



Union of International Associations

***Survey on International
Meetings Issues - 2020***



UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS
UNION DES ASSOCIATIONS INTERNATIONALES



UIA
Survey on International Meetings Issues - 2020

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Associated and complementary information is available in the
[Yearbook of International Organizations](#),
Volume 5: Statistics, Visualizations and Patterns

And

The UIA's annual ***International Meeting Statistics Report***

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UIA Survey on International Meetings Issues - 2020

During 2020 the Union of International Associations undertook its eighth large-scale survey on issues encountered by international organizations and associations when holding meetings.

Of special note: some of the responses were received during Q1 of 2020, including before any impact of Covid-19 was evident. In light of this and the ongoing issues caused by the pandemic response, we will survey the associations again in 2021.

The survey is designed to help all involved in the process of organizing international meetings to get a sense of changes over the years and the challenges of the current environment.

The questionnaire was in English and comprised simple yes/no and multiple choice questions.

The 2020 survey follows surveys undertaken on behalf of UIA's Associate Members in 1985, 1993, 2002, 2009, 2013, 2015 and 2018. The questions have been adjusted over time.

Comments and suggestions are always welcome.

With the aid of our sponsors we were able to invite a larger group of organizations to participate and to make access to this report free to the general public.

While we repeat the survey on a regular basis (every two years), we are planning a pandemic related survey for next year.

We thank our sponsors for their support of this edition of the survey:

Report and Survey Sponsors

Busan Tourism Organization – <https://bto.or.kr/eng/>

Finland Convention Bureau – <https://www.visitfinland.com/>

Congress Center Hamburg – <https://www.das-neue-cch.de/en/>

Korea Tourism Organization – <http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/>

Poland Convention Bureau – <https://www.pot.gov.pl/en/poland-convention>

Seoul Tourism Organization – <https://www.miceseoul.com>

Singapore Tourism Board – <https://www.stb.gov.sg>

General Background

Current number of active bodies in the Yearbook: **41,743**

Of those with some form of meetings activity: **23,260**

Source: Yearbook of International Associations

Number of meetings in the International Congress Calendar:

held in 2019: **13,001**

held in 2018: **12,380**

held in 2017: **12,584**

held in 2016: **13,099**

held in 2015: **13,001**

Source: International Congress Calendar Online

Number of new entries created by the editors in the Yearbook of International Organizations:
2020 (to date): **1,206**

On average, the Yearbook adds between 800 and 1,200 organization descriptions each year. These are not necessarily new organizations but are new to the UIA. Most will have foundation dates in the past five years, but we will add any relevant organization, active or not, to the Yearbook as soon as we learn of its existence.

The associations which responded to our questions represent the range of organization types in the Yearbook but one thing they all share is a level of internationality in their structure and activities.

Organizations in the Yearbook by UIA Type – IGO + INGO: total

TOTAL ALL TYPES 7804 (IGO) + 65027 (INGO): **72,831**

Source: YBIO volume 5, table 2.1, Edition 57, 2020/2021 (data collected in 2019)

- A. Federations of international organizations 1 + 37: **38**
- B. Universal membership organizations 37 + 558: **595**
- C. Intercontinental membership organizations 39 + 2031: **2070**
- D. Regionally oriented membership organizations 212 + 7314: **7526**
- E. Org's emanating from places, persons, bodies 958 + 3457: **4415**
- F. Organizations of special form 734 + 5489: **6223**
- G. Internationally oriented national organizations 159 + 9408: **9567**
- H. Dissolved or apparently inactive organizations 903 + 5249: **6152**
- J. Recently reported bodies - not yet confirmed 60 + 1327: **1387**
- K. Subsidiary and internal bodies 193 + 538: **731**
- N. National organizations 1 + 3411: **3412**
- R. Religious orders and secular institutes 0 + 907: **907**
- S. Autonomous conference series 90 + 1208: **1298**
- T. Multilateral treaties, intergovernmental agreements 2473 + 0: **2473**
- U. Currently inactive nonconventional bodies 1944 + 24093: **26037**



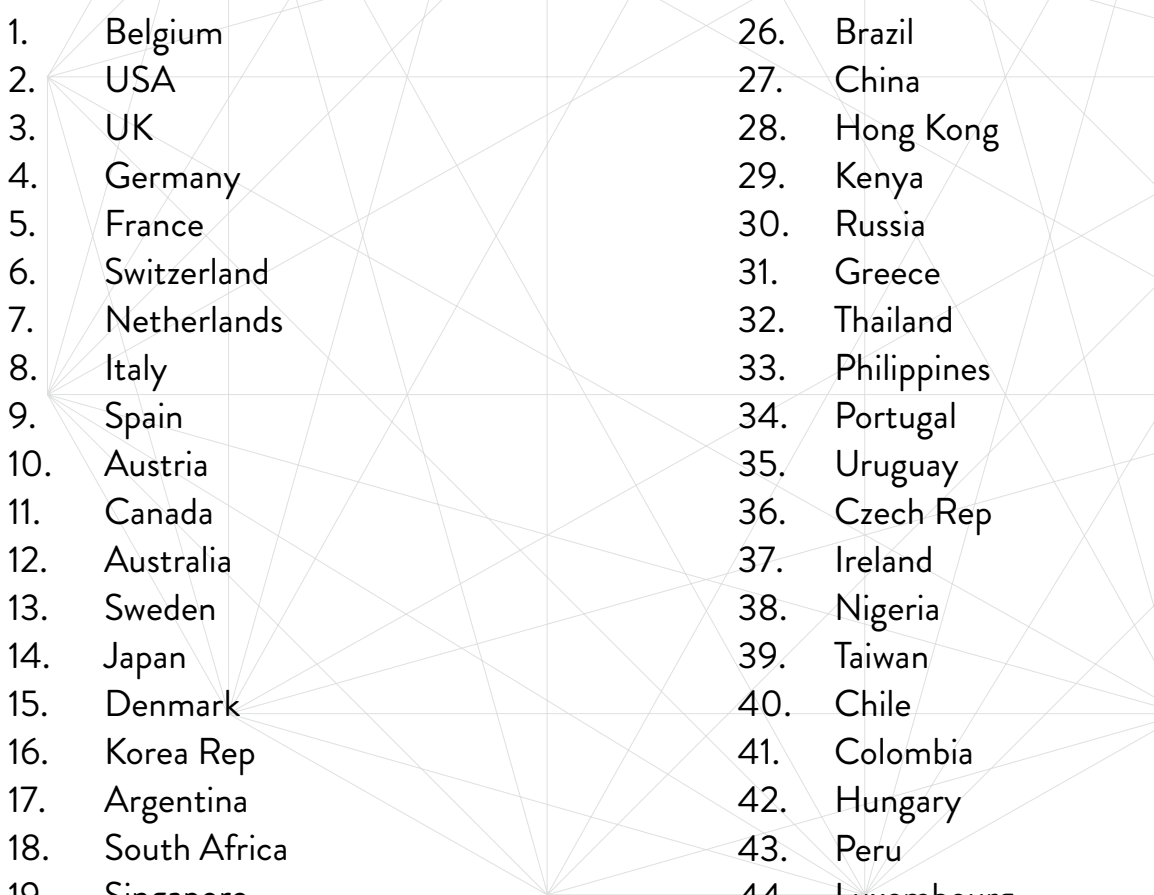
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Where are the associations located?

The table below lists the top fifty countries where organizations listed in the Yearbook have their main office / headquarters location for types A-D only. This is an extract of a table in the Yearbook which ranks all the countries and includes totals for all of the Yearbook's types. Outside of the top fifty places there is little variation when all types are calculated, thus the table below gives us a general picture of the main countries hosting association offices.



1.	Belgium	26.	Brazil
2.	USA	27.	China
3.	UK	28.	Hong Kong
4.	Germany	29.	Kenya
5.	France	30.	Russia
6.	Switzerland	31.	Greece
7.	Netherlands	32.	Thailand
8.	Italy	33.	Philippines
9.	Spain	34.	Portugal
10.	Austria	35.	Uruguay
11.	Canada	36.	Czech Rep
12.	Australia	37.	Ireland
13.	Sweden	38.	Nigeria
14.	Japan	39.	Taiwan
15.	Denmark	40.	Chile
16.	Korea Rep	41.	Colombia
17.	Argentina	42.	Hungary
18.	South Africa	43.	Peru
19.	Singapore	44.	Luxembourg
20.	Norway	45.	United Arab Emirates
21.	Mexico	46.	New Zealand
22.	Malaysia	47.	Poland
23.	Egypt	48.	Turkey
24.	Finland	49.	Israel
25.	India	50.	Trinidad-Tobago

Source: YBIO volume 5, table 3.1.1, Edition 57, 2020/2021 (data collected in 2019)

Experience Finland for meetings and events:

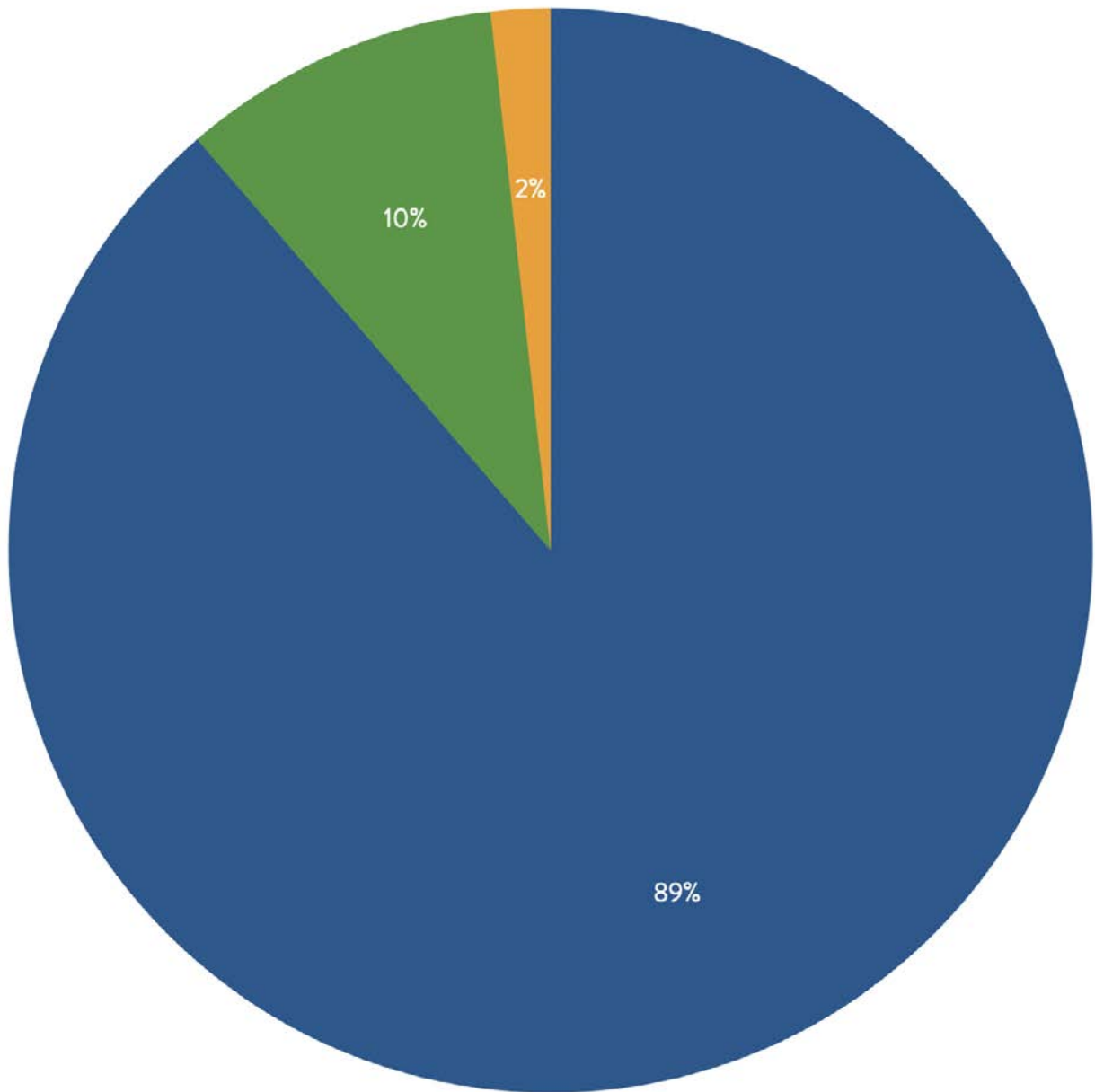
A serene summer haven and a true winter wonderland.

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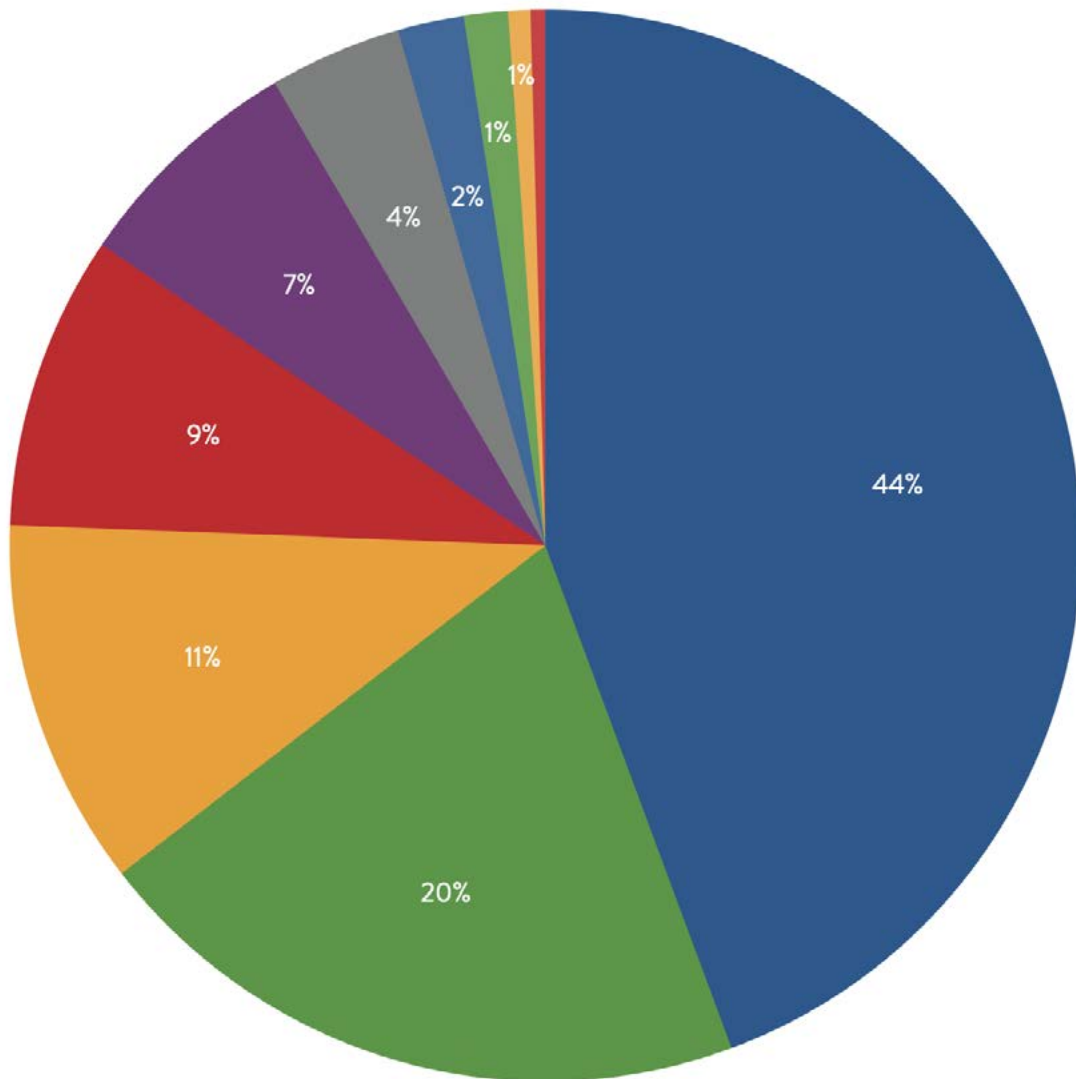
Finland
Convention
Bureau

1. Does your organization hold one or more major international meetings?



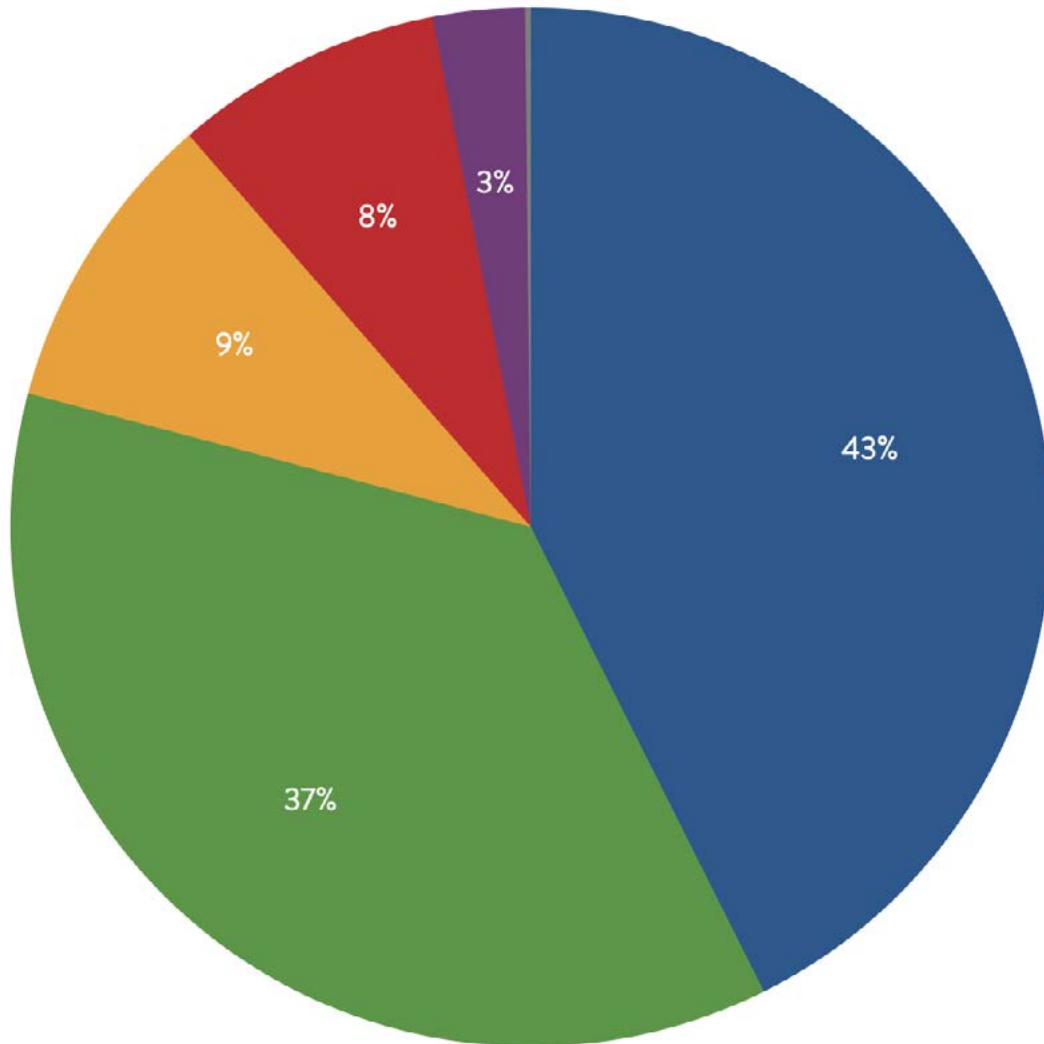
- 89% - Yes
- 10% - No
- 2% - No Answer

2. How often is your largest international meeting held?



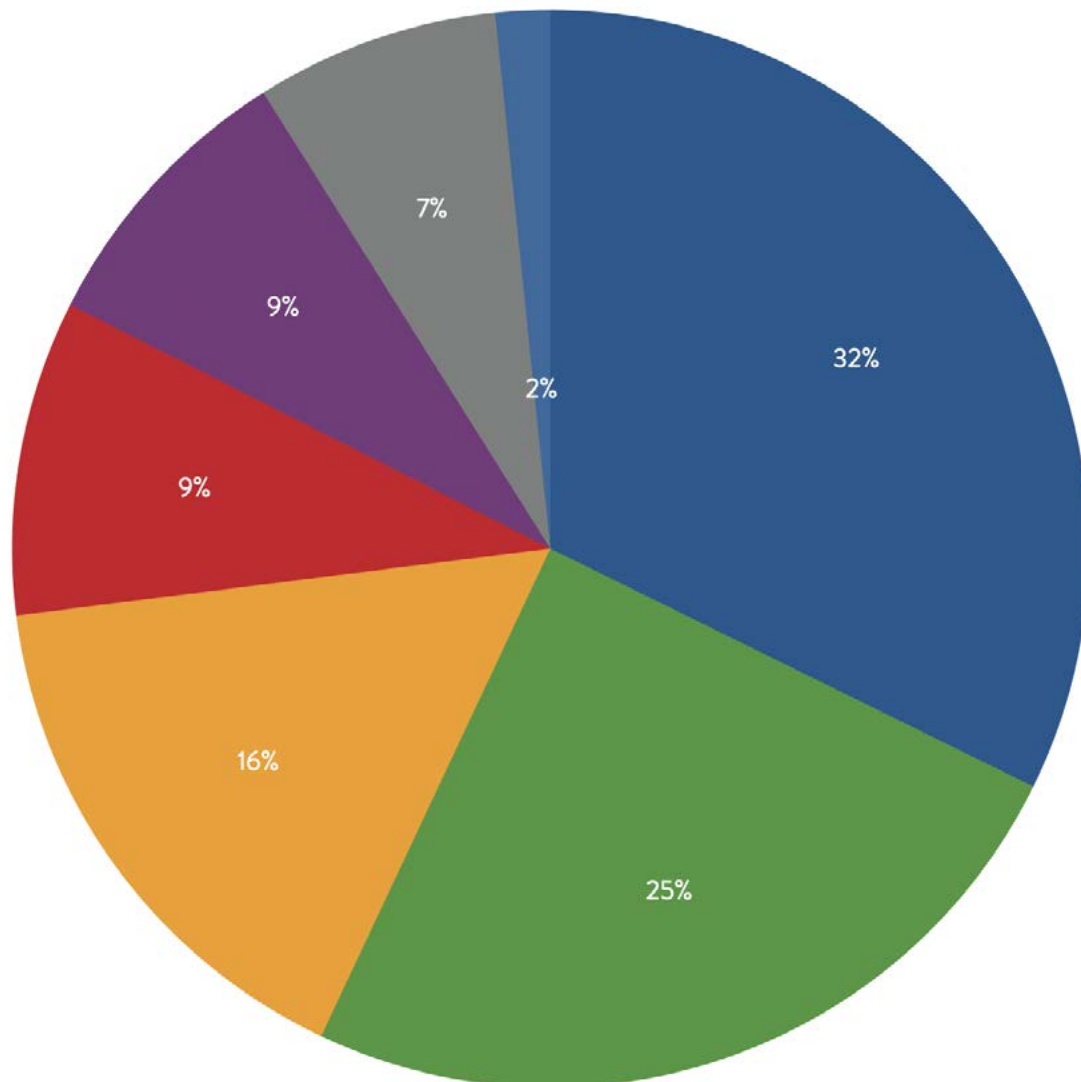
- 44% – Once each year
- 20% – Every 2 years
- 11% – 2 or more times per year
- 9% – no answer
- 7% – Every 3 years
- 4% – Every 4 years
- 2% – Other (irregularly)
- 1% – Every 5 years
- 1% – With more than 5 years between meetings
- <1% – I don't know

3. Who organizes this meeting?



- 43% – National or local member / national or local organization
- 37% – Our association's general staff
- 9% – Our association's in-house PCO or meeting planning department
- 8% – An external Professional Congress Organiser (PCO)
- 3% – Other
- <1% – I don't know

4. What are the main sources of income that cover the costs of this meeting?



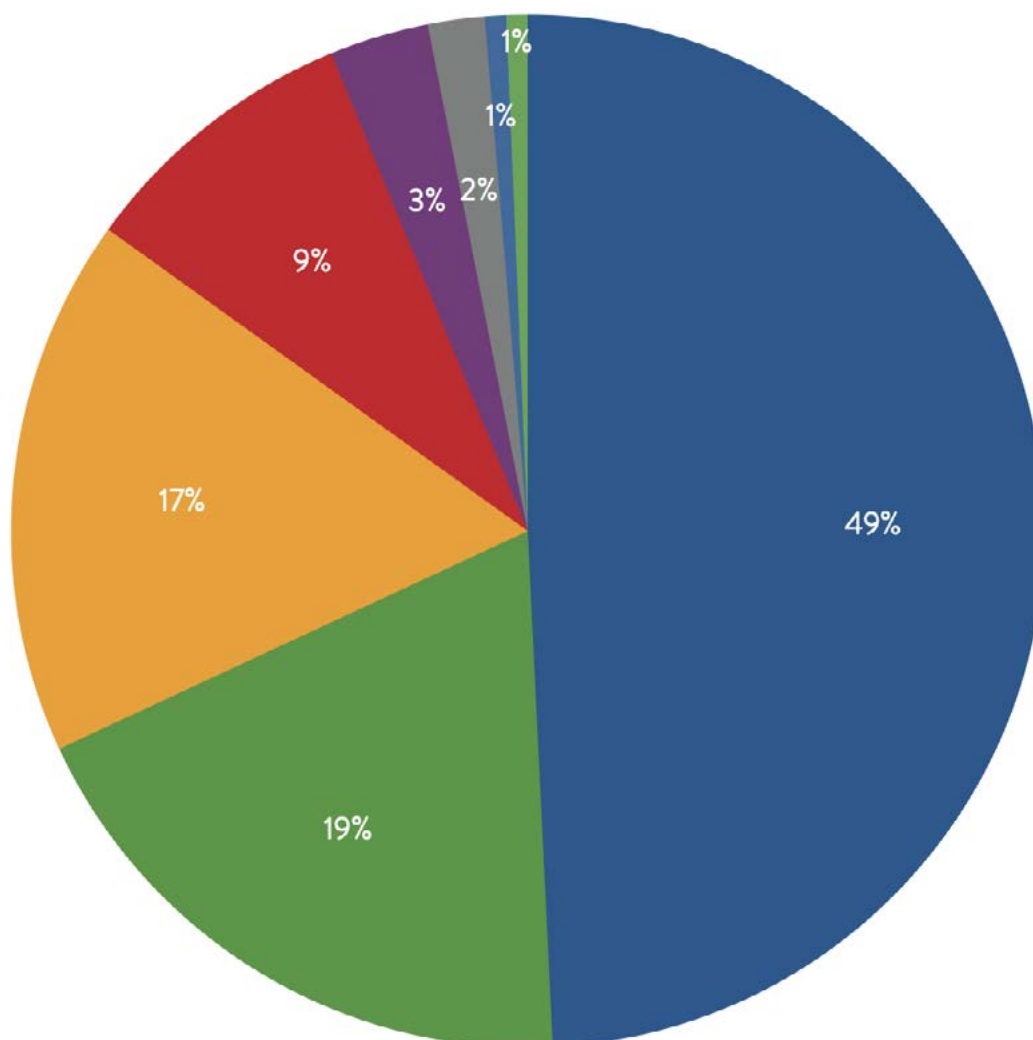
- 32% – Registration fees
- 25% – Sponsorship
- 16% – Annual membership
- 9% – Exhibition fees
- 9% – Partnerships
- 7% – Other
- 2% – Advertising / promotion (other than sponsors)



KOREA PROMISES INSPIRATION FOR SUCCESS

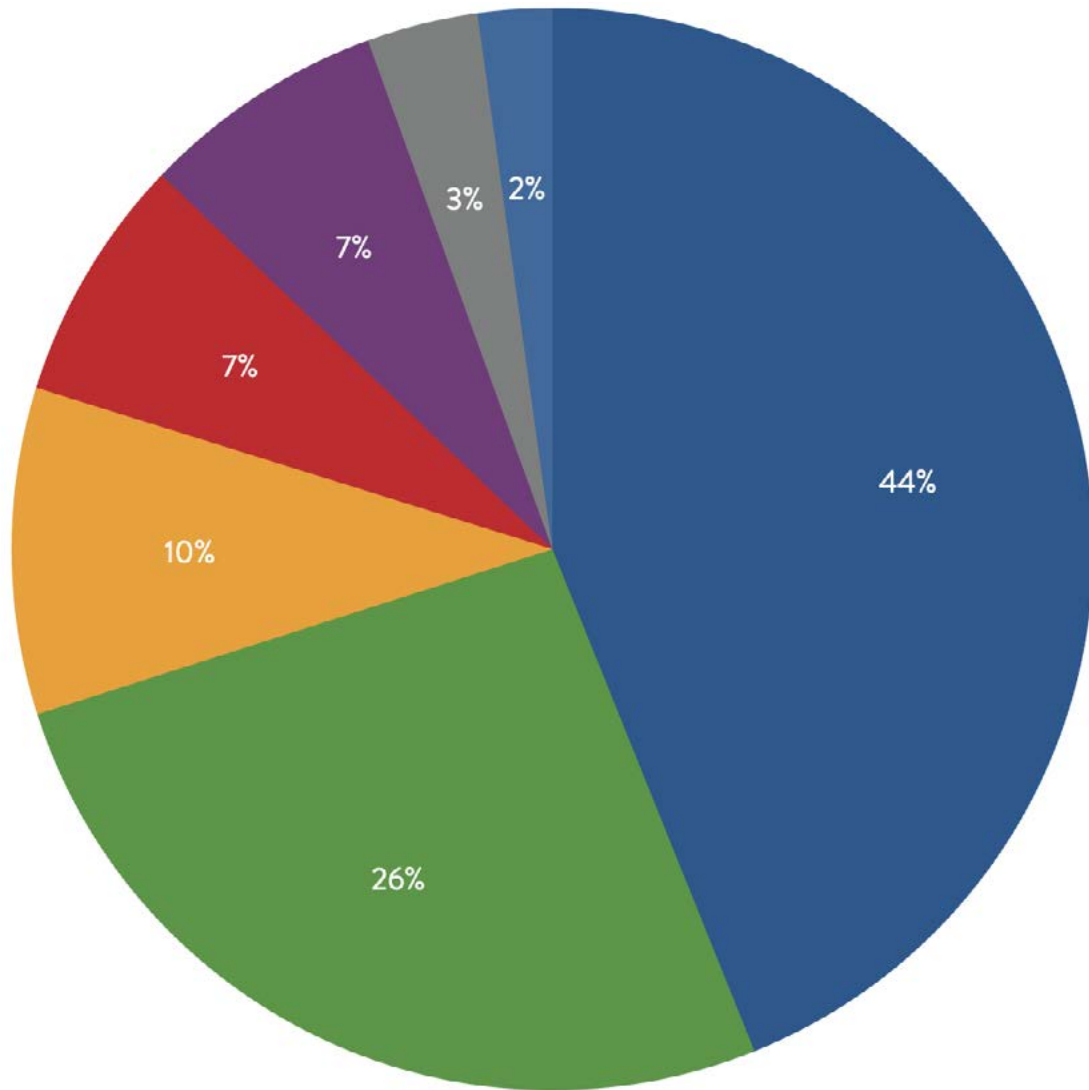
A country with a stunning natural environment
and convenient urban infrastructure.
Where time-honored tradition and cutting-edge digital technology coexist.
Everything is at your service based on our extensive experience.

5. Who makes the final decision on the destination / location / city / country of this meeting?



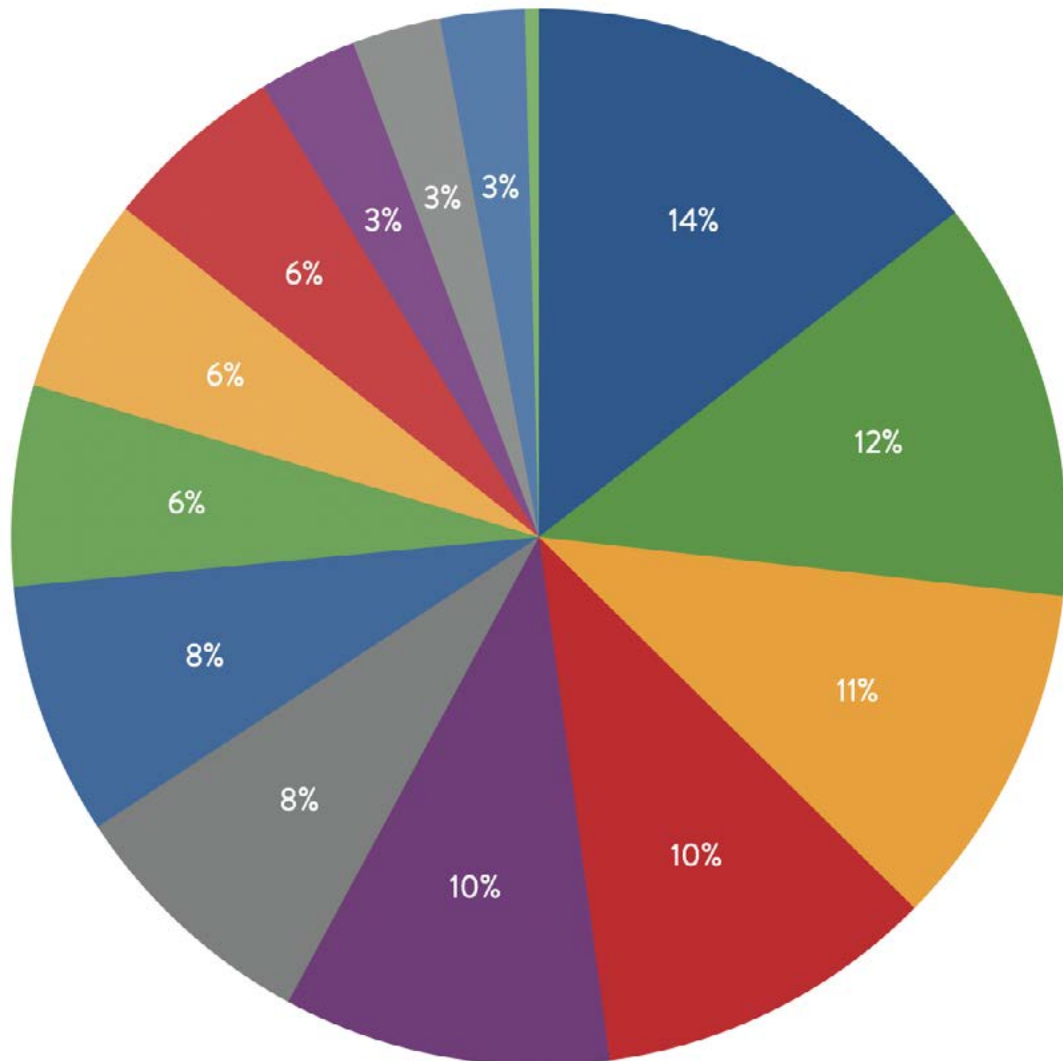
- 49% – Council / Board / Steering Committee
- 19% – General Assembly
- 17% – Executive officer(s) / staff
- 9% – Unanswered
- 3% – Partner organization
- 2% – Other
- 1% – I don't know
- 1% – National body

6. Do you provide a bid manual for potential destinations, or a similar document with criteria and decision-making information?

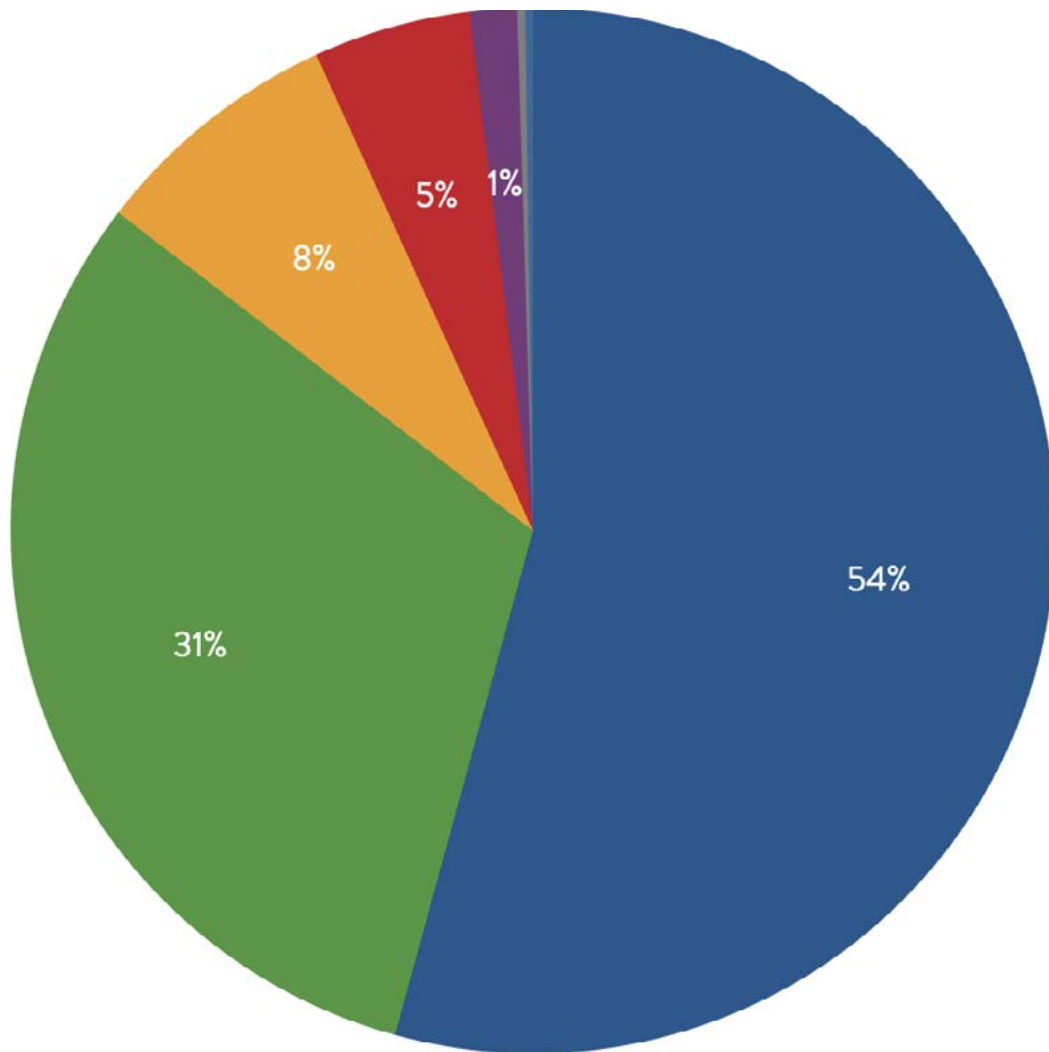


- 44% – No, there is no bid manual or other document
- 26% – Yes, a document with guidelines, criteria, checklists, etc
- 10% – Unanswered
- 7% – Our requirements for meetings are contained in our statutes or by-laws
- 7% – Yes, a bid manual
- 3% – Other
- 2% – I don't know

7. What is the preferred time of year for this meeting?



8. What is the usual length of this meeting?



- 54% – 2 to 3 days
- 31% – 4 to 5 days
- 8% – 1 day or shorter
- 5% – 6 or more days
- 1% – Variable
- <1% – I don't know
- <1% – Other



foto: Alicja Wróblewska dla KEF blackshadowstudio.com

WELCOME TO THE POLAND: ONLINE SITE INSPECTION

Looking ahead at “post-coronavirus” times, the Polish Tourism Organisation Poland Convention Bureau has launched the first edition of Poland: Online Site Inspection, a comprehensive online guide for meeting planners. It allows event organisers to interactively and individually explore the many congress, conference and event facilities Poland has to offer – from anywhere in the world and at any time. The catalog also includes self-certified conference and congress venues operating in Poland.

pot.gov.pl/en/online-site-inspection



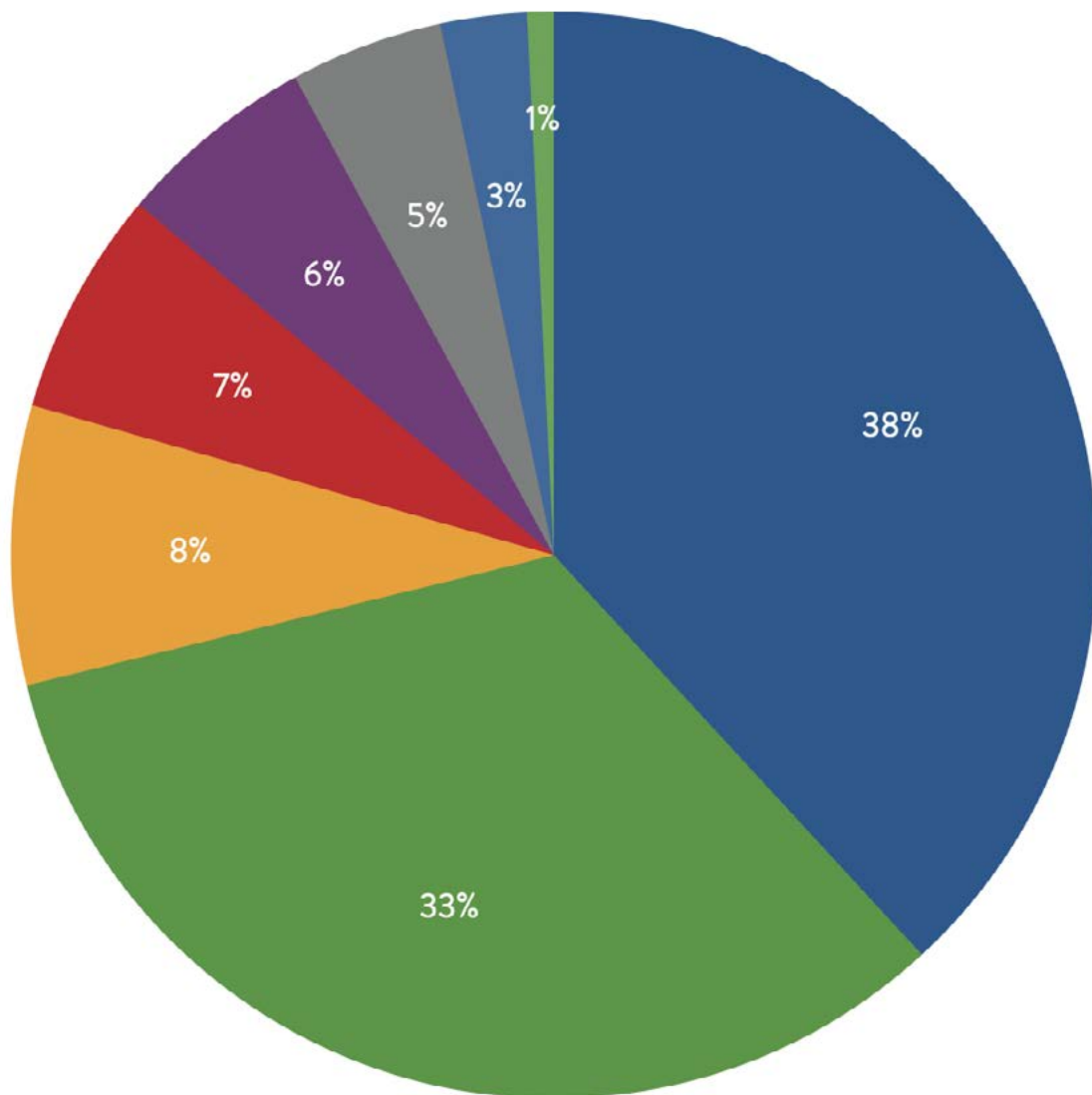
POLISH
TOURISM
ORGANISATION



POLAND
CONVENTION
BUREAU

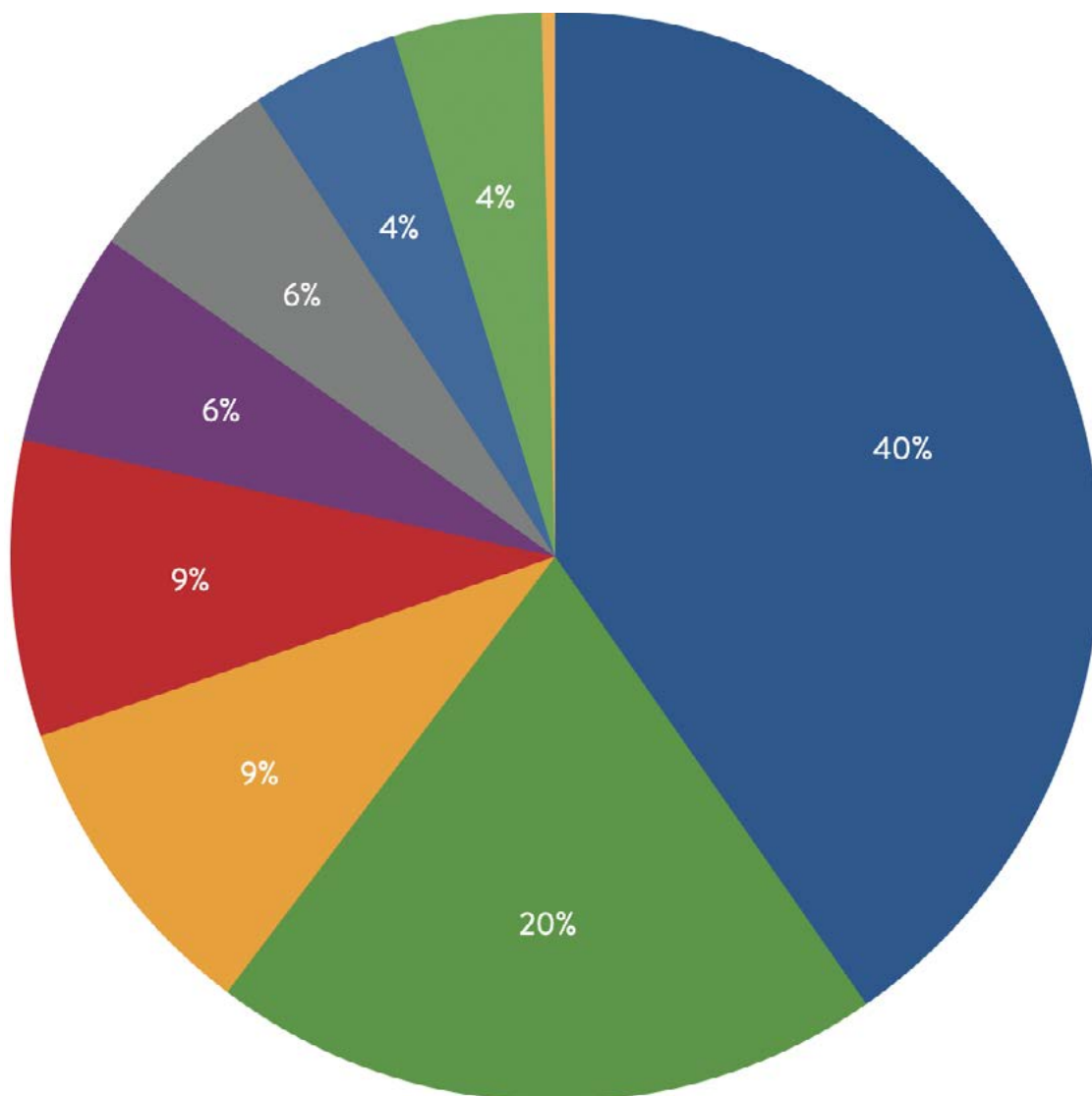


9. Where is this meeting held?



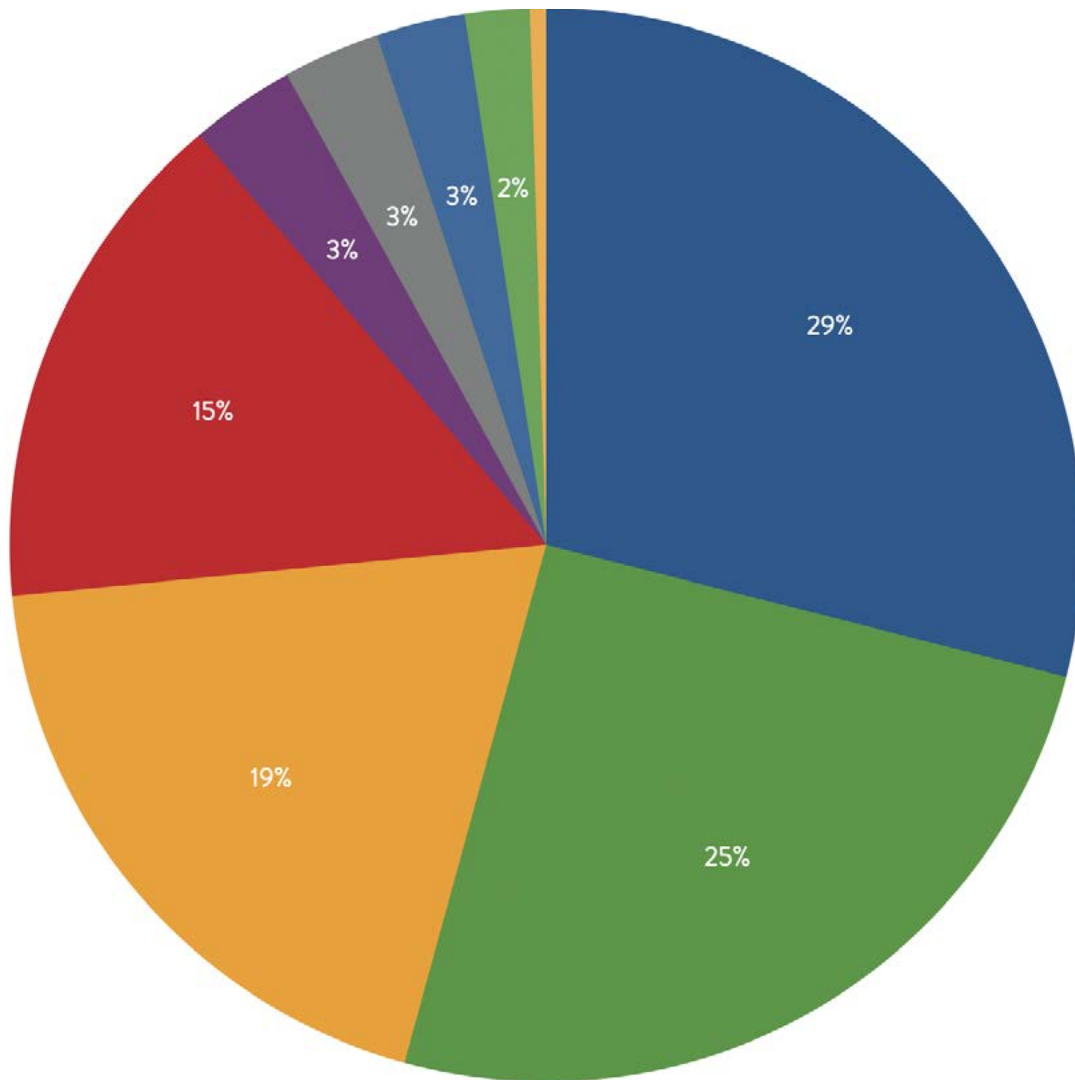
- 38% - Rotating
- 33% - Europe
- 8% - Asia
- 7% - North America
- 6% - Africa
- 5% - South America
- 3% - Australasia / Pacific / Oceania
- 1% - I don't know

10. How is the location of this meeting determined?



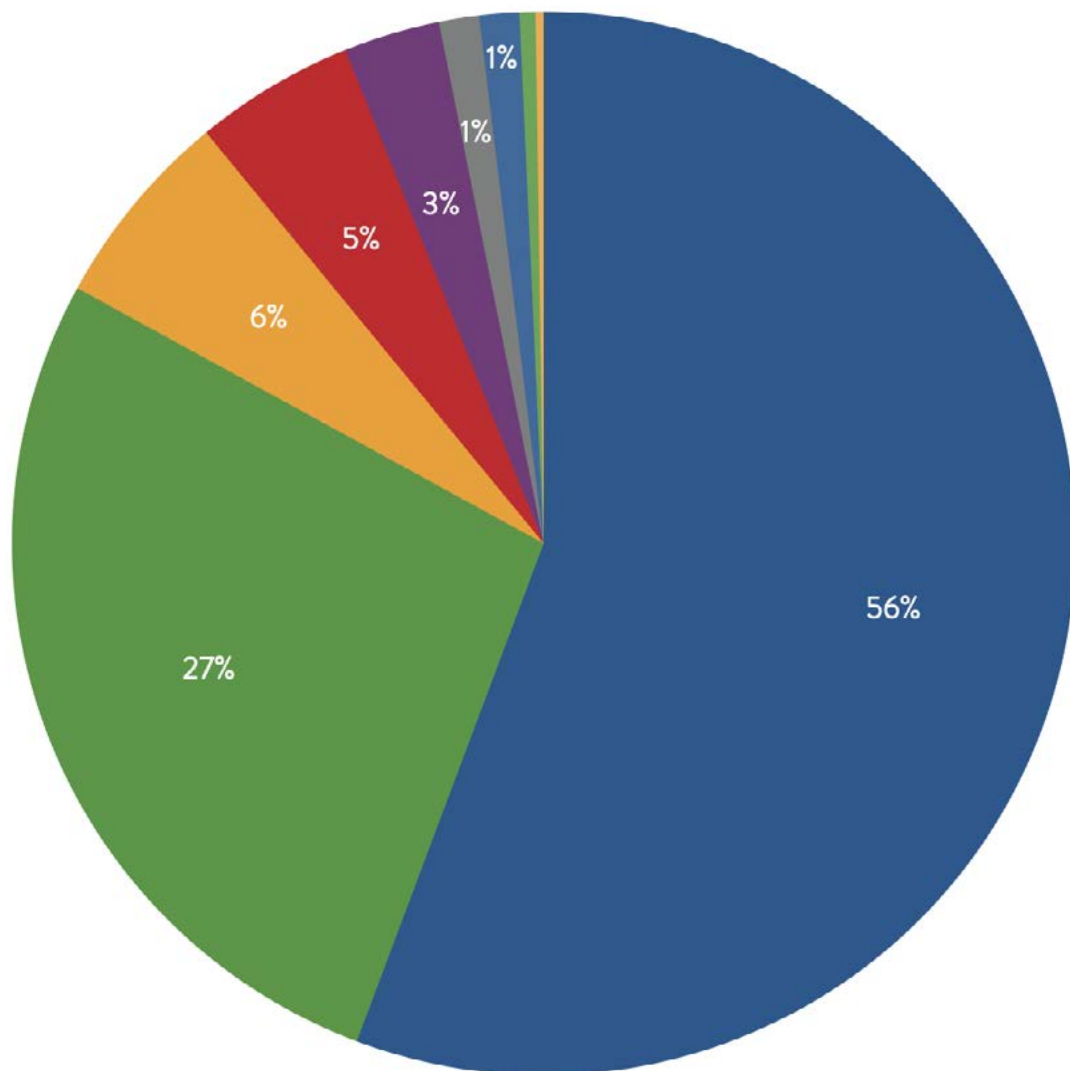
- 40% – Each destination is decided on a case by case basis
- 20% – No official policy of rotation, but meeting usually rotates
- 9% – An official policy of rotation between countries on the same continent
- 9% – The location does not change; the meeting is in the same place every time
- 6% – An official policy of rotation between continents
- 6% – The location is determined by the partner organization
- 4% – The location is determined by the location of a principal officer
- 4% – Other
- <1% – I don't know

11. Where do you usually hold this meeting?



- 29% – In a conference or congress centre
- 25% – In a hotel
- 19% – At a university
- 15% – Variable, or no preference
- 3% – In a facility specific to our work or the subject (e.g. a museum, a hospital, a factory)
- 3% – In our international office
- 3% – In our local/regional/national office
- 2% – Other
- <1% – I don't know

12. Do you hold an exhibition in conjunction with this meeting?



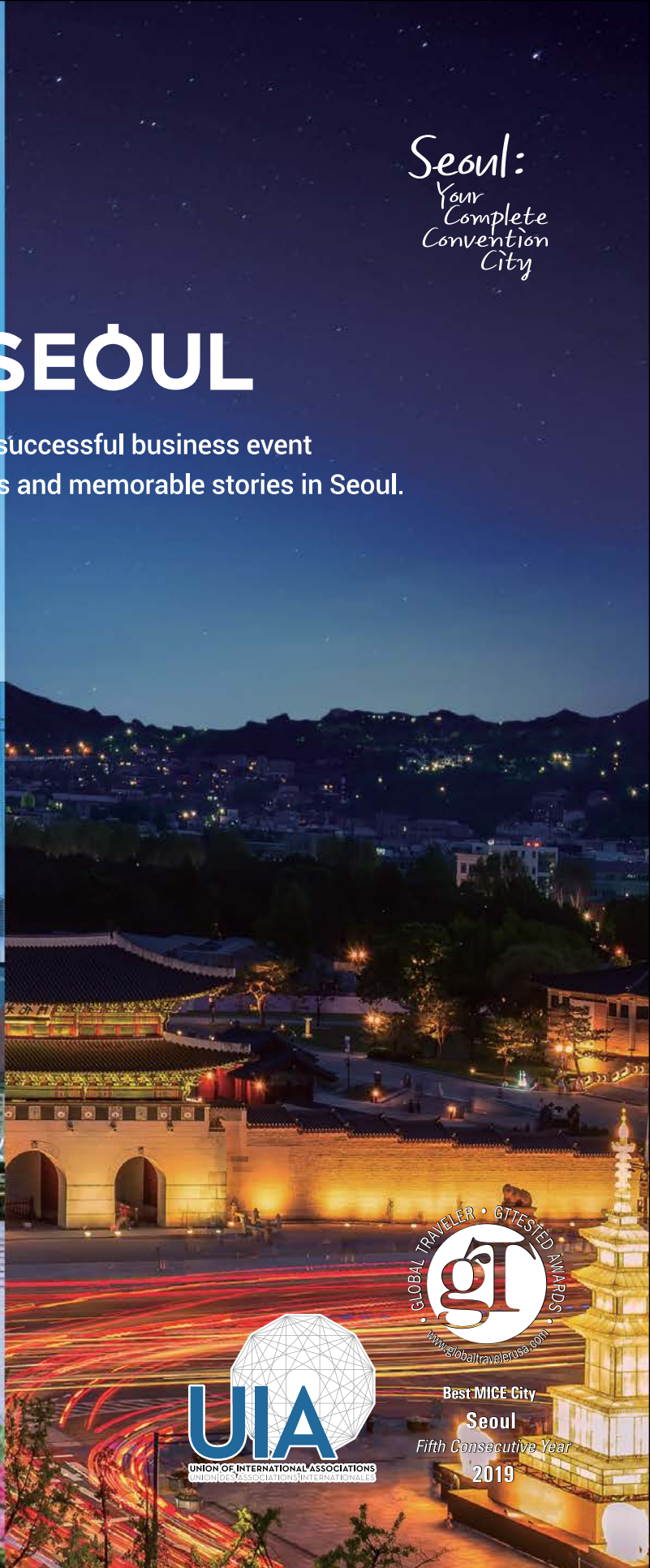
- 56% – No exhibition is held
- 27% – Yes, a different size each time
- 6% – Yes, but I do not know the size
- 5% – Yes, up to 500 m2
- 3% – Yes, 1,001 m2
- 1% – I don't know
- 1% – Yes, 501 m2
- <1% – Yes, 3,001 m2
- <1% – Yes, over 5,001 m2



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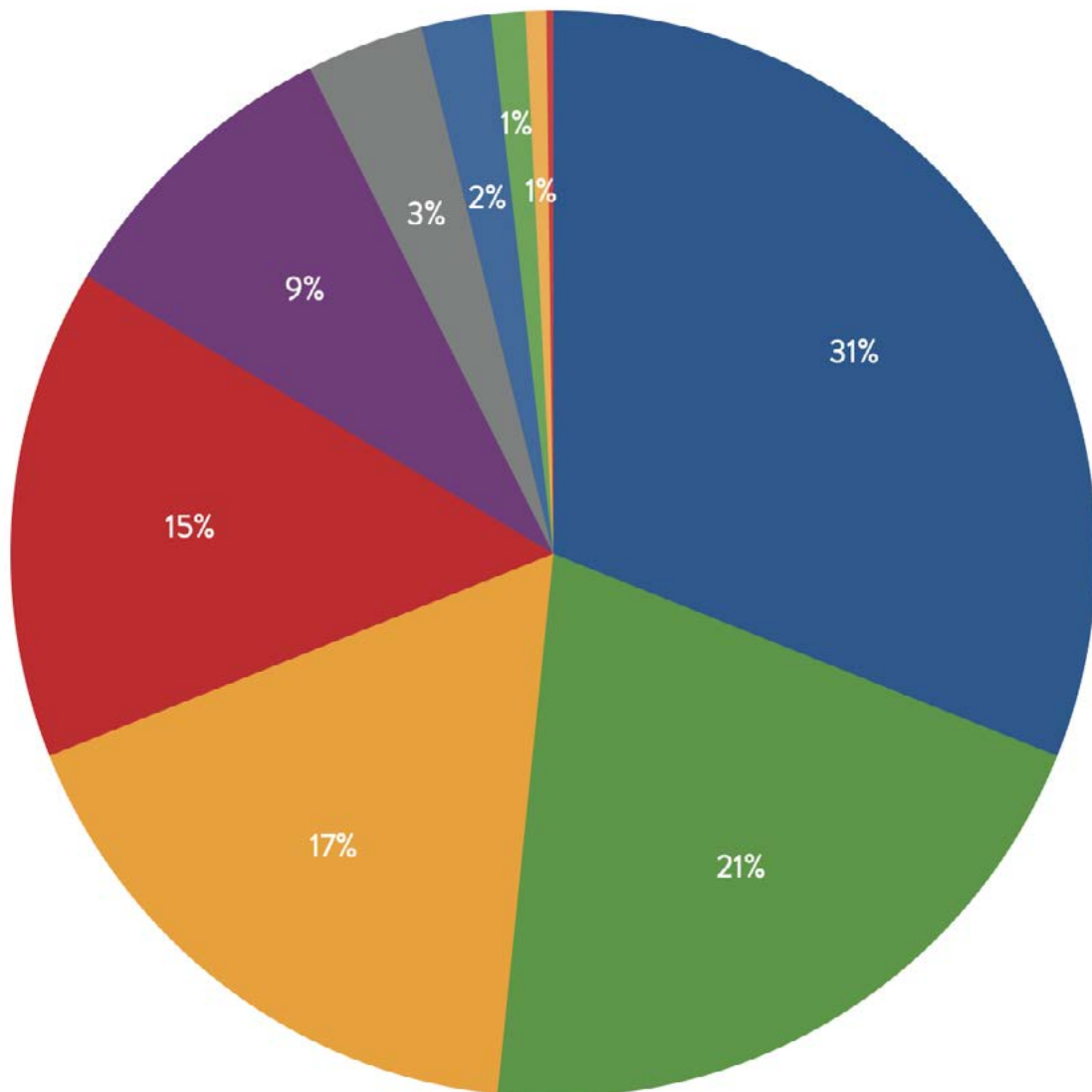


Get in touch with the Seoul Convention Bureau

Email: plussoul@sto.or.kr | Tel: +82-2-3788-8151 | www.miceseoul.com

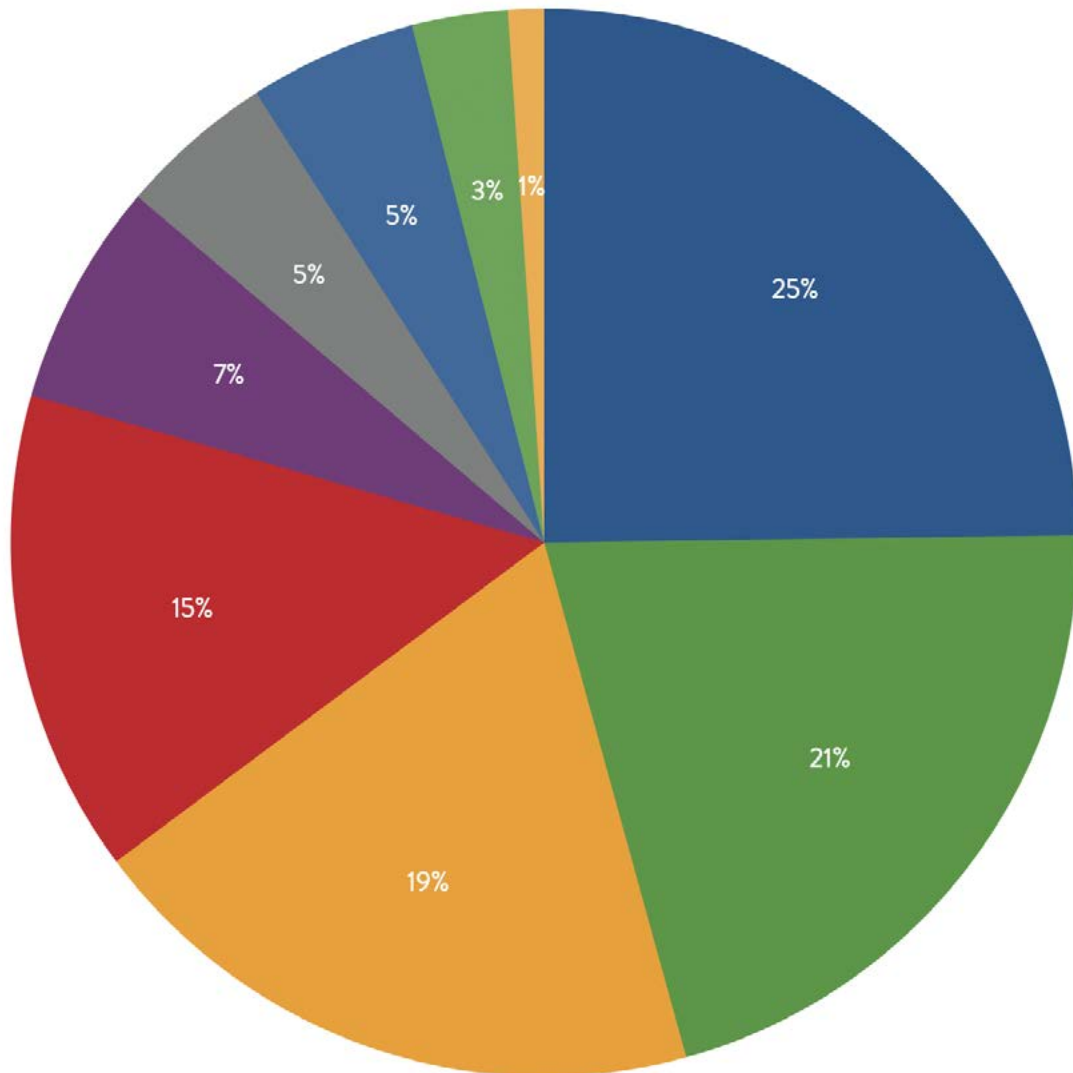
Find us on:

13. How many delegates (excluding accompanying persons and staff) attend this meeting?



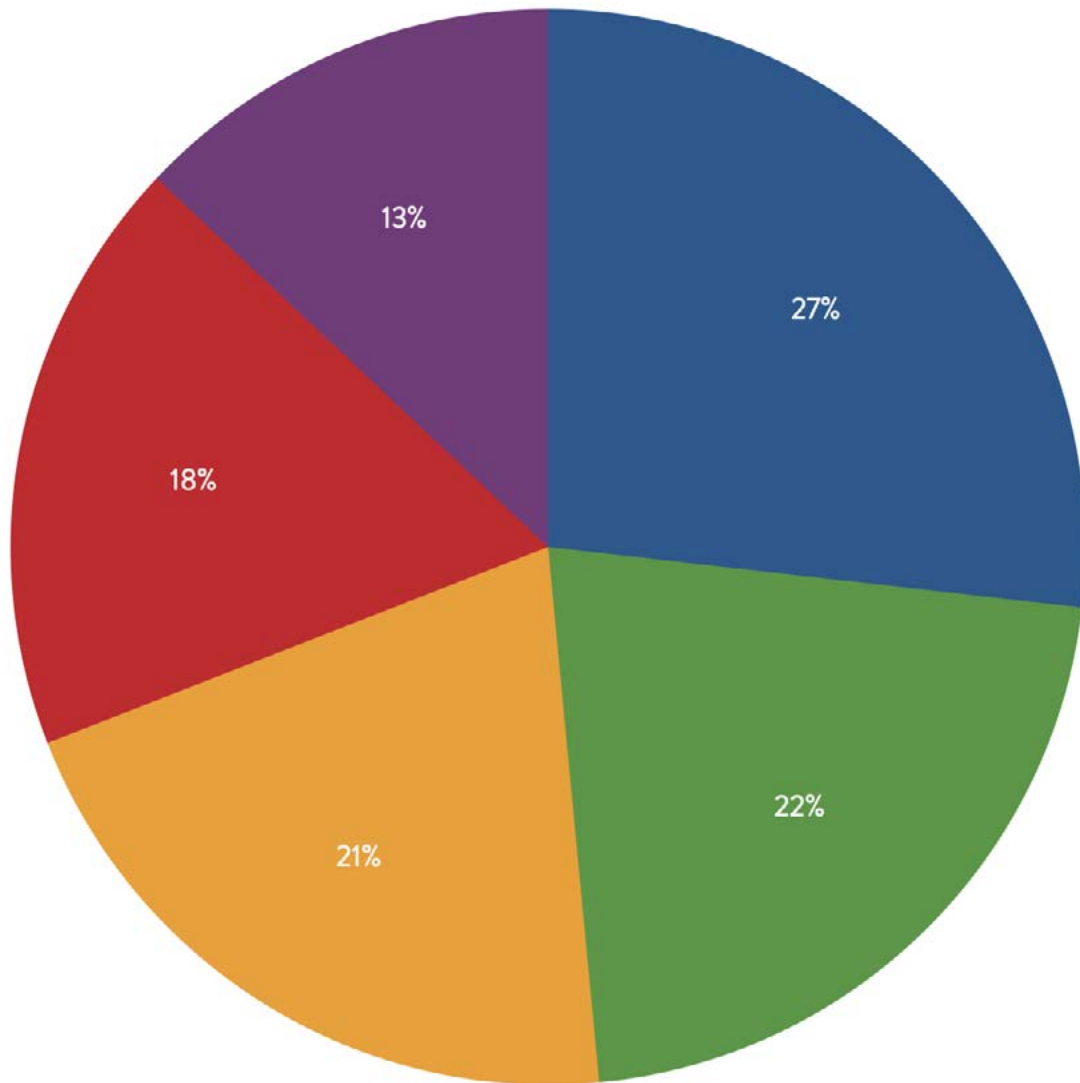
- 31% - up to 100
- 21% - 101 to 250
- 17% - 50 or fewer
- 15% - 251 to 500
- 9% - 501 to 1,000
- 3% - 1,001 to 2,500
- 2% - 2,501 to 5,000
- 1% - 5,001 to 7,000
- 1% - I don't know
- <1% - 7,001 or more

14. What concerns do you have about your future meeting activities?



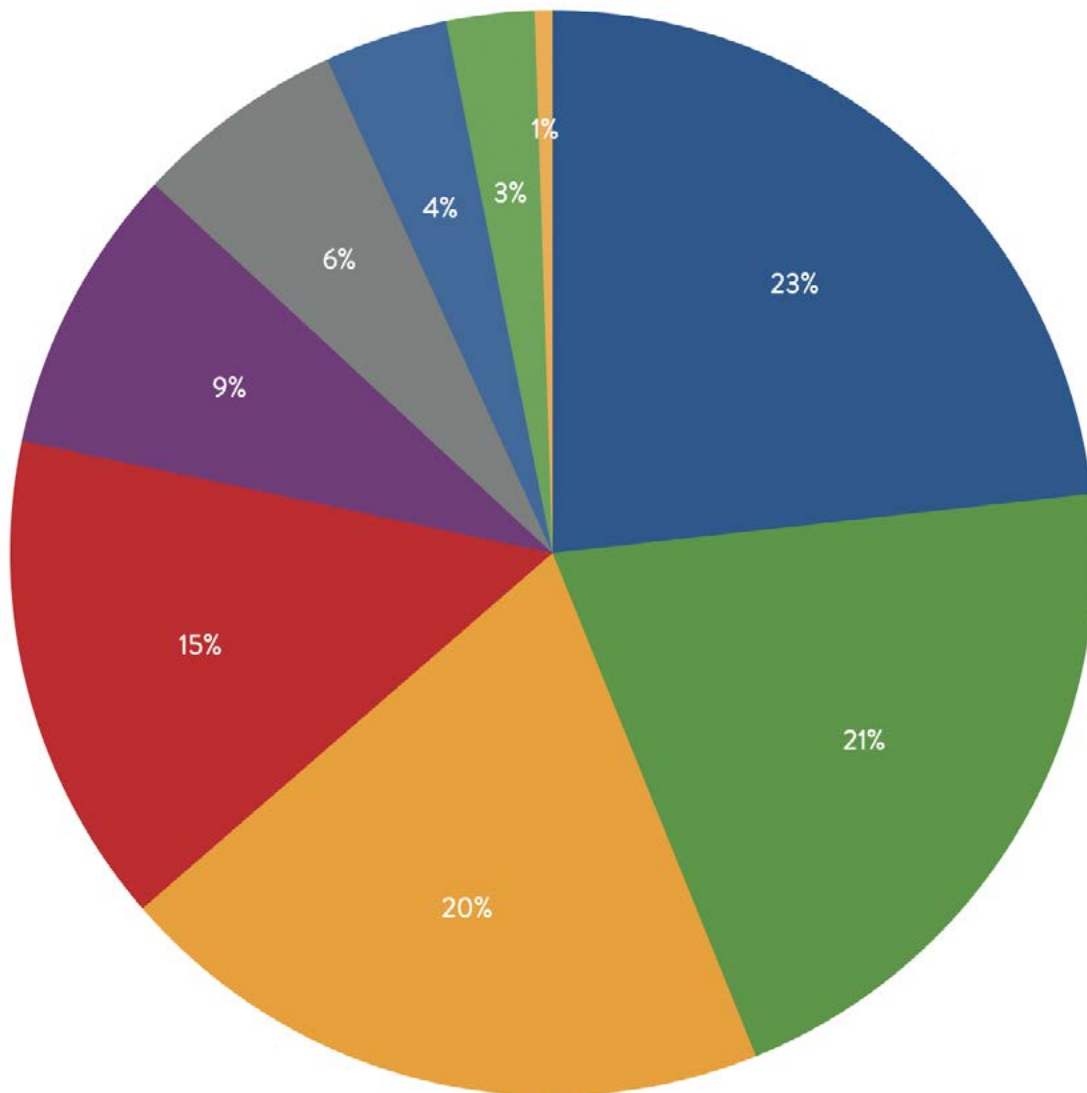
- 25% – Practical difficulties for your participants (e.g. budget reductions, travel costs, visa issues)
- 21% – Reduced funding or finance, fewer sponsors and exhibitors
- 19% – Safety concerns (e.g. health, terrorism, political situation)
- 15% – Reduced participant numbers
- 7% – Inability to locate a local partner
- 5% – Exchange rate impact on costs
- 5% – None of the above
- 3% – Other
- 1% – I don't know

15. When considering your future meeting activities, do you take into account the following?



- 27% – Environmental impact of the meeting
- 22% – Sustainability policy of the destination
- 21% – Social policy of the destination
- 18% – Possibility of leaving a legacy in the local community of the destination
- 13% – Corporate Social Responsibility activities of the destination

16. Are there opportunities for online / virtual participation in your events?



- 23% – Yes, live streaming of (some) speakers or sessions
- 21% – No, there are no options for remote participation or interaction and we are not considering this
- 20% – No, there are no options for remote participation or interaction but we are considering this
- 15% – Yes, archived videos of (some) speakers or sessions
- 9% – Yes, online reporting from the conference
- 6% – Yes, online discussion forum concurrent with the meeting
- 4% – Yes, virtual poster session
- 3% – Other
- 1% – I don't know

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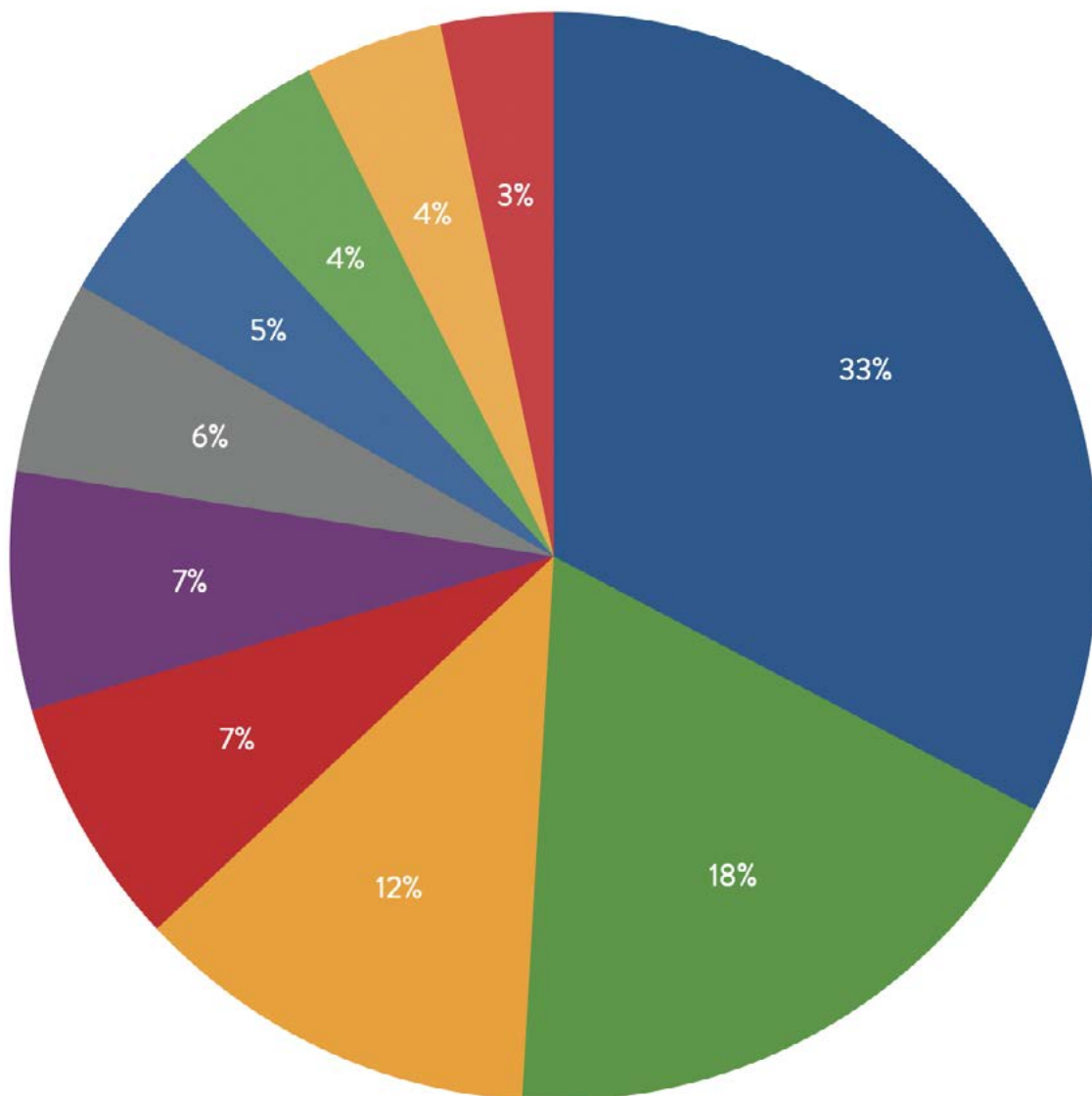


Busan Convention Bureau
Email: cmz11@bto.or.kr
bto.or.kr/cvb

 **BUSAN METROPOLITAN CITY**

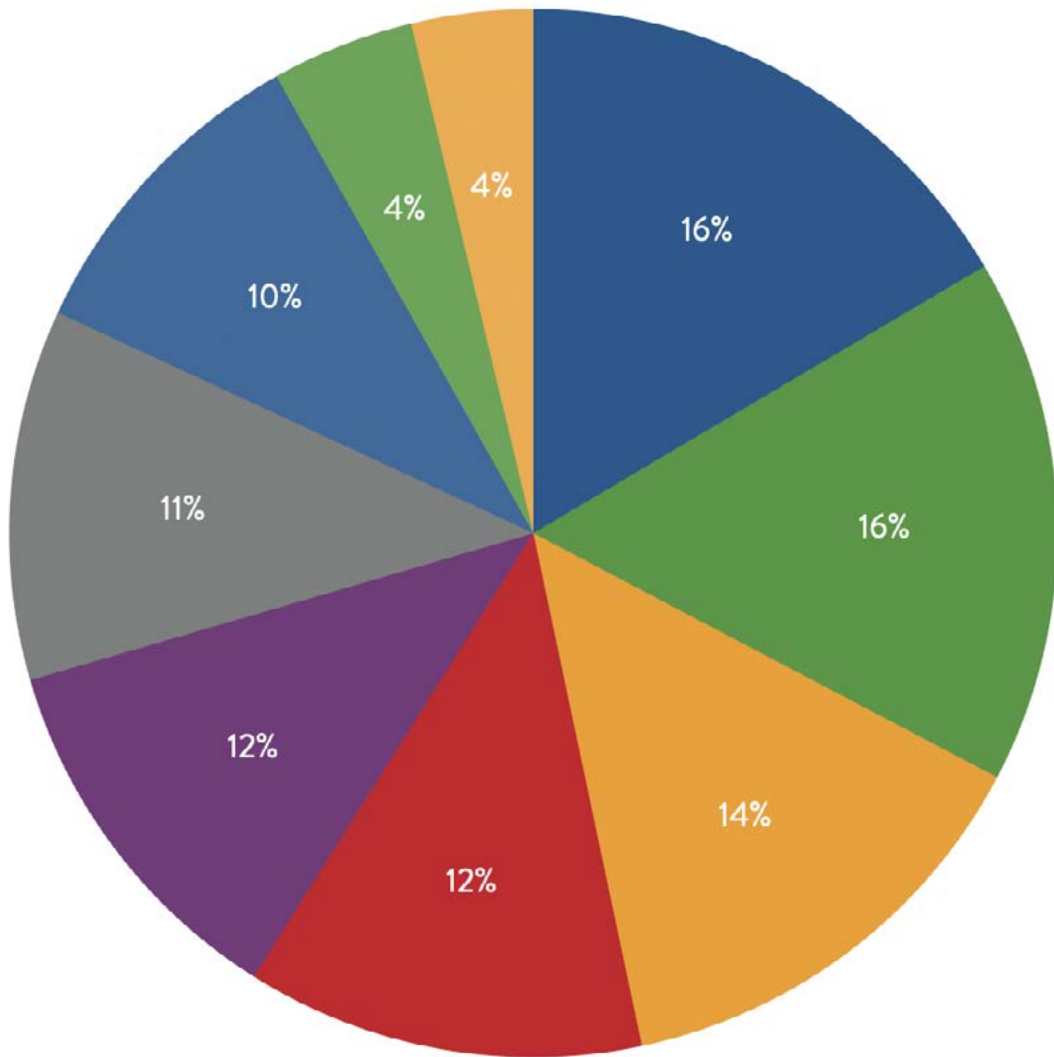
 **BUSAN**
TOURISM ORGANIZATION

17. Have you consulted a (city, regional, or national) Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)?



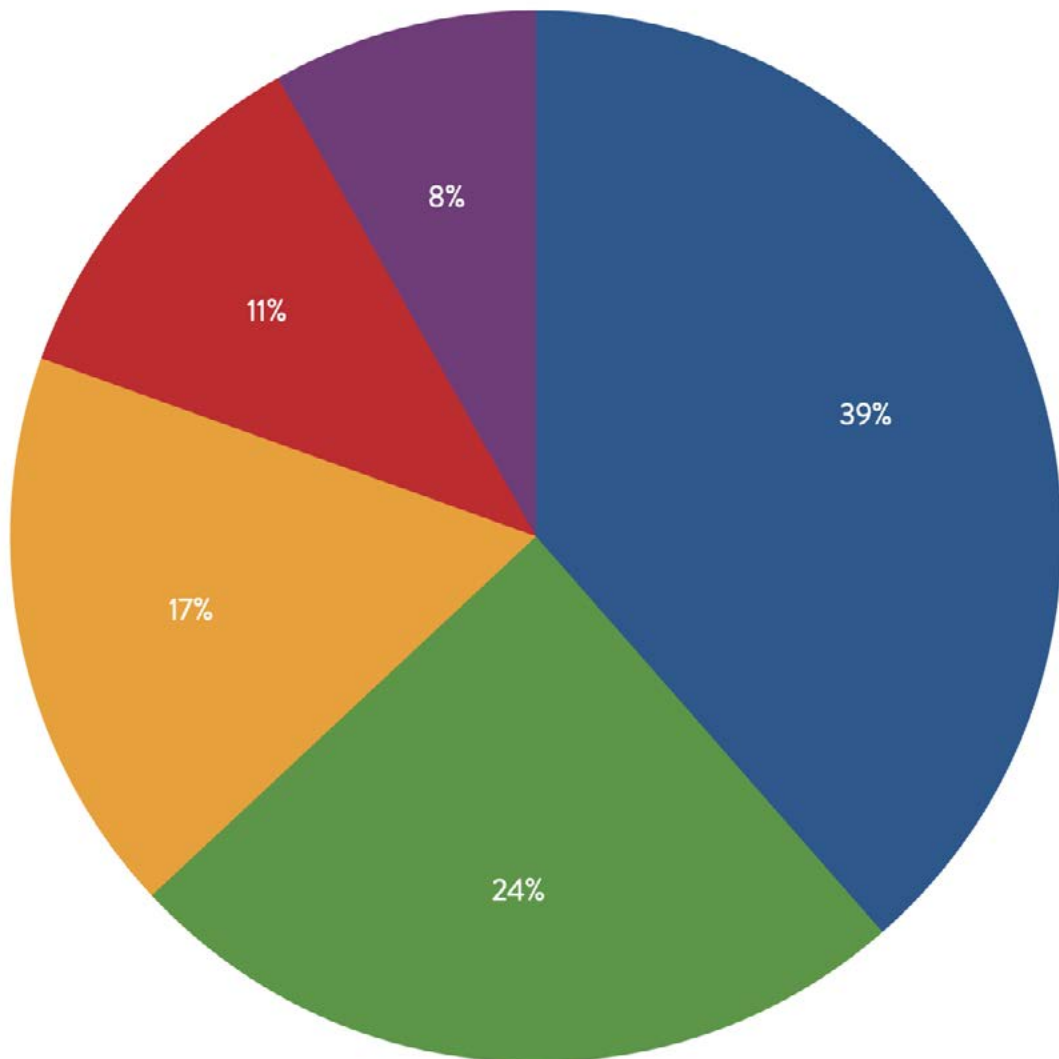
- 33% – No, we are not familiar with the services offered by a CVB
- 18% – We know what a CVB offers, but we have never consulted one
- 12% – We have consulted a CVB in the last 5 years
- 7% – We are likely to consult a CVB in the near future
- 7% – I don't know
- 6% – Yes, we have received assistance from a CVB in finding suppliers for our meeting(s)
- 5% – Yes, we have received financial assistance from a CVB for our meeting(s)
- 4% – Other
- 4% – Yes, we have received assistance from a CVB in preparing a bid proposal for our meeting(s)
- 3% – Yes, we have received assistance from a CVB in preparing a budget for our meeting(s)

18. What support would you expect from a (city, regional, or national) Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)?



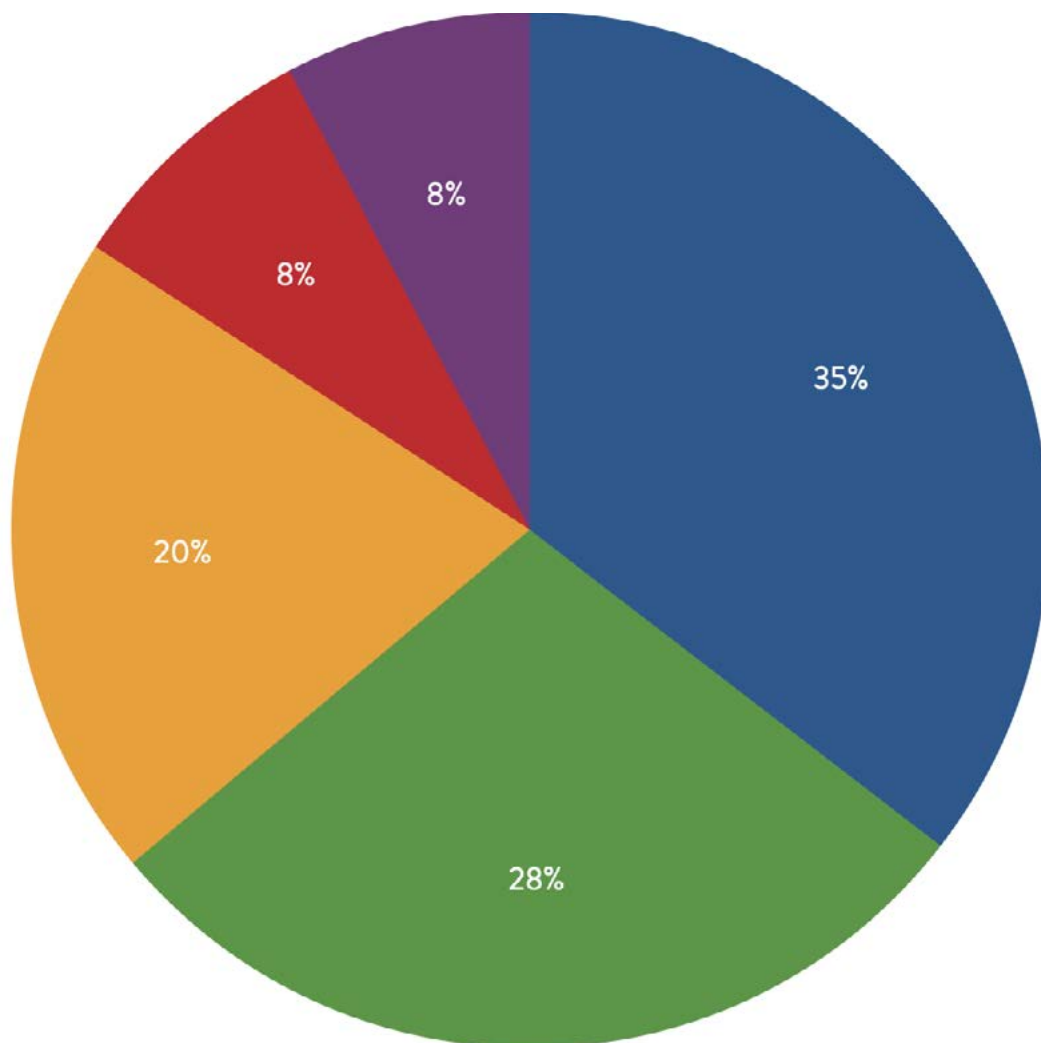
- 16% – Finding accommodation (giving guidance/advice with hotel selection)
- 16% – Help in finding the right venue
- 14% – Help in obtaining a subsidy from the host city
- 12% – Financial aid
- 12% – Attracting participants
- 11% – Planning / organization of site inspections
- 10% – I don't know
- 4% – Suggesting legacy options
- 4% – Other

19. Does someone in your organization read specialized magazines from the meetings industry media?



- 39% – No, we are not familiar with these publications
- 24% – Yes, sometimes
- 17% – No, we are familiar with these publications but we do not read them
- 11% – I don't know
- 8% – Yes, always

20. Does someone from your organization attend trade shows on travel and meetings?



- 35% – No, we are not familiar with such trade shows
- 28% – No, we are familiar with trade shows but we do not attend
- 20% – Yes, sometimes
- 8% – Yes, often
- 8% – I don't know



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Thank you for your support



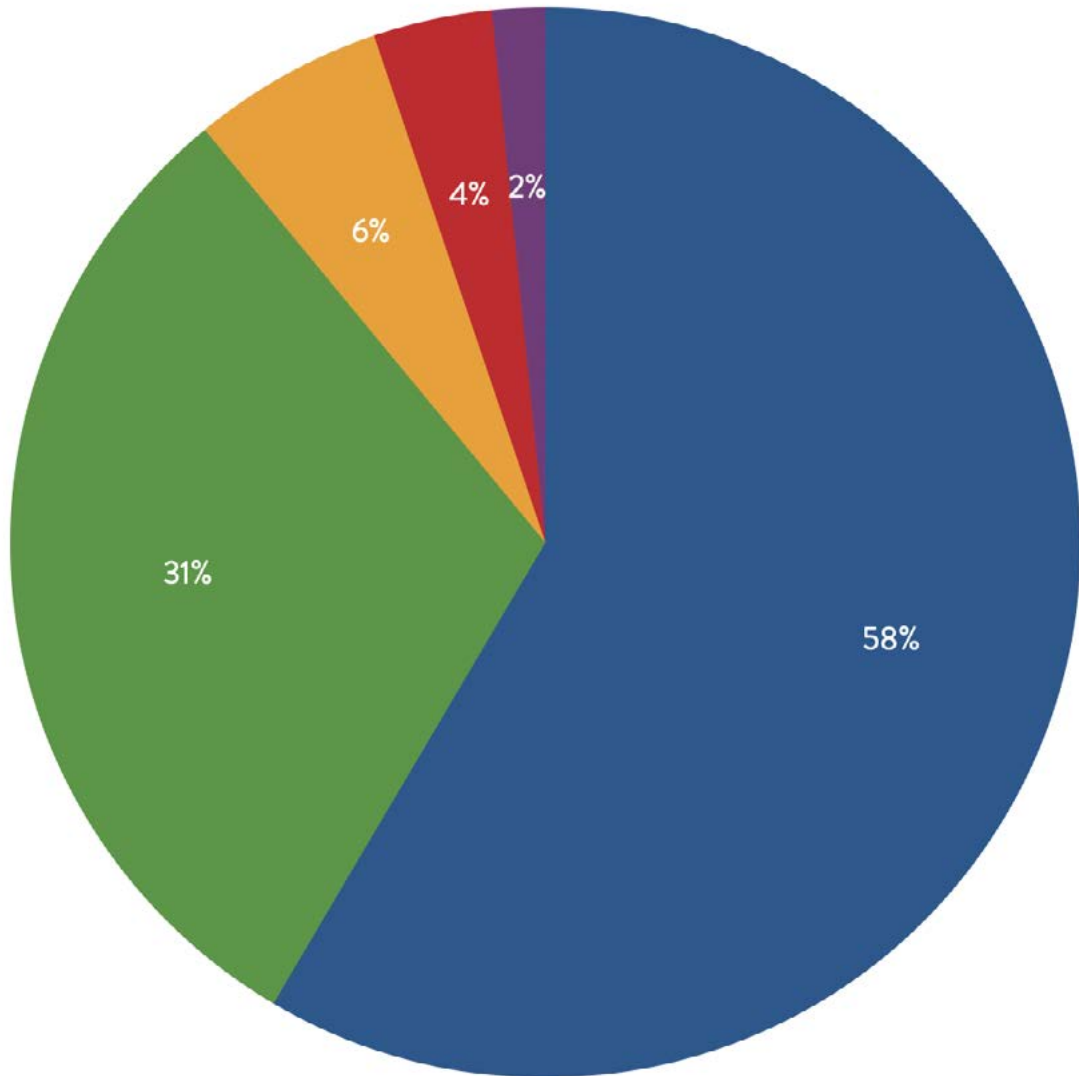
**TOP INTERNATIONAL
MEETING COUNTRY
FOR 2 CONSECUTIVE YEARS**

Union of International
Associations Rankings 2019

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go to VisitSingapore.com/mice



21. Your association is (probably - and possibly frequently!) contacted by companies that provide services and products for meetings. How do you prefer to be contacted by such suppliers?



- 58% – Email
- 31% – We prefer not to be contacted by any supplier in any way
- 6% – Website / web-form
- 4% – Telephone
- 2% – Postal letter

22. Do you have additional comments on international organization meetings to share?

A wide variety of responses were received for this question. Below are a few examples which highlight current and ongoing issues in organizing international associations' events:

We are interested to find out how other organizations manage exogenous risks (volcanos ground air travel, COVID closing destinations, geopolitical issues suddenly forcing additional visa or security issues), in terms of insurances, location selection etc.

–

Our meeting is small, circa 100 delegates. We like to choose venues where we have a local member to help with logistics on the ground, often in a university or somewhere with a science/science publishing connection. I don't think it would be worth a PCO getting involved as there isn't enough income to support the fees. The organising committee is made up of volunteers who give their time for free.

–

Our biggest challenge is internal resource to support such an event, as we always have so many other things to do that an event keeps falling further and further down the agenda.

–

Our single biggest logistical hurdle is visa issues for participants. We rotate our location to make it easier for everyone to have a chance to attend somewhere reasonably close to their own region, but the reality is that some regions are simply much more politically difficult. We have noticed that many international organizations regularly use South Africa, Turkey, and Thailand for large meetings because they are consistently visa-friendly. We are considering doing this ourselves, as Latin America and Europe are increasingly difficult.

–

We'd like to have an organization bureau but the high costs and time investment from our side, made we'll do it ourselves.

But it would save us a lot of time.

It's also difficult to receive all information in time by our participants, so it's often last minute work.

–

Our meetings are actually organized by the host university, and they are usually experienced in these matters.

–

I recently returned from Meetings Afrika and found the meetings I set up with CVBs invaluable. We hold 11 regional meetings annually in all regions of the world so I am always looking for government partners with incentive packages.

–

Organisation is not the problem, sometimes the finances are challenging. But for a small meeting no real assistance is necessary.

–

Our organization does not have funds to attend trade shows on travel and meetings. We would be able to send a representative if there was funding available.

–

Costs of meetings seem to continue to increase around the world, particularly in popular destinations. Some of the meeting room, A/V, and food costs have gotten to the point that they are no longer within reason. For example, I can usually buy A/V equipment to use for 4 days and then donate them to a local organization and the cost ends up being lower than using a local vendor. That should not be the case! While I understand that the industry has to seek profits and that many corporations out there may be willing to pay these outrageous fees, it puts nonprofit associations like us in a very difficult situation. There are certain locations that we have entirely eliminated from future consideration because we would never be able to put a balanced budget together with the costs involved.

22. Do you have additional comments on international organization meetings to share? (continued)

A wide variety of responses were received for this question. Below are a few examples which highlight current and ongoing issues in organizing international associations' events:

As an international academic organization, we should try our best to organize a meeting that attracts delegates as many as possible from everywhere in the world, not only from the rich developed countries but also from those developing countries. We should do our best to provide various kinds supports to those potential delegates in need.

–

Finance for facilitators and relevant participants who are unable to afford is a huge challenge.

–

The National Society hosting our International Congress makes ALL decisions. HQ is not involved at all. The Host Society is chosen 7 years in advance and rotates through our 3 Zones. The Congress venue is selected by the Host Society 5-6 years in advance.

–

Our organization is a sports federation so our meetings will be held during our international events, maybe each year we had a meeting but the main meeting is every 2 years, also maybe organize an exhibition of sport manufactures during our events. our organization independently will organize an international event or conjunction with other partners, of course, it depends on the kinds of events.

It is usually the lack of available time of volunteers to organise a conference that is the limiting factor in holding a conference regularly.

–

We will cherish that the Convention and Visitors Bureau will be involved in sponsoring a cocktail for our event at an historical building or at the City hall of the country we visit. We have had this covered by private sponsors or companies and had been a success as participants feel more connected to the city they visit. For our participants coming to our event is about learning and empowering women but also about the country they visit. They like to learn about the city that is hosting our Conference.

–

Most of the National or International events (either Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) or not), mostly they all NEVER facilitate for hearing/speech impaired. It is polite and appropriate for an organization or organizer to “standby” translator for an impaired person, and also every presentation made by any organization is good if having subtitles/sign language within their presentation.

–

One of our biggest challenges is two-fold: ever-increasing prices by venues (including meeting room rental, food and beverage, internet access, and now even charging for electrical power within the meeting space and associated foyers that we are paying for!), and a lack of willingness to flex or even be reasonable on these prices. We should not be in a position where it is less expensive to order a “coffee break” with food on a per person price as opposed to ordering what we really want - just coffee/tea for our attendees (at 30 Euros per litre!!!! Ridiculous!!!), and a huge amount of food goes to waste. That greatly upsets our leadership, attendees, staff, and is incredibly irresponsible of venues. We need venues to have REASONABLE pricing on food and beverage and not charge for electricity and internet in spaces for which we are already paying rental.

22. Do you have additional comments on international organization meetings to share? (continued)

A wide variety of responses were received for this question. Below are a few examples which highlight current and ongoing issues in organizing international associations' events:

We have also noticed a significant decline in service/responsiveness from venues. It will take a week or more to get responses to questions; if 2-3 questions are asked in an e-mail, the hotel only answers one; when the hotel is in breach of contract and we point it out and ask what the hotel is going to do to address any negative impact of their breach, they completely ignore the question, but just correct their breach (ex., they do not inform us when our room inventory is running low on one date in our block and then over the weekend, that one date fills up and attendees who want to make a reservation receive a message that the HOTEL - not just our block - is sold-out for their selected dates, and to adjust their dates if they can, which drives an unknown number of our attendees to seek lodging elsewhere, because they believe the entire hotel is full during our conference...and we have an attrition clause in our contract). Hotels are getting more and more difficult to work with, regardless of brand or country. Universities would be fine for our group as venues, but we often run into issues surrounding liability insurance with them (i.e., they will not accept any responsibility for harm to attendees stemming from negligence by the university - our organization must assume 100% of that). Universities also tend to be away from the major attractions and restaurants of a destination, and there is often poor transport from the universities to the attractions/restaurants. The same is true for convention centers, making them the least desirable venues.

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This year's question is obviously the corona virus, and the impact it will have beyond this year.

A few sister organisation's conferences had to be cancelled, we also had to cancel a regional (smaller) event.

Our planned conference for October is still scheduled, but we have to check the situation and we'll decide by the end of April.

If it goes on, the virus might have impact on the number of participants and on the willingness of sponsors to contribute.

Financially our association is now in a comfortable situation, but as we're depending on the membership fees of public institutions and the sponsorship of private companies, we can only hope that the long term economical impact of the corona virus is not too heavy.

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On one side the number of international events is rising, on the other side the trend to participate in person in international conferences is declining due to climate concerns. The question is: how will this situation develop in the future with regard to virtual methods / technologies for online meetings?

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We are a small association, whose board and office members are essentially teacher-researcher volunteers. We are open to anything that would help us improve the organization of our conferences.

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Our 2020 General Assembly, and those of our members have all been cancelled this year.

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We have an international membership. Covid restrictions forced us to cancel our March 2021 meeting and we are also considering canceling our March 2021 meeting because of uncertainty over international travel restrictions, social distancing requirements, financial health of our hotel venue, concerns about international airfares (and existence of some carriers), etc. Moving forward we will be extremely suspicious of (room) performance guarantees and harsh non-refundable deposit schedules.

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We are a small volunteer organization. would need to be convinced that any contacts with conference organizers would be praiseworthy for us.



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Associated and complementary information is available in the
[Yearbook of International Organizations](#),
Volume 5: Statistics, Visualizations and Patterns

And

The UIA's annual ***International Meeting Statistics Report***

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