# the business of events

GLOBAL DESTINATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022

ibtm WORLD

# Contents

# Introduction

First published in 2021, The Business of Events: Global Destination Report is an annual survey of the leading global business events destinations, including National Tourism Organisations and Convention & Visitor Bureau.

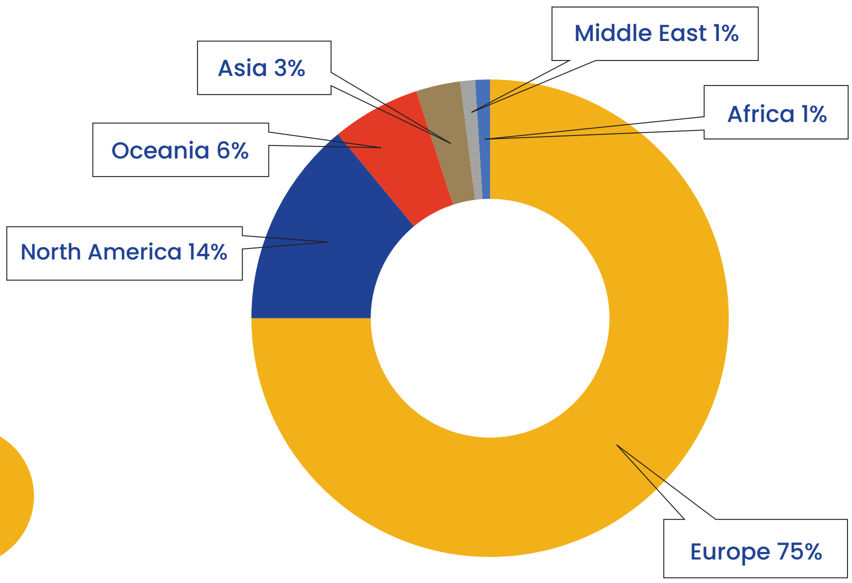
The data obtained is used to create this report, which is available for free download, and which can be used by destinations and planners, along with the wider event supply chain, to help shape future decision-making.

In addition, the information included in the report can be used to influence government departments, public sector bodies, policy makers and influencers on the benefits of having a strong and well-supported business events sector to both national and local economies and wider society.

# Sample & Methodology

During the period September 22nd, 2022 – 21st October 2022, a sample of 1,032 organisations within the global business events sector were contacted via an online platform. These organisations were a combination of city, regional and national convention bureaux and destination marketing organisations which specifically market, promote and attract business events to their destinations.

Those organisations surveyed came from the following geographic regions:




A total of eight individual questions were posed, primarily with a selection of multiple-choice responses. All data gathered was anonymous and confidential to ensure that respondents felt at ease with providing honest opinions and were therefore more likely to participate and provide accurate responses.

# Executive Summary

The Business of Events: Global Destination Report was commissioned by brand communications agency davies tanner and conducted by SFA Connect to establish how the industry has changed since 2019. The research focused on funding, sentiment, and legacy, with the objective to demonstrate to governments and policymakers the benefits of having a strong and supported business events sector.

The survey was conducted in the summer of 2022 among more than 1,100 destination respondents, most of which worked in small teams of between three and five people.

In summary, the report suggests that the sector is being taken more seriously by governments around the world, that funding has broadly remained stable, and that there is an enhanced focus on the legacy of events. There is an indication of a decline in international events, but to date has been compensated by an increase in domestic events.

## Relationship with Government

By way of context, it is interesting to note that just over half (56%) of the respondents report to a domestic Department of Tourism while the remaining 44% report to various other departments and agencies. This underlines that on a global scale, the business events sector is widely viewed as part of the supposed 'visitor economy', with governments generally seeing the industry as part of the wider tourism mix.

Yet there is a clear sign that the role played by business events departments is being taken more seriously. Respondents reported that how they are regarded by their city, regional or national government had 'increased' (55%) since 2019. Seven percent of the respondents indicated that it had decreased.

## Funding

Funding for business events has long since been a talking point around the world. The recent volatility of the economic climate has cast a shadow over finances more generally, with many public bodies having to cut budgets and divert funds elsewhere.

According to the findings in this report, most responses (52%) suggest core funding remained the same or increased from 2019 to 2022. However, 42% of respondents have seen their central core funding decrease in 2022. The remaining 8% were unsure, possibly indicating that budget confirmation has been delayed.

On subvention funding, many respondents stated that there had not been a change in their international, regional, national or overall bid or subvention fund since 2019. However, several respondents (an average 20% across all four of these categories) were unsure, responding 'don't know'.

Broadly, this indicates that government (or budget setter) attitudes to business events are unchanged.

## International Events

Compared to 2019, a significantly larger proportion of respondents reported seeing a decrease in the volume of their international business in 2022. This is in large part a knock-on effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has interrupted association congress cycles and the relative uncertainty has made some corporations reluctant to commit.

Some key markets, such as China, are still facing lockdowns and are therefore not travelling overseas presently.

However, respondents report that there had been an increase in both regional and national business events. This will likely have been accelerated by the backlog of domestic events in the wake of the pandemic.

## Legacy

The legacy of events has been a key talking point in 2022 as destinations begin to harness the power of what they can bring. Some governments actively encourage their business event teams to court conferences and congresses which align with their own national policies. The net result is to improve society as well as its economy. This is particularly pertinent for business events in the fields of healthcare, science, green energy, and technology.

It was clearly an essential element to respondents, with the majority (96%) saying it was important (62% selected 'very important' while 34% selected 'somewhat important). This left just 5% saying that it was 'not very important'.

# SURVEY RESPONSES & KEY FINDINGS

# Questions

We asked eight specific questions to our business events audience, which were:

1: Where in the world are you located?

2: What is the size of your team that works directly across business events?

3: As a Convention/Visitors Bureau or agency, which official department do you report into?

4: Compared to 2019 have you seen a change in this year's central core funding i.e., budget and spending levels?

5: Compared to 2019 figures have you seen a change in the volume of your business events this year?

6: Compared to 2019 have you seen a change in your bid or subvention fund this year?

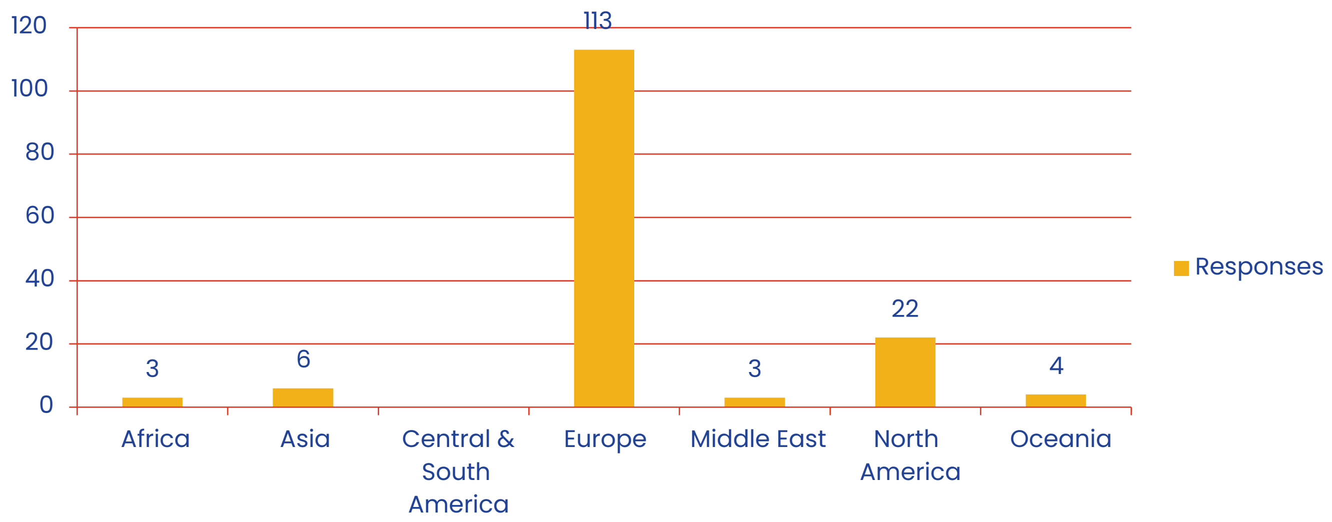
7: How important is legacy or future building when bringing a major event to your destination?

8: Has your profile (in relation to how well known or regarded by your city, regional or national government) as a business events department/team changed since 2019?

A summary of their responses can be found in the following section.

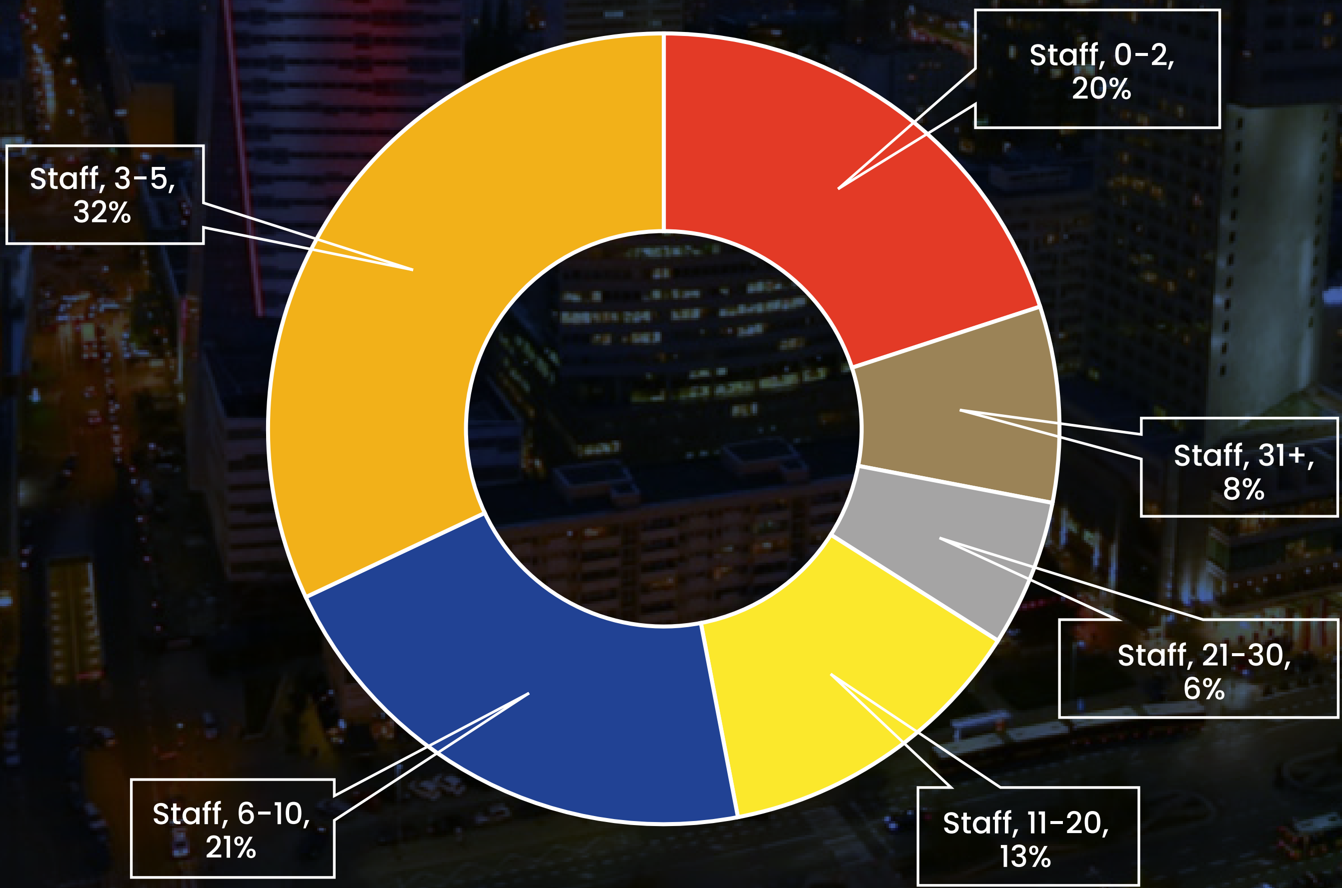
# Geographic Responses

Approximately 75% of all respondents were based in and operate out of Europe. This is quite disproportionate with the overall data sample, which was split across all the major global regions. One reason for this might be that our own network, and that of many of our industry partners which supported the distribution of the survey, is more weighted towards Europe and therefore the reach and response rate reflected this. The balance of responses was spread across other regions, including North America, Asia, Africa, Middle East and Oceania.



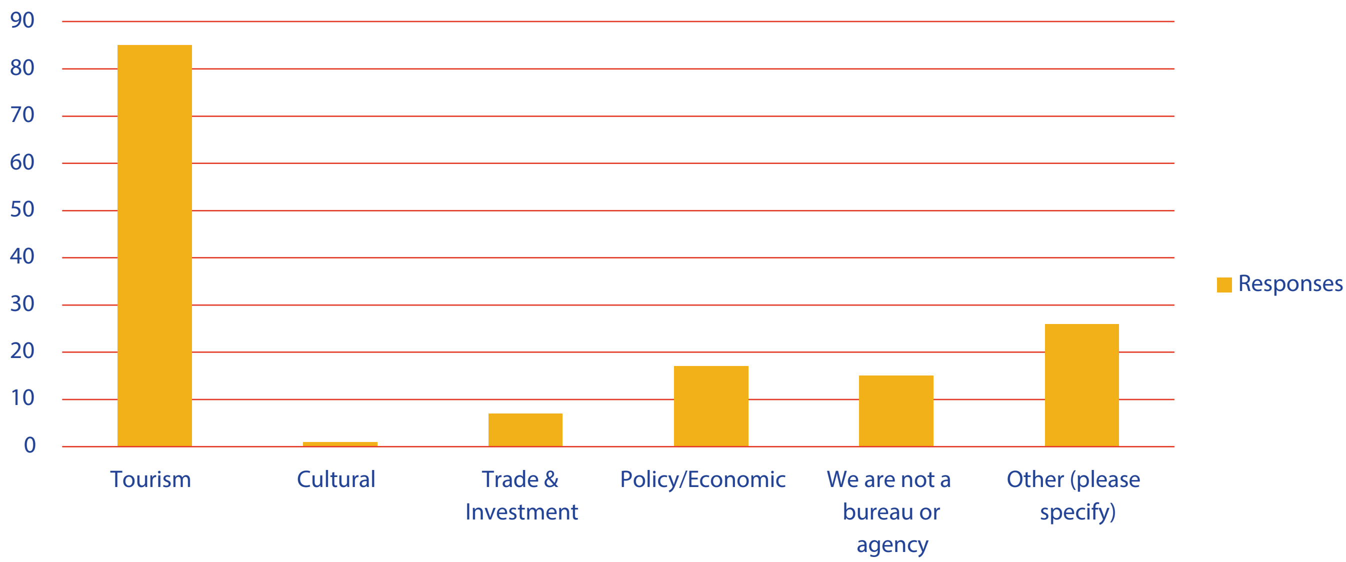
# Team

The majority of respondents to the survey were based in smaller teams with a total of 73% being positioned in a team of 10 or fewer and the biggest proportion being a team of 3-5. Given the value of business events to a city it could be argued that this is a relatively small team.



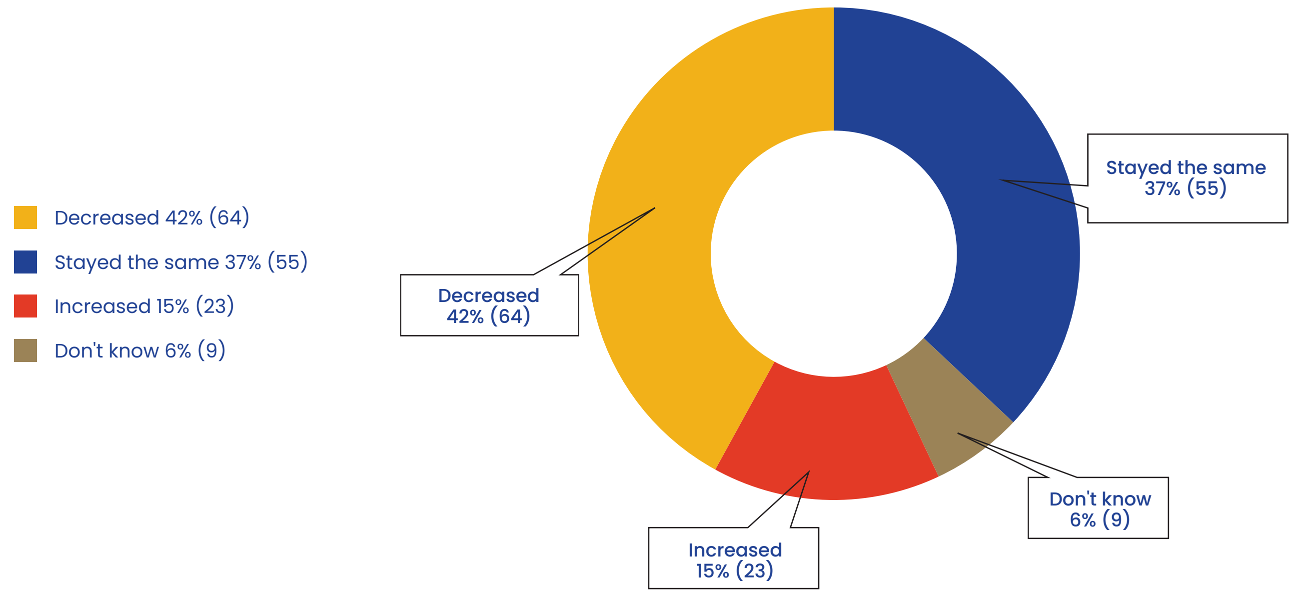

# Reporting

Whilst the below graph shows that 56% of respondents reported to the Department of Tourism this number increases slightly when looking at the responses provided under “other” three where an additional four people specified this department as the one they report to bringing this proportion even higher to 62%.

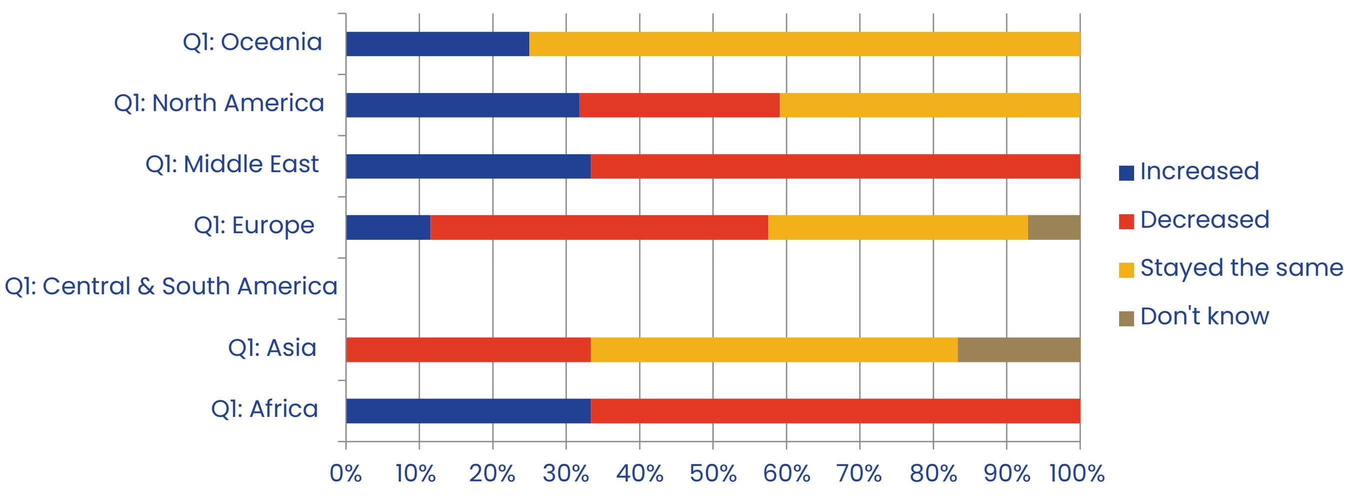


# Funding

If looking at the figures in terms of whether more respondents saw an increase or a decrease in their central core funding from 2019 to 2022, then a larger proportion saw a decrease (42%). However, if we look at if the funding had decreased then the minority would say it had as 52% said they had seen an “increase" or it had "stayed the same”.

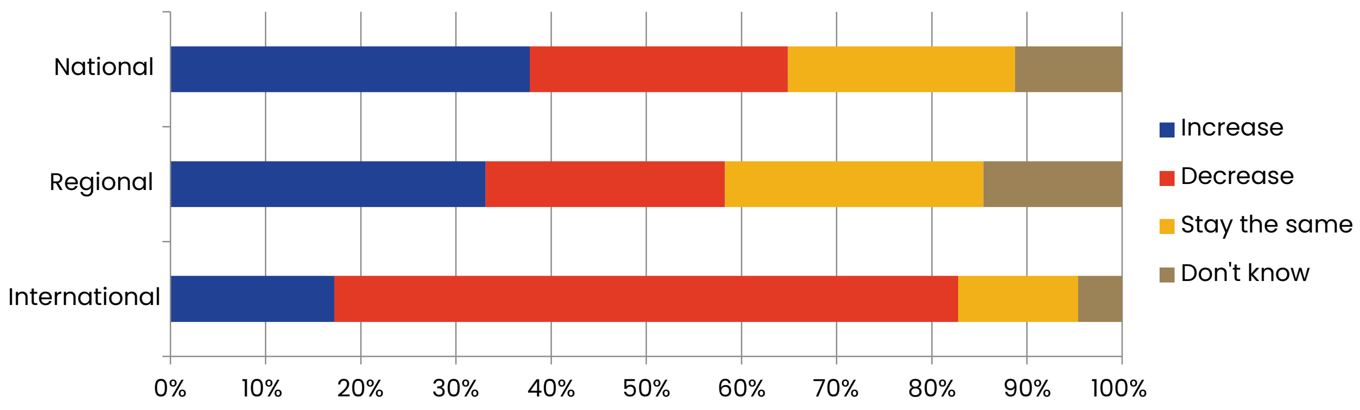



Interestingly, when we look at this data split by location, there is not one location where the majority of respondents saw their core funding decrease since 2019. However, there is quite an even split between those who responded “increase/stay the same”, “increase” and “decrease”, except for North America and Oceania both of which saw the majority (73% for North America and 100% for Oceania) of its respondents seeing an “increase” or “stayed the same”.

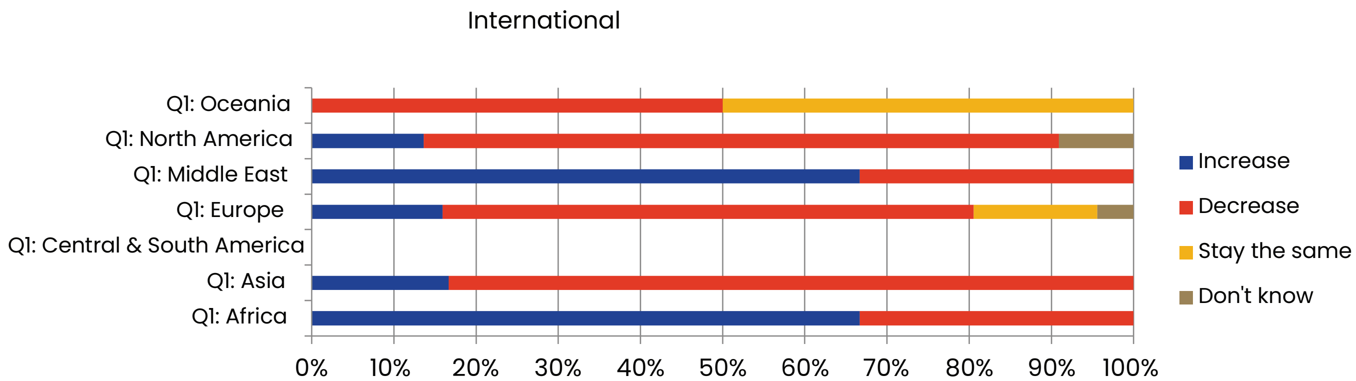


# Volume

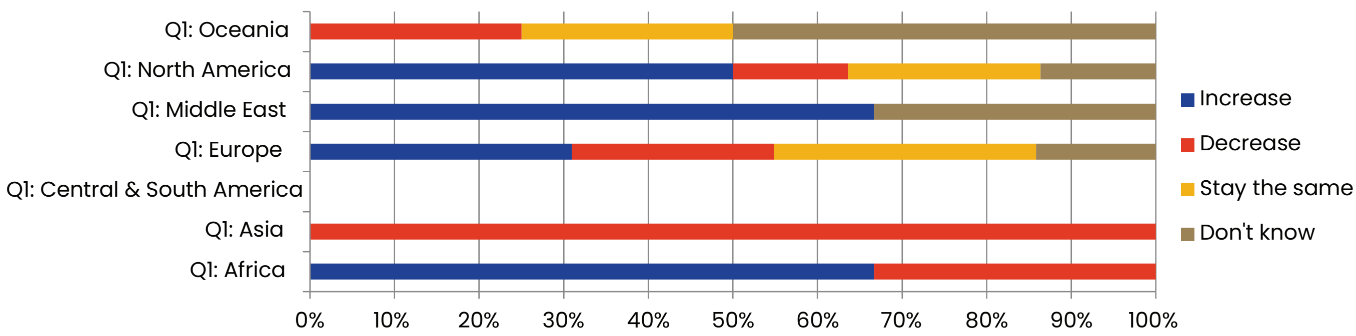
A significantly larger proportion of respondents have seen a decrease in the volume of their international business in 2022 compared with 2019. Whilst there has been more regional and national business events in 2022 compared to 2019.



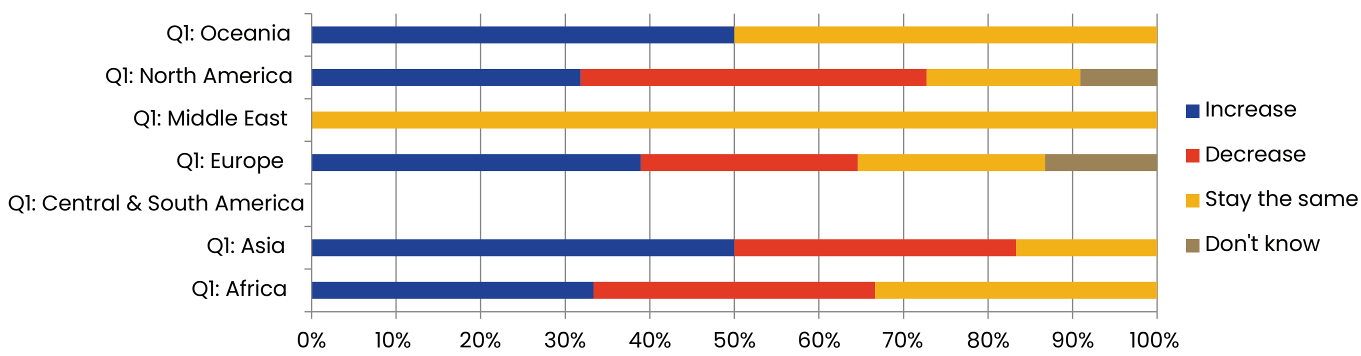

Some interesting trends can be seen when considering the answers to this question from each part of the world:



Regional

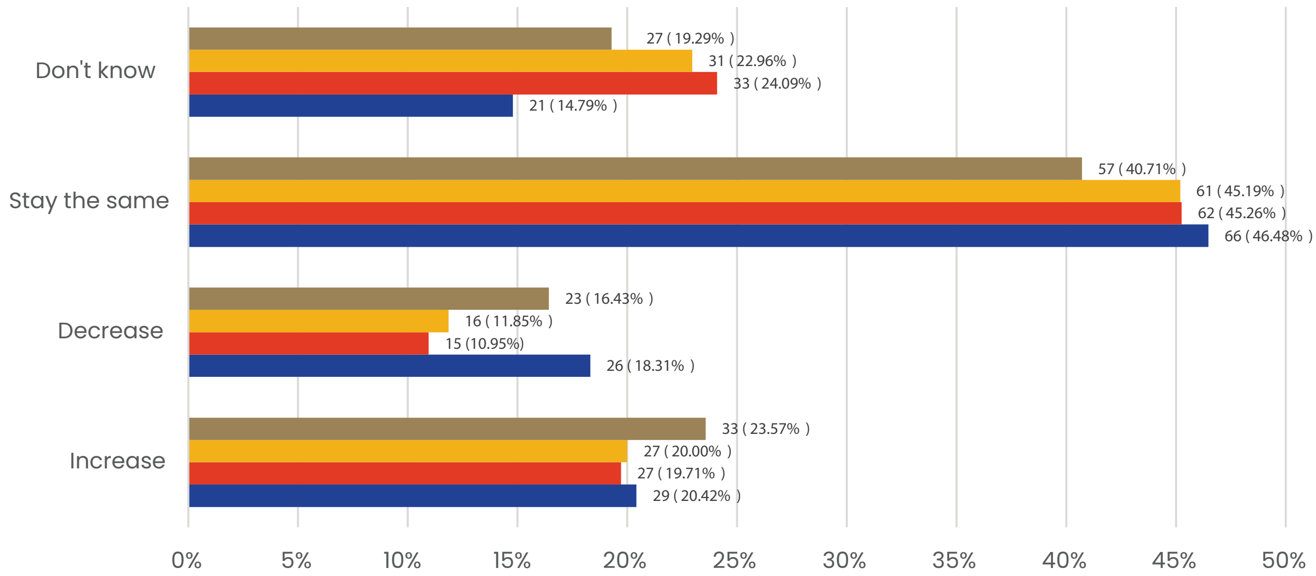



National



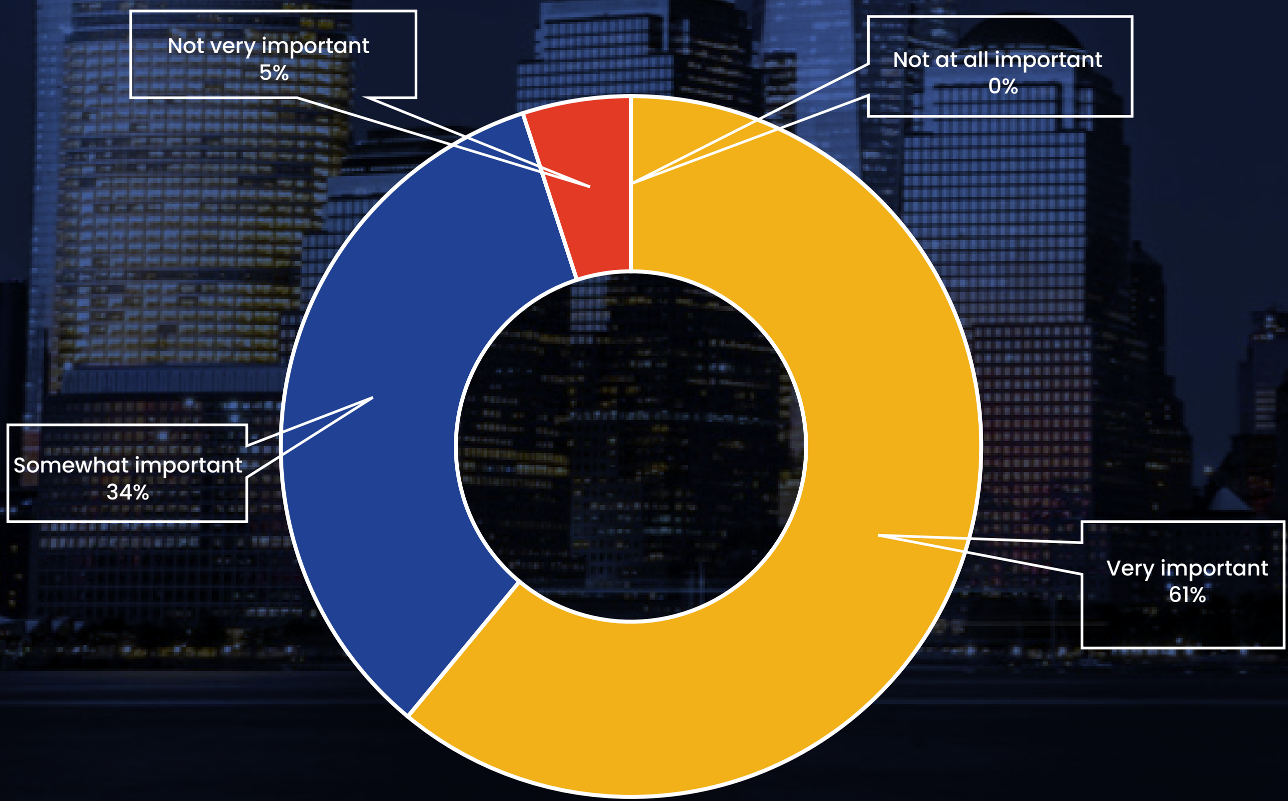

# Subvention

The majority of respondents stated that there has not been a change in their international, regional, national or overall bid or subvention fund since 2019. It should be noted that for this question there was a high number of respondents who were unsure and so put "don't know".



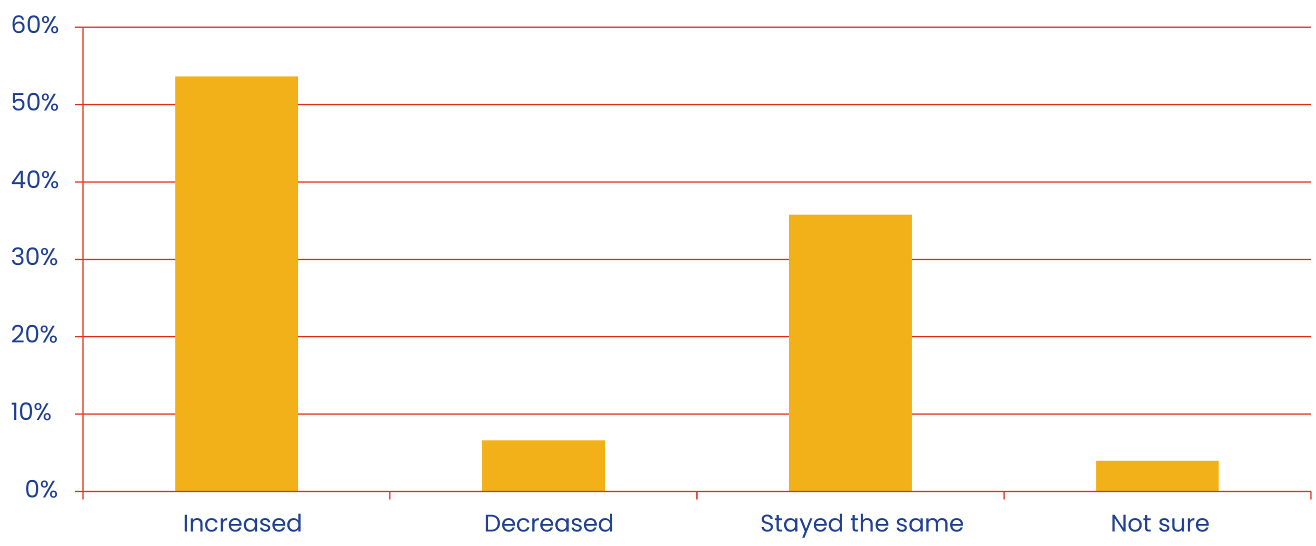

# Legacy

The response to this was clear with only 5% saying that legacy or future building when bringing a major event to their destination was “not very important”. Meaning that the remainder of respondents believed it was important with the majority saying it was “very important” (62%).



# Profile

In terms of the destination’s business events department/team profile and how it is regarded by their city, regional or national government, the majority of respondents saw that there had been an “increase” (54%) in this since 2019, with only 7% of the respondents indicating that it had decreased.



# About The Business of Events

The Business of Events is an initiative created by davies tanner, the global brand communications agency for the business events sector.

The Business of Events works in partnership with public and private sector organisations to raise the importance and profile of business events around the world as an economic, policy, and community driver through the development of Policy, Advocacy, Content, and Engagement.

We bring together leaders from across the business events community to connect with government, policy makers and influencers, public sector organisations and politicians.

These events are supported by several strategic and supporting partners, including the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Events, VisitBritain and UK Events (formerly the Business Visits & Events Partnership).

davies tanner

# Supporters

We are grateful for the following organisations for their support in creating this important report and to actively contributing to the work of The Business of Events.

# Contact

For further information regarding The Business of Events, including discussing speaking opportunities, media enquiries or partner opportunities please contact us.

### Editorial and Content

**Martin Fullard**
Associate Director : News & Content
martin.fullard@daviestanner.com

### Partnerships

**Sue O'Gorman**
Brand Marketing Director
sue.ogorman@daviestanner.com

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