

Report to the



UK Subvention Policy and Bid Support Practices
for International Conferences and Events

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Introduction

This paper outlines the results of research carried out by The Right Solution and Tony Rogers Conference & Event Services, commissioned by the Business Visits & Events Partnership. Additional research undertaken by CAT Publications with international associations is attached as an appendix to this report.

The broad aims of the project were to update the information contained in the 2011 report into subvention and bid support practices in order to inform and guide the work of the new Events Industry Board and its objective of identifying and winning more major international events for the UK.

It was agreed that the updated report would not need to contain recommendations but would state the facts of what is currently happening in the global marketplace in terms of subvention-type support practices.

The results of research with international associations, UK based conference organisers and PCOs plus destinations in the UK and worldwide are provided here.

A session discussing the findings with organisers and destinations was held at The Meetings Show on 15th June 2016. The key points as concluded by that session are included in the report.

Additional case studies and examples of what is currently happening, by way of subvention and bid support in the global market place are also provided.

Research with international associations undertaken by CAT Publications is also attached as an appendix.

Executive Summary

The research findings are based on feedback from direct conference organisers (representing companies, national and international associations, charities, government bodies and others), professional conference organisers (PCOs -mostly UK based), and UK and international convention bureaus or destination marketing organisations (representing cities and, in some cases, countries).

Direct Conference Organisers

Subvention funding was an important influence on the choice of destination for international association and charity organisations. It was much less significant for corporate organisations.

The commonest form of subvention received was a direct (cash) subsidy, followed by discounts on venue hire costs, contributions to event marketing and civic receptions. The amount of funding received varied from up to £50,000, to as much as £250,000.

Around a fifth of conference organisers had been involved in bids to attract conferences to UK cities and destinations in the last two years. 18% indicated that bids with which they had been involved had gone to overseas destinations/venues principally because they were able to offer greater subvention and/or in-kind support.

Organisers identified that it was important to have the right combination of subvention (particularly in terms of assistance with venue hire costs), infrastructure, welcome, and convention bureau support. One organiser also commented: "The most important thing is that all stakeholders in the destination need to be on board with the bid – and critically really "WANT" the business ... a joined up approach will undoubtedly win the confidence of the event buyer who is placing the business."

The UK destination that was seen by organisers as leading the way in the provision of subvention funding was Glasgow. This was followed by Liverpool and, to a lesser extent, Belfast.

Professional Conference Organisers

The presence of event and bid support, such as subvention, was important for the majority of professional conference organisers (PCOs) in their bid preparation for international conferences. PCOs particularly look for destination support in the form of organising/funding familiarisation and site visits, as well as contributions to funding elements of the conference including civic receptions. Subsidies on venue hire costs and direct cash funding were also frequently sought.

PCOs noted an upward trend over the past five years in terms of subvention requests from international associations.

PCOs also confirmed experiences of events being lost to overseas destinations due to a lack of subvention funding in the UK. Cities identified as leading the way in developing a competitive edge through subvention include Barcelona, Berlin, Geneva, Singapore, Seoul, Vienna, Melbourne, Dubai, Frankfurt, Madrid and Munich. Specific examples of good practice cited were favourable VAT arrangements offered by Canada and Mexico, and Australia's easier online visa application for conference attendance.

One PCO made the point that "successful bids generally require the support of industry and research and development leaders in the client's specialist area. This means sponsorship support from industry

and access to leading speakers in R&D. It also means government involvement to demonstrate their commitment to the specialism in question, often involving public engagement platforms during the congress.”

PCOs suggested a number of changes needed by UK convention bureaux and national government agencies to improve the chances of success when bidding for international conferences and events. Ideas include having a strategic approach to target sectors; better research into the support needs of international association clients; better funding for convention bureaux and national agencies, with expert staff; improved visa and VAT arrangements; the crucial importance of a package of total support.

Destination Marketing Organisations

Destination marketing organisations reported that requests for subvention funding from international associations had increased over the last five years, reflecting a robust (growing) association marketplace and/or an increasing expectation by organisers of subvention assistance.

The average subvention budget was £232,000. There were significant variations with budgets ranging from £20k to £548k. The average level of support per event was approximately £15,892. On average, destinations supported 42 events through subvention funding / in-kind support in the last year. This was higher among international destinations (54.5 events) and lower among UK (14.3).

Destinations highlighted a number of elements that were important to approach subvention funding. These included provision of wide-ranging types of assistance and bid support, working with delegates, the influence of partnerships and ambassadors, and the wider potential role of conferences and subvention.

Success and good practice were as a function of a number of factors including significant budgets, high level government support, and partnerships (particularly with venues).

Top ten countries worldwide for international association meetings

The context for this research is set by the position of the UK in the latest international meeting statistics which are gathered by two organisations, the UIA and ICCA. These are shown below. It is interesting to note the different position of the UK according to the different qualifying criteria.

UIA 2014			UIA 2013			ICCA 2015			ICCA 2014		
Top ten countries for international meetings	Number of meetings	Percentage of all meetings	Top ten countries for international meetings	Number of meetings	Percentage of all meetings	Top ten countries for international meetings	Number of meetings	Percentage of all meetings	Top ten countries for international meetings	Number of meetings	Percentage of all meetings
Singapore	927	8.3	Singapore	1132	10.2	USA	925	7.7%	USA	918	7.4%
USA	859	7.7	USA	802	7.2	Germany	667	5.6%	Germany	705	5.7%
Belgium	855	7.6	Korea Rep	703	6.3	UK	582	4.9%	UK	604	4.9%
Japan	700	6.2	Japan	631	5.7	Spain	572	4.8%	Spain	576	4.7%
Korea Rep	699	6.2	Spain	550	5.0	France	522	4.4%	France	570	4.6%
France	597	5.3	Belgium	512	4.6	Italy	504	4.2%	Italy	532	4.3%
Austria	583	5.2	Austria	438	3.9	Japan	355	3.0%	China PR	396	3.2%
Spain	538	4.8	Germany	434	3.9	Netherlands	333	2.8%	Japan	358	2.9%
Germany	462	4.1	France	428	3.9	China P-R	333	2.8%	Netherlands	329	2.7%
Netherlands	379	3.4	UK	352	3.2	Canada	308	2.6%	Austria	304	2.5%
UK	355	3.2	<i>11th position</i>								

Source: Union International Associations and International Convention and Congress Association

N. B. Please note the UIA records international meetings that have a minimum of 300 participants who come from at least five countries; and where at least 40% of the participants come from abroad. The ICCA database records international association meetings that have a minimum of 50 participants; rotate between three countries or more and take place regularly. The differing qualifying criteria is the reason for the different results outlined above.

The ICCA statistics for 2015 were published in May 2016. The UIA statistics for 2015 will not be available until September 2016.

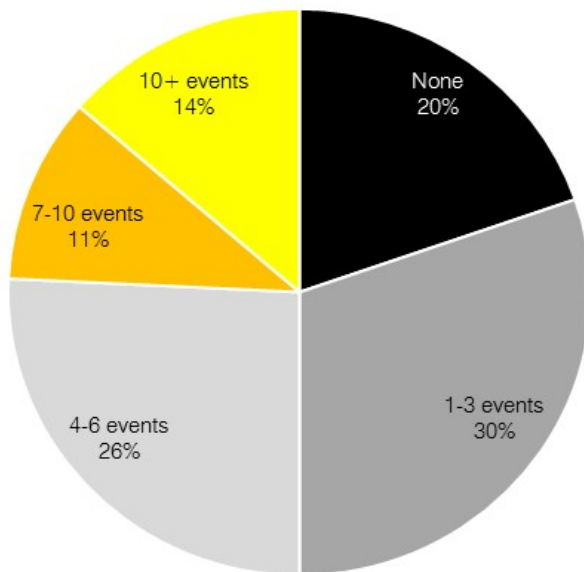
Results from Direct Conference Organisers

Sample Characteristics

40 direct organisers provided full responses.

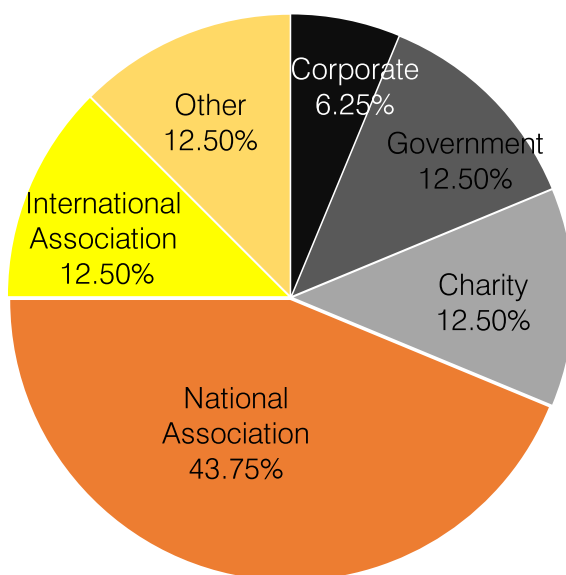
They had all organised at least one conference event of at least 100 delegates in the last two years with many responsible for multiple events.

No. of Events Organised (last 2 years)



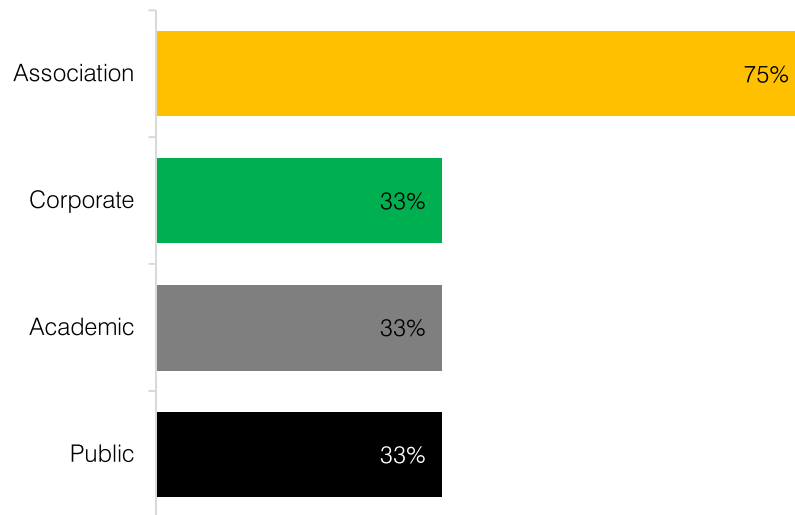
NB An event is a conference event of 100+ delegates

Type of Organisation



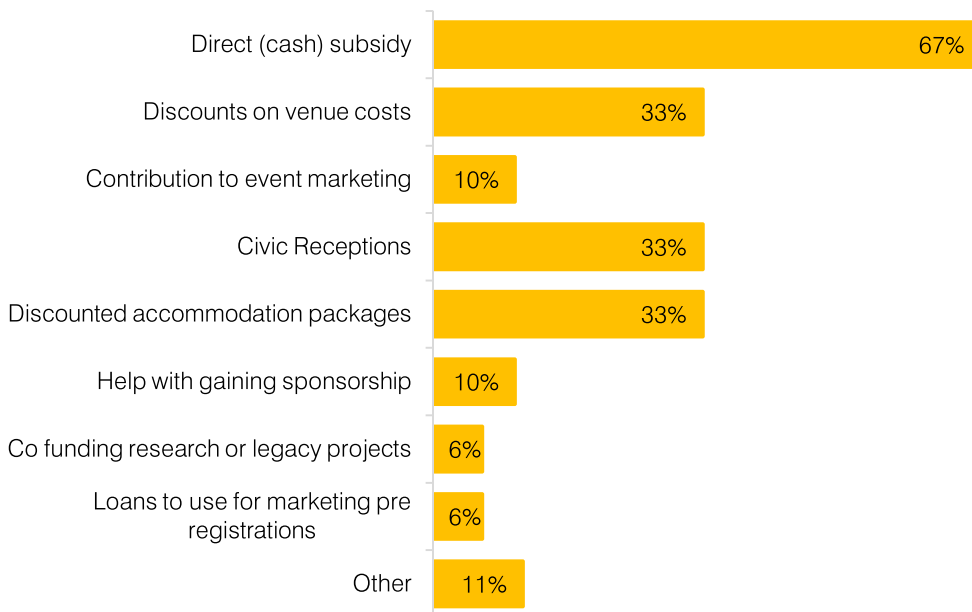
Respondents were from a variety of different organisation types. Reflecting this, respondents were most likely to have organised association conferences (56% of respondents), followed by other not for profit events (25% of respondents).

Types of Events Organised (last 2 years)



Subvention Funding Received

Type of Subvention/In-kind Support received



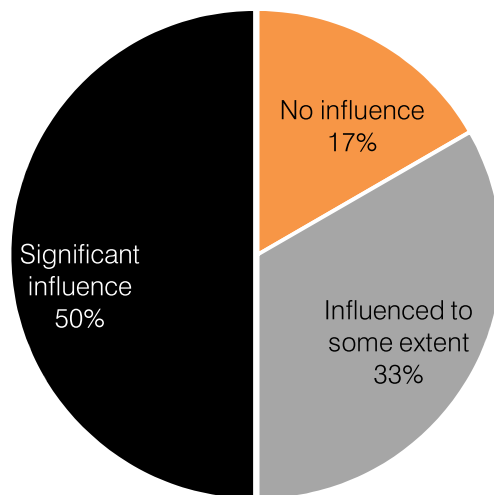
While the majority of respondents (58%) had not received any subvention funding or in-kind support for any conference events they had organised in the UK in the last two years, a quarter had received funding for a number of events. This was particularly the case for International Association and Charity organisations (albeit based on a small number of responses).

Respondents highlighted a number of destinations they had received funding from. The most common was Glasgow and London. A number of other UK destinations were also mentioned including Liverpool, Harrogate, Belfast and Birmingham and Manchester.

For recipients of subvention funding, it was an influence on choice of destination – half (50%) of those receiving it indicated it had significantly influenced their choice of destination, and a further third indicated it had influenced them to some extent.

The commonest form of subvention received was a direct (cash) subsidy (72% of recipients), followed by discounts on venue costs (45%), contributions to event marketing and civic receptions (both 39%).

Influence of Subvention Funding / In-kind Support on Destination Choice



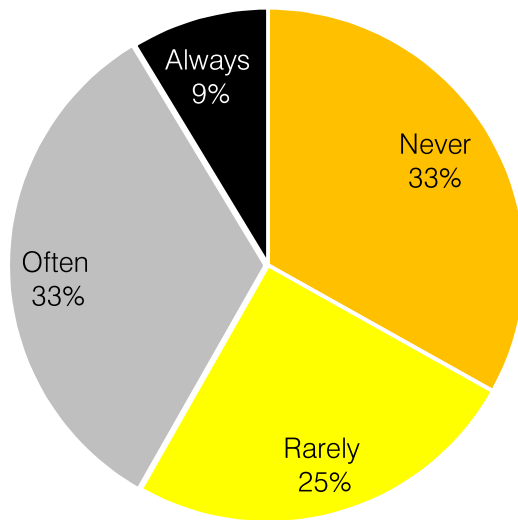
Subvention funding received was up to £50,000 (for 33% of respondents receiving subvention funding). Another third of respondents had received between £50k-100k and a further third between £100k-250k.

Potential Subvention Funding

20% had been involved in bids to attract conferences to UK cities and destinations in the last two years.

18% indicated that bids they had been involved in had gone to overseas destinations/venues principally because they were able to offer greater subvention and/or in-kind support.

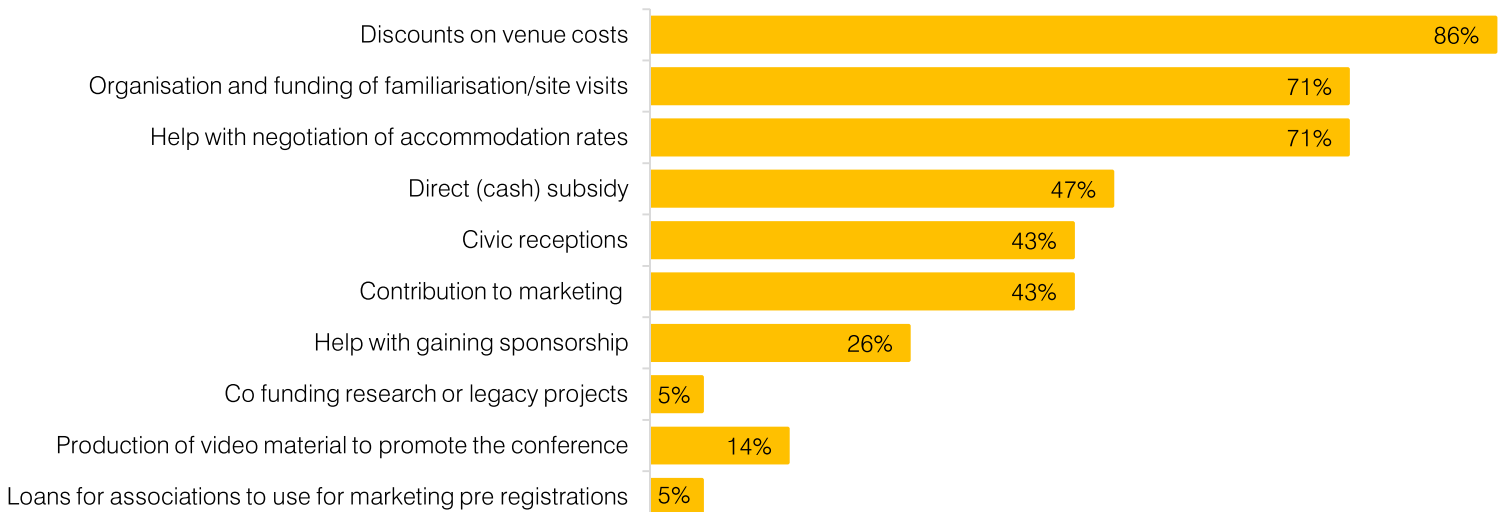
Subvention / In-kind Support - how Frequently it Influences Destination Choice



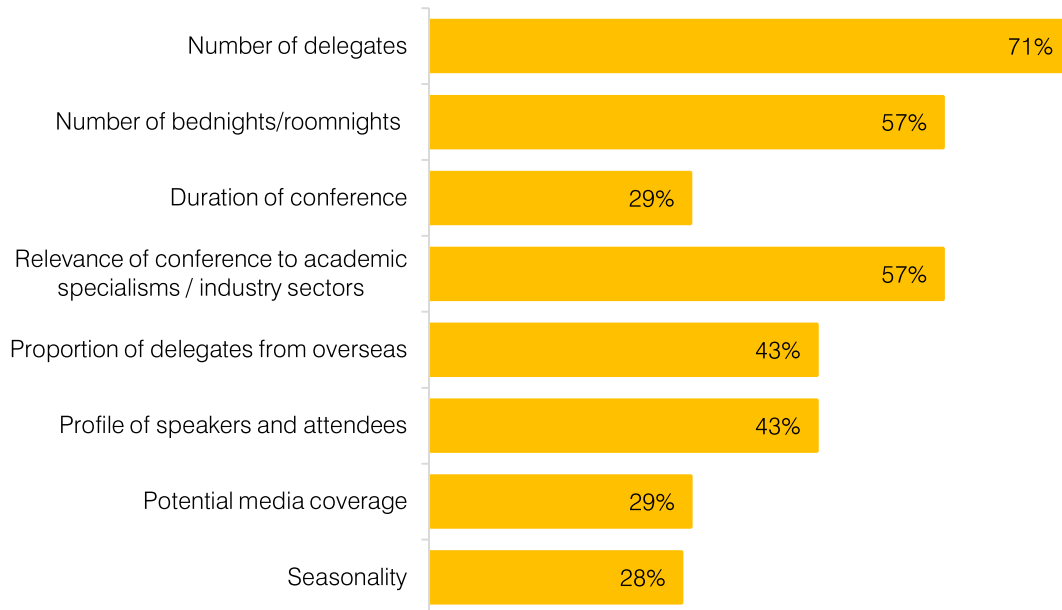
42% of organisers are often or always influenced by subvention or in-kind support. It tended not to be an influence for 33% of organisers), and rarely influence 25%.

Where organisers were often and / or always looking for subvention funding, they tended to be primarily looking for a discount on the venue cost. Other common areas identified for support included organisation and funding of familiarisation and site visits, help with negotiation on accommodation rates, civic receptions, and direct cash subsidies.

Type of Subvention / In-kind Support Looked for Most Often



Best Evaluators for Destinations to Decide on Awarding Subvention



Organisers' views on the best evaluators for subvention awards are shown above. Supporting comments are:

The overall driver to awarding subvention appears to be the economic value of the event to the destination concerned and the potential for repeat business in the future. This is especially important in the case of events, which are cyclical in nature and will revisit the same destination in subsequent years. Securing high profile events is also used by destinations as a case study to encourage similar events to bid to use their location and facilities.

Destinations are also interested in the potential "add on" business for pre and post activities – particularly for events with a large proportion of international delegates – or which have partner programmes – as this adds to the overall economic value and impact.

From an organiser's point of view, seasonality can be important in terms of security the best discounts on venue and accommodation costs.

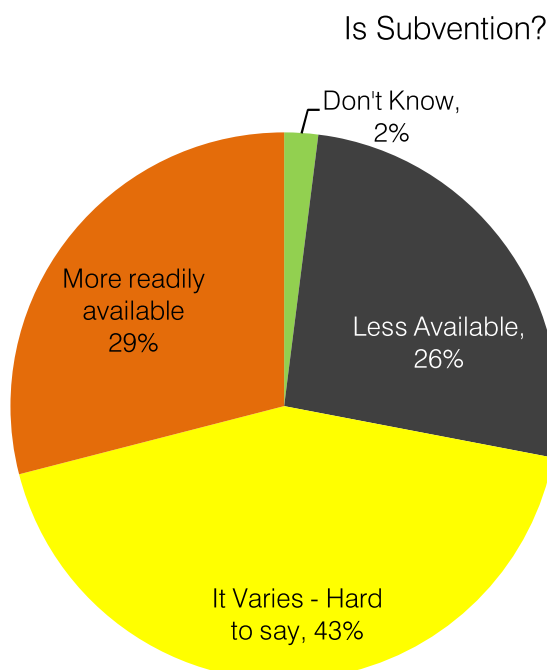
The most important thing is that all stakeholders in the destination need to be on board with evaluating and supporting the bid and critically "WANT" the business. This may mean there is more consideration for some elements of the bid than others (the conference venue in particular or a hotel which is chosen as a Headquarters base which tends to get F&B as well as bedrooms) but a joined up approach will undoubtedly win the confidence of the event buyer who is placing the business. Those perceived as losers for one bid will undoubtedly be winners for another bid. It is important to enable "buyers" to "see for themselves" the destination at first hand. An approach which convinces buyers that they – and most importantly their delegates – will feel welcome and safe is essential. Any support to help the event organiser to sell the benefits of the destination to potential audiences is particularly helpful.

Destinations

The UK destination that was seen as leading the way in the provision of subvention funding by organisers was Glasgow. This was followed by Liverpool and, to a lesser extent, Belfast. Internationally a number of destinations and countries were also highlighted. These included Frankfurt, Dublin, USA, Spain, Qatar, Dubai, Cannes, Montreal, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Organisers also identified that it was important to have the right combination of subvention, (particularly in terms of assistance with venue hire), infrastructure, welcome, and convention bureau support, For example:

- *“The key element isn't just about subvention but infrastructure. Access via flight, number of high standard hotels, public transport, etc.”*
- *“Conference centres are often more expensive than hotels so discounts on venue hire can make bids more competitive. Flexibility is key so confidence in the convention bureau takes a weight off the event manager's mind.”*
- *“Belfast and Glasgow are both cities that have impressed me as they know they are competing against larger, more popular, well known globally or more established destinations. London, Manchester and Birmingham are all guilty of just assuming that good transport links will win them business. The support networks from Glasgow especially in producing materials, assisting in bookings and fam trips has been incredibly helpful to us especially as a small team. We feel very valued and that we have a dedicated team within Glasgow Convention Bureau that knows our event well and what our needs are. They have become part of the team and attended other events of ours to promote Glasgow as a destination to our international delegates.”*
- *“The most important thing is that all stakeholders in the destination need to be on board with the bid - and critically to really "WANT" the business. a joined up approach will undoubtedly win the confidence of the event buyer who is placing the business. Despite the economic benefit of the peace process there are still negative perceptions of Belfast and Northern Ireland, so an approach which enables buyers to "see for themselves" is more critical there than other parts of the UK. An approach which convinces buyers that they - and most importantly their delegates - will feel welcome and safe is essential. And support to help the event organiser to sell the benefits of the destination to the potential audience is particularly helpful.”*



Key Points:

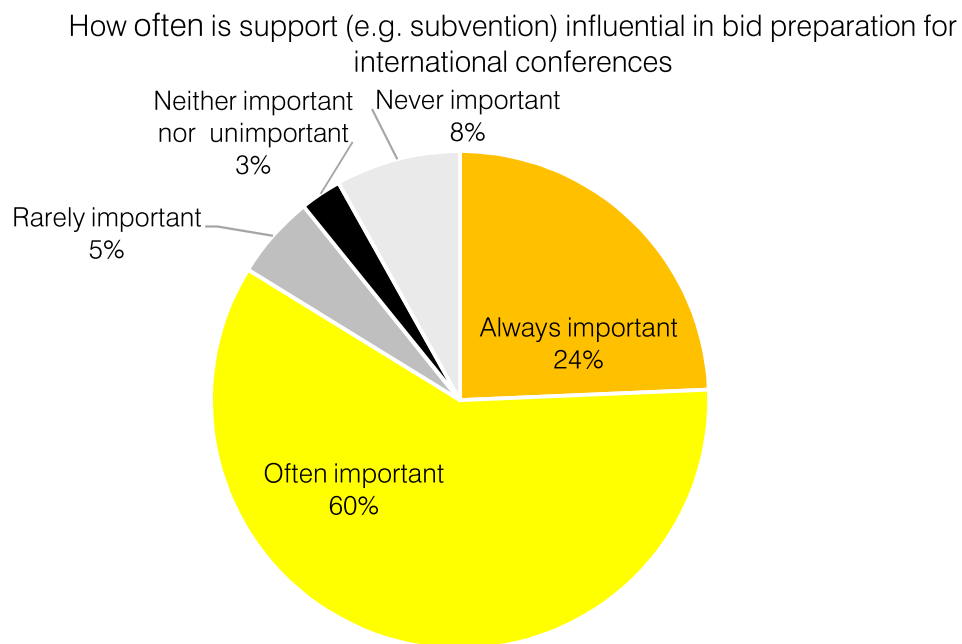
- About a quarter of organisers had received Subvention funding a number of times in the last two years. Frequently mentioned destinations providing this were Manchester, London and Glasgow.
- For organisers receiving subvention funding, it was an influence on their choice of destination – half indicated it had significantly influenced their choice of destination.
- The commonest form of subvention received was a direct (cash) subsidy (67% of recipients), followed by discounts on venue costs, contributions to event marketing, and civic receptions.
- Subvention funding received varied from up to £50,000 to as much as £250K.
- Among all organisers, 42% said subvention was often or always an influence on choice of destination.
- The principal element of subvention organisers were looking for was a discount on the venue cost.
- The number of delegates was seen as the best evaluator for destinations to decide on awarding subvention funding.
- The UK destination that was seen as leading the way in the provision of subvention funding by organisers was Glasgow
- Organisers highlighted elements as important which were the right combination of subvention (particularly in terms of assistance with venue hire), infrastructure, welcome, and convention bureau support.

Results from Professional Conference Organisers

Influence of Subvention Funding / In-kind support

Overall 37 UK based PCOs partially responded to the survey – although 31 completed more substantial parts of the questionnaire.

The presence of event and bid support, such as subvention, was important for the majority (84%) of PCOs in their bid preparation for international conferences. Typically PCOs (69%) regarded support as 'often important' but a quarter highlighted that support was 'always important'.



PCOs would look for a range of forms of support from destinations (see chart below).

The key ones were organisation and funding of familiarisation/site visits, and contributions to funding elements of the conference, civic receptions, etc. (both highlighted by 81% of PCOs).

As with conference organisers, subsidies on venue costs and direct cash funding subsidies (subvention) were also frequently looked for by PCOs (by 68% and 61%) respectively.

Other points highlighted by PCOs include:

- *"I think there is a distinction between what we are offered versus what we look for. The former is now influencing the latter"*
- *"It is really about the whole package - the more support (either financially or in-kind) one can get, the better!"*
- *"Support for Ambassadors to help them make a business case for their involvement in the bid."*

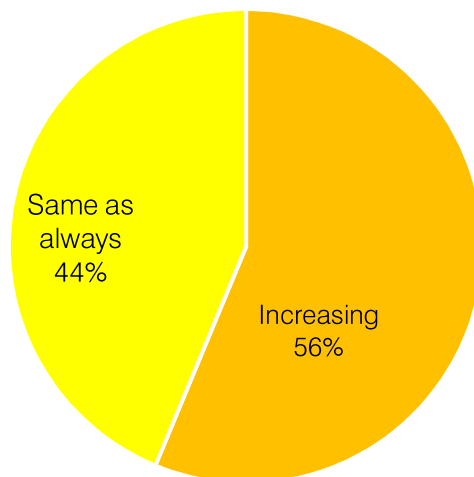
Forms of event support looked for from destinations



Trends in request for Subvention Funding

PCOs were asked whether subvention requests from international Associations were increasing. The trend was upwards – just over half of PCOs (albeit on a small sample size) had reported an increase in requests over the last five years.

Trend in Subvention Requests from International Associations



Amount of Subvention required

PCOs generally indicated that the amount of subvention required by international associations varied depending on the size of the event. Variations ranged from £10K to £200K. Responses included:

- “It rarely comes down to actual cash - it is about the combined value of the offer to what we are trying to achieve”
- “€30.00 per delegate in Vienna”
- “Difficult to say - it very much depends on the actual pricing of the destination itself”
- “It varies dependent on size of conference £10k to £200k”
- “50,000 - 100,000 Euros.”
- “It varies by scale and type of programme”

Potential subvention evaluation methods for UK destinations

PCOs highlighted a number of different methods for destinations to potentially evaluate conferences for subvention. These include:

- Economic impact measures: for example, size of event, duration
- Seasonality of the event
- Fit – e.g. whether there is a close tie between a local university department or research institute and the proposed conference, sector specialisms, a mechanism for development / inward investment / job creation etc.
- Profile – political, prestige
- Future impact – e.g. whether the event can be secured in future years.
- Overall contribution to the city – economic, political, prestigious
- Financial risk of the conference taking place and the subvention

Lost bids because of lack of subvention funding

A number of PCOs indicated this was privileged information but a number did highlight examples of bids that had been lost to overseas destinations due to a lack of subvention funding. For example:

- “The organisers were not on the board and this affected the final decision as it was primarily a political decision. The bid was lost to Korea as they did offer a substantial subvention in the region of \$500,000.”
- “4 day conference, approximately 1000 delegates. Lost to Cannes where the venue cost was heavily discounted / subsidised”
- “It happens all the time” e.g. 1000 delegates x 3 days in 2017
- “Venues in Australia regularly offer such subvention in order to offset costs. Gulf States offer significant amounts to win such bids (up to £½million)”.
- Prague offered subvention on transport and Vienna offered subvention @ €15.00 per head plus a free dinner venue
- When a destination offers the rental cost of the venue (free), it is impossible to compete.
- In Australia venues regularly offer subvention to offset costs. Gulf States offer 10X other destinations.

Overseas cities and countries and subvention

A number of overseas cities and countries were highlighted as leading the way in developing a competitive edge through subvention. Commonly mentioned ones included Barcelona and Berlin, (see below). Others that were mentioned included Geneva, Singapore, Seoul, Prague, Vienna, Melbourne, Dubai, Frankfurt, Madrid and Munich.

More substantial examples of good practice included:

- “Canada - grants and favourable VAT arrangements Mexico - favourable VAT status for international events Australia - subventions and easier online Visa application for 30 day access for conference attendance”
- “Istanbul offer excellent subvention support where they discount the venue to almost a negligible amount. Most cities in America charge very little or nothing for the venue but do require guarantees of delegates and bedroom nights. Thessaloniki, Greece offer a fantastic social programme and volunteers to work at the conference as well as a discounted venue cost.”
- “It is all about the "overall package" to show that you (as a destination) care. True partnerships (delivered by experts) are appreciated by clients. This is why the "Glasgow Model" got so much attention when it was launched and why the Netherlands "Pre-finance and Guarantee Fund" is a brilliant solution for associations. The more "real engagement", legacy commitment (such as London with European Cardiology, Glasgow on just about everything) from the destination the better. Clients truly want connections that are meaningful and will help the association in whatever its goals are.”
- “Successful bids generally require the support of industry and research and development leaders in the client's specialist area. This means sponsorship support from industry and access to leading speakers in R&D. It also means government involvement to demonstrate their commitment to the specialism in question, often involving public engagement platforms during the congress”.

Changes from city and national government agencies

PCOs were asked what changes and actions they would like to see from city convention bureaux/local government agencies in the UK, and national government agencies, to improve their chances of success when bidding for international conferences and events.

Responses included:

- “Define a strategy, obtain funding or support for what you are offering, make it clear to customers and then deliver”
- “Centralised approach with decision-making capability. Strategic view of target sectors and organisation; so everyone clear on what the destination is targeting.”
- “There are many factors and one size does not fit all. Research is required by the city to find out what would best suit the association or the agency responsible for organising the event. It could be they wish a sum of subvention money especially to help with start-up costs, reduced venue costs, assistance with some of the following: marketing, social programme, building delegate numbers, reduced accommodation costs, travel passes within the city, complimentary site visits for organisers, provision of bursaries and legacy projects.”
- “Be the one stop shop and listen to the client need, with a total flexibility in helping the client choose your destination”
- “Support demonstrated on government departmental or on local council level - either in form of letter or in person”
- “CVBs and national agencies should be funded well with expert staff that can provide the value and expertise to clients.”
- “As compliance restrictions make revenue generation more difficult for scientific/medical associations, so we need to find other ways of funding their congresses, particularly mitigating the financial risks and providing seed monies (if only interest free loans). This means working in

partnership with associations to ensure their congresses are viable by creating risk/reward strategies in venue contracts and with other major suppliers.”

- “Free transport, travel and accommodation bursaries. Support with public awareness. Access to captains of industry (specific to the sector)”
- “Straightforward and quick response to request.”
- “At city level, have the ability to offer in-kind support of items that will be a cost to event budget, welcome reception, dinner etc. or, cash subvention, or venue cost subsidy. Nationally, visa arrangements and VAT conditions”
- “Be more supportive on the use of local public resources (receptions) - municipal buildings at low rates, transport offers. Offer grants (sliding scales) to venues to help keep venue costs competitive (London) with the scale related to profit outcome from event”.
- “Have a clear subvention scale available to support the bid process”.
- “Having more ability to offer in kind support of items that will be a cost to the event budget”

PCO actions and approaches

PCOs were asked what actions and approaches adopted by their company in relation to subvention and bid support have been crucial to success in winning international events. A number of points were highlighted:

- Meeting with the president/president-elect or secretary to ascertain objectives of the conference and what they were looking for from the cities.
- Greater engagement with clients at bid stage to help support the bidding process
- Ensuring Council members were on the board who could be influential in the decision making process of the chosen destination
- Tailored site visits to the city which encompassed the programme objectives to enhance the city offering
- Aligning services and the offer with event/client desired outcomes
- Presenting the "real value" of subvention to the client to help make a decision
- Detailed budgets and cash flow forecasts enable a business case to be made for funding and loans. / In depth business modelling illustrating security of objectives for the host society.
- Ambassador lobbying
- The involvement of a wider community (industry, researchers, partner societies, government) ensures greater 'buy in' to the bid.
- Per delegate city funding support
- Support - Government and Captains of industry letters of support, marketing support, Visa support
- Risk/reward by venues to terms associated with anticipated numbers
- Great bid documents (electronic and printed), access to picture gallery and video content
- Promotion desk at the congress the year before it is inbound to the UK
- In depth business modelling illustrating advantages of objective to compete with subvention offers.

Other comments

PCOs were asked about any other comments in relation to the UK's subvention and bid support practices or the UK's competitiveness. These include:

- “It's not or shouldn't be about the money - it is about what destination assets you can bring into play that will support, enhance or help me better achieve the event outcomes. Otherwise you are ending up in a commoditized race to the bottom for money and that is not healthy for the destinations or the clients”

- “Many conferences are using core PCOs and it is important to meet with these agencies and find out what they are looking for as often they are underwriting the conferences and hold the purse strings. Research, networking and staying in touch with associations and agencies is very important to understand their objectives. Start-up monies is crucial for all conferences, especially smaller academic meetings under 1,000 delegates, and offering monies in advance to help their cash flow would be very advantageous until delegate, exhibition and sponsorship monies come in. Convention Bureaus and Local Government should also look at underwriting conferences and I am sure this would encourage more conferences to come to their destination.
- “Edinburgh has a good subvention process and the City has been successful in winning bids because of their clear subvention criteria. They are successful because of the 'joined up' approach of all elements of the supply chain, ensuring competitive pricing and support for their bids.”
- “Need to understand the impact of the changing rules on compliance to ensure subvention offer is compliant for those association congresses who rely on funding from pharma and medical device manufacturers.
- “Getting governmental support even in terms of endorsement letters can be very hard work. Little central government support evident to help in our competitiveness, to date.”
- “Would like to see bids be more 'actual' rather than travel location ideas. More in depth professionalism is needed.”

Key Points:

- The presence of Subvention Funding / In-kind Support was typically important to PCOs.
- PCOs were looking for a range of different subvention measures. The key ones were organisation and funding of familiarisation/site visits, and contributions to funding elements of the conference, civic receptions, etc., followed by subsidies on venue costs, and direct cash funding subsidies.
- However, PCOs did identify a number of other measures as important. These included:
 - Overcoming barriers such as visa applications
 - City wide logistical support - policing, road closures, transport
 - Access to speakers/ambassadors/city or national figureheads
 - Assistance with negotiation of accommodation rates, generating revenues (delegate building) and gaining sponsorship
 - City funded events
 - Loans or financial contribution for marketing
- The amount of Subvention Funding required varied enormously from event to event.
- Identified methods to evaluate applications included potential impacts and seasonality, fit (with economic / academic specialisms), profile, and likelihood of a re-visit.
- While a number of PCOs highlighted bids had been lost to international destinations due to higher subvention offers (“it happens all the time”), they did highlight that good practice was more than about the money. The importance of a package of total support was seen as key.
- Some of this was the type of tangible support highlighted above but a number of other elements were also emphasised. These included:
 - The importance of partnerships, understanding conference objectives, and joined-up delivery approaches.
 - A strategic approach and clarity on what the offer and criteria of support are
 - Support – from industry, government, ambassadors and the wider community etc. including lobbying, endorsement and speakers.
 - Flexible approaches from destination – “one size does not fit all” – with tailored approaches of support to different needs. Examples: sliding levels of venue support, potentially providing start up / seed monies for conferences
 - Efficiency, expertise and professionalism from bid teams, and good bid documents .

Results from Destinations

Sample Characteristics

The survey of destinations was conducted among UK and international destinations. Overall there were 85 responses.

Overview of Subvention Provision

71% provided subvention or in-kind benefits. 29% did not provide any subvention funding. For those, the reason for not providing subvention was simply a lack of funds or available budget. For example:

“Limited budgets in place for business tourism - not enough to offer subvention”

“Because our Council cannot afford it”

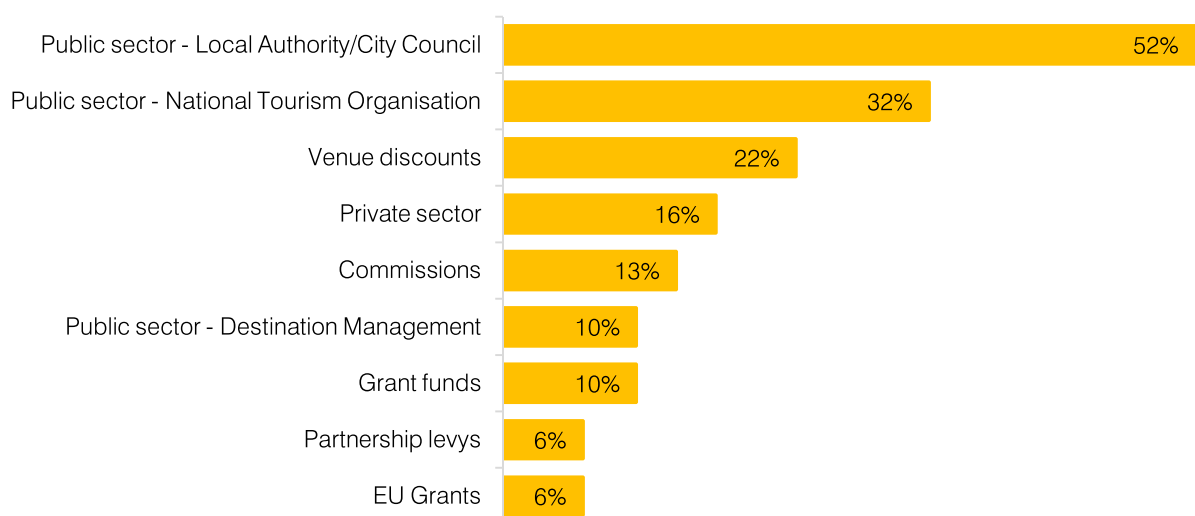
Sources of Subvention Funding

Just over half of destinations (54%) had multiple sources of funding for subvention. The rest of destinations (46%) had one primary source.

The commonest source of subvention funding was from a Local Authority / City Council – highlighted by half of destinations (52%). Other common sources of funding included the National Tourism Organisation (or national government) (two fifths of destinations) and a venue (a fifth of destinations). Less common were the private sector, commissions, grant funds, partnership levies, DMO and EU grants.

The UK is more likely to be raising funding from the private sector, commissions and partnership levies (albeit this was based on a small sample size).

Sources of Subvention Funding

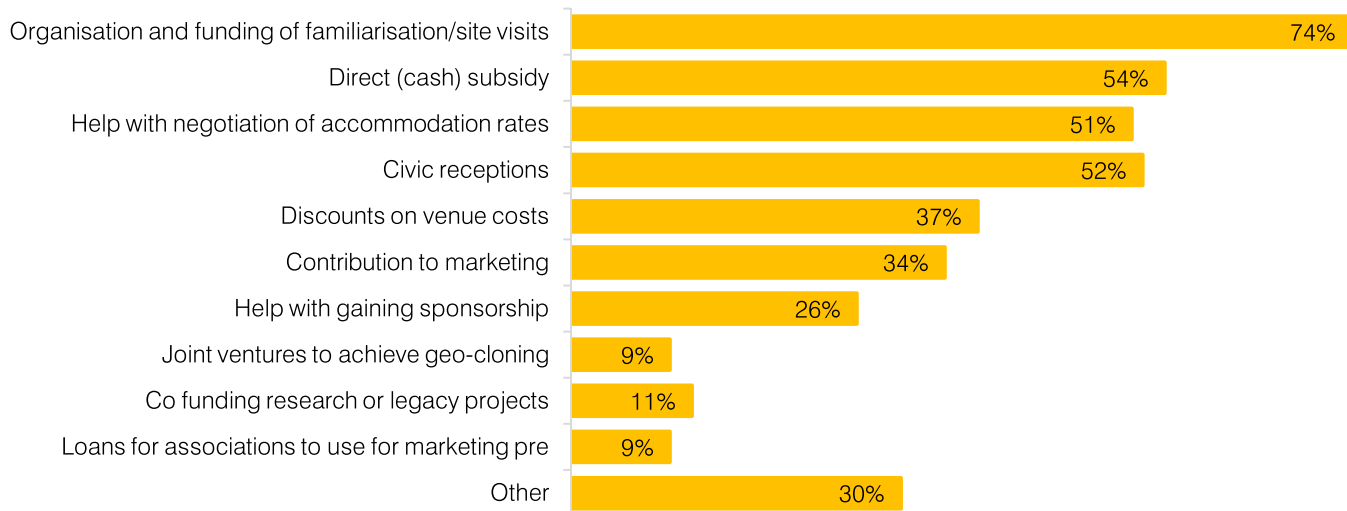


Ways Subvention / In-kind Support are provided

Destinations were offering Subvention and In-kind support in numerous ways. The commonest way was through the organisation and funding of familiarisation and site visits (three quarters of destinations). Just over half of destinations (54%) were offering direct cash subsidies.

51% of destinations were providing help with the negotiation of accommodation rates – this was more predominant among UK destinations than international ones. A majority of destinations (52%) also provided civic receptions, and over a third provided discounts on venue costs.

Ways in which Subvention/In-kind Support is provided for International Conferences



A number of other methods of supporting events were highlighted. These included:

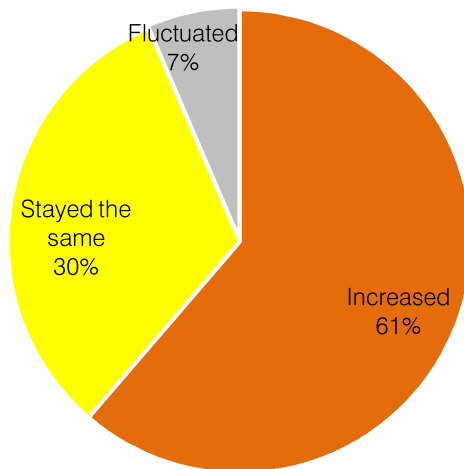
- Occasional support for reception or marketing
- Coach transfers to destination
- Occasional reinvestment of a percentage of any commission raised
- Free Public Transport Card
- A fund in case of cancellation or postponement of conference due to geopolitical event
- Interest-free loans and cash linked to attendance building and destination brand promotion
- A range of measures including venue-finding, sourcing suppliers, speakers and industry contacts, hosting site visits and complimentary hospitality for decision-makers, creation of the bid proposal (content, design and publication), special offers for delegates from city centre businesses.
- Bid presentation
- Financial support for site visits

Trends in Requests for Subvention Funding

Destinations were asked whether, over the last five years, subvention requests from international Associations had increased.

The trend was upwards – nearly two-thirds of destinations reported an increase in requests over the last five years. This possibly reflects a robust (growing) association marketplace and / or an increasing expectation by organisers of subvention assistance.

Trend in Subvention Requests from International Associations (last 5 years)



Subvention Budgets for 2016/17

Many destinations were reluctant to provide an indication of the size of their subvention funds so the following figures should be treated with some caution (since they are based on relatively small samples).

The average subvention fund for all reporting destinations was £232k. Please note this is the approximate amount based on current currency exchange rates at the time of the report being prepared.

This was lower among UK destinations ranging from £20k to £150k. For international destinations, the average was higher, ranging from £48k to £548k (albeit that this last figure was at a national level).

Average amount of Subvention per event

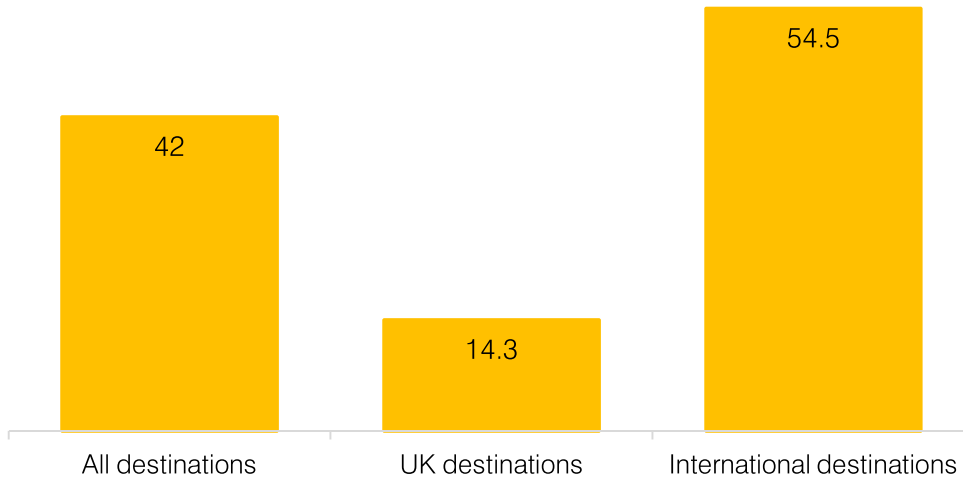
Destinations were also reluctant to provide information on average levels of subvention funding per event.

Based on a small sample (19 destinations) the average level of support per event was approximately £15,892.

Average number of events supported

On average, destinations supported 42 events through subvention funding / in-kind support in the last year. This was higher among international destinations (55 events) and lower among UK (an average of 14) – a reflection of budget differences.

Number of Events Supported with Subvention (last 12 months)



Methods of Evaluating Subvention Funding

A variety and mix of methods were used to evaluate whether to support an event with Subvention Funding / In-Kind support. Virtually all destinations were using multiple methods of evaluation.

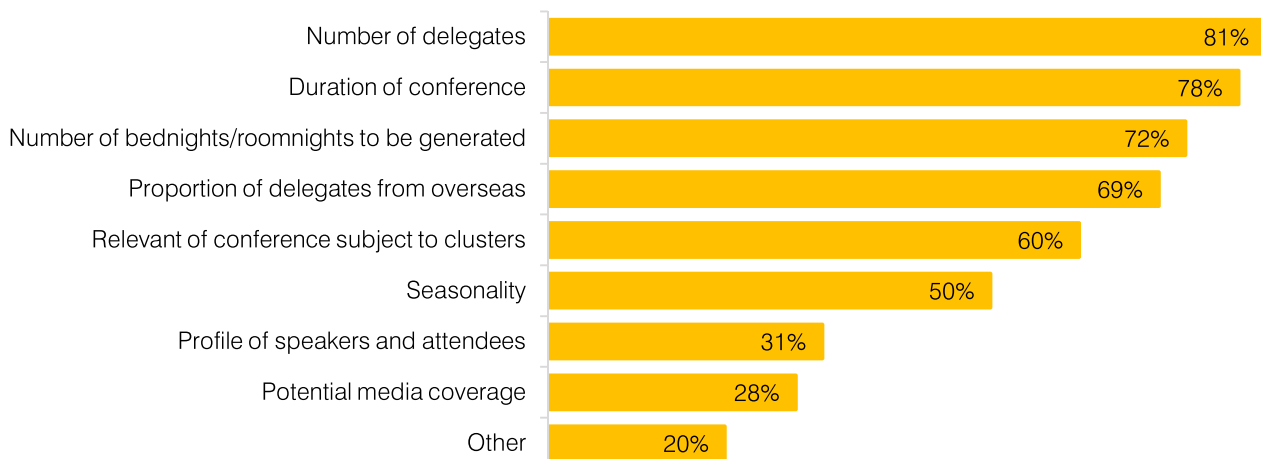
The commonest were the number of delegates (80%) and the duration of a conference (77%) but other methods used by the majority of destinations included:

- Number of room nights to be generated
- Proportion of delegates from overseas
- Relevance of the conference subject to clusters, academic specialisms, or industry sectors.

Seasonality, and more qualitative factors like speaker profile and potential media coverage, were also factors used by a substantial minority of destinations. Other methods of assessing events included:

- The profile of the event
- The connection of the organising committee with local education institutions
- Marketing scope
- A ROI formula which looks at direct economic spend and contribution to GDP.

Methods of Evaluating Subvention Funding



The minimum number of delegates required for an event to be supported varied from 50 to 1000 delegates. The overall average among destinations around 300 delegates. It was slightly higher among international destinations than UK destinations.

Examples of approaches adopted by destinations

Destinations highlighted a range of elements that form an important part of their approaches to Subvention Funding and In-kind support

- Wide -ranging assistance - A common theme among destinations was the wide range of assistance they provided, including:
 - Provision and management of free airport transfers
 - Venue negotiation and discounts
 - Complimentary reception / welcome events
 - Familiarisation visits
 - Marketing support and materials (images, copy & video)
 - Accommodation searches
 - Funding and supporting the production of bidding documents and presentations
 - Support letters from Government / Mayor and City Council
- Working with delegates was also highlighted. For example:

“We now also highlight the in kind support that is provided by the city and its members. Our Delegate Rewards scheme has proved very advantageous as part of a bid as it is seen to give something back to the delegate.”

“Being able to offer flexible solutions ... we are supporting a charity stand with F1 simulator which means we get to speak to the delegates who may then bring their conferences. The organiser welcomed the flexibility and our approach to making a difference as well as supporting the conference”
- The importance of partnerships – for example

“Working closely in partnership to raise funds with the council and BID which are then matched by venue in in-kind support”
- Ambassadors

“Development of Ambassador Programme is key to raise awareness of subvention support for international conferences There is merit in widening the remit of subvention to assist with pre-bidding (creating bid documents, supporting ambassador membership of associations and attendance (travel support) at high level conferences/Executive meetings to make their pitch.”
- The wider role of conference development and subvention

“We are also fortunate that the bureau sits within an economic development agency and as such can use these levers to ensure we are supporting the right opportunities and that they align to our Business Events Plan and our Economic Development Strategy.”

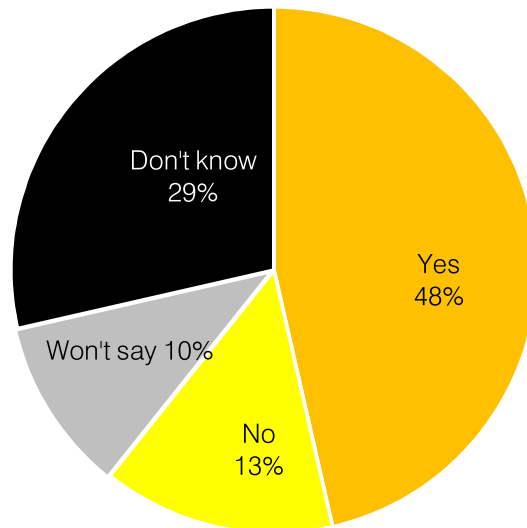
“Subvention is part of our investment strategy in securing relevant events that align with our priority industry sectors. As such, we offer subvention to organisations who allow us access to market our destination brand to delegates and organisations (end users) that we would not have access to through our own channels since we only interface with organisers.”

“CSR activity to raise profile of congress objectives (e.g. heart disease)”

Lost bids because of lack of subvention funding

Approximately half of destinations (48%) had definitely lost bids to other destinations because of a lack of subvention funding. Only 13% of destinations had not.

Lost bids to other destination because of a lack of subvention funding (last 12 months)



Examples of why bids were lost included:

- “We lose when cities put up big money – i.e. tens of thousands of pounds”.
- “Venues offer higher discounts which we do not have”
- “[A lack of subvention] prevented us from bidding”
- “Events were underwritten by Barcelona and Lisbon”
- “We were unable to offer subvention as our scheme has ended however the venue costs were cited as one of the main reasons why we weren't competitive. Unfortunately the venue wasn't able to discount further to secure the conference”
- “If the RFP already requests larger amounts of financial cash we are not bidding at all!”
- “Support offered by another destination was simply bigger and more attractive to the organiser”

Competitor destinations with innovative approaches to bid support or subvention

A number of destinations were highlighted as examples of good practice. The more frequently mentioned ones include Vienna (and Austria), Melbourne (and Australia), Dublin (and Ireland), Manchester and Glasgow.

Others mentioned included Amsterdam / Holland, Edinburgh, Sydney, Brisbane, Montreal, Basel, Denmark, Thailand, and Kuala Lumpur.

There were specific elements of other destinations' subvention that were highlighted – for example

- *“I do see a lot of cities having greater government support, managing to get key Ministers along to conferences or at least being seen to publicly support sometime with receptions etc.”*
- *“Asian countries do offer delegate gifts/ experiences based on number of delegates. Others offer support for specific sectors which match the destination target sectors”*

- *“Failte Ireland support for sub-regional growth given saturation of market in Dublin and the national support given to regions in the development of their pre-bidding process.”*
- *“Liverpool - using ACC in a very smart fashion. Manchester - long term investment.”*
- *“Melbourne for their creativity and cohesive effort. Vienna for their network support”*

Key Points:

- Subvention funding tended to be provided through one organisation but about a third of destinations were providing subvention through a partnership approach. The nature of these partnerships did vary.
- Just over half of destinations had multiple sources of funding for subvention. The rest had one primary source. The commonest source of subvention funding was from a Local Authority / City Council – highlighted by half of destinations. Other common sources of funding included the National Tourism Organisation (or national government) (two fifths of destinations) and a venue (a fifth of destinations).
- Most destinations provided Subvention and In-kind support through the organisation and funding of familiarisation and site visits, direct cash subsidies, the negotiation of accommodation rates, and civic receptions. About a third provided discounts on venue costs.
- Requests for subvention funding from International Associations had increased over the last five years, reflecting a robust (growing) association marketplace and / or an increasing expectation by organisers of subvention assistance.
- The average subvention budget was £232k – this was higher among international destinations. There were significant variations with budgets ranging from £20k to £548k.
- The average level of support per event was approximately £15,892.
- On average, destinations supported 42 events through subvention funding / in-kind support in the last year. This was higher among international destinations (54.5 events) and lower among UK (an average of 14.3).
- Virtually all destinations were using multiple methods of evaluation to assess whether an event was supported with Subvention Funding / In-kind support. The commonest were the number of delegates and the duration of a conference but other methods used by the majority of destinations included the number of room nights to be generated, proportion of delegates from overseas and the relevance of the conference subject to clusters, academic specialisms, or industry sectors.
- The minimum number of delegates required for an event to be supported varied from 50 to 1000 delegates. The overall average among destinations was around 300 delegates.
- Destinations highlighted a number of elements that were important to approach to Subvention Funding. These included provision of wide-ranging types of assistance, working with delegates, the importance of partnerships and ambassadors, and the wider potential role of conferences and subvention.
- Approximately half of destinations (48%) had definitely lost bids to other destinations because of a lack of subvention funding – only 13% had not (the rest were not sure or not prepared to say).
- A number of destinations were highlighted as examples of good practice. The more frequently mentioned ones include Vienna (and Austria), Melbourne (and Australia), Dublin (and Ireland), Manchester and Glasgow.
- Success and good practice were as a function of a number of factors including significant budgets, high level government support and partnerships (particularly with venues).

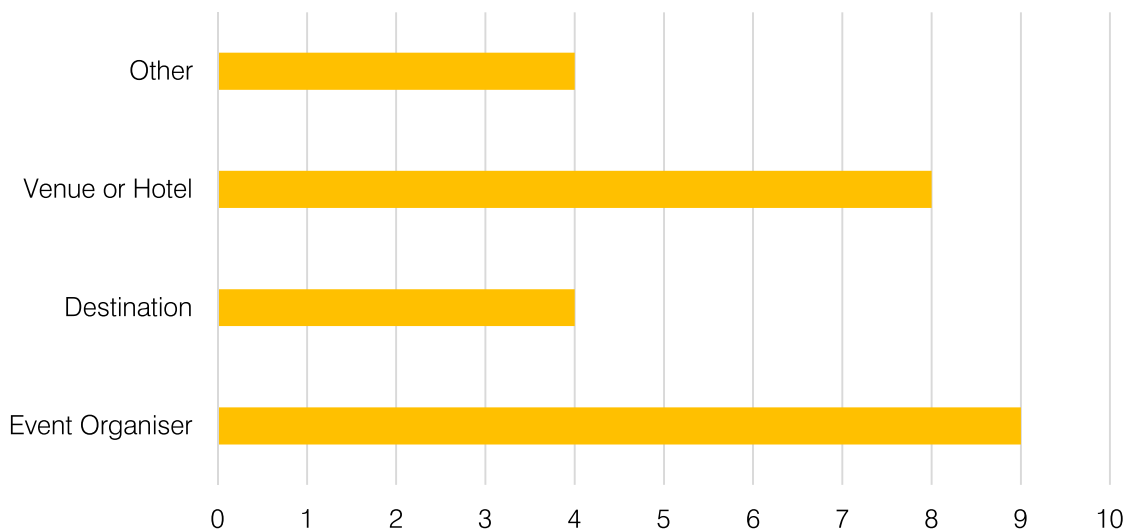
Outcomes from a survey of delegates attending a seminar on Subvention and Bid Support Practices at The Meetings Show 2016

A seminar on the subject of subvention and bid support practices was held at The Meetings Show in London on 15 June 2016. The seminar was attended by over 50 people from a mix of event organisers, destinations and venues. A few questions comparable with the research already outlined were posed to the audience although not all attendees participated. The results are shown in the charts below. The results of all the research including that undertaken with international associations led to a lively discussion.

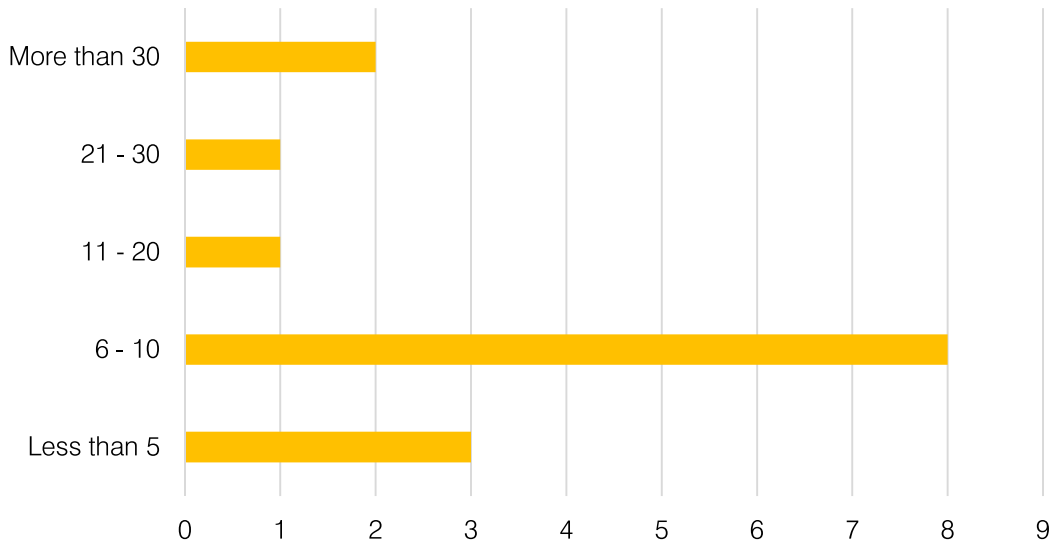
Although subvention was clearly not seen as the most important factor in destination decisions it was acknowledged that it does have a role in enabling the UK to compete internationally and is frequently influential, particularly as venue and other costs are perceived as being higher than elsewhere. It was acknowledged that high costs may be a London centric view but does not detract from the need for strong bid support practices to show organisers that the UK is 'hungry' for their events. Offering bid support in other ways besides cash subsidy is often more of a priority for organisers and can really make a difference to views of the destination. It is seen as demonstrating that the destination really wants the event and will go 'the extra mile' to make it successful.

The audience supported the international associations' view that the UK excels with the knowledge and research available and in accessibility. However the view was that service levels, facilities for conferences and hotels all leave room for improvement.

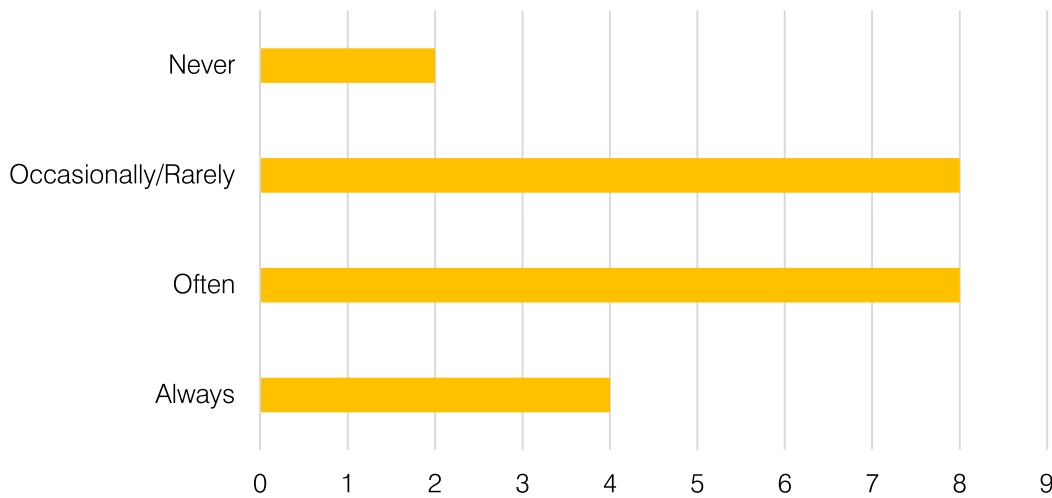
1. Which of these best describes your role or responsibility?



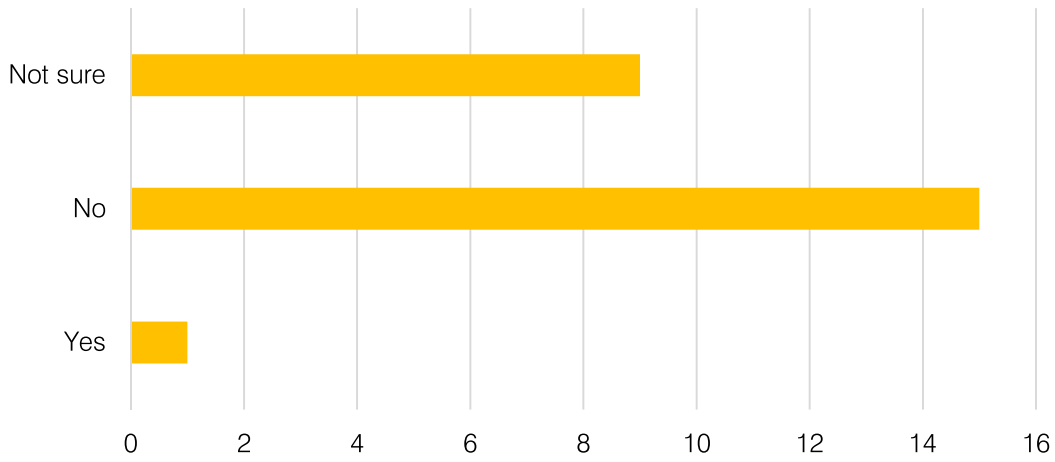
2. How many destinations are you competing with on a regular basis?



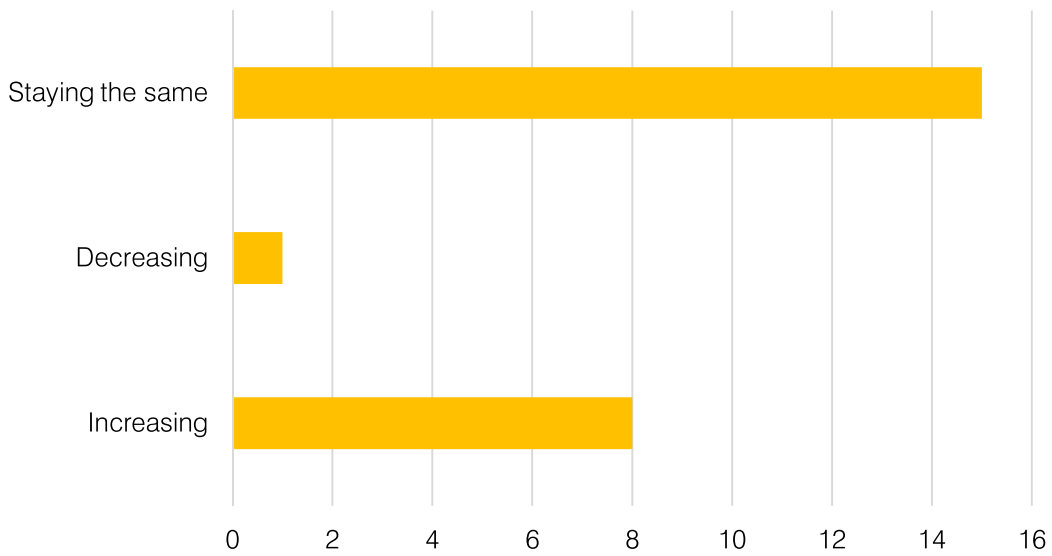
3. How often is events bid support (such as subvention) influential in your bid preparation for international conferences?



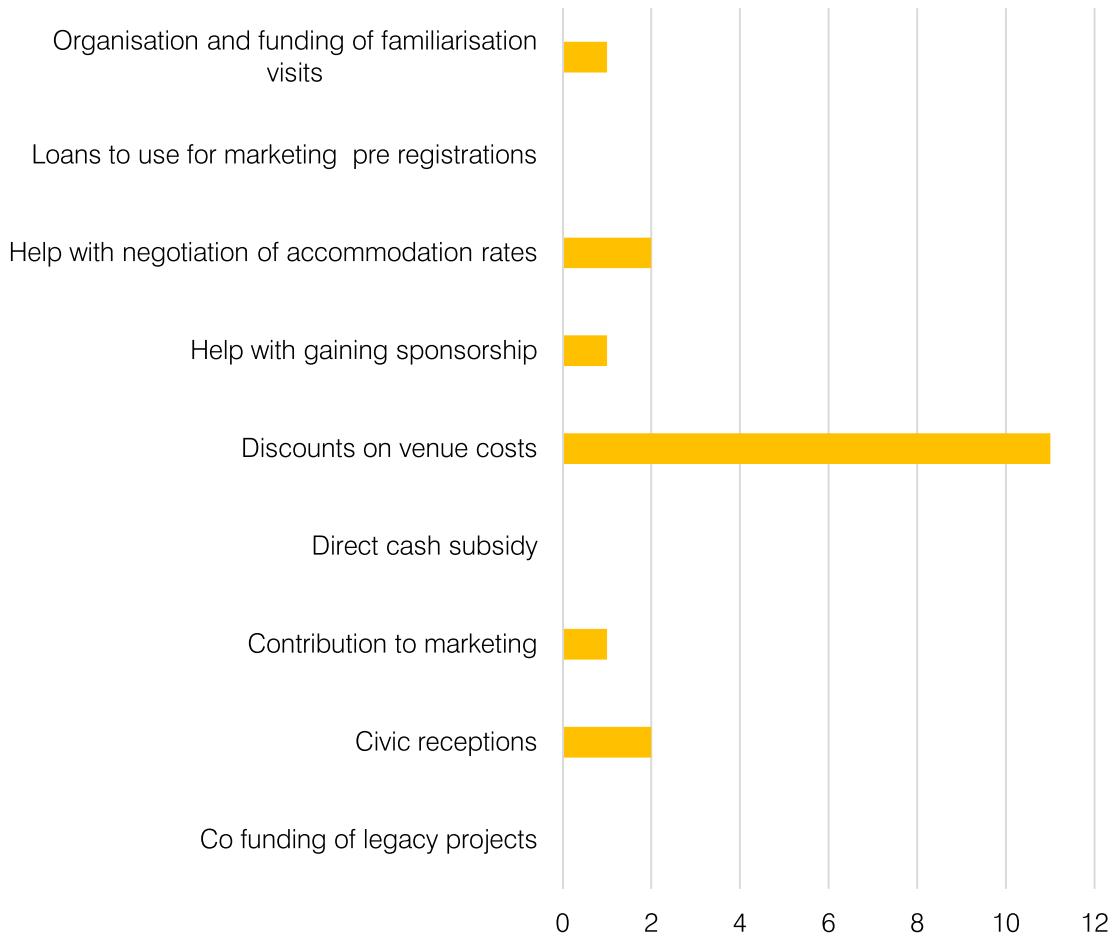
4. Subvention is the single most important factor for attracting many types of conferences



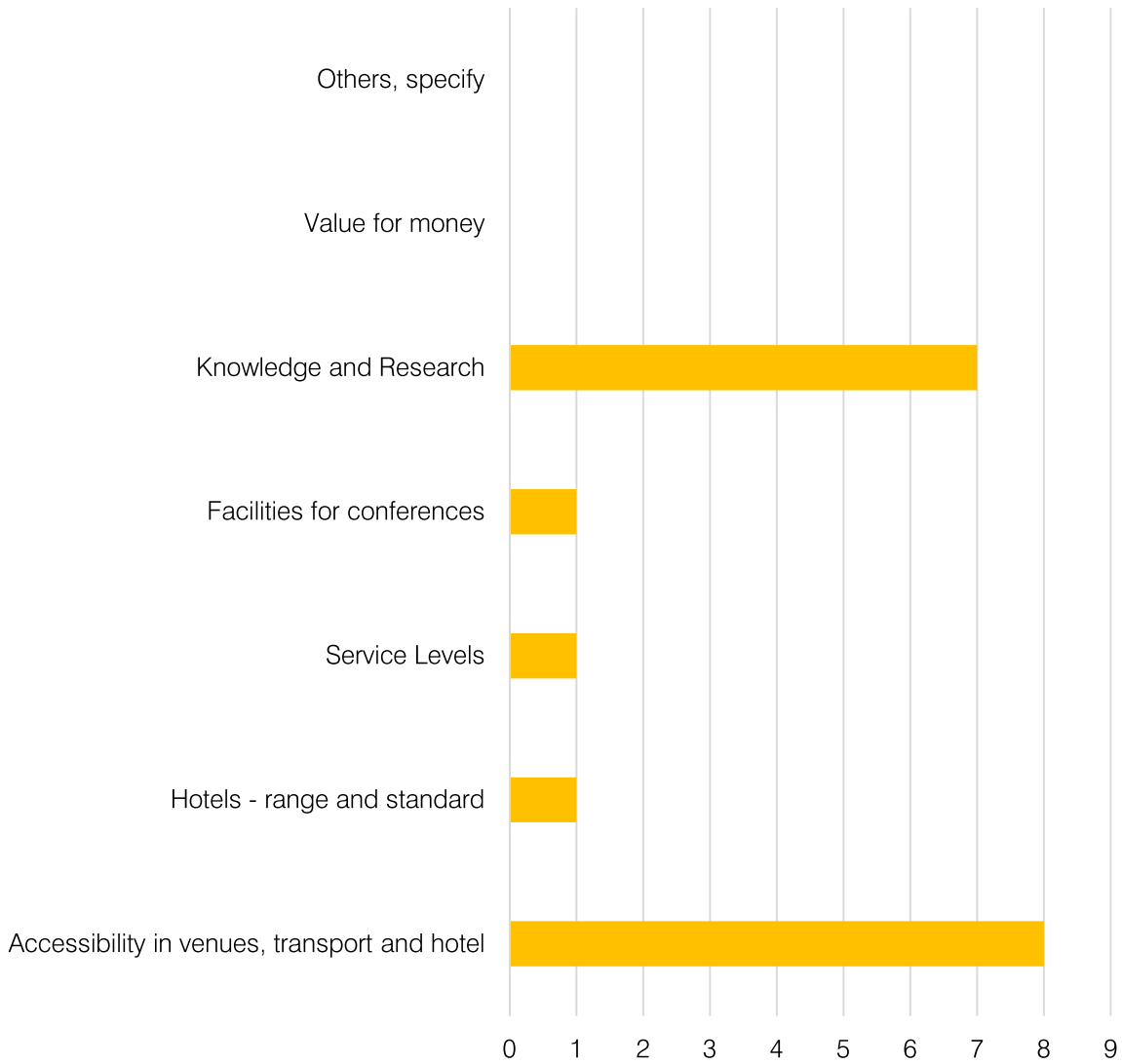
5. Are subvention requests?



6. Which of the following are the most popular forms of bid support?



7. In which of the following areas does the UK excel?



Case studies and detailed examples of overseas destinations' subvention and bid support

CASE STUDY Singapore's Sales Incentives and Event Support Programmes

The Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau™ (SECB), a division of Singapore Tourist Board (STB), is currently operating two sales promotion schemes which aim to strengthen Singapore's business events global market share. They are called:

- *Business Events in Singapore (BEiS)*
- *Singapore MICE Advantage Programme (SMAP)*

They supercede an earlier scheme known as 'Make It Singapore PLUS!', itself an extension to a S\$15 million initiative entitled 'Make It Singapore' which ran between 2003-4 and was designed to reinforce Singapore's reputation as a business hub and to attract more MICE events to Singapore.

a) Business Events in Singapore (BEiS)

The Business Events in Singapore (BEiS) scheme, launched in 2012, seeks to 'encourage the business events industry to anchor and grow quality events as well as catalyse the innovation of new content' (STB website). BEiS provides customised support ranging from the selection of venues, introductions to leading government agencies and business partners, as well as publicity support. Funding support is also available upon the fulfilment of deliverables (see below).

BEiS is open to all businesses/companies or associations in the Meetings, Incentive Travel, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) sector, and proposed events should fall under one of the following categories:

- Meetings
- Incentive Travel
- Corporate Activities
- Association Conventions
- Trade Conferences
- Exhibitions

Successful applicants will receive funding support of up to 70 per cent of qualifying costs, subject to the scope of the project and the SECB's evaluation of the merits of the project. Qualifying costs include costs related to third party professionals (e.g. professional conference organisers, event management agencies), content development, marketing, and bidding activities. The evaluation of proposed events will be based on the following factors:

- Content e.g. the extent to which the event brings in key content relevant to Singapore's strategic industry clusters
- Brand – e.g. the extent to which the event has the potential to make an impact in Singapore
- Delegate profile (i.e. numbers of foreign visitors/delegates).

Applicants (i.e. event organisers from MICE companies, businesses and associations) are advised to discuss the proposed project with the officer-in-charge at the SECB prior to making a formal application – formal applications must be made on prescribed application forms and submitted to the SECB.

b) Singapore MICE Advantage Programme (SMAP)

Launched in October 2013, the Singapore MICE Advantage Programme (SMAP) is a partnership jointly developed by the Changi Airport Group, Singapore Airlines and Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau™. SMAP offers enhanced event management services for event organisers and overseas MICE visitors and is intended to complement the BEiS incentive scheme.

SMAP can help event organisers, through a variety of services and benefits, to achieve cost savings and also to smooth the event planning processes and operations. MICE delegates travelling to Singapore to attend SMAP-supported events can also enjoy exclusive airline and airport benefits. The table below sets out the eligibility criteria and benefits.

SMAP Eligibility Criteria and Benefits

Eligibility Criteria	Benefits
a) <u>Meetings and Incentives</u> A minimum of 100 foreign participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial grants of up to 50 per cent of qualifying costs* Up to two complimentary Economy Class tickets on Singapore Airlines, subject to minimum expenditure on airfare Additional check-in baggage of 10kg across all classes of travel for participants A warm Singapore Airlines welcome with a special on-board announcement, exclusively for groups of more than 50 people
b) <u>Association-based Conventions</u> A minimum of 1,000 foreign participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial grants of up to 30 per cent of qualifying costs* Up to five complimentary Economy Class tickets on Singapore Airlines, subject to minimum expenditure on airfare Exceptional value fares on Singapore Airlines and hotel accommodation in Singapore for site inspections Preferential rates with Singapore Airlines Cargo for safe delivery of bulky, sensitive or fragile cargo Additional check-in baggage allowance of 10kg across all classes of travel
c) <u>First Exhibition in Singapore</u> A minimum of 2,000 foreign trade visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial grants of up to 30 per cent of qualifying costs* Up to five complimentary Economy Class tickets on Singapore Airlines, subject to minimum expenditure on airfare
d) <u>Anchored Exhibition in Singapore</u> A minimum of 500 incremental foreign trade visitors from the previous exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptional value fares on Singapore Airlines and hotel accommodation in Singapore for site inspections Complimentary advertising spaces on SilverKris, Singapore Airlines' in-flight magazine, and/or KrisWorld, Singapore Airlines' in-flight entertainment system
d) <u>First Trade Conference in Singapore</u> A minimum of 500 foreign trade visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial grants of up to 30 per cent of qualifying costs* Up to five complimentary Economy Class tickets on Singapore Airlines, subject to minimum expenditure on airfare
e) <u>Anchored Trade Conference in Singapore</u> A minimum of 100 foreign trade visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptional value fares on Singapore Airlines and hotel accommodation in Singapore for site inspections Complimentary advertising spaces on SilverKris, Singapore Airlines' in-flight magazine, and/or KrisWorld, Singapore Airlines' in-flight entertainment system

*qualifying costs include fees relating to content development, marketing, experience development, and professional services engaged

Additional Benefits

In addition, all groups that fulfil the minimum number of foreign trade visitors will enjoy the following benefits:

- o Changi Dollar Value vouchers for shopping and dining at Singapore Changi Airport for participants or discounts on advertising spaces across all terminals at Singapore Changi Airport
- o A selection of exceptional value fares to Singapore on Singapore Airlines, from over 60 destinations around the world, for participants

- Special rates on Singapore Stopover Business and Singapore Stopover Holiday packages for participants
- Complimentary welcome desk at Singapore Changi Airport for organisers to greet their participants on arrival
- Suggestions on social activities, such as Singapore city tours
- Recommendations on social and MICE venues
- Introductions to relevant agencies and suppliers for event facilitation
- Visa facilities for participants
- Complimentary Singapore maps and brochures.

One event that will benefit from the SMAP programme is the 2017 Pacific Rim International Conference on Lasers and Electro-optics (CLEO), expected to attract some 900 delegates over a 5-day period. The conference selection committee chose Singapore in preference to several other Asian cities that were bidding for the event, being won over by the SMAP offerings, which address some of the issues commonly faced by meeting attendees.

In the period to March 2015, 64 applications had been received for assistance under SMAP, and 11 events had been staged with SMAP support.

Further information on BEIS and SMAP is available at www.mice.yoursingapore.com

CASE STUDY: Hong Kong's Delegate Rewards Scheme

Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK), a division of Hong Kong Tourism Board, has teamed up with industry partners to ensure that delegates of meetings, incentive and convention groups receive more rewards to enjoy the best that Hong Kong has to offer. The rewards include (according to 'The PCO', IAPCO's newsletter – Issue 75, Q2 2016):

- Complimentary cocktail reception offered by about 40 hotels, ranging from high-end luxurious to high-quality budget ones
- Offers at world-class attractions, including Hong Kong Disneyland, Ocean Park Hong Kong and more
- Free cultural performances at their event
- Airport shopping and dining coupons worth up to HK\$2000 (approx. £200)

These premium privileges run until March 2017. More information is available at www.mehongkong.com

OTHER EXAMPLES OF GLOBAL SUBVENTION AND BID SUPPORT PRACTICES

1. Malaysia's annual US\$7.5 million subvention budget is being used to increase its business events arrivals from 1.2 million (in 2012) to 2.9 million by 2020. Totally funded by central government, the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) operates with a budget of US\$15 million, of which 50 per cent is devoted to the subvention programme. To receive subvention funding, clients are required to sign a memorandum of understanding that ensures certain economic impact targets are achieved – otherwise, the subventions can be withdrawn. Further information: www.myceb.com.my
2. In November 2013, the Czech capital of Prague announced incentive support for large international conventions. Grants are available to non-profit organisation congresses with 1,500 or more delegates, at least 50 per cent of these being from abroad. Organisations can receive US\$12 per participant, up to an estimated US\$50,000 per event. This subvention can be used towards the cost of the venue rental or a welcome reception. Previous subvention support took the form of free public transport for congresses with more than 500 participants. Further information: www.praha.eu in the section Subsidies and Grants / Urban Grants / Tourism

3. In 2015 Adelaide Convention Bureau announced that it had received a new AU\$5 million bid fund over two years from the State Government. It expands on the original AS\$2 million fund launched in 2013. The bid fund is for use with strategic bids to assist in attracting significant conventions to Adelaide and specifically to the Adelaide Convention Centre (which will complete phase two of its development in 2017). The fund will assist the Bureau to remain competitive when bidding to bring highly lucrative and globally sought after business events to Adelaide “*when competing in an arena where the provision of financial support as part of convention bids is considered the norm*” (quoted from the media release issued to announce the new fund).
4. According to an article entitled ‘Show Us the Money’, published in the January-February 2015 edition of *Association Meetings International* magazine, Lisbon has established an International Congress Fund offering €50,000 to any international event attracting 3,600 or more delegates. Funding starts at €7,500 for events of 600-plus delegates and rises in stages. As with most subvention funds, no cash actually changes hands. Instead, the money must be used for space rental, room hire, social programmes, transfer services and accommodation. A further condition means that the grant must be applied for at the bidding stage and not retrospectively. Applications for Lisbon’s International Congress Fund had to be made before the end of 2015.
5. Estonia has launched a support scheme of up to €30,000 for any company holding a large, international conference in the country up to 2022. Financed by the EU’s Regional Development Fund and administered by Enterprise Estonia/the Estonian Tourist Board, the ‘Promoting Estonia as a Tourism Destination’ programme will reimburse organisers for a sizeable share of their expenses. To qualify, conferences have to be of an international nature, last at least three days, include a minimum of an aggregate 500 overnight stays and involve a local or regional sightseeing element. Only not-for-profit events are eligible and only suppliers such as PCOs and DMCs based in Estonia can apply. Funds can be used to cover a broad spectrum of conference-related expenses from organisation and marketing to opening and closing events. The programme’s budget is €300,000 per year for the current funding cycle i.e. 2015 to 2020.
6. In 2012 it was announced that five conferences had won subsidies from Chiba Prefecture (near Tokyo) to hold their events in Japan. They were the first events to benefit from a new subsidy system and included the International Forge Masters Meeting and the World Congress on Dance Research (both taking place in 2014). Under the subsidy scheme, international conferences with over 1,200 participants can receive up to 10 million yen (nearly 95,000 euro), while those with fewer than 1,200 participants can receive up to 7.5 million yen
7. In 2013 the Dutch city of Utrecht was offering congress organisers up to 10,000 euro if they committed to holding a ‘knowledge-based’ event in the city. It aimed to attract conferences in areas such as life sciences, creative industries, care and sustainability. Utrecht developed a 100,000 euro ‘congress fund’ for 2013, unusual in that it was restricted to one year only. The fund was a collaboration between the city and the province, designed to showcase the Utrecht region to more knowledge institutions. Further information: www.utrechtconventionbureau.nl

It is also interesting to note that national governments are increasingly lending their support to city/regional convention bureaux in the process of bidding for, and delivering, major events. For example, it was reported in December 2014 (*International Meetings Review*, 2/12/14) that, in Australia, the Minister for Trade and Investment, the Hon. Andrew Robb AO MP, had announced an historic new framework for collaboration: *Attracting Business Events to Australia: Role of Government Agencies*. The framework

delivers on a Government commitment to support key international business events and strategically aligns the Federal Government, through Austrade and Tourism Australia, to work with Australian convention bureaux and the business events sector to attract world-class events to Australia. Lyn Lewis-Smith, President of the Australian Association of Convention Bureaux, is quoted in the same article as saying:

Letters of support from key government departments and ministers are vital (to the bidding process), especially given the growth potential of key Asian markets. This support will ensure that Australian convention bureaux are in the best-possible position to identify, bid for and win business events that align with national priority areas and better connect industry, academia, government and the private sector.

A relatively new development in the use of subvention, one which will be disturbing for many in the industry, is the potential extension of subvention to corporate meetings and events. For example, Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau announced, in March 2013, the introduction of an incentive scheme for corporate meetings. The scheme provides 13 structured offerings as part of its Advantage Abu Dhabi initiative aimed at the corporate meetings and incentive travel industry. Such offerings include:

- welcome dinners at host hotels
- city tours
- evening functions Emirati-style
- 'Speedster Specials' at Ferrari World
- Abu Dhabi desert safaris and dune dinners.

To qualify for any selection of these incentive offerings, organisers had to hold an event in Abu Dhabi that had a minimum of 50 paid room nights during 2013 or 2014. The number of incentives on offer for a single event was on a sliding scale based on the number of paid room nights booked (e.g. 1001-1500 room nights qualified for three incentives).

An article in the October 2014 issue of 'Meetings & Incentive Travel' magazine (www.meetpie.com) entitled 'Just say no to the carrots' describes the provision of subvention support by Fáilte Ireland (the Irish Tourist Board) to an unnamed major US insurance company in order to attract the company's salesforce meeting to Ireland. Fáilte Ireland operates a Corporate Meeting Fund, set up to offer 'a suite of financial ... supports to attract corporate meetings and events to Ireland'. The magazine article criticises this form of subvention as follows:

Now, I know it's commonplace to offer sweeteners to associations. Arguably, the prestige, affiliation with the subject and the fact that associations are chiefly not-for-profit, can outweigh the costs. So a subvention has been the norm. But even for associations, the issue of accepting a payment to go to a certain city raises eyebrows. And for corporate business it should raise more.

The article goes on to explain that the Irish destinations of Dublin and Killarney beat competition from London and Edinburgh to win the 2015 salesforce meeting – where the insurance company would receive financial support towards transport, receptions and entertainment. The article concludes:

And this is my plea to buyers and influencers: ignore such sweeteners. Choose the destination and venue that are the right fit for your event, for your clients and for your company. If you want to be influenced by price, hold your event in a village hall or a scout hut. They are invariably cheap. To the unnamed, and in my view shamed, US insurance company, I say: if Dublin and Killarney are so great then you don't need their financial support. Give the money to charity.

Paris Charter for Hosting Large Congresses

Representatives from 651 hotels with over 76,600 rooms in all categories met (May 2016) under the auspices of the City of Paris, the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Paris Tourism and Congress Office and the UNIMEV to sign a Charter on the hosting of large congresses in Paris. A tool at the service of congress organisers, this agreement commits hotel owners who have signed the Charter to:

- Predictable price policy
- Fixed terms and conditions of sale and room release
- Allotment management policy
- Commitments to quality

The Charter applies to major congresses – over 1000 participants – organised by not-for-profit organisations (learned societies, federations, professional associations, etc.).

Working with the signatory hotel owners, public authorities and organisations operating in the Paris tourism sector commit to building a common strategy to support the growth of major congresses in the city. Specific outputs include:

- The City of Paris offers a customised package to organisers e.g. welcome to the city messages, flags along certain avenues, letters of support, receptions in the Town Hall
- The Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Paris Tourism and Congress Office commit to ensuring that the event runs smoothly, from the application stage to the welcome of participants
- The Paris Tourism and Congress Office supports French and international applications and then works with associations at all stages of their events, initiating links with the destination's service suppliers (transport, catering, dedicated services).

In 2015 association congresses generated 11% of business tourism nights in Paris: 762,000 participants at 1004 events (an increase of 9.6% compared with 2014), including 136 events with over 1000 participants. The sector was worth 1.2 billion euro in 2015 (average expenditure of congress participants was €212 per day – up to €344 for international congress participants – and is 50% higher than expenditure by leisure visitors).

Florence Subvention Plan

Florence has recently launched a €60,000 subvention plan for International conferences in the city (C&IT Magazine 28 June 2016).

Some venues, Opera House, Firenze Fiera Congress & Exhibition Centre and Palazzo dei Congressi Garden will be free to hire. Benefits also include F&B, poster printing services and technologies such as personalised digital screens.

A special booking system allows congress organisers to make reservations with rates 5% lower and more reasonable cancellation policies.

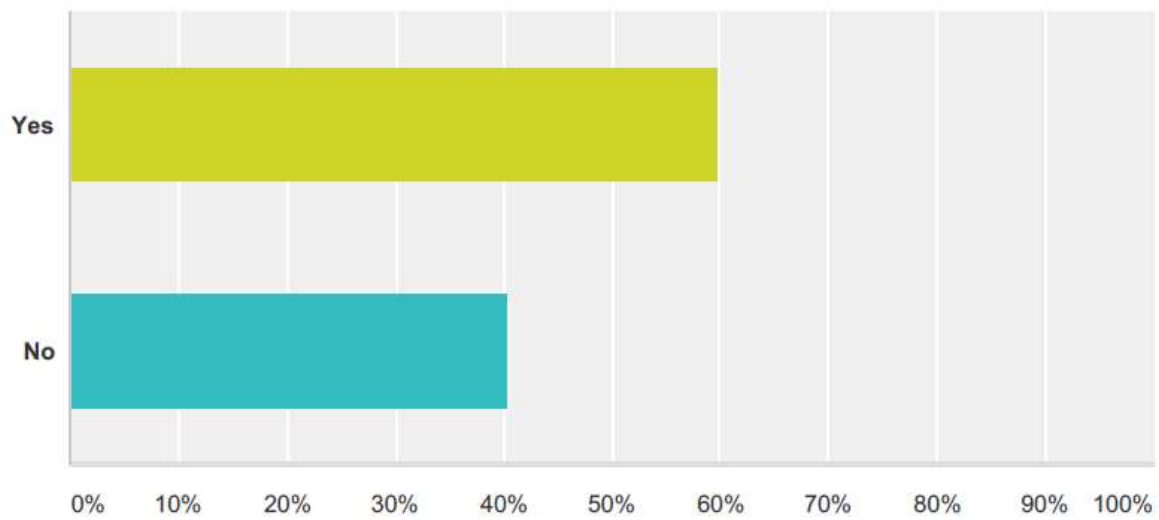
Other services are a welcome desk at the airport on arrival days, a complimentary city information desk and assistance during site visits.

APPENDIX 1

CAT Publications – Research with international associations – June 2016

Q1 Have you held a meeting in the UK in the last 12 years?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 0

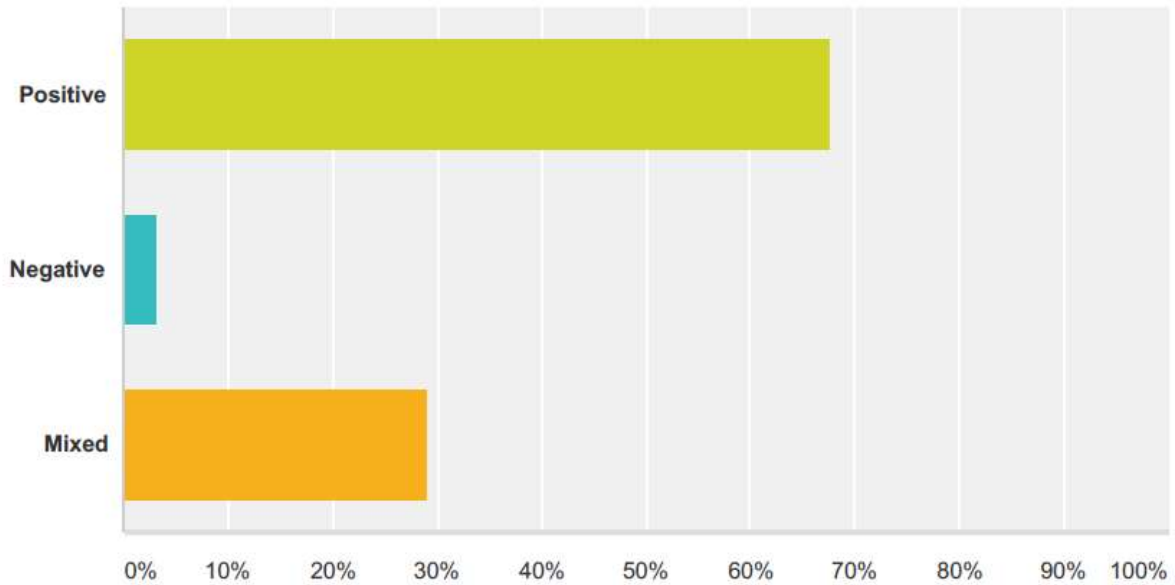


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	59.63%	65
No	40.37%	44
Total		109

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q2 What was your overall impression of the UK?

Answered: 62 Skipped: 47



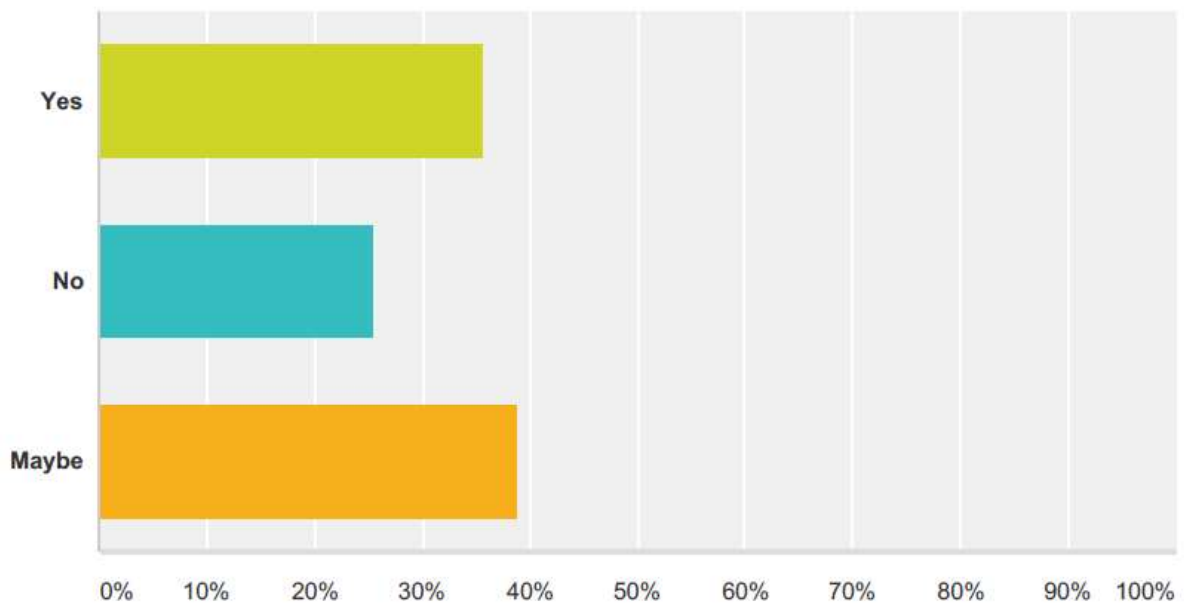
Answer Choices	Responses	
Positive	67.74%	42
Negative	3.23%	2
Mixed	29.03%	18
Total		62

#	If negative, please give reasons why.	Date
1	expensive	4/26/2016 1:51 PM
2	Not involved in the organisation of this event	4/26/2016 11:10 AM
3	Very expensive to operate in venue	4/26/2016 4:43 AM
4	Very old venue (in 2004), problems in exhibition setup, price. In 2007, again the venue was not up to standard but better venues (5 star hotels in this case) were not affordable.	4/25/2016 4:14 PM

CAT Publications –International association research – June 2016

Q3 Are you planning to hold a meeting in the UK in the next 5 years?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 11

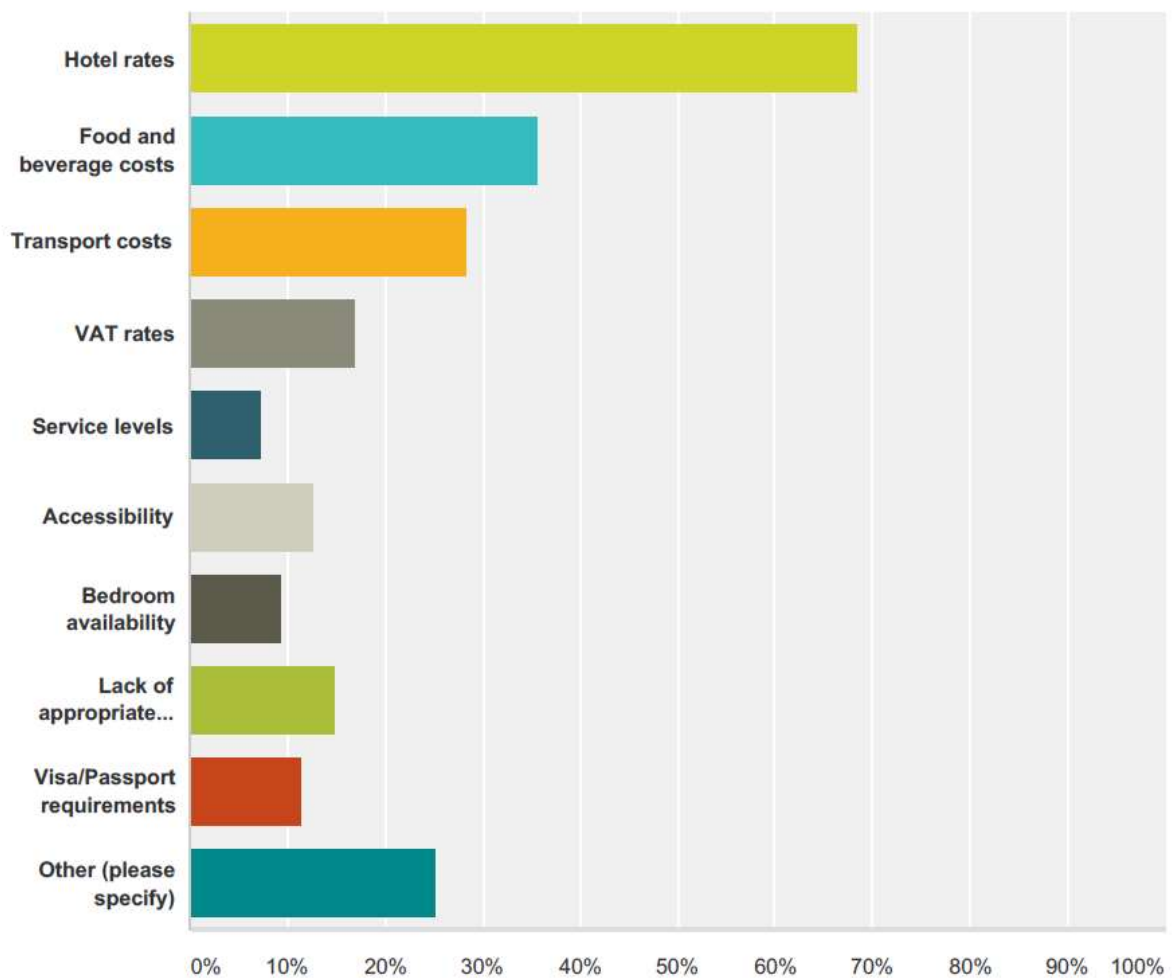


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	35.71%	35
No	25.51%	25
Maybe	38.78%	38
Total		98

CAT Publications –International association research – June 2016

Q4 What do you see as the main barriers to holding your conference in the UK? You can select more than one answer.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 14



CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Answer Choices	Responses	
Hotel rates	68.42%	65
Food and beverage costs	35.79%	34
Transport costs	28.42%	27
VAT rates	16.84%	16
Service levels	7.37%	7
Accessibility	12.63%	12
Bedroom availability	9.47%	9
Lack of appropriate congress centre	14.74%	14
Visa/Passport requirements	11.58%	11
Other (please specify)	25.26%	24
Total Respondents: 95		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Venue cost	5/9/2016 2:48 PM
2	No barrier, our congresses take place in the different countries/countries of origins of our members (37 countries).	5/9/2016 8:16 AM
3	high rent prices for convention centers	5/5/2016 3:49 PM
4	Lacking economical supports	5/5/2016 10:20 AM
5	We are only an Incoming DMC for The Netherlands	5/4/2016 7:53 PM
6	too few researchers in horticulture/ goyt cuts	5/4/2016 4:40 PM
7	High quality conference facilities for >500 delegates in The City of London / Canary Wharf	5/4/2016 3:31 PM
8	Cost for the congress venue(s)	5/4/2016 3:05 PM
9	Service mentality, Quality of food	5/4/2016 3:02 PM
10	Our conference is an Africa Regional Conference primarily	5/4/2016 2:58 PM
11	expensive UK pound to Euro	5/4/2016 2:50 PM
12	Industry regulations and compliance	4/26/2016 11:11 AM
13	The rates for room rent are generally incredibly high for an organisation as ours (dealing with music education) as compared to other EU countries, even at related institutions (concert halls, higher music education institutions). Moreover appropriate space is hardly available as needed badly by UK ensembles.	4/25/2016 6:31 PM
14	Costs for conference venue in general	4/25/2016 5:24 PM
15	Hotel and accommodation costs	4/25/2016 5:21 PM
16	the decision is taken by many national representatives	4/25/2016 4:32 PM
17	Exchange rate between €Euro & £GBP is not good at present	4/25/2016 3:32 PM
18	Missing infrastructure which combines conference, exhibition, accomodation and travel	4/25/2016 3:23 PM
19	Passenger Duty on flights	4/25/2016 2:59 PM
20	exchange rate risk	4/25/2016 2:54 PM
21	UK does not fall into our region (CEE/SEE, Central Asia, MENA)	4/25/2016 2:48 PM
22	exchange rates	4/25/2016 2:40 PM
23	I do not see barriers to holding our events in the UK.	4/25/2016 2:25 PM
24	Logistics.	4/25/2016 2:15 PM

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q5 How can the UK makes improvements in the areas you have highlighted?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 23

#	Responses	Date
1	One problem we constantly meet is the high cost of accommodation, F&B and inbound transport for holiday periods. No one minds a premium but we shouldn't be paying double for the same product just because it's a Bank Holiday. We have to plan our events to avoid these time or they are not financially viable as our inbound delegates do not always have UK incomes so the UK seem very expensive to them.	5/10/2016 4:09 PM
2	The Shakespeare Association of America traditionally meets in a conference hotel with at least 900 guest rooms and multiple meeting rooms.	5/10/2016 1:00 PM
3	Provide better access to smaller airports, both in flight and on the road; limit venue costs. Release catering to bid.	5/9/2016 2:49 PM
4	None	5/9/2016 10:25 AM
5	Complex question: I'd say focus on an attendee centric approach. Need on one larger convention center.	5/9/2016 10:07 AM
6	None	5/9/2016 8:17 AM
7	Power prices	5/7/2016 6:52 AM
8	make it easier to waive VAT	5/5/2016 10:17 PM
9	provide incentives. E.g funding for certain scientific conferences. As we are academics and not backed by a corporation, we can't afford the fees convention centers and hotels charge.	5/5/2016 3:51 PM
10	Good quality conference hotels that do not charge extortionate rates.	5/5/2016 1:34 PM
11	Costs are problematic because one of the contributing factors is the exchange rate, so as long as we do not use the EURO this will affect many of our participants, but it also means we have to have a relatively high registration compared to when we hold the conference in other European countries. Visa requirements can be an issue, especially the timeline, but working with a PCO can mitigate against some of this.	5/5/2016 11:26 AM
12	An association with scientific people organizing Congresses & Simposia.	5/5/2016 10:21 AM
13	Reduce hotel rates - Have lower transportation costs	5/5/2016 9:37 AM
14	I don't see an easy solution for lowering costs of travel and accomodation	5/5/2016 6:11 AM
15	I dont know	5/4/2016 10:20 PM
16	see comment at #3	5/4/2016 7:54 PM
17	STAY IN EU	5/4/2016 7:16 PM
18	The costs are too high implying setting high registration fees. Maybe by providing some kind of financial support in terms of sponsorship to non profit conference organisers	5/4/2016 6:22 PM
19	It locates a little bit far from the continental areas in Europe. So, some collaboration with, e.g., Lille in France might be a good idea.	5/4/2016 5:26 PM
20	take food production and research seriously if you want to feed your population in the future with a balanced diet	5/4/2016 4:43 PM
21	we are a car club not a business	5/4/2016 4:11 PM
22	Recognise associations and NFPs as having better return business but less budget than corporates	5/4/2016 4:05 PM
23	Make visa access for South Africans simpler and cheaper	5/4/2016 3:36 PM
24	Bigger/better - modern - conference facilities in cities.	5/4/2016 3:32 PM
25	reasonable accommodation rates	5/4/2016 3:24 PM
26	N-A	5/4/2016 3:15 PM
27	More venues with accommodation/congress capacity which have accessible rooms/parking etc.	5/4/2016 3:08 PM
28	tax incentives to that specific area	5/4/2016 3:07 PM

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

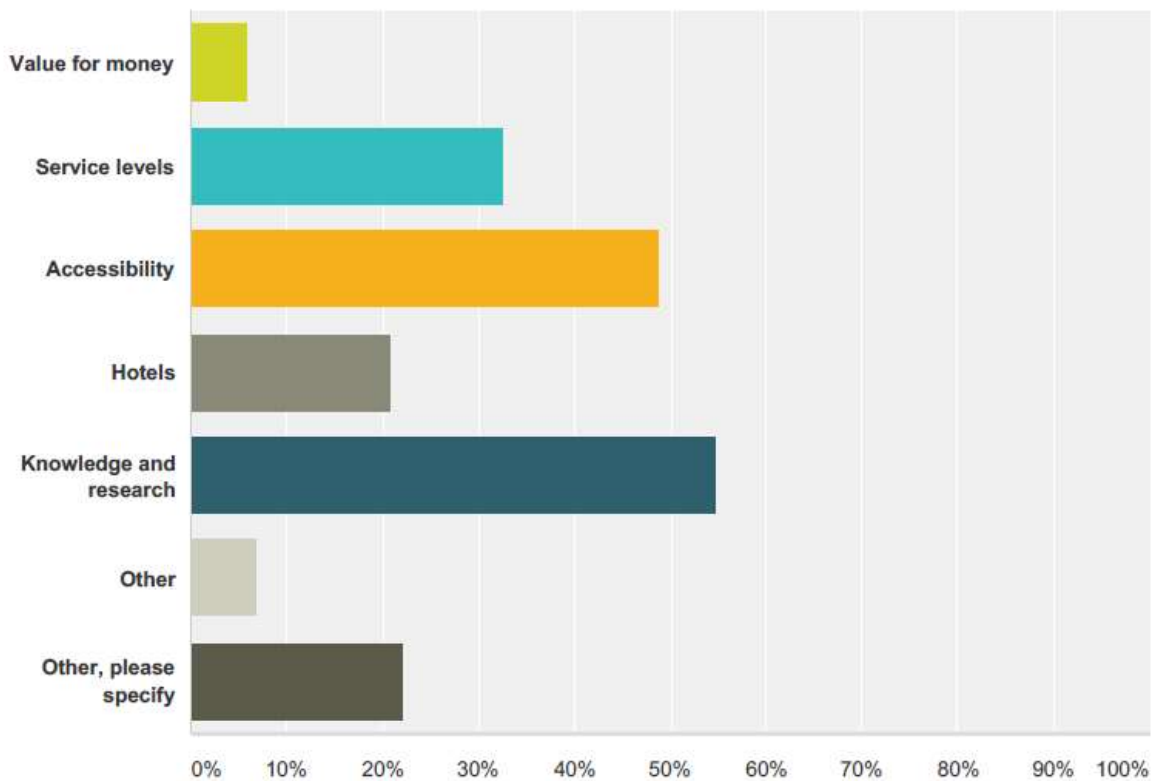
29	Real service and not service because the client is asking for it	5/4/2016 3:03 PM
30	None. Except we have a UK-Africa meeting	5/4/2016 3:00 PM
31	Special agreements with hotels when large events are held	5/4/2016 2:56 PM
32	Charging VAT on Association Conference Registration Fees is a competitive disadvantage	5/4/2016 2:52 PM
33	Not sure, as this is essentially a market issue	5/4/2016 2:51 PM
34	price level	5/4/2016 2:50 PM
35	Britain is expensive and suffers from poor levels of service compared to other nations.	5/4/2016 2:48 PM
36	Food and beverage prices in hospitality are completely unregulated and often veer into the ridiculous	5/4/2016 2:47 PM
37	More affordable accommodation esp in London	5/4/2016 2:46 PM
38	price level is high compared to Mainland europe	5/4/2016 2:46 PM
39	Better value for money (especially hotels)	5/3/2016 9:42 AM
40	Lower prices 4 and 5 star hotels	4/29/2016 1:10 PM
41	Deduct the VAT for foreign organizer to held the meeting in UK for example. Offer 3~5% rooms of each hotel with cheap rate for meeting organizers.(Hotels offer cheap rate to travel agent/On-line-trading already)	4/28/2016 6:00 PM
42	By making destination more affordable to travellers	4/27/2016 10:32 AM
43	highlight non-London values	4/26/2016 1:52 PM
44	reduce costs, improve accessibility	4/26/2016 11:12 AM
45	Lower Visa Fees which are atrocious. The strong GBP does not make for a compelling business case and hence keep costs competitive in order to drive business volumes.	4/26/2016 9:46 AM
46	offer lower rates	4/26/2016 9:20 AM
47	Make it easier for delegates from emerging markets to obtain visa, work on harmonising the cost of hotels	4/26/2016 5:40 AM
48	get hotels in line to work with the city a partner increase service levels and pricing in convention centers	4/26/2016 5:11 AM
49	It is the strength of the pound against our currency. No problems with services etc.	4/26/2016 4:47 AM
50	Cost is the main issue, on the whole, UK's currency is too strong for Asian countries.	4/26/2016 1:08 AM
51	lower hotel rates and transports	4/25/2016 8:23 PM
52	Our membership is very interested in a meeting in London, but it is simply too expensive both for our organization and for our membership, who have ever-decreasing budgets for conferences/travel. Also, we always meet around the time of Wimbledon, and contract venues 3 years in advance. Not knowing the dates of Wimbledon more than 1 year in advance makes it impossible for us to know what dates to avoid, even though we can be flexible.	4/25/2016 8:03 PM
53	Giving better prices	4/25/2016 7:42 PM
54	Increase availability of space outside the usual conference centres, fix reasonable tariffs for room rent	4/25/2016 6:33 PM
55	give more competitive rates for hotel accommodation and catering in congress venues	4/25/2016 6:25 PM
56	The main problem are the high costs for the organisation. We believe that the UK can be more supportive on big congresses and provide financial support.	4/25/2016 5:26 PM
57	Provide financial incentives to attract foreign organizers.	4/25/2016 5:25 PM
58	To lower the prices.	4/25/2016 5:20 PM
59	Making it clearer re visa (where nec) requirements; ensuring a mixed band of hotel prices (not everyone can afford 5*!!) nr to Conf venues.	4/25/2016 4:36 PM
60	ask the native English speakers to slow down while speaking in front of an international audience	4/25/2016 4:34 PM
61	My comments are mainly about London. We usually hold our convention at 5* hotels and in London it is close to impossible.	4/25/2016 4:15 PM
62	The EGBP is so strong against the weak €Euro so it is so expensive to have any conference or incentive in the UK!	4/25/2016 3:35 PM
63	reduce the prices	4/25/2016 3:29 PM

64	Providing information about places for international meetings where infrastructure and accessibility exists and environments offer enticing venues.	4/25/2016 3:26 PM
65	Give better rates for groups.	4/25/2016 3:21 PM
66	Hotel rates are simply too high in London.	4/25/2016 3:14 PM
67	make it more affordable	4/25/2016 3:00 PM
68	Apply discounted rates	4/25/2016 2:56 PM
69	Accept payments in euro	4/25/2016 2:54 PM
70	N/A	4/25/2016 2:48 PM
71	develop the demetia-friendly program	4/25/2016 2:41 PM
72	I am satisfied with the present situation in our professional area (Measurement and Measuring Techniques).	4/25/2016 2:29 PM
73	More competitive costs	4/25/2016 2:29 PM
74	Offer more reasonable rates. I recently visited Bratislava; flights BHX-BTS, 2 nights four star accommodation B&B basis and city transport pass = £200.	4/25/2016 2:27 PM
75	Better transport links to main airports, lower taxi fares around main airports, and more mid-sized conference centres.	4/25/2016 2:23 PM
76	Trains are so expensive	4/25/2016 2:22 PM
77	Increase bedroom standards and lower prices for those	4/25/2016 2:21 PM
78	Reduce airport duty. Ireland doesn't have airport duty and is a more attractive english-speaking venue for conference guests	4/25/2016 2:19 PM
79	Better connectivity with Excel. Better knowledge of the congress -large medical specialty - congresses from teh Hotels and other parts involved in These Projects.	4/25/2016 2:18 PM
80	conference venues: exhibition space IT, wifi food for events	4/25/2016 2:16 PM
81	Capping hotel rates	4/25/2016 2:13 PM
82	not sure this is something the UK has control over	4/25/2016 2:12 PM
83	more training	3/8/2016 9:55 AM
84	bouo9p;	3/7/2016 3:28 PM
85	www	2/15/2016 8:09 PM
86	zxczxczxc	2/10/2016 2:42 PM

CAT Publications – International association researchey – June 2016

Q6 In what areas does the UK excel? Please tick all that apply

Answered: 86 Skipped: 23



Answer Choices	Responses
Value for money	5.81% 5
Service levels	32.56% 28
Accessibility	48.84% 42
Hotels	20.93% 18
Knowledge and research	54.65% 47
Other	6.98% 6
Other, please specify	22.09% 19
Total Respondents: 86	

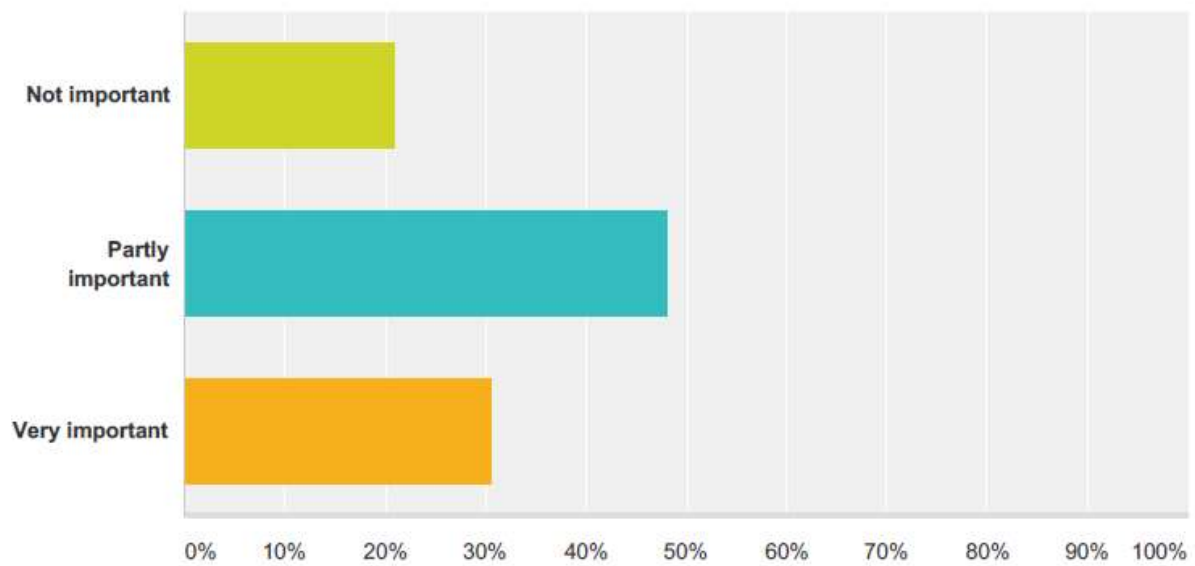
CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

#	Other, please specify	Date
1	History	5/10/2016 4:09 PM
2	Heritage sites.	5/10/2016 1:00 PM
3	cultural offers	5/9/2016 8:17 AM
4	sightseeing and tourism opportunities. Most of our delegates are international so the opportunity to come to the UK is fantastic.	5/5/2016 3:51 PM
5	Social networking, diversity for social events	5/5/2016 9:37 AM
6	good level researchers	5/4/2016 10:20 PM
7	see #3	5/4/2016 7:54 PM
8	None that I am aware of	5/4/2016 4:43 PM
9	Easier and cheaper visa requirements	5/4/2016 3:15 PM
10	Its difficult to especify since we did not hold an event there in the last 30 years	5/4/2016 3:07 PM
11	The African immigrant population in the UK is much and the presence of strong UK institutions working in Africa	5/4/2016 3:00 PM
12	History	5/4/2016 2:48 PM
13	xxx	4/26/2016 4:47 AM
14	Culture	4/26/2016 1:08 AM
15	Attractions of interest and culture	4/25/2016 8:03 PM
16	language is no problem... no issues with health or food...	4/25/2016 5:25 PM
17	At least London is by far too expensive for what it offers. other places are difficult to access.	4/25/2016 5:20 PM
18	None of the above. UK is losing ground to providers from other countries.	4/25/2016 2:23 PM
19	cultural heritage & Monuments	4/25/2016 2:21 PM

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q7 How important are subventions to your organisation when selecting a destination for a conference?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 24

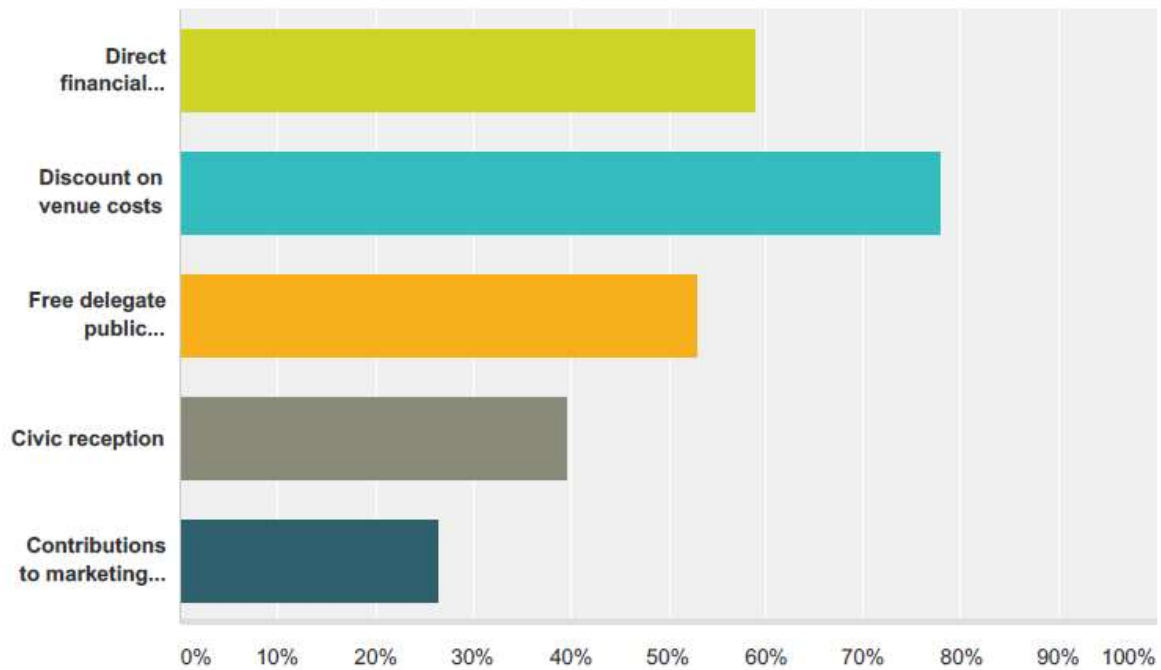


Answer Choices	Responses	
Not important	21.18%	18
Partly important	48.24%	41
Very important	30.59%	26
Total		85

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q8 If subventions are important to you, what are your preferred forms of subvention? Tick those that apply.

Answered: 68 Skipped: 41



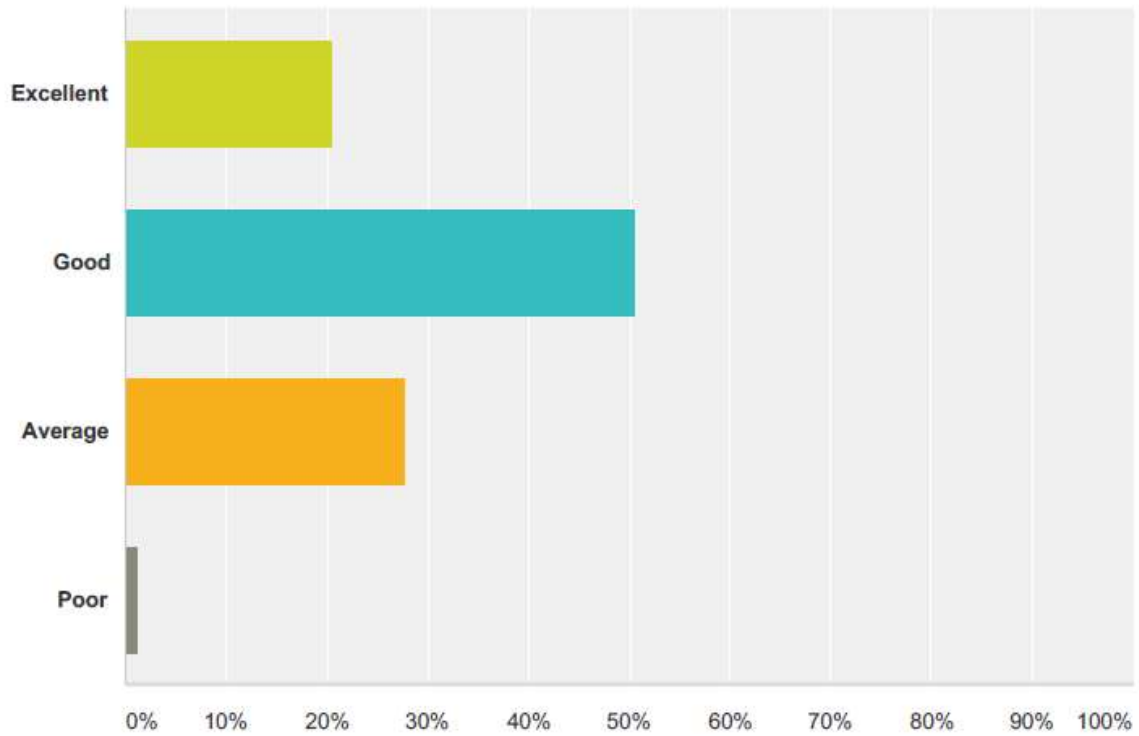
Answer Choices	Responses
Direct financial subsidy	58.82% 40
Discount on venue costs	77.94% 53
Free delegate public transport	52.94% 36
Civic reception	39.71% 27
Contributions to marketing costs	26.47% 18
Total Respondents: 68	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	see #3	5/4/2016 7:55 PM
2	Partnership support including more generalised support across board	5/4/2016 3:02 PM

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q9 How do you rate the convention bureaux you have dealt with in the UK?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 26

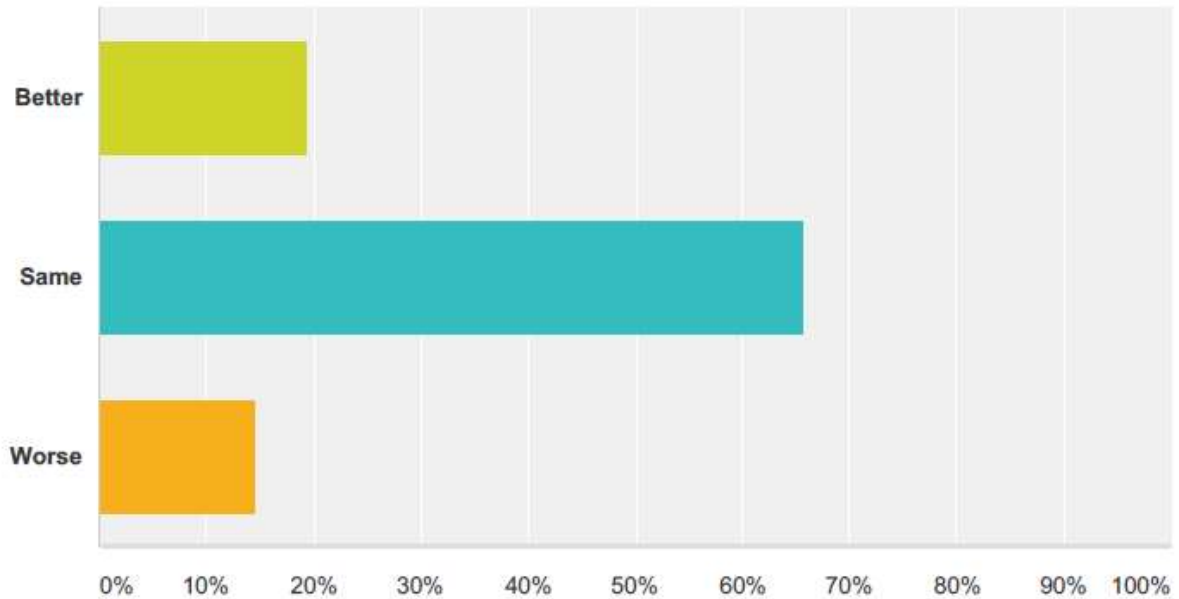


Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	20.48%	17
Good	50.60%	42
Average	27.71%	23
Poor	1.20%	1
Total		83

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q10 Typically, how do they compare with bureaux in other countries?

Answered: 82 Skipped: 27



Answer Choices	Responses	
Better	19.51%	16
Same	65.85%	54
Worse	14.63%	12
Total		82

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q11 How can UK convention bureaux improve?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 61

#	Responses	Date
1	Very strong on the sales side but the operational teams can be a real let down. It seems once you've signed up they've lost interest	5/10/2016 4:11 PM
2	This survey has required me to respond although I have no experience with UK convention bureaux. I have dealt with none.	5/10/2016 1:02 PM
3	Hard to say, they are already very active!	5/9/2016 2:49 PM
4	More association focus	5/9/2016 10:08 AM
5	Better service	5/7/2016 6:54 AM
6	Larger meeting rooms at a lower rate	5/5/2016 1:36 PM
7	They are really very good and work well with other parties to create a "one-stop shop" so as long as the delegated tasks between them and a PCO are clear I have found no problem as an organiser and they have extremely valuable knowledge and experience.	5/5/2016 11:29 AM
8	I do know...	5/5/2016 10:23 AM
9	Hardly use convention bureaux	5/5/2016 9:38 AM
10	maintaining close contact with organizing committees and being proactive in schedule and broadcasting	5/5/2016 6:15 AM
11	I dont know	5/4/2016 10:22 PM
12	UK convention bureaux are typically our customers for destination Netherlands	5/4/2016 7:56 PM
13	BETTER CONTACT WITH CUSTOMERS	5/4/2016 7:17 PM
14	By being proactive and proposing solutions and diverse options to conference organisers	5/4/2016 6:23 PM
15	haven't used them	5/4/2016 4:12 PM
16	Not applicable - haven't worked with them previously	5/4/2016 3:37 PM
17	Better links with key trade institutions and bodies and stakeholder groups to better understand specific needs relating to that industry.	5/4/2016 3:34 PM
18	difficult question. Maybe informing on possibilities/services not only of their members, in order to give the best offer.	5/4/2016 3:10 PM
19	UK is a part of Europe and not UK is UK	5/4/2016 3:04 PM
20	Have not dealt with any yet	5/4/2016 3:03 PM
21	Less standardised approach	5/4/2016 2:52 PM
22	A more unified service offering - some are excellent (Marketing Edinburgh is a great example), some offer no assistance at all and staff don't seem to be aware of available services (London is the worst example I've encountered)	5/4/2016 2:48 PM
23	Responsiveness - Proactive approach	5/3/2016 9:44 AM
24	more added value	4/29/2016 1:11 PM
25	Response to the requests extremely fast.	4/28/2016 6:04 PM
26	By being more accommodating	4/27/2016 10:34 AM
27	FAM trips for serious buyers to non London locations	4/26/2016 9:49 AM
28	Staff must be motivated to learn to speak other languages beyond just English	4/26/2016 5:43 AM
29	more funding and therefore ore professional service	4/26/2016 5:12 AM
30	No comments	4/25/2016 8:26 PM

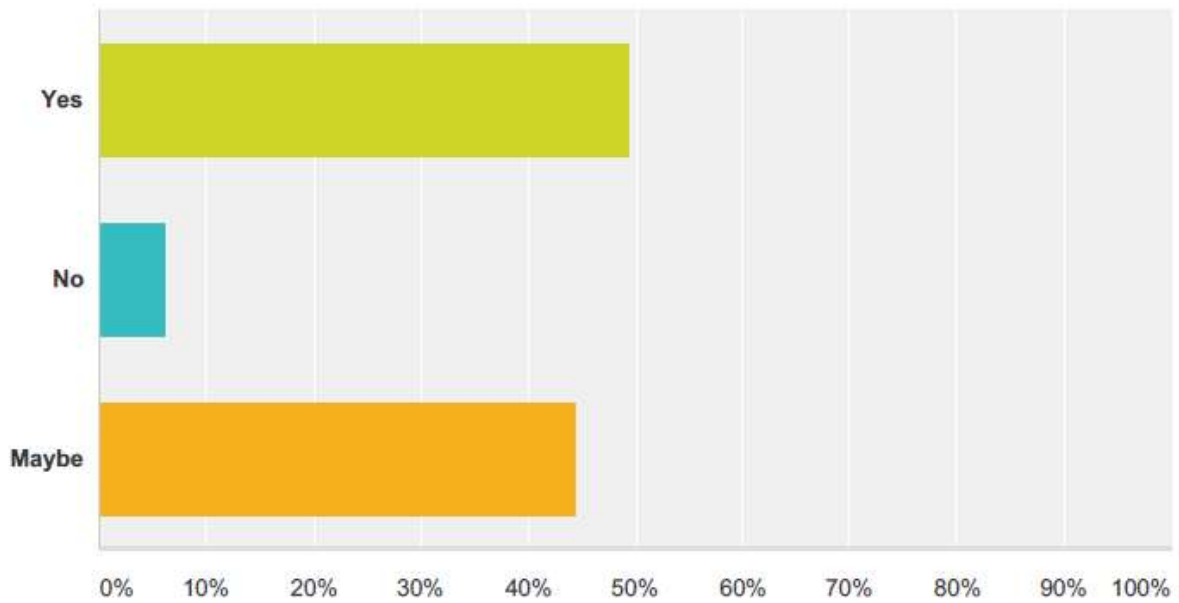
CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

31	I have not used one yet, but your questions required responses. I have no opinion at this stage.	4/25/2016 8:04 PM
32	Serve as a channel to approach possible financial resources	4/25/2016 5:27 PM
33	We not used a UK Convention bureaux	4/25/2016 5:22 PM
34	Making sure they are aware of not just the luxury (again 5*) end but the budget end also	4/25/2016 4:37 PM
35	find the right channel of promotion abroad	4/25/2016 4:36 PM
36	Offer free site inspections, organise more functions for visibility in other cities such as Brussels, etc. or at IMEX etc. - some CVBs are in touch all the time and over the years a partnership is established	4/25/2016 4:16 PM
37	Decrease your costings & improve your services	4/25/2016 3:37 PM
38	By providing a full-fledged service from IT based registration to exhibitions and poster shows	4/25/2016 3:28 PM
39	Better publicity	4/25/2016 2:57 PM
40	To offer more venues for more events.	4/25/2016 2:32 PM
41	Show more attention to business visitors.	4/25/2016 2:28 PM
42	Better bidding, the UK needs to improve here	4/25/2016 2:23 PM
43	ask barcelona/vienna/amsterdam convention bureau	4/25/2016 2:22 PM
44	They are trying very hard, yes! They need the city to help more than what they do so far.	4/25/2016 2:19 PM
45	Facts not hard sell	4/25/2016 2:14 PM
46	more staff	3/8/2016 9:57 AM
47	More staff	2/15/2016 6:14 PM
48	cbcvbb	2/10/2016 2:43 PM

CAT Publications – International association research – June 2016

Q12 Would you recommend the UK as a place to hold meetings?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 28



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	49.38%	40
No	6.17%	5
Maybe	44.44%	36
Total		81