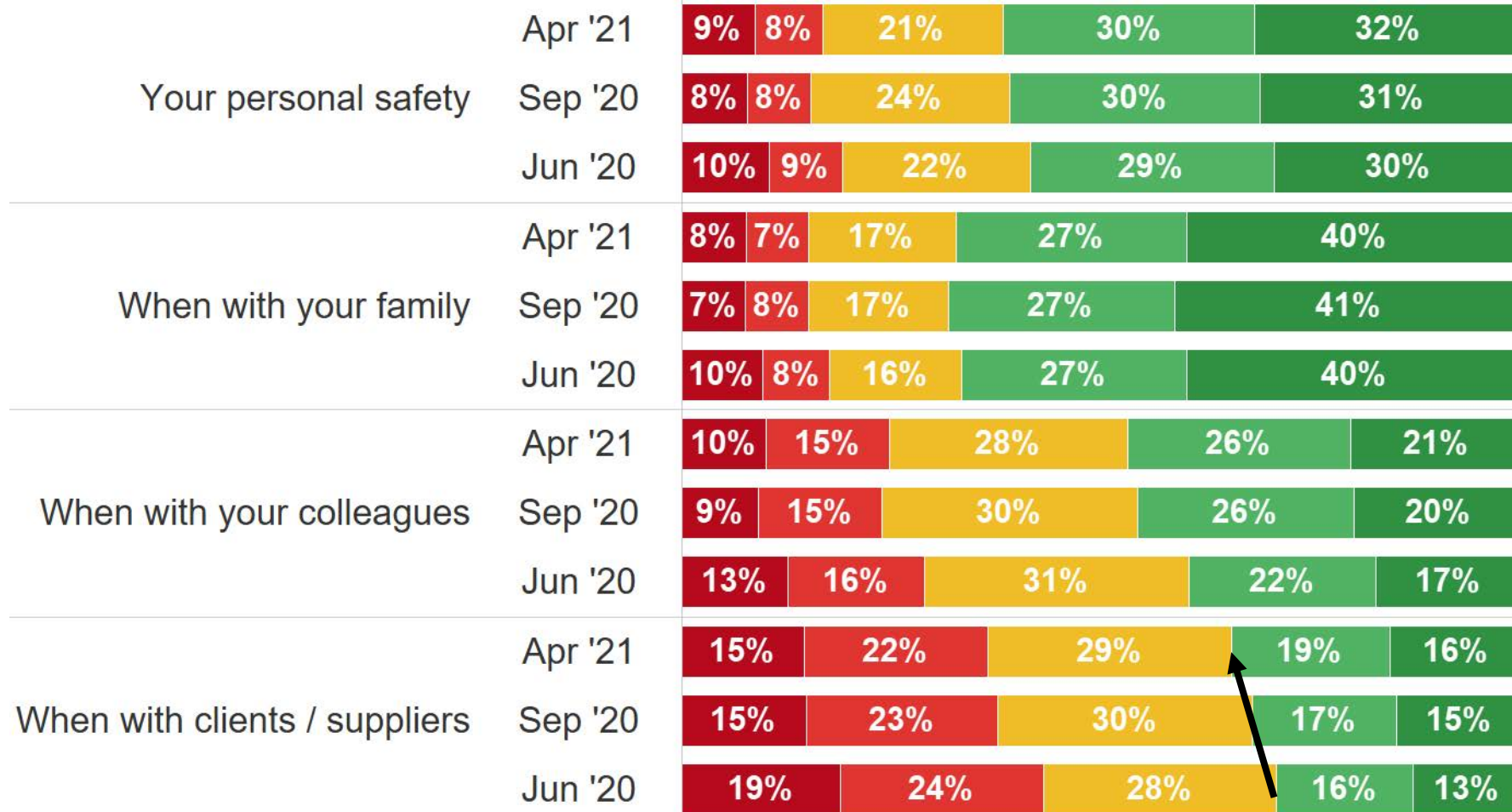


Travelling



The Effects of Covid-19

With regards to the Covid-19, how safe do you feel right now?

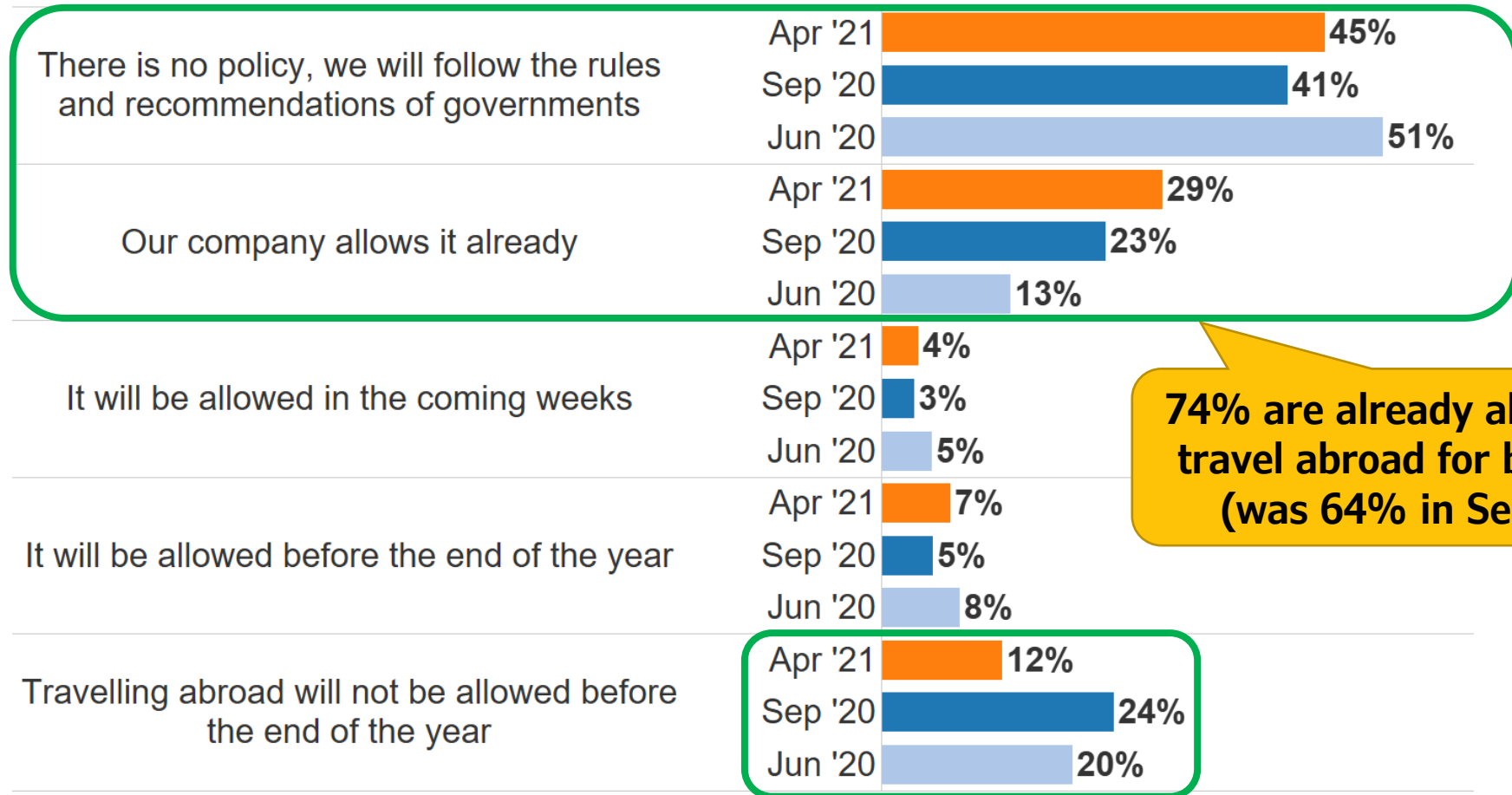


Stable vs Sep 2020

- Not at all safe
- Not very safe
- Somewhat safe
- Fairly safe
- Very safe

The Effects of Covid-19

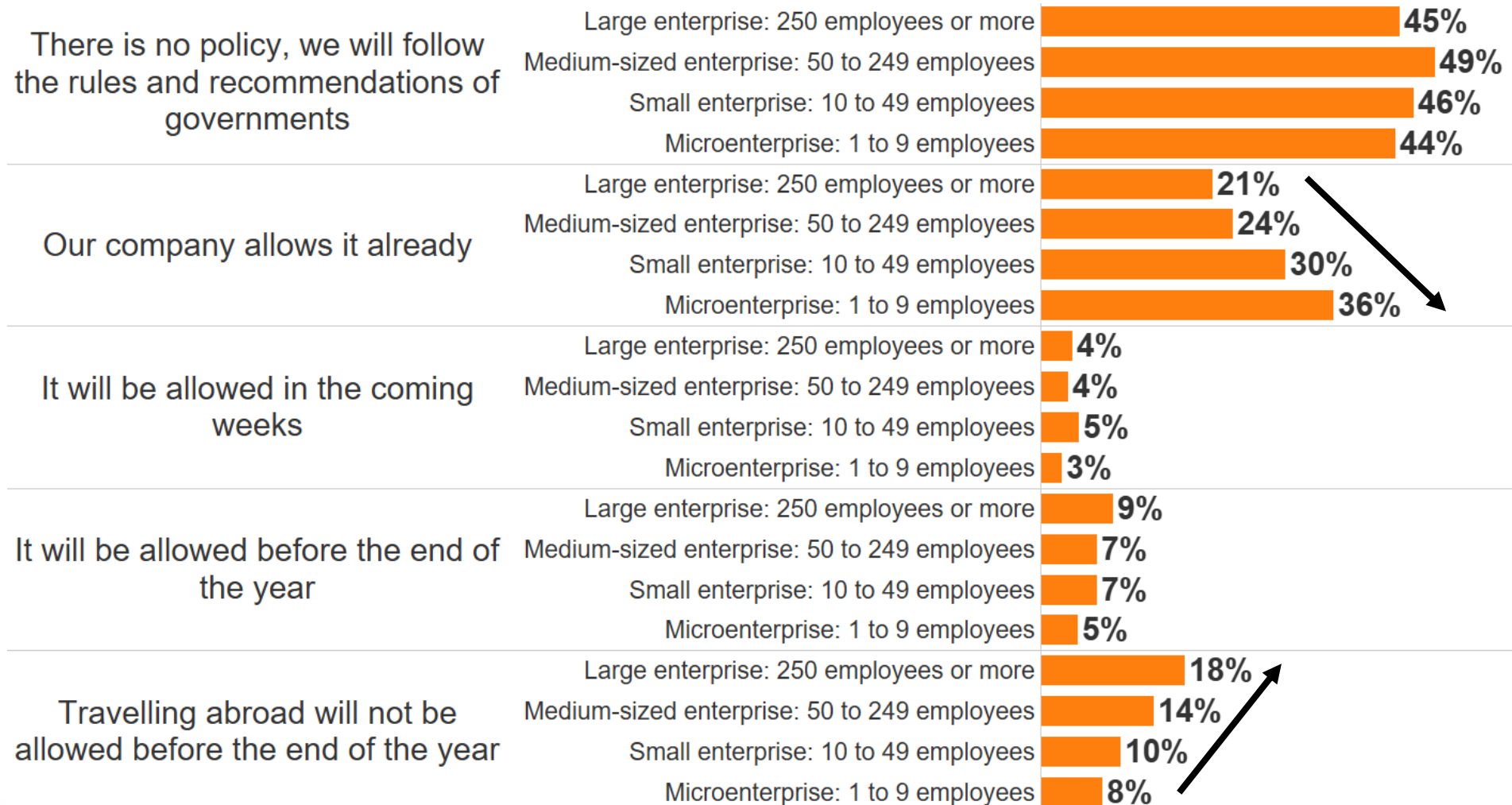
What's your company's policy about travelling abroad for business?



74% are already allowed to travel abroad for business (was 64% in Sep '20)

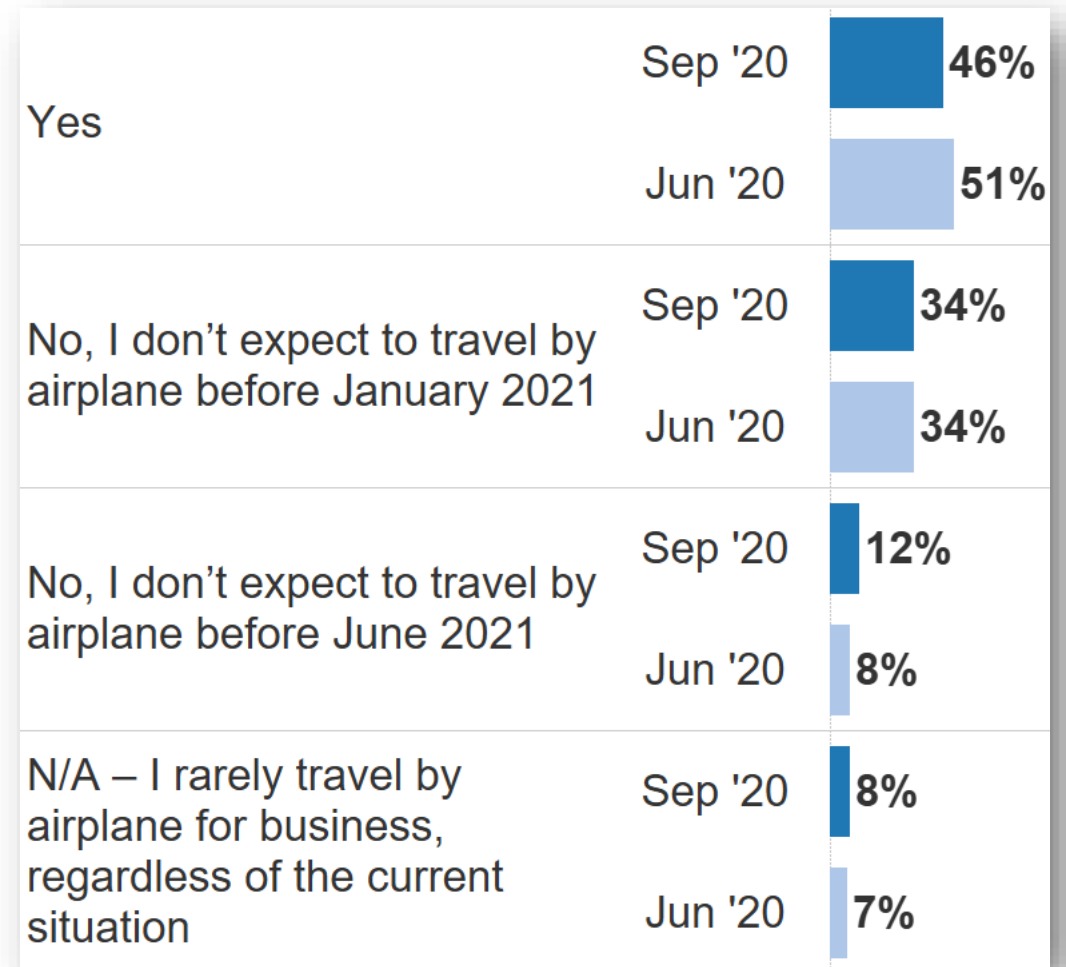
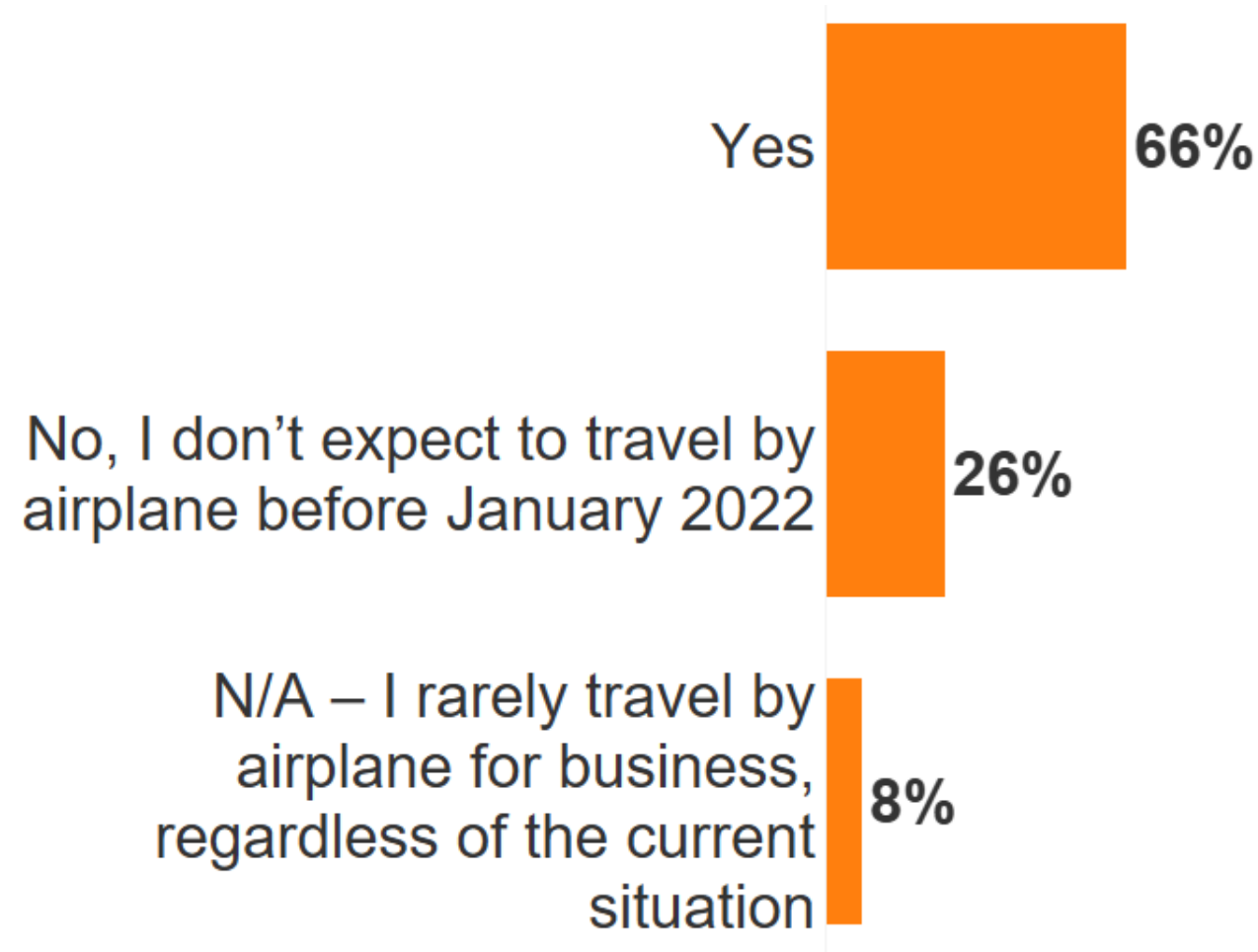
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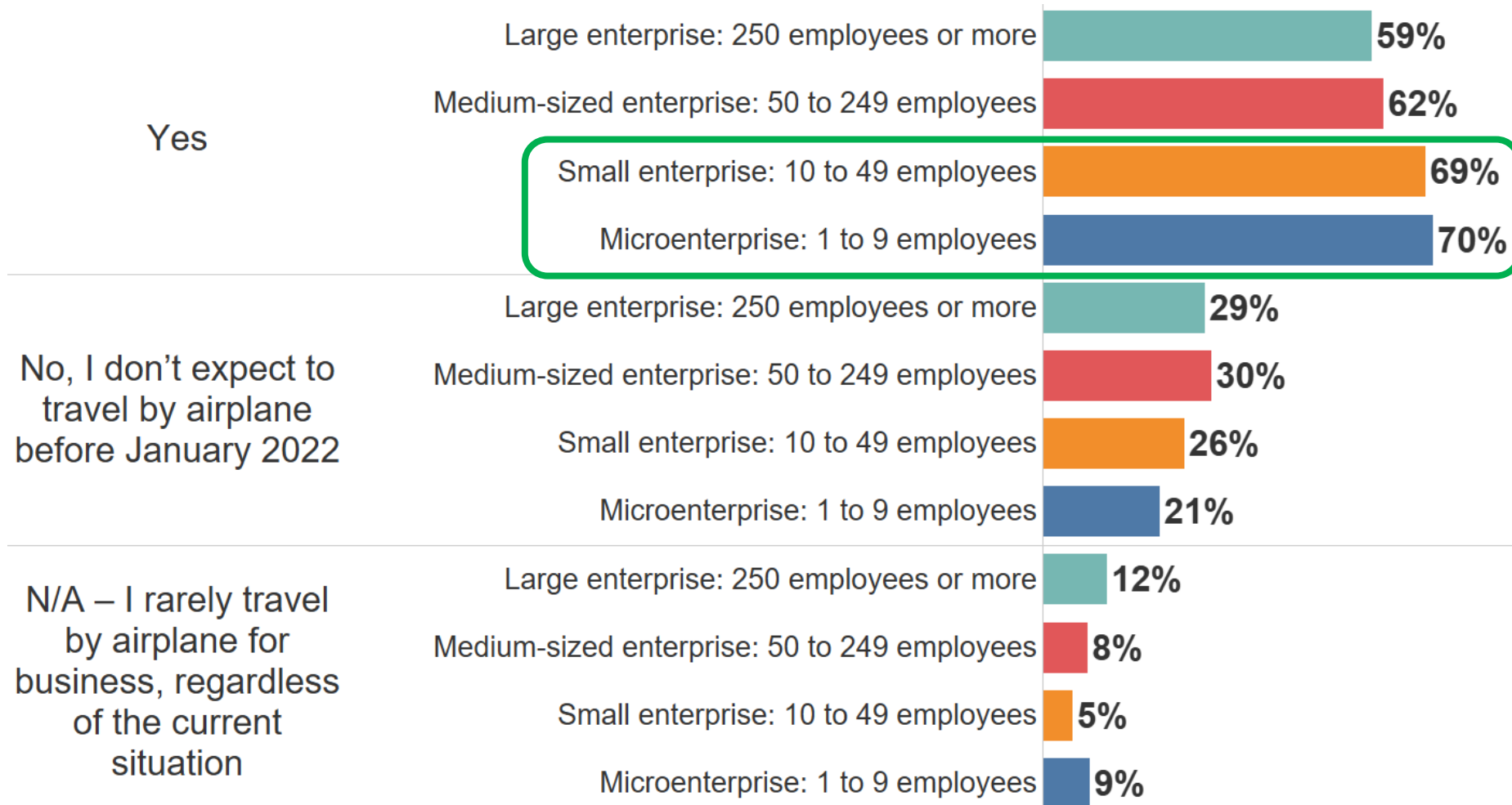
The Effects of Covid-19

Are you planning to travel by airplane for business this year?



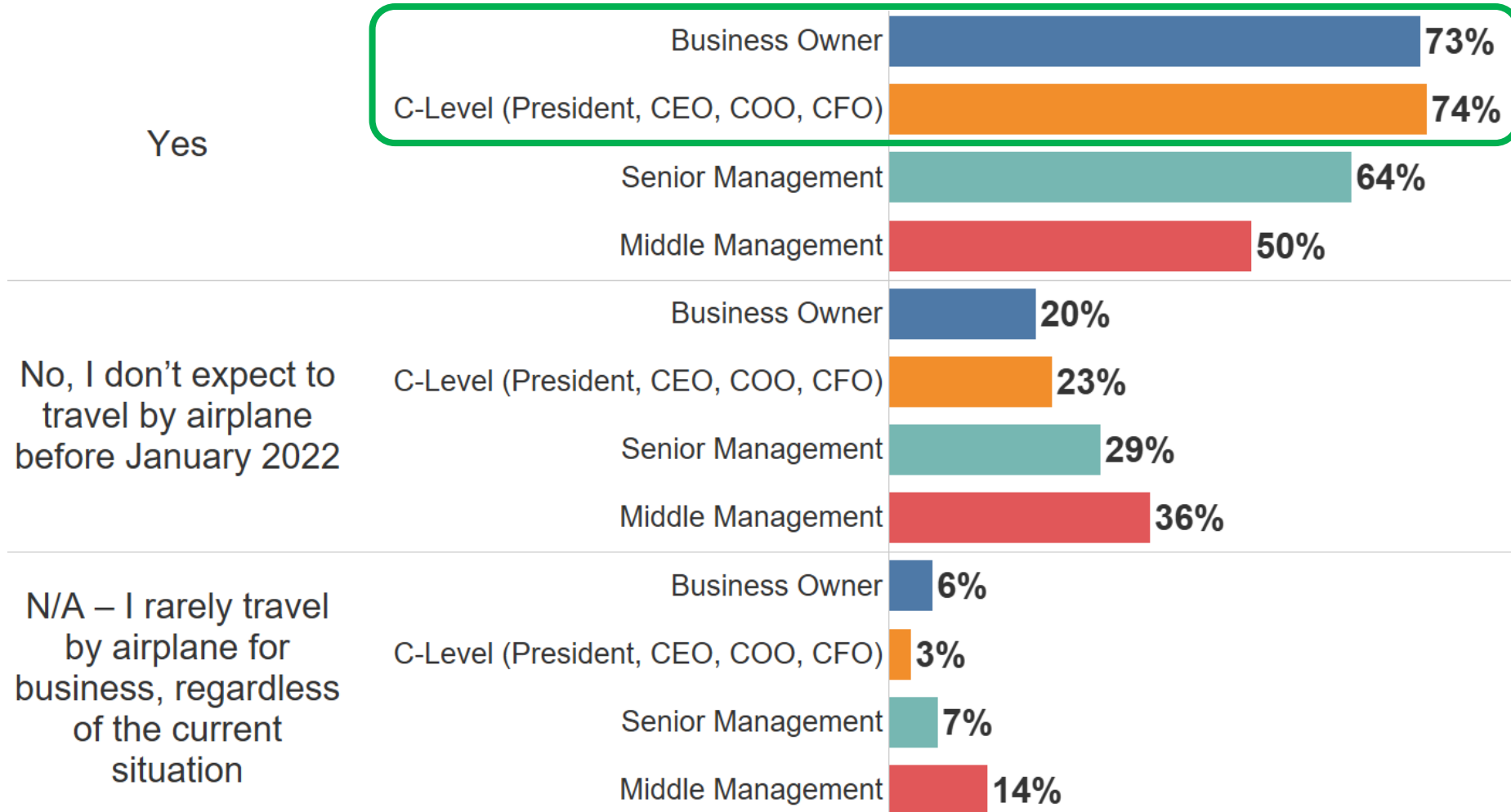
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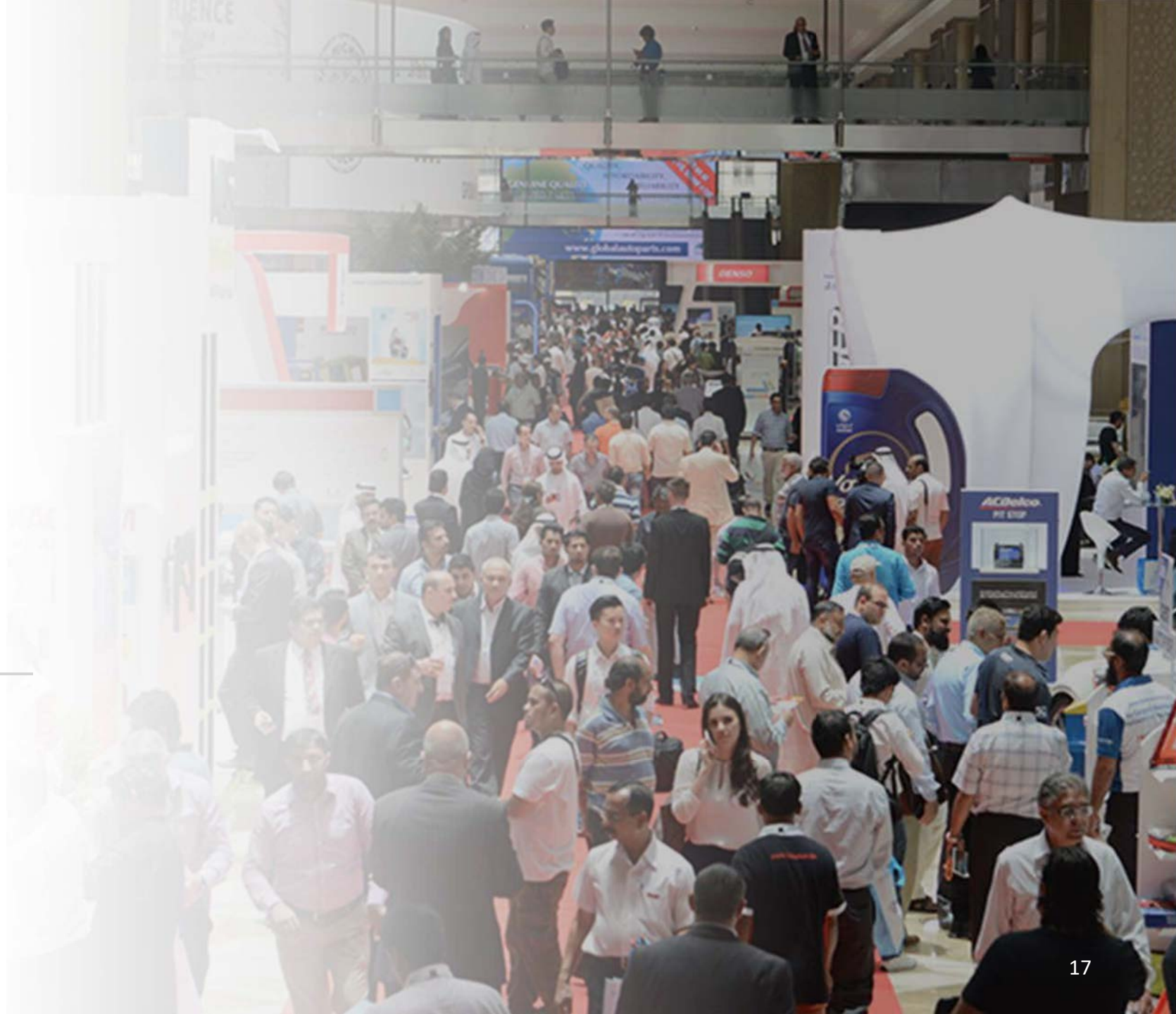


The Effects of Covid-19

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Importance of Exhibitions

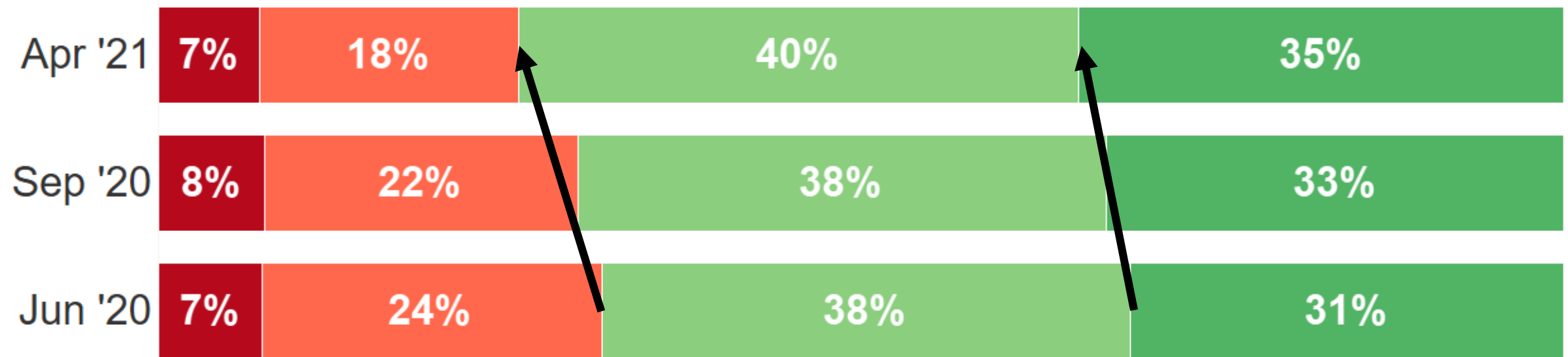


The Effects of Covid-19

Having experienced lockdown and travel restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, exhibitions moving forward will be:

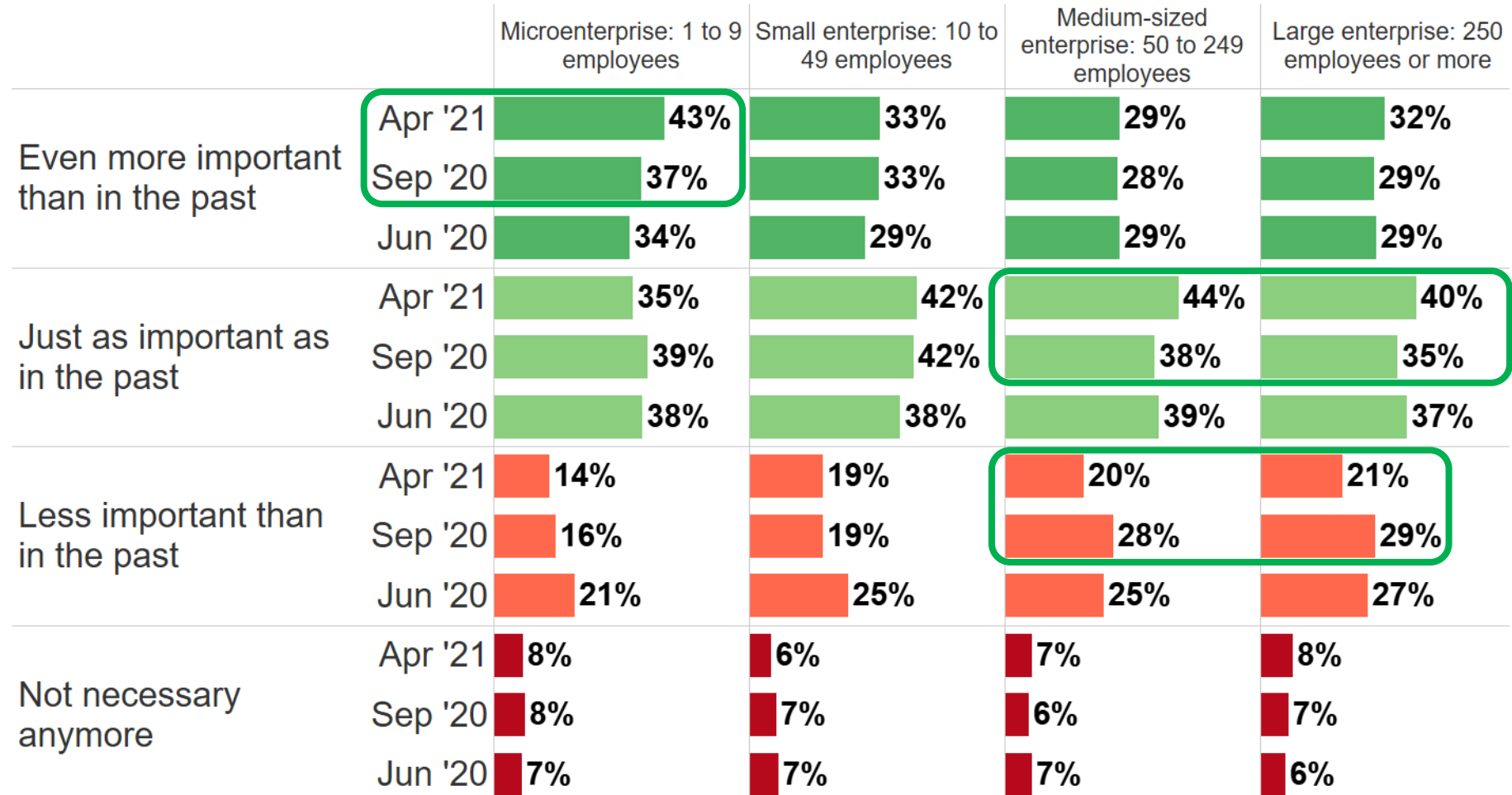
- Even more important than in the past
- Just as important as in the past
- Less important than in the past
- Not necessary anymore

People are realizing even more the importance of exhibitions as they struggle to find valuable alternatives: 75% say they will be as or more important than before



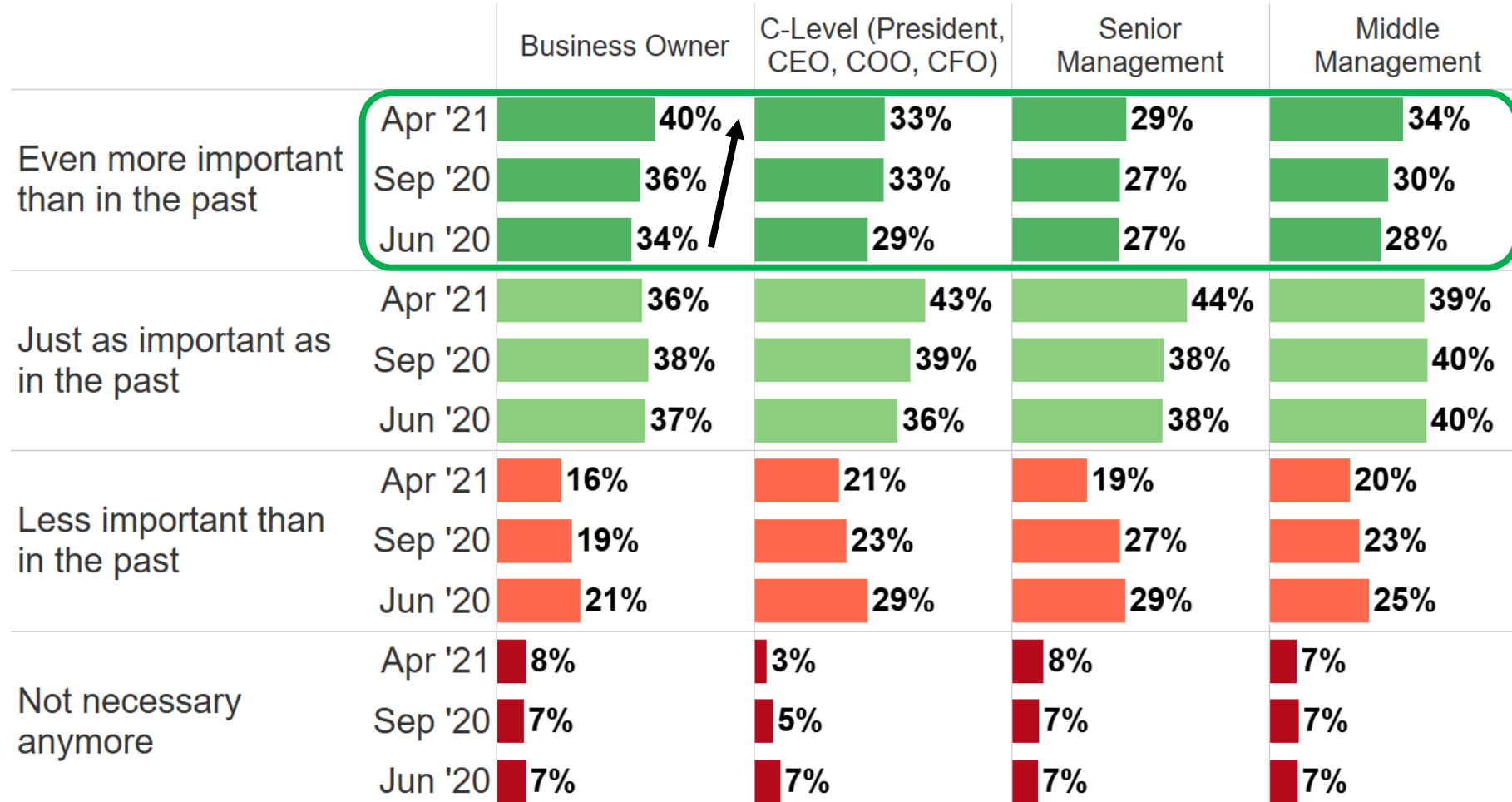
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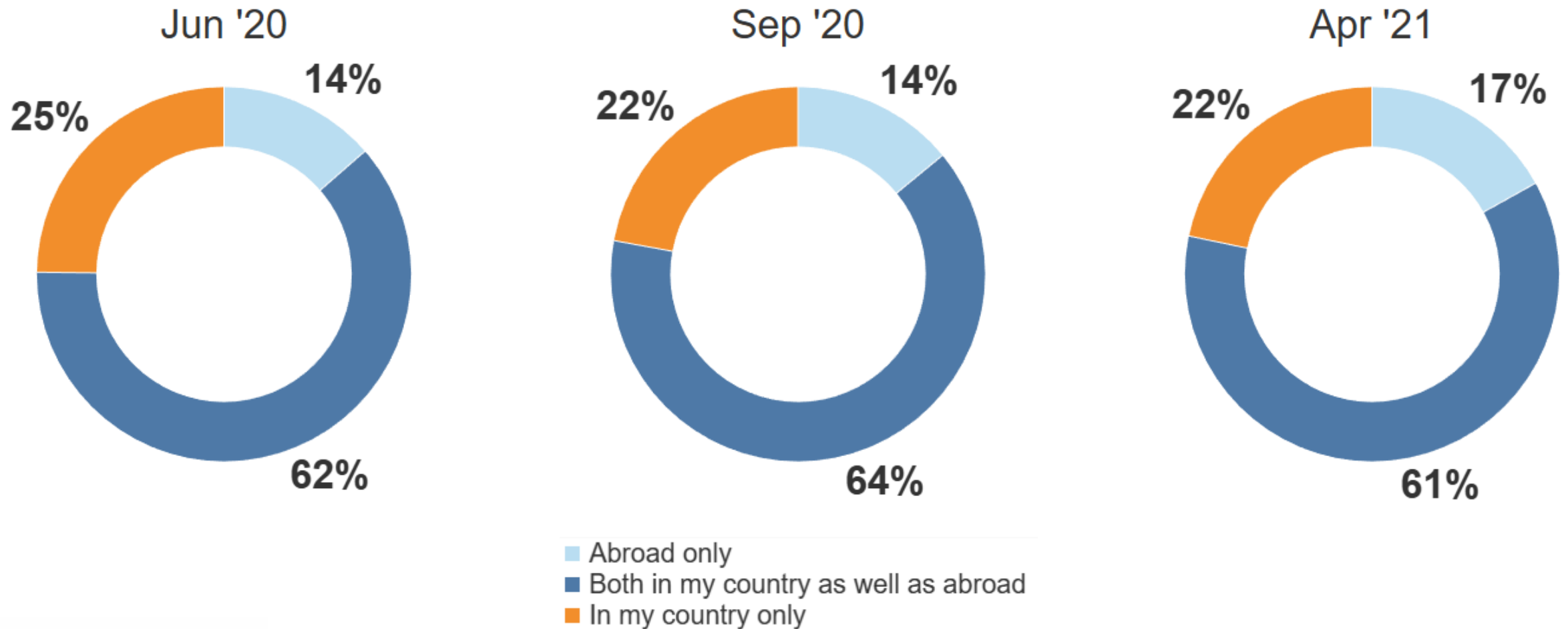
		Africa	Asia	Europe	GCC	Middle East	UAE	Other
Even more important than in the past	Apr '21	34%	34%	30%	36%	39%	37%	37%
	Sep '20	41%	34%	26%	35%	33%	33%	25%
	Jun '20	37%	33%	27%	33%	31%	30%	22%
Just as important as in the past	Apr '21	35%	41%	46%	40%	35%	36%	36%
	Sep '20	43%	35%	43%	36%	39%	35%	40%
	Jun '20	42%	35%	43%	36%	36%	36%	42%
Less important than in the past	Apr '21	26%	17%	16%	19%	18%	18%	21%
	Sep '20	12%	18%	28%	22%	20%	24%	32%
	Jun '20	18%	22%	25%	24%	23%	27%	29%
Not necessary anymore	Apr '21	5%	8%	8%	6%	8%	9%	6%
	Sep '20	5%	13%	4%	7%	9%	7%	3%
	Jun '20	4%	9%	5%	7%	10%	8%	7%

Attendance to exhibitions



The Effects of Covid-19

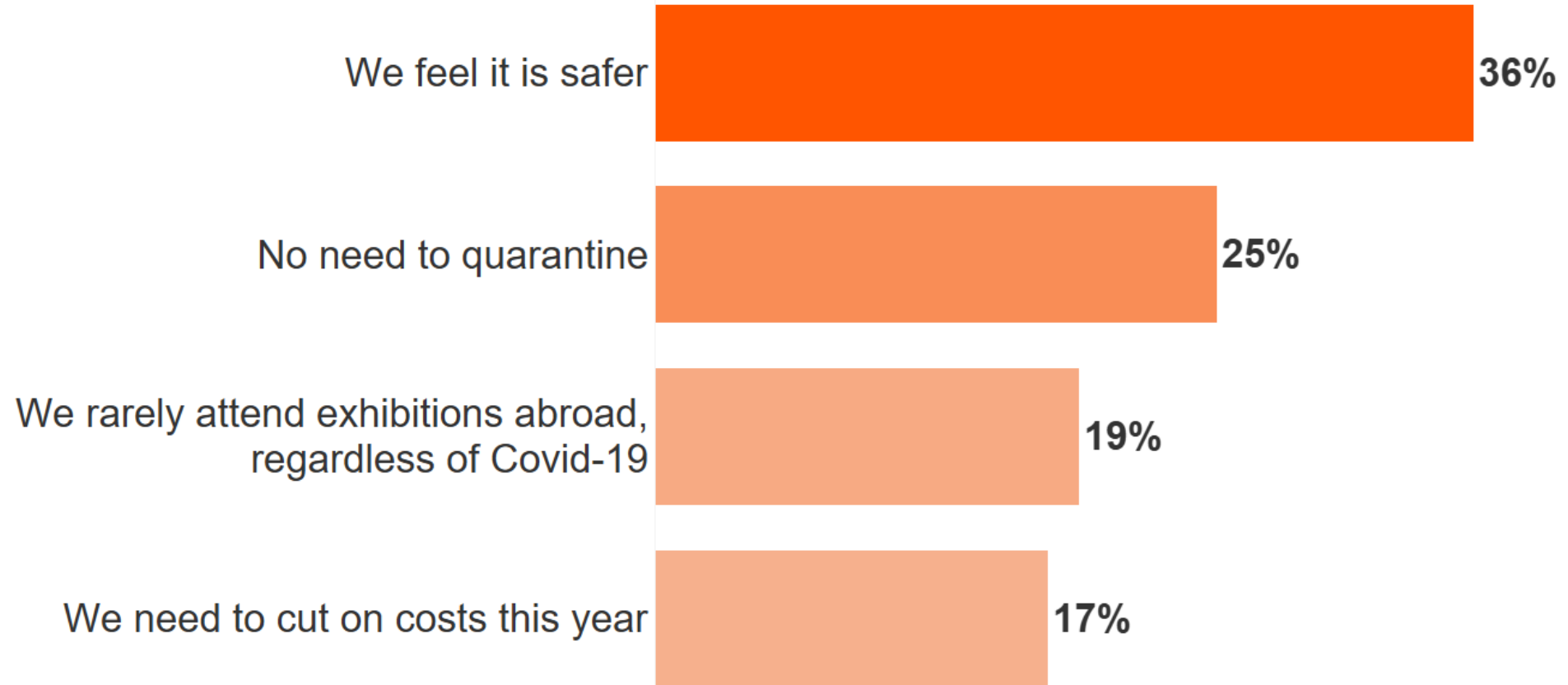
Will you participate in exhibition(s) in your country or abroad?
(only for those who will attend exhibitions in the next 12 months)



The Effects of Covid-19

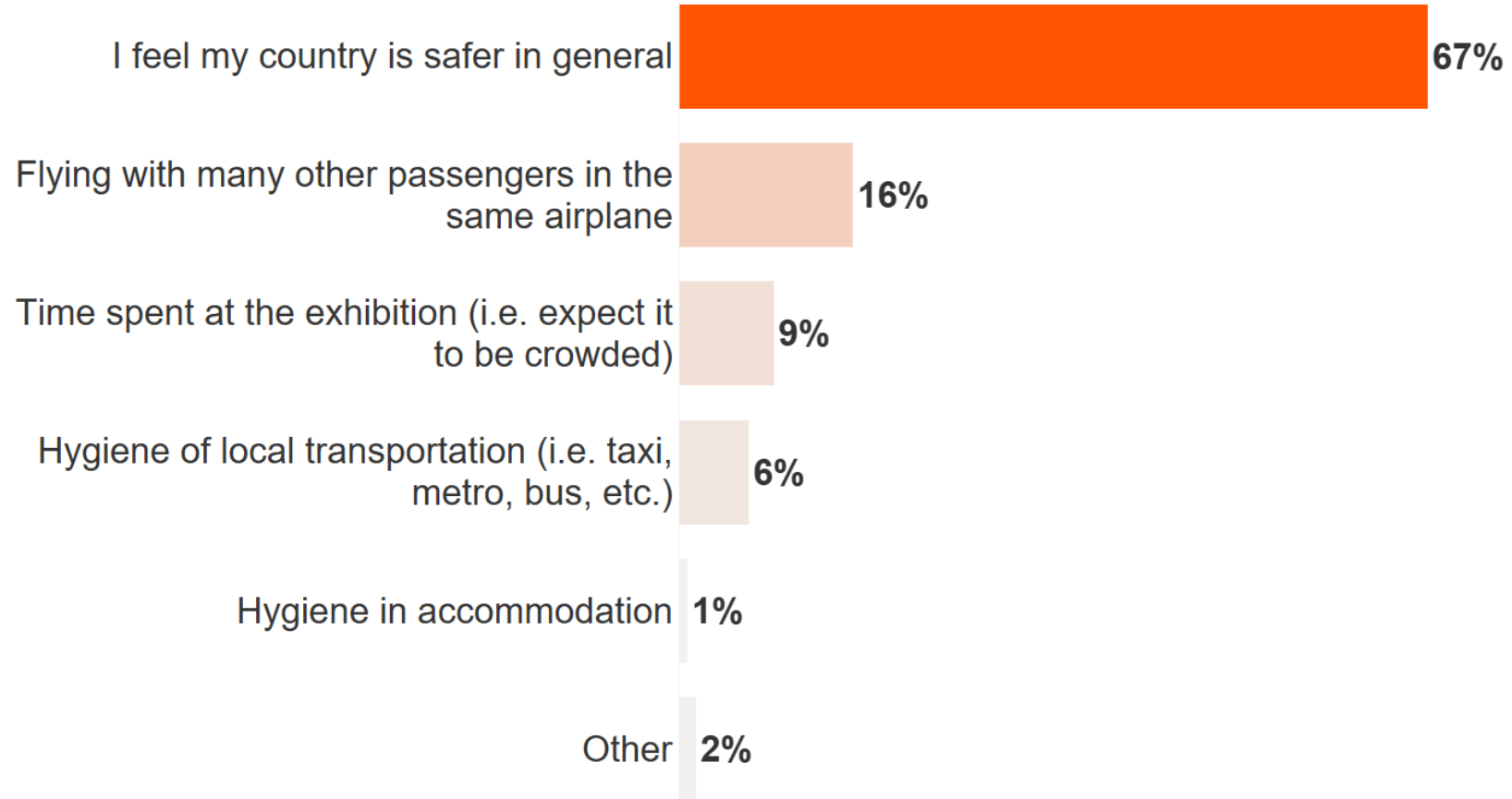
Why are you planning to attend exhibitions in your country and not abroad?

(only for those [22%] who will only attend exhibitions in their country in the next 12 months)



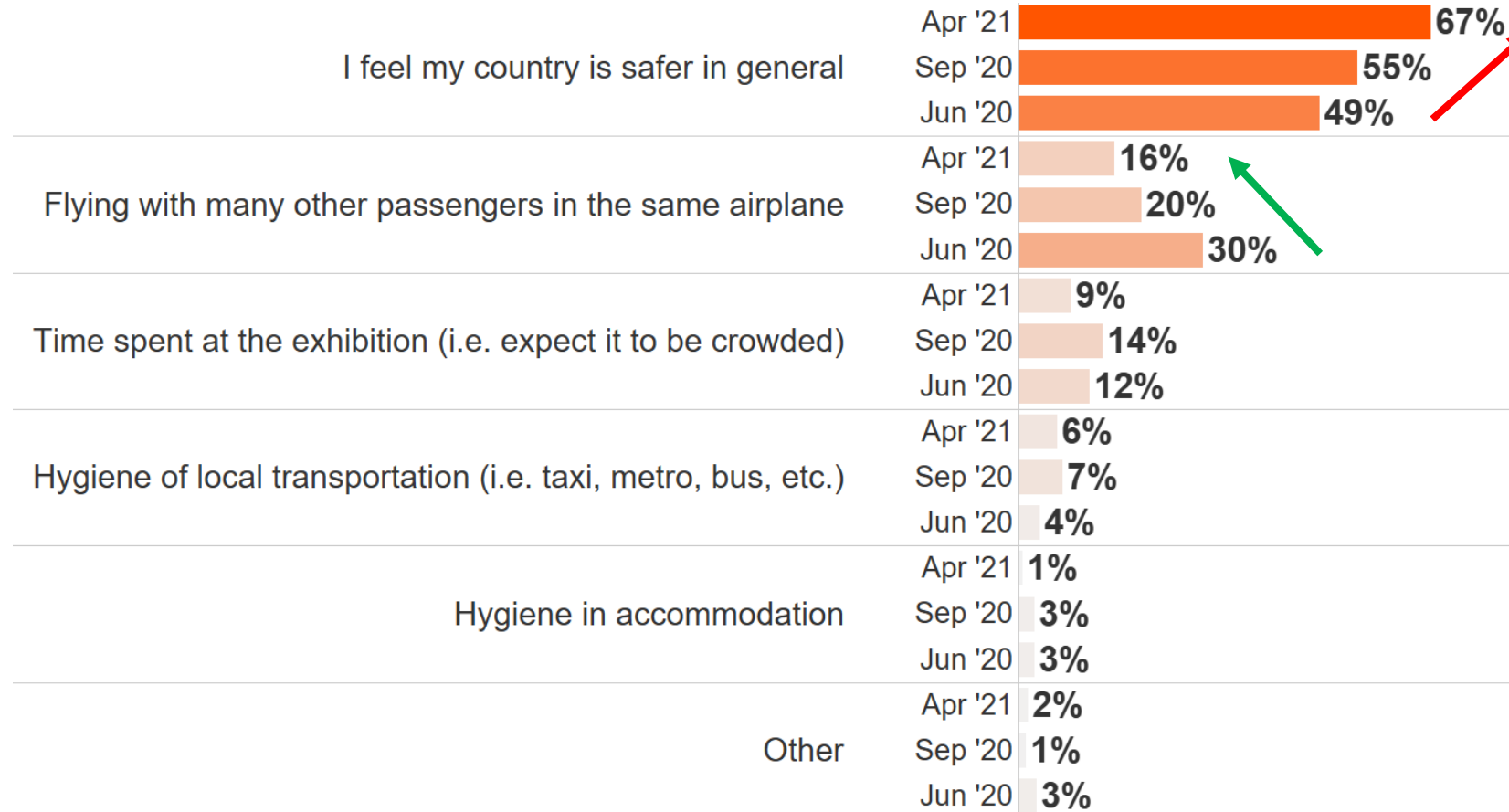
The Effects of Covid-19

What are you primarily concerned about when thinking about travelling to an exhibition abroad?
(only for those [36% of 22%] who will only attend exhibitions in their country in the next 12 months because they feel it is safer)



The Effects of Covid-19

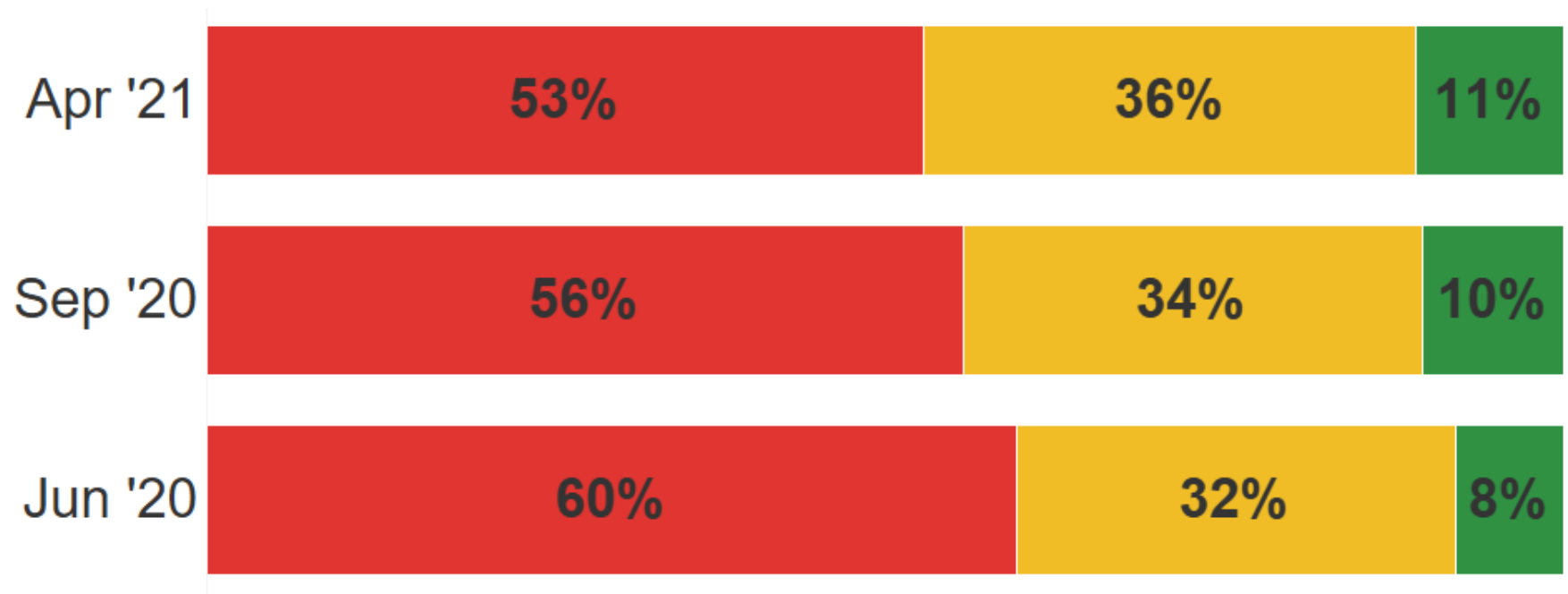
What are you primarily concerned about when thinking about travelling to an exhibition abroad?
 (only for those [36% of 22%] who will only attend exhibitions in their country in the next 12 months because they feel it is safer)



The Effects of Covid-19

With regards to the number of people attending exhibitions from your company in the coming months, do you expect any difference compared to pre Covid-19 emergency?

(only for those who will attend exhibitions in the next 12 months)



- More people from our company
- There will be no difference
- Less people from our company

The Effects of Covid-19

With regards to the number of people attending exhibitions from your company in the coming months, do you expect any difference compared to pre Covid-19 emergency?

(only for those who will attend exhibitions in the next 12 months)



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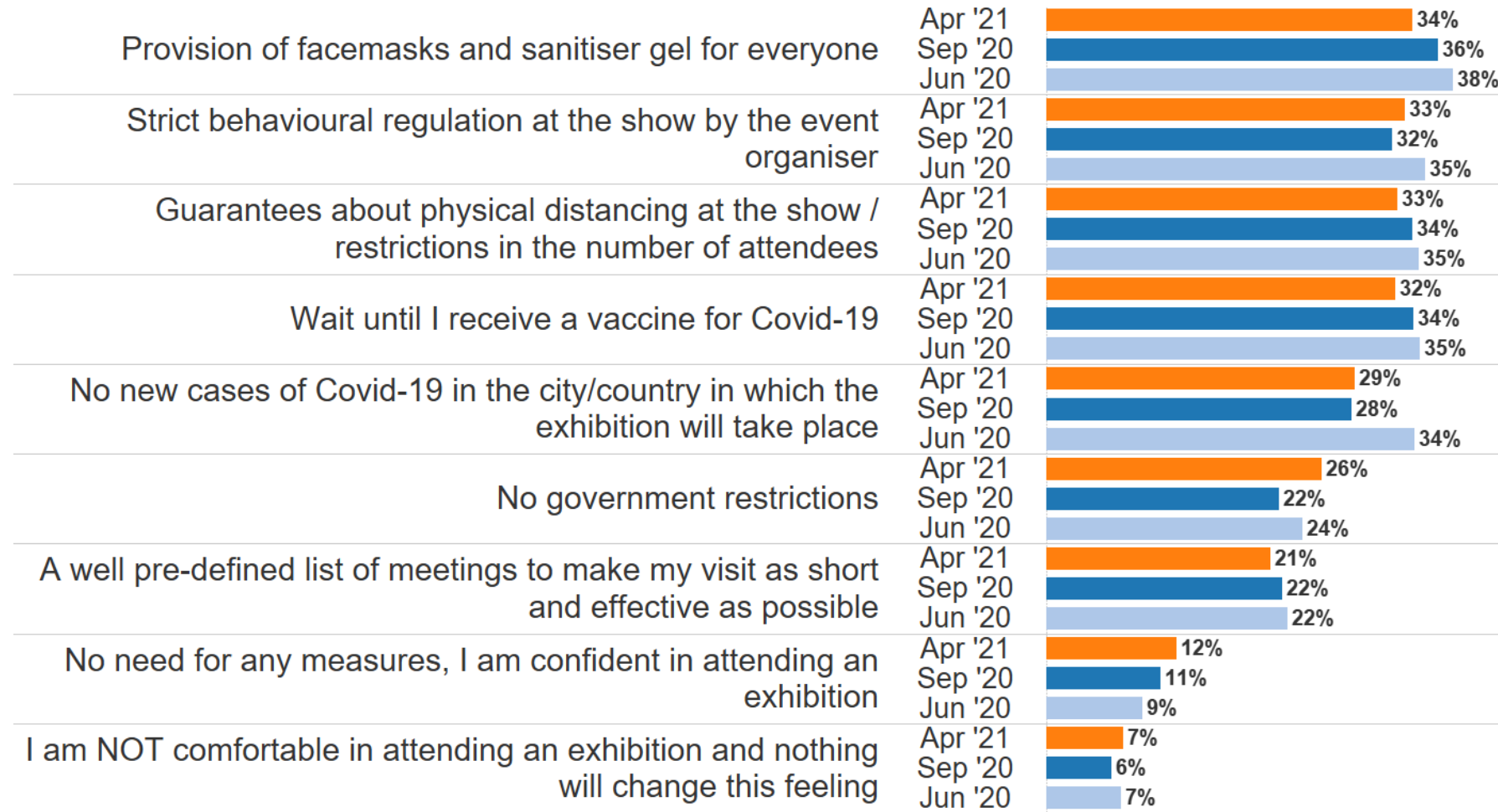
Why will there be fewer people attending exhibitions on behalf of your company?

(only for those [53%] who said there will be less people attending exhibitions in the future)



The Effects of Covid-19

What measures will make you more confident in attending an exhibition?

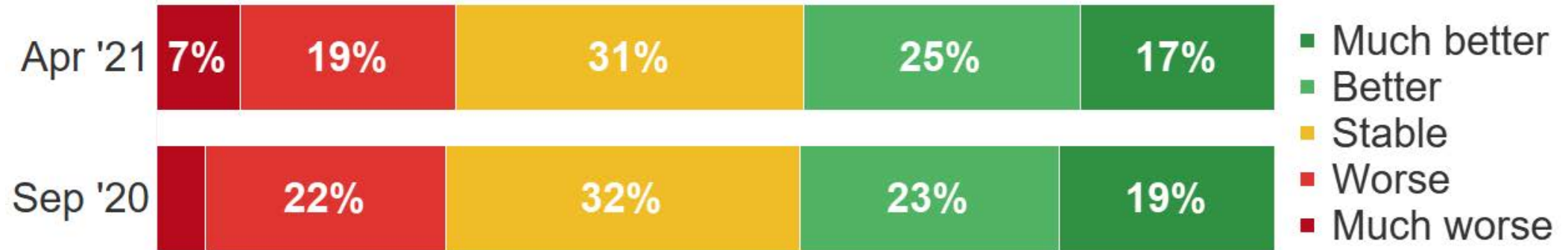


Confidence & Countries



The Effects of Covid-19

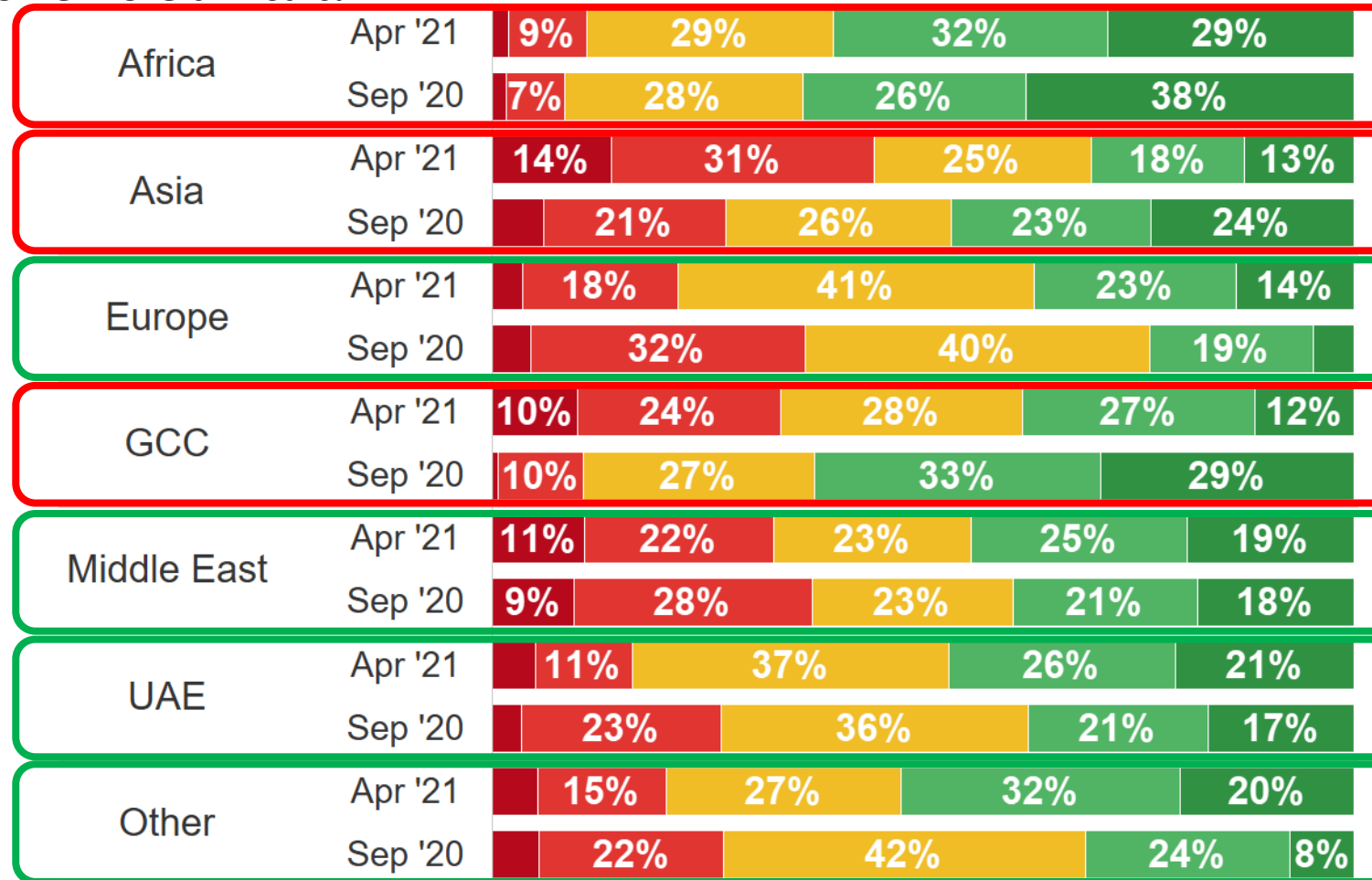
Do you feel the situation with regards COVID-19 has improved over the last few weeks, or has it become more difficult?



Stable vs Sep 2020
on aggregate...

The Effects of Covid-19

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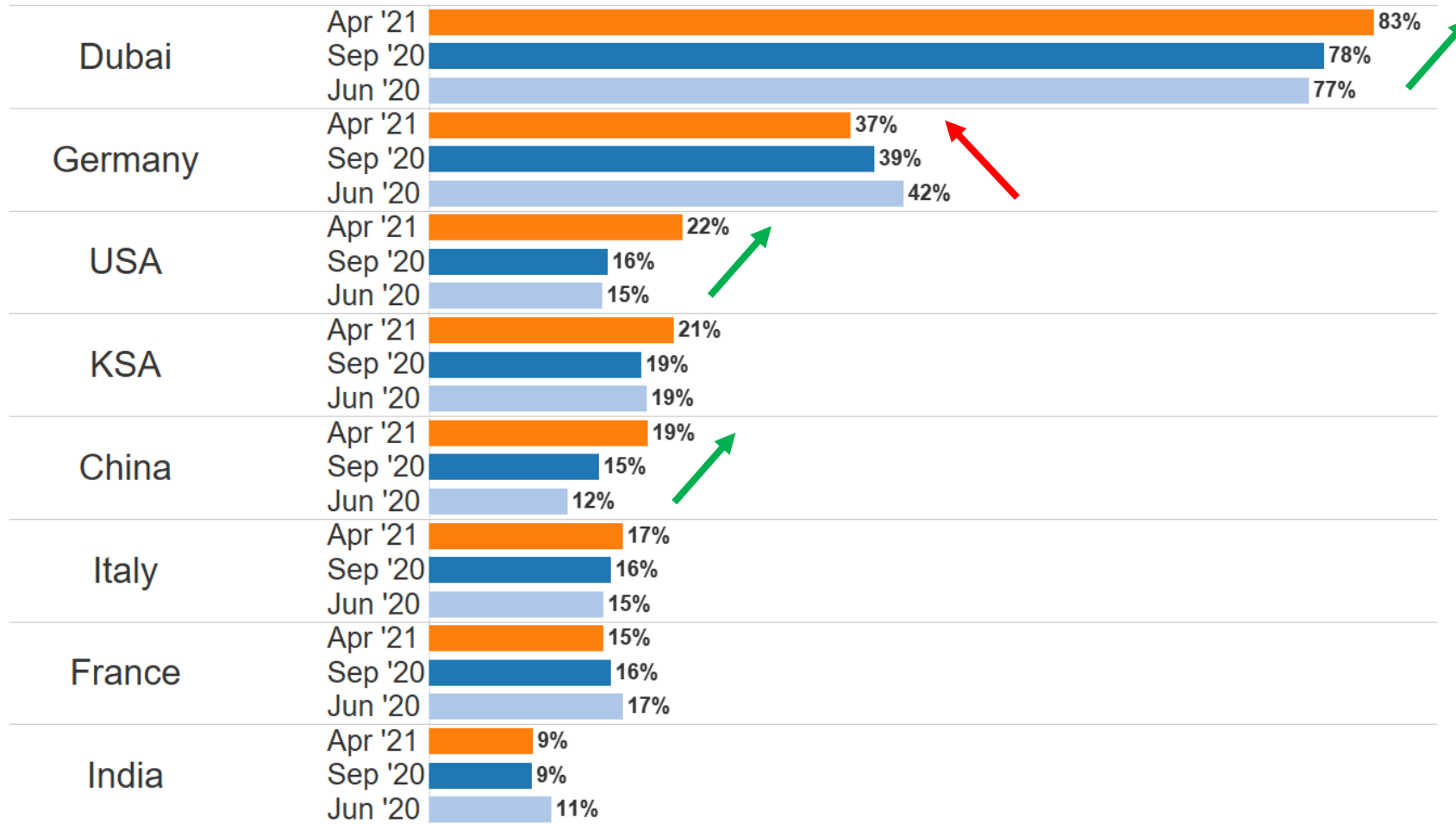


But very different across various regions

- Much better
- Better
- Stable
- Worse
- Much worse

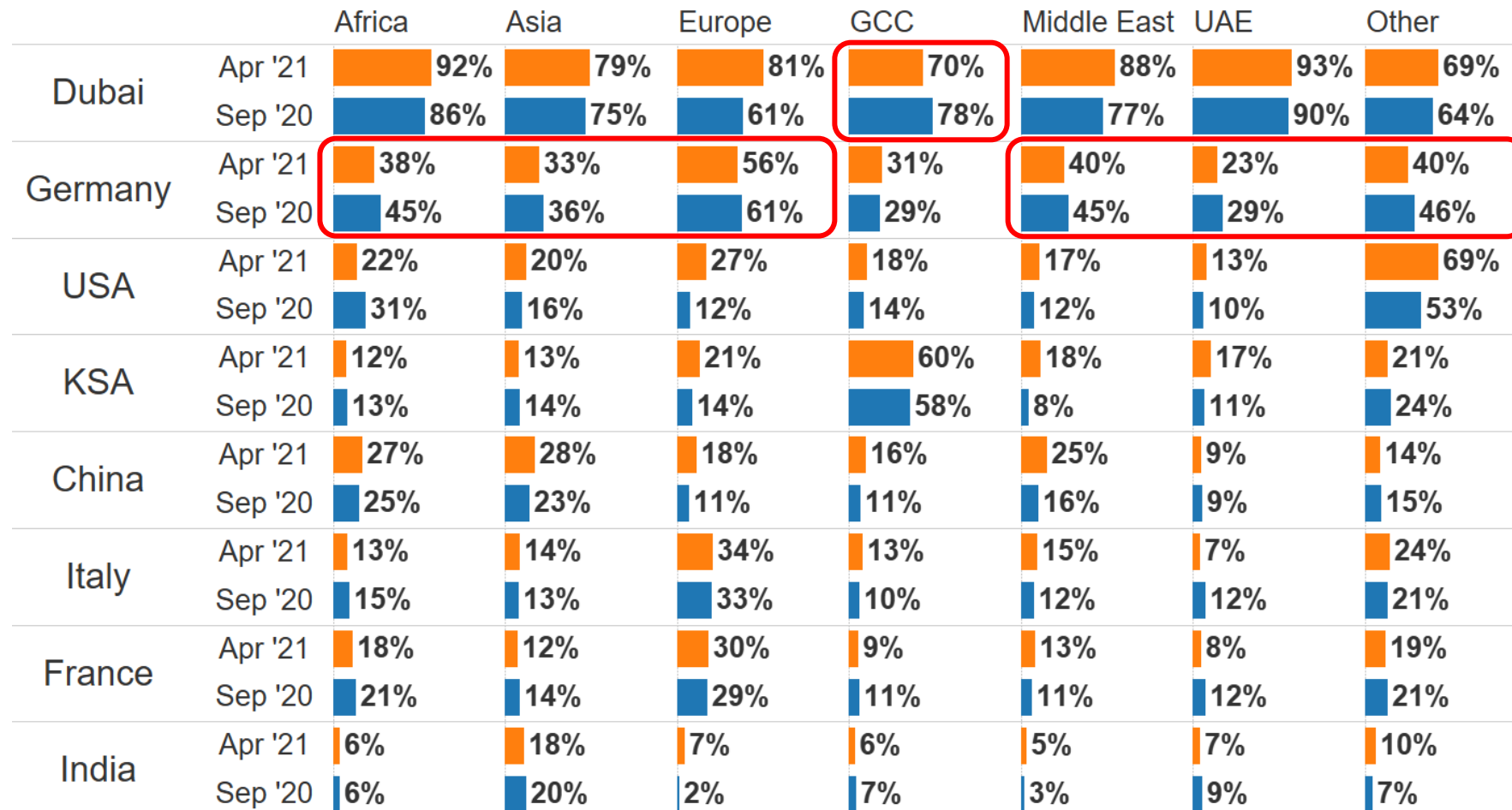
The Effects of Covid-19

Which of the following countries / regions you feel comfortable in attending exhibition?



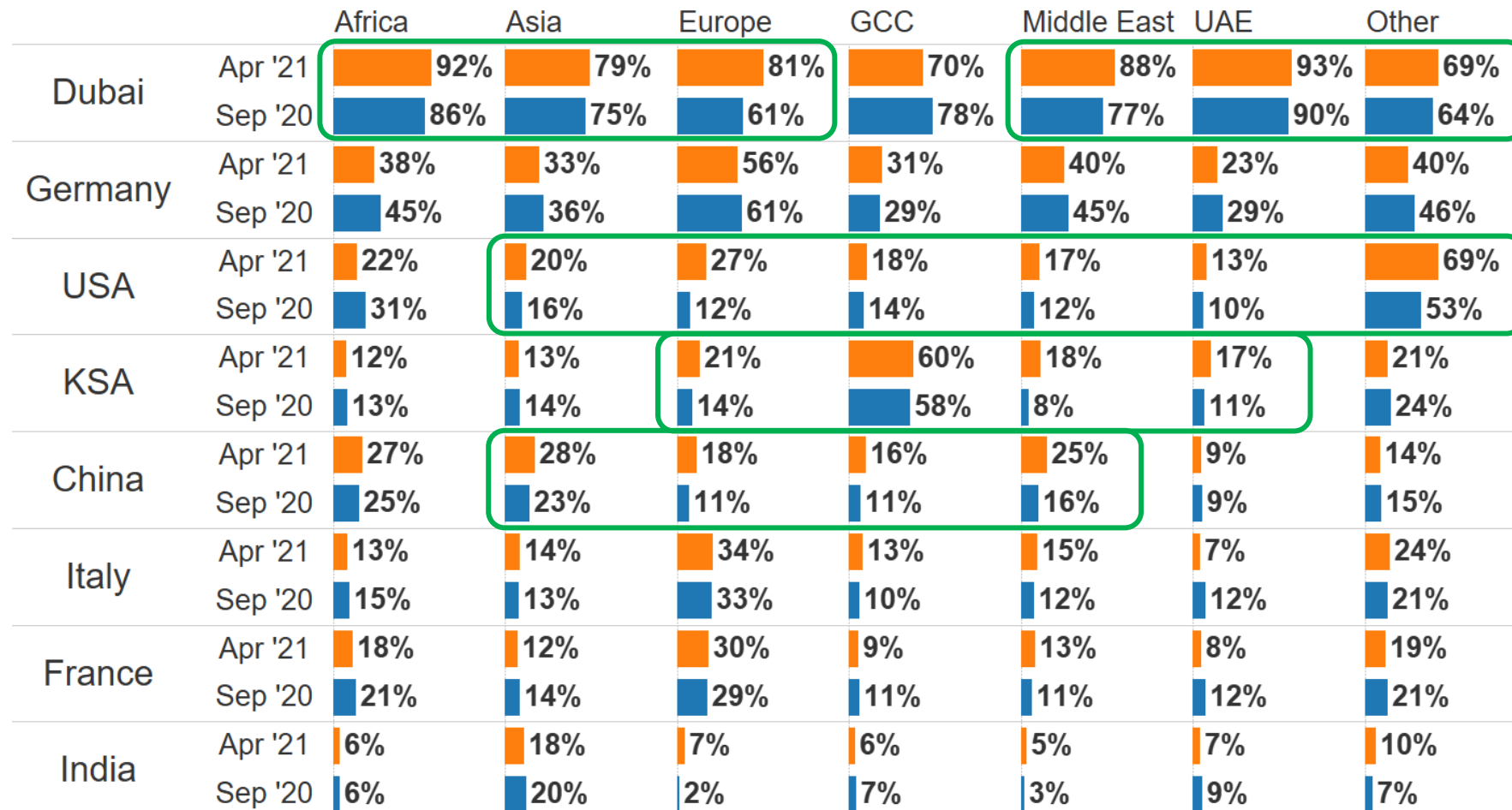
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