

Delegate Expenditure Survey

Estimating the Direct
Expenditure Benefits of
Conferences to a Local Area.

September 2006

An Advisory Note from the
UK National Tourist Boards.



Visit Wales
Croeso Cymru

Incentive Trip Organisers' Expenditure

Conferences, meetings and incentive programmes are a key segment of the tourism market in many locations across Britain and Ireland and can make an important contribution to destinations' economic wellbeing and development. Research was undertaken in 1997 and updated in 2001 to estimate the value of conference and meetings delegates. In 2005, VisitBritain, VisitScotland, VisitWales and Failte Ireland commissioned a new research programme to provide up to date estimates.

963 interviews were conducted with delegates at 29 conferences. These were complemented by 50 interviews with Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs). The majority of the research was conducted by BDRC.

The figures include estimates of expenditure by delegates themselves, by conference organisers on behalf of delegates and expenditure by people accompanying delegates.

This note highlights some of the key findings from the study on delegate spend, and provides advice on how best to use the data to estimate expenditure by conference delegates in a local area.

Delegate Expenditure

A summary of the average expenditure per delegate per conference day is set out below. Data from the study can be applied in the following categories:

Association: Professional, academic and trade groups, societies, clubs

Corporate: Company meetings, training courses, sales meetings, board meetings, product launches etc

Other: Public sector and government bodies, charities, voluntary organisations, religious organisations, political parties and trade unions

For the purpose of this study, a conference was defined as an out of office meeting of at least 6 hours involving a minimum of 15 people. Where there was any ambiguity in defining the type of meeting, it was left to the organiser to select the appropriate category.

Conference Key Facts

	Mean number of conference days	Incidence of people accompanying delegates	Incidence of people staying pre or post conference
Corporate day	1 day	2%	0%
Corporate multi-day	2.08 days	2%	6%
Domestic association day	1 day	1%	0%
Domestic association multi-day	2.90 days	7%	23%
International association	3.59 days	12%	31%
Others	2.77 days	32%	10%

Average Expenditure

Table 1:
Average Expenditure
per Delegate per day (%)

Expenditure Category	Corporate Day	Corporate Multi-day	Domestic Association Day	Domestic Association Multi-Day	International Association	Other
Registration fee	0%	0%	32%	16%	18%	10%
Overnight accommodation at the conference	0%	17%	0%	16%	23%	30%
Overnight accommodation before/after the conference	0%	2%	0%	4%	8%	1%
Local travel at conference destination	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Food & drink at the conference	1%	5%	<1%	3%	5%	4%
Food & drink before/after the conference	2%	2%	6%	2%	3%	6%
Evening events/entertainment at the conference	0%	<1%	<1%	1%	1%	<1%
Evening events/entertainment before or after the conference	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Shopping & gifts	11%	6%	<1%	2%	5%	8%
Day trips and/or pre or post conference tours	0%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Expenditure by people accompanying delegates	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%
Total Expenditure Per Day by the Delegate	16%	35%	41%	48%	66%	64%
Total Expenditure Per Day (PCO)	84%	65%	59%	52%	34%	36%
Total Expenditure Per Day	£120	£459	£170	£461	£364	£305

Average Expenditure

Table 2:
Incentive Trip Organisers' Expenditure

Accommodation	40%
Meals	22%
Events	12%
Entertainment	10%
Travel at destination	9%
Activities	6%
Other costs	2%
Incentive trip organiser total expenditure per participant day	£293

Notes to Tables 1 and 2:

- i** Travel to and from the conference destination are excluded.
- ii** The figures in Table 1 include estimates of expenditure by delegates themselves, by conference organisers on behalf of delegates and expenditure by people accompanying delegates.
- iii** The incentive trip figures in Table 2 are based only on research among organisers. No data is available on expenditure by individuals participating in the incentive trips due to difficulty in collecting this data.
- iv** The expenditure figures are an average for all delegates including both those who did and those who did not spend on each category.
- v** Expenditure before and after the conference is included in the totals as is expenditure by accompanying persons.
- vi** International Associations are not split Day versus Multi-Day as is the case for Corporates and Domestic Associations. This is due to a low occurrence of single day International Association Conferences and interviewing at only multi-day events in the survey.

Application

Applying the figures
to local events

The figures in this note provide a good basis for estimating the direct benefit of conference expenditure to an area, and some examples of how to apply the figures are given below. The figures do not include any economic multiplier effects which may arise from any direct or indirect delegate spend.

- i** A 45 - delegate corporate meeting lasts 2 days:
 $45 \times 2 \times \text{£}459$
Total expenditure is $\text{£}41,310$

- ii** A 150 - delegate international association meeting lasts 3 days:
 $150 \times 3 \times \text{£}364$
Total expenditure is $\text{£}163,800$

- iii** A 90 - delegate domestic association meeting lasts 1 day:
 $90 \times \text{£}170$
Total expenditure is $\text{£}15,300$

Notes:

i The research was undertaken in 2005-6. When applying these figures to events in the future, it is recommended that a note is made to advise that figures are on a 2006 base.

ii Some areas may have detailed local expenditure survey studies which provide more robust information for their local area. If no such studies exist, the national tourist boards recommend the use of the expenditure estimates in this note.

iii If the categorisation of a specific event is unclear, it is suggested that the event is placed within the category which appears to offer the best fit, and that again, this point is noted.

iv The table provides good information on the mix of activities delegates spend money on, and can be a useful tool to stress to accommodation providers, retailers and restaurateurs the expected benefit of conferences to their specific sector.

Further Information

Further information on this and other research as well as advice and promotion opportunities can be obtained by contacting the business tourism teams at the sponsoring organisations listed below:

VisitBritain
Thames Tower
Black's Road
London
W6 9EL
Tel: 020 8563 3386
meetengland@visitbritain.org
www.visitbritain.com

VisitScotland
Business Tourism Unit
One Ocean Point
94 Ocean Drive
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Tel: 0131 472 2355
businesstourism@visitscotland.com
www.conventionscotland.com

Visit Wales
Brunel House
2 Fitzalan Road
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