

Independent report reveals Expo 2025 Osaka attracted 1.53 billion EUR in national investments, setting critical strategic benchmarks for Expo 2030 Riyadh.

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EUR 1.53Bn

Total national investment
(≈ 282 Bn JPY)

25.57M

Visits — largest human
gathering of 2025

53%

Of average EUR 32M pavilion budget
spent on construction

AMSTERDAM /RIYADH, June 23, 2026 — A new independent analysis of Expo 2025 Osaka provides governments and organisers with the most relevant financial and operational benchmarks as Saudi Arabia prepares to host the 2030 World Exposition in Riyadh.

Published by world exposition experts THEY VISUALIZE VALUE, the report shows that participating countries invested a total of approx EUR 1.53 billion in the development of the independent national pavilions in Osaka, marking a milestone in Expo history.

One of the most significant drivers of this shift was the increasing share of capital consumed by building costs. In Osaka, 53 percent of the average EUR 32 million pavilion budget went to construction.

“The Yumeshima Island location forced countries to invest more money in smaller, more compact pavilions. Total investment was almost 34 percent higher than at Expo 2000 Hannover, for example, adjusted for inflation. Yet, because the Expo was hosted on an island with limited space, pavilion sizes dropped by roughly 40 percent, averaging 1,740 square meters. This made it a relatively expensive Expo for participating countries, offering lessons for future Expo organisers.”

— Tjaco Walvis, co-founder at THEY VISUALIZE VALUE and lead researcher of the project

“Nevertheless, with 25.57 million visits, Expo 2025 Osaka was the largest human gathering on Earth in 2025. It was a massive global event, hosted by Japan, and a cultural, geopolitical, and financial success. There are many vital lessons for the organisers of future Expo’s.”

— Tjaco Walvis

The report consolidates insights from independent interviews with commissioners and pavilion directors, offering clear lessons for the Expo 2030 Riyadh Organisers. Participants noted that rules were sometimes confusing and too stringent and that while the Expo was promoted locally in Osaka, it was practically invisible elsewhere.

The goal of world expo’s is to stimulate better understanding between the people of the world.

“One key theme we have seen throughout our reports since 1992 is the need to improve global marketing of the event. Expo 2030 offers a unique opportunity for Saudi Arabia to truly host the world and bring people from across the planet together.”

— Tjaco Walvis

ABOUT THE REPORT

“Expo 2025 Osaka in Numbers” is the third edition of THEY’s “Expo in Numbers” series and an independent, private initiative since 1992. THEY believe the purpose of world expo’s is to stimulate better understanding between the people of the world. For over three decades, the team behind THEY has been deeply involved in world expositions, motivated by this purpose.

Expo 2025 Osaka in Numbers is invaluable for national teams reporting back to their government as well as teams planning future pavilions for World Expos such as Belgrade 2027 and Expo 2030 Riyadh. It covers 120 pages and includes:

- Expo 2025 pavilion performance benchmarks (visits, costs, m², staffing, capacity), compiled across independent national pavilions.
- Creative strategies and Expo 2025 case studies explaining why certain pavilions worked, using clear strategic lenses (creative approach, narrative style, visitor density and operational reality).
- Advice from Commissioners and Pavilion Directors what they would repeat, what they would change, and what future teams should know from day one.
- Lessons and blueprints for future Expos, connecting Osaka’s learnings to practical decisions teams must make for Belgrade 2027 and Riyadh 2030.

Expo 2025 Osaka in Numbers offers valuable insights for governments, ministries, expo authorities, and architectural firms preparing for future Expos. It outlines patterns in spending, design decisions, and operational outcomes that may shape global participation strategies in the coming decades.

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ABOUT THEY VISUALIZE VALUE

THEY VISUALIZE VALUE is a creative leadership communications agency based in Amsterdam and New Delhi, specialising in strategic storytelling and communication for nations, governments, and large-scale entrepreneurs. The agency provides independent research, communication strategy, narrative development and creative execution for organisations seeking to articulate and amplify their impact on a global stage.

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