

THE INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE




Subvention as a catalyst for sustainable and impactful transformation in the Business Events Industry





Report at a Glance

From Financial Incentive to Strategic Driver for Sustainable Change

Who We Asked

-  115 destinations
-  55 associations
-  Surveys, in-depth interviews, and live workshops




Subvention Use Remains High, But its Role is Evolving

-  77% of surveyed destinations offer subvention
-  55% of associations depend on subvention

Associations are looking beyond financial assistance.

Mismatch Between What Destinations Offer and What Associations Need




Destination Priorities

-  Economic Impact
-  Delegate numbers or hotel nights
-  Sector alignment

Association Needs

- Financial support (87%)
- Tools to measure impact (66%)
- Sustainability guidance (53%)
- Local stakeholder connections (45%)
- Accessibility and inclusion support (34%)

Subvention as a Driver of Change: Momentum, But Not Yet Mainstream

-  91% of destinations do believe subvention can be a driver for positive change
-  Only 6% of destinations have fully integrated change-driven objectives into their subvention strategies
-  62% of associations believe subvention should help drive positive change.

Associations are ready, but many destinations are still in catch-up mode.

Key Barriers

Destinations

- Budget constraints (66%)
- Administrative burden and complexity
- Lack of political support or understanding of subvention's strategic value
- Difficulty measuring impact

Associations

- Lack of awareness of subvention availability (55%)
- Complex or inflexible application processes (41%)
- Limited internal resources to manage applications

From Transaction to Transformation

Subvention is no longer just about economic stimulus. For both, it is becoming a strategic platform for shared value. To fully realise this potential, subvention programmes must evolve!

INTRODUCTION

Subvention has long played a powerful - yet often less transparent - role in the global events industry. Traditionally viewed as a financial tool to attract conferences, its true potential has largely remained untapped. The post-pandemic era cracked this open. In 2021, Conferli's market study shed light on the fragmented and evolving landscape of subvention across European destinations. That study posed bold questions about transparency, accessibility, and effectiveness. Now, it's time to go further.

The business events industry is under mounting pressure - not just to recover, but to transform. Sustainability and societal impact are no longer buzzwords; they're imperatives. Associations, destinations, and suppliers alike are rethinking what success looks like. And in this context, subvention isn't just a means to win business - it might be a lever to drive change.

This new study, a collaboration between Conferli, #MEET4IMPACT, and GDS-Movement, dares to explore:

What if subvention could do more than support events - What if it could shape a better future?

This report aims to understand how subvention practices are currently used and if they can fuel sustainability strategies, amplify impact initiatives, and create stronger, more equitable partnerships between destinations and associations. Through robust research, compelling case studies, and in-depth stakeholder questioning, this market study will map out where subvention stands today, and where it can boldly go next.

This is not just another report. It's a call to rethink current practices.

Let's unlock the full potential of subvention - for **people, planet, and progress**.



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Table of Contents

<u>Scope and Methodology</u>	Page 5
<u>Important Considerations and Limitations</u>	Page 6
<u>Respondents</u>	Page 7
<u>Executive Summary</u>	Page 8
<u>Subvention (Mis)match Matrix</u>	Page 11
<u>The current state of subvention from a destination perspective</u>	Page 13
<u>The Global Divide in Subvention</u>	Page 13
<u>No Subvention: Choice or Circumstance</u>	Page 14
<u>Types of Subvention</u>	Page 16
<u>Nature of Subvention</u>	Page 19
<u>Strategic Objectives Behind Subvention Programmes</u>	Page 20
<u>Who Qualifies for Subvention?</u>	Page 23
<u>Subvention Award Criteria</u>	Page 24
<u>Financial Scope of Subvention</u>	Page 25
<u>Reporting Requirements for Subvention</u>	Page 27
<u>Outcomes Beyond Economic Impact</u>	Page 28
<u>Supporting Broader Outcomes</u>	Page 29
<u>Subvention as a Catalyst for Change</u>	Page 30
<u>Key Finding</u>	Page 31
<u>Subvention Programmes under Review</u>	Page 32
<u>Suggested Areas for Improvement</u>	Page 33
<u>Key Challenges in Managing Subvention Programmes</u>	Page 34
<u>Future Outlook</u>	Page 37
<u>Multiple Subvention programmes Within Destinations</u>	Page 39
<u>Evolving Subvention Models</u>	Page 40
<u>Best Practices: Subvention Programmes Driving Change</u>	Page 42
<u>The Current State of Subvention from an Association perspective</u>	Page 52
<u>Subvention: A Significant Factor for Associations</u>	Page 52
<u>Subvention as a Decision-Making Factor</u>	Page 52
<u>What Support Really Matters: A Breakdown of Subvention Types</u>	Page 53
<u>Why Associations Apply for Subvention: Priorities Revealed</u>	Page 54
<u>Do Associations Measure Subvention Impact?</u>	Page 55
<u>How Associations Measure Subvention Success</u>	Page 55
<u>Barriers to Subvention: What's Holding Associations Back</u>	Page 56
<u>Should Subvention Drive Positive Change?</u>	Page 57
<u>Reimagining Subvention: A Catalyst for Sustainable and Impactful Events</u>	Page 58
<u>What Associations Really Need to Create Impactful Conferences</u>	Page 59
<u>Clarity Is Lacking: Destinations Must Step Up on Guidance</u>	Page 60
<u>From Sponsorship to Strategy: Best Practices for Impact-Driven Subvention Use</u>	Page 61
<u>What Associations Want: Reframing Subvention Priorities</u>	Page 63
<u>Overall Conclusion</u>	Page 64
<u>Strategic Recommendations: Moving from Intention to Action</u>	Page 66

Scope and Methodology

This market study was developed to gain an in-depth understanding of how subventions are currently used, perceived, and evolving within the global association landscape - particularly in relation to sustainability and societal impact. Our research combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A global survey was distributed to both destinations and associations via our own networks, with additional outreach and amplification through our exclusive media partner Association Meetings International (AMI). In total, 55 associations participated in the survey and 115 destinations across the globe.

To kick off the project, a dedicated session was hosted during Impact Day, organised by the Flanders Convention Bureau, GDS-Movement and #MEET4IMPACT, on 14 October 2024, marking the official launch of this research initiative. The session brought together a diverse group of stakeholders - associations, destinations, and impact experts - to explore the demand for more meaningful subvention practices and to identify current best practices. The insights gathered during this live session were instrumental in fine-tuning our research approach and framing the key questions addressed in the survey.

Our analysis takes a global lens to uncover key trends, shared challenges, and future opportunities. While we offer grounded conclusions and recommendations, this report is not designed to dictate a single direction. Instead, it aims to spark a much-needed conversation on how the industry can collectively rethink, realign, and reimagine the subvention model for greater long-term value.

To further support our findings, we conducted in-depth interviews with thought leaders and analysed a selection of best practices and published articles. All quotes and case studies are included with approval from the organisations or individuals involved. If no explicit permission was given and if no attribution was provided and no way to contact the respondent was available, the quotes have been anonymised to respect confidentiality.

This research has been made possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsoring partners: Sapporo Convention Bureau and Visit Flanders Convention Bureau. Their commitment to driving innovation in the events industry has helped ensure this study reaches the right conversations at the right time.

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Important Considerations and Limitations

While this market study provides valuable insights into current subvention practices within the global events industry, several important disclaimers must be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

Voluntary participation

The data in this report is based on voluntary participation. Only destinations and associations that chose to respond are represented, which introduces the potential for response bias. For instance, destinations that actively offer subventions may have been more inclined to participate, potentially skewing the overall results.

Input

It is also essential to note that the findings reflect only the input we received. Although broad in scope, this research does not represent the full global market. Geographical representation is uneven, with stronger input from Europe, findings should be interpreted in this context. Conclusions should be seen as indicative rather than exhaustive.



Typology

Throughout this report, the term "destination" refers to any type of respondent representing a destinations perspective. This includes local, national and regional convention bureaus (CVBs), along with venues that function as CVBs in their respective destination. When referring to "we" or "us," this specifically points to the research partners: Conferli, #MEET4IMPACT, and the GDS-Movement.



Interpretation

Additionally, there may be variability in how subvention is defined or interpreted across regions and respondents. While the survey aimed to clarify terminology and categories, subjective understanding may still influence the responses.

In this report, subvention is defined as any form of support provided by a destination, encompassing both financial contributions and in-kind assistance.



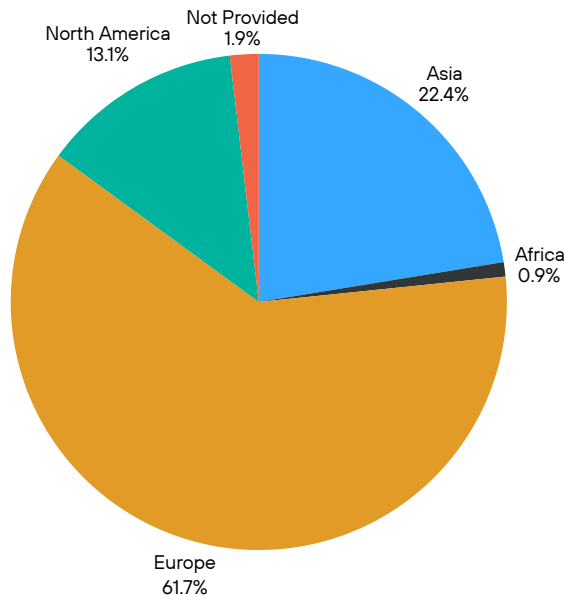
Multiply Responses

Lastly, in cases where a destination submitted multiple entries, the responses were consolidated, and a weighted average was applied to ensure accurate and balanced representation in the findings.

However, the accuracy of results still depends on the quality and completeness of self-reported information.

Respondents

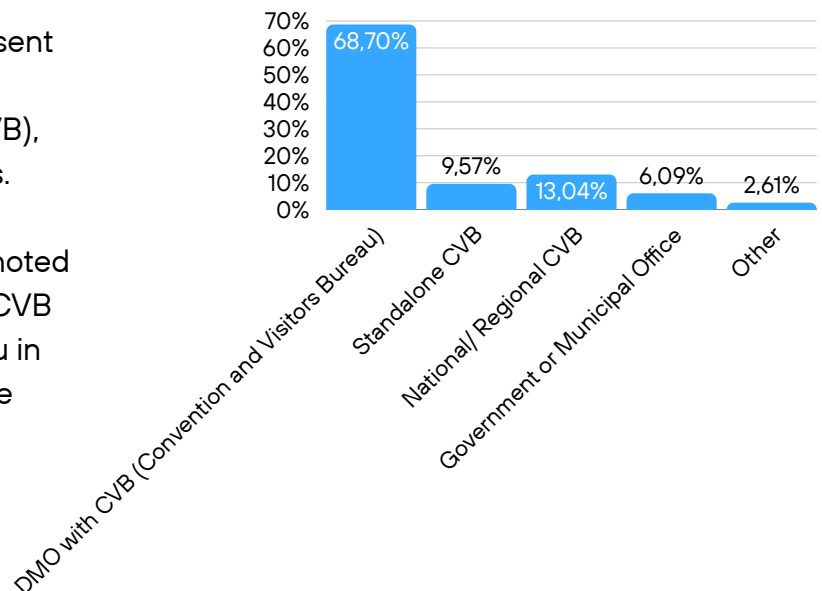
In total, 115 destinations participated in the research, representing a mix of national, regional, and local convention bureaus.



The vast majority of destination respondents are based in Europe, followed by strong participation from Asia and North America (Canada, USA, Mexico and the Caribbean), with Oceania also well represented. This diverse geographic spread allows us to provide a meaningful global snapshot of subvention practices - with the exception of Africa and Latin America, where response levels were limited. Where relevant, the report will highlight regional differences and examine how subvention strategies vary across continents.

The vast majority of respondents represent a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) with a Convention Bureau (CVB), followed by national and regional CVBs.

Among the "other" responses, several noted that a venue was fulfilling the role of a CVB due to the absence of an official bureau in the destination. And in another case the same applied to university convention offices stepping in to support bids and event acquisition.



In total, 55 association respondents participated in the survey. Of these, 82% indicated that their organisation is based in Europe. Within this group, 76% represented an association, 13% an NGO, while others identified as Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs) or Association Management Companies (AMCs).

Executive Summary

Reframing Subvention as a Strategic Lever

This market study, explores a fundamental shift in how subvention is understood and applied within the global events industry. While subvention has traditionally functioned as a financial incentive to attract conferences, this research reveals its untapped potential as a driver of sustainability, legacy, and impact.

By engaging 115 destinations and 55 associations through global surveys, in-depth interviews, and live workshops, the study offers a two-sided perspective - revealing how destinations structure and prioritise subvention and how associations perceive, access, and utilise it. The findings uncover both convergence and misalignment - and highlight where innovation, co-creation, and structural change are needed.

1. Subvention Use Remains High, But Its Role Is Evolving

77% of destinations currently offer subvention, most commonly as a mix of financial grants and in-kind support. Public/government funding remains the dominant source in Europe and Asia, while North America shows strong use of CVB-funded programmes. In contrast, 55% of associations say they require subvention to support their events – demonstrating its continued importance.

However, associations are looking beyond financial assistance. For many, subvention is seen as a tool to enable more sustainable practices, community engagement, and innovative event formats. This is particularly critical given the cost barriers often associated with more responsible choices (e.g., digital programmes, zero-waste initiatives, public transport).

2. There's a Clear Mismatch Between What Destinations Offer and What Associations Need

While destinations continue to prioritise economic impact - delegate numbers, hotel nights, sector alignment - associations place greater value on mission-driven outcomes. The most requested forms of support from associations include:

- Financial support (87%)
- Tools to measure impact (66%)
- Sustainability guidance (53%)
- Local stakeholder connections (45%)
- Accessibility and inclusion support (34%)

Yet only 5% of associations say destinations provide clear guidance on how to use subvention strategically, and just 20% of destinations offer comprehensive support on sustainability or legacy.

3. Reporting and Measurement Are Fragmented, But Widely Acknowledged as a Priority

64% of destinations state that their reporting systems need to improve. While most require basic reporting (e.g., proof of delegate numbers), very few tie subvention to environmental or societal KPIs. Even fewer offer consistent measurement tools, templates, or third-party evaluations. From the association perspective, only 58% currently measure subvention outcomes. Among them, 94% measure economic impact, but fewer than half assess social or environmental outcomes - mainly due to lack of resources, tools, or clear expectations.

This fragmented landscape presents a clear opportunity: *to standardise reporting frameworks and move toward structured, outcome-based funding.*

4. Multi-Tier Subvention Models Are Emerging

Half of all responding destinations offer more than one subvention programme. These secondary and tertiary programmes often target:

- Local hosts and ambassadors (local academics, local professionals)
- Legacy or community-based initiatives
- Hybrid formats and innovation-driven events

These models tend to shift away from bid-stage support toward confirmed business generation.

Destinations that layer their support effectively (e.g., one programme for bidding, another for sustainability outcomes) are pioneering a more strategic and nuanced approach.

5. Subvention as a Driver of Change: Momentum, But Not Yet Mainstream

Only 6% of destinations have fully integrated change-driven objectives into their subvention strategies, while 22% are actively experimenting with criteria tied to sustainability, legacy, or inclusion. Another 44% express the ambition to evolve in this direction but have not yet implemented formal frameworks.

From the association side, the desire is stronger: 62% believe subvention should help drive positive change. The message is clear - associations are ready, but many destinations are still in catch-up mode.

6. Key Barriers Include Funding, Complexity, and Lack of Shared Language

Destinations cited several challenges in optimising their subvention strategies:

- Budget constraints (66%)
- Administrative burden and complexity
- Lack of political support or understanding of subvention's strategic value
- Difficulty measuring impact

Associations, meanwhile, report:

- Lack of awareness of subvention availability (55%)
- Complex or inflexible application processes (41%)
- Limited internal resources to manage applications

These shared frustrations highlight the need for better communication, simplification, and alignment.

7. A New Set of Expectations for the Future

40% of destinations expect to integrate stronger sustainability and impact goals into their subvention programmes within the next 24 months. 31% anticipate increasing measurement and reporting requirements. However, 23% don't foresee any changes - suggesting the pace of innovation will vary significantly.

The associations surveyed were clear about their expectations:

- More flexible and targeted support
- Transparent criteria and application processes
- Access to tools and templates
- Real partnership, not just funding

Final Insight: From Transaction to Transformation

Subvention is no longer just about economic stimulus. For both destinations and associations, it is becoming a strategic platform for shared value. But to truly deliver on this potential, subvention programmes must evolve:

- From cash handouts to co-created outcomes
- From volume metrics to value-based KPIs
- From fragmented offers to flexible, tiered support
- From opaque processes to transparent, equitable partnerships

This report is a call to action. The tools, the will, and the models exist. What's needed now is leadership, alignment - and the courage to shift the system.

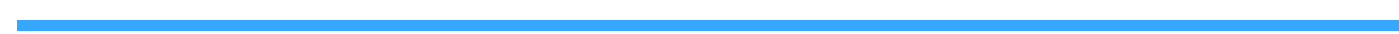
Subvention (Mis)match Matrix

Association Needs versus Destination Offers

Association Needs	% Associations Indicating This Need	% Destinations Offering It	Gap Identified
Financial support (grants, venue discounts)	67%	53%	Moderate alignment
In-kind support (services, local transport)	77%	44%	Underprovided
Tools to measure sustainability & legacy impact	66%	20%	Severely underprovided
Guidance on how to use subvention	53%	20%	Critical gap
Support for community engagement or accessibility	34%	29%	Limited availability
Stakeholder matchmaking (e.g., local government, academia)	45%	29%	Promising, but not widespread
Clear eligibility and reporting framework missing	95%	47%	Seen as the biggest challenge from both sides

Destination Perspective

Designing, delivering, redefining: the destination view on subvention

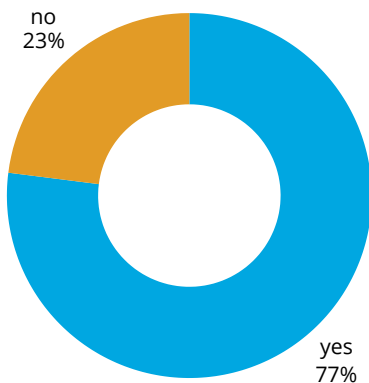


The Current State of Subvention from a Destination Perspective

In this chapter, we explore how subvention is currently approached across different continents. We examine which regions actively support events through subvention and where gaps still exist. Various forms of subvention, funding models, and programme structures are analysed, alongside the objectives destinations set and the challenges they encounter. We highlight best practices, emerging trends, and opportunities for destinations to strengthen their subvention strategies moving forward.

The Global Divide in Subvention

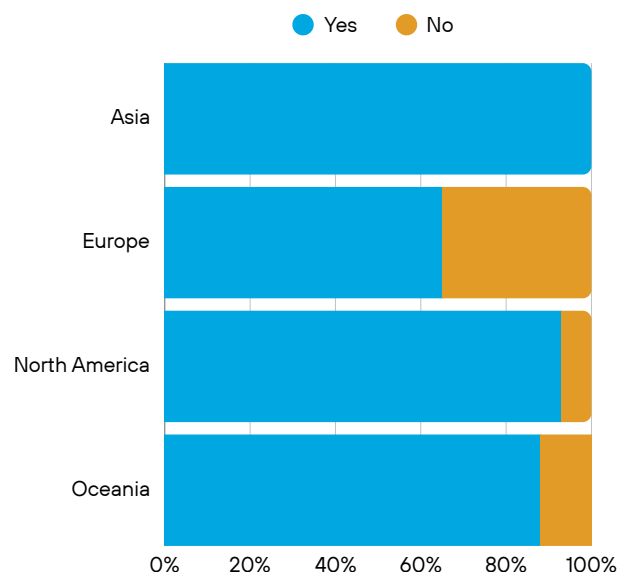
This section outlines which regions actively offer subvention and where financial support remains limited or absent. By examining continental differences, we reveal patterns in availability, identify influencing factors, and set the stage for understanding the strategic choices destinations make when deciding whether to invest in subvention.



The data shows that **77%** of responding destinations currently **offer subventions** to attract conferences and events, while 23% do not. This indicates that subvention remains a commonly used tool within the global events landscape. However, the variation also suggests that different strategic approaches exist across regions and destination types. This study explores those differences in more detail, including how and why subvention is or isn't implemented.

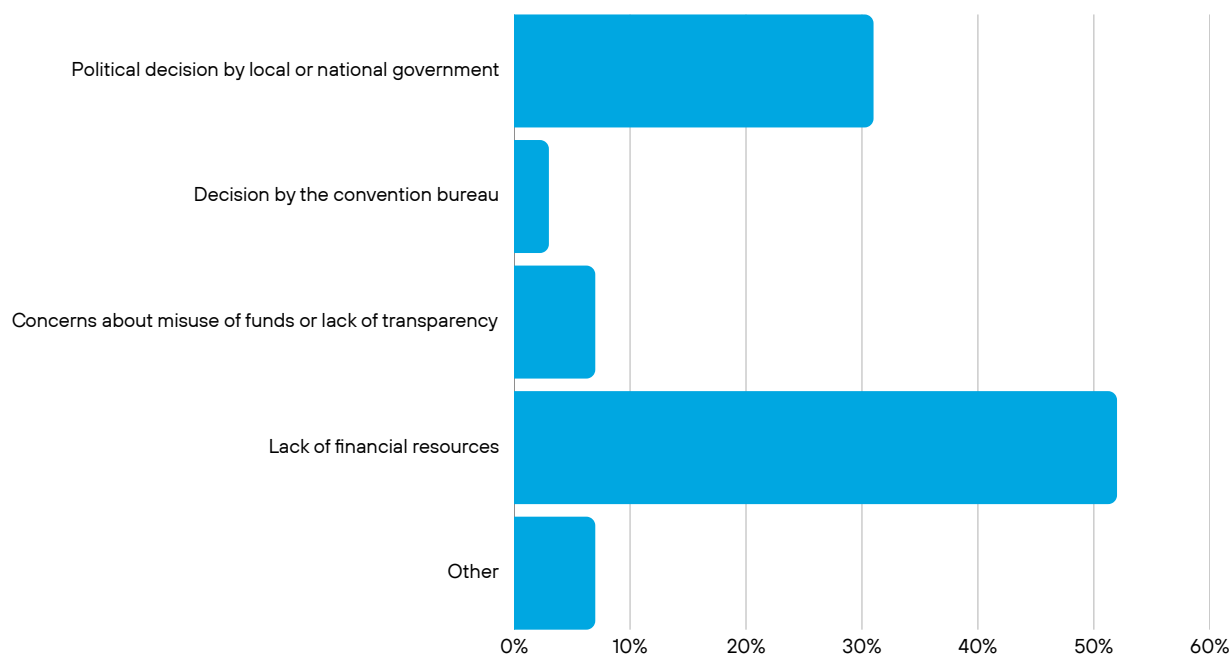
The data highlights clear regional differences in the availability of subventions. **Asia** and **North America** report near-universal provision of subvention support. **Oceania** also shows a high adoption rate, with only a small number of destinations not offering subventions. **Europe**, however, displays the most significant variation, with a larger proportion of destinations indicating that they do not currently offer subventions.

These differences underline the importance of regional context when analysing subvention practices and highlight the value of exploring tailored strategies rather than one-size-fits-all models.



No Subvention: Choice or Circumstance

Not all destinations offer subvention. In some cases, this is a strategic choice; in others, it results from political decisions, funding restrictions, or administrative frameworks. In none of the cases it was because of limited interest from the conference organisers. This section outlines the main reasons why subvention is not available and highlights the different contexts behind these decisions.



Most European destinations point to limited budgets as the main barrier to offering subvention, followed by political resistance and concerns about misuse. Some voiced frustration – calling the whole concept outdated or opposing the use of public funds as event discounts. Others noted that subvention often lacks structural funding and political backing, especially post-COVID.

In-kind support, like gifts, local introductions, or marketing, remains common, though not always recognised as "real" subvention. This mismatch shows how fragmented the definition still is.

Some destinations push back entirely, refusing to "buy" events and instead emphasising value alignment and long-term impact. And with associations more interested in collaboration than cash, it's clear: subvention needs a rethink.

It's clear from the responses that subvention remains a delicate and often polarising topic. Several comments reflect a perception of subvention as a simple financial handout or cash injection, rather than a strategic instrument to support broader policy goals. We are mindful of this tension, and the remainder of this research will aim to clarify how subvention is structured and delivered in practice, as well as showcase models that go beyond pure financial incentives – highlighting cases where subvention serves as a catalyst for sustainability, innovation, and long-term partnerships.



"How we are funded means it would be difficult to justify the membership fee, to include subventions, if it was not for the benefit/ equal opportunity for all members."

"We have chosen not to "buy" conferences, our aim is to make the destination attractive for the right reasons and not compete with the ones who are willing to throw in cash. We of course understand that the organisers need to consider their budget, and this is where the city support schemes (in-kind subventions) come into play."

"Conferences should not be bought. We do offer a subvention to those organisation who want to go the extra mile, and take additional measures to reduce negative ecological impact and/or to increase positive societal impact."

IS SUBVENTION" STILL THE RIGHT TERM?



Let's face it: the word **subvention** isn't working. For some destinations, it screams money. For others, it simply means support - in the form of civic receptions, venue discounts, marketing help, or introductions to key networks.

"When we hear subvention, we immediately think of cash support. But what we actually offer is in-kind, like civic receptions or city services. The term itself is misleading and doesn't reflect the kind of support we provide." *Valérie Ducaud - OnlyLyon Convention Bureau*

"For us, subvention is a case-by-case partnership. Sometimes it's funding, sometimes it's something entirely different. It depends on the impact we can generate together." *Ulrika Scoliege - Gothenburg Convention Bureau*

And associations? Many don't even recognise the word. We've never used the term subvention - we just need support to make our event possible."

This disconnect is more than just semantics. If we can't even agree on what subvention is, how can we expect to design better models, build trust, or advocate for smarter investment?

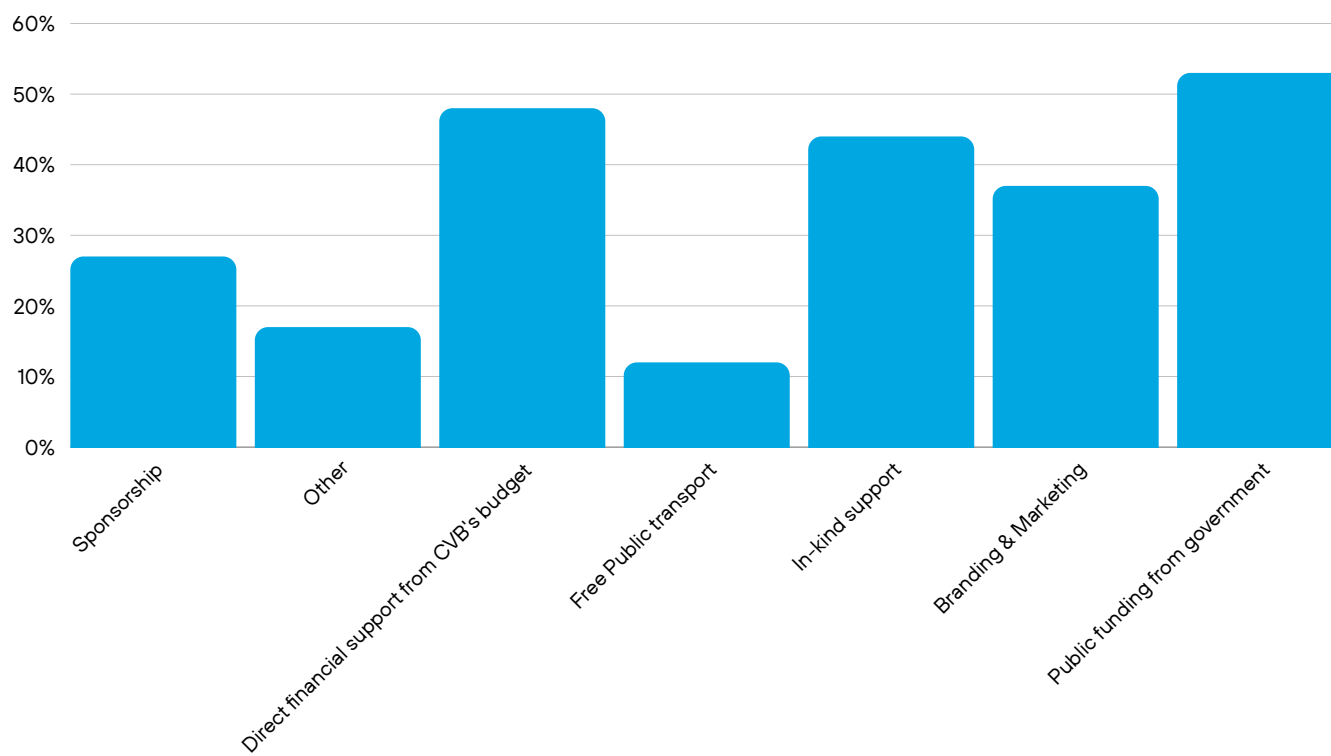
Maybe it's time to rename the practice altogether. Here are some alternatives:

- Conference Support Fund – works for both attraction and non-financial help.
- Conference Innovation & Impact Fund – focus on sustainability, legacy, and new models
- Conference Development Fund – highlights long-term growth, legacy, and capacity-building.
- Strategic Hosting Deal – positions it as a mutual commitment.

What we call it shapes how it's understood, valued, and defended, especially in political conversations. If we want to evolve the practice, let's start with evolving the language.

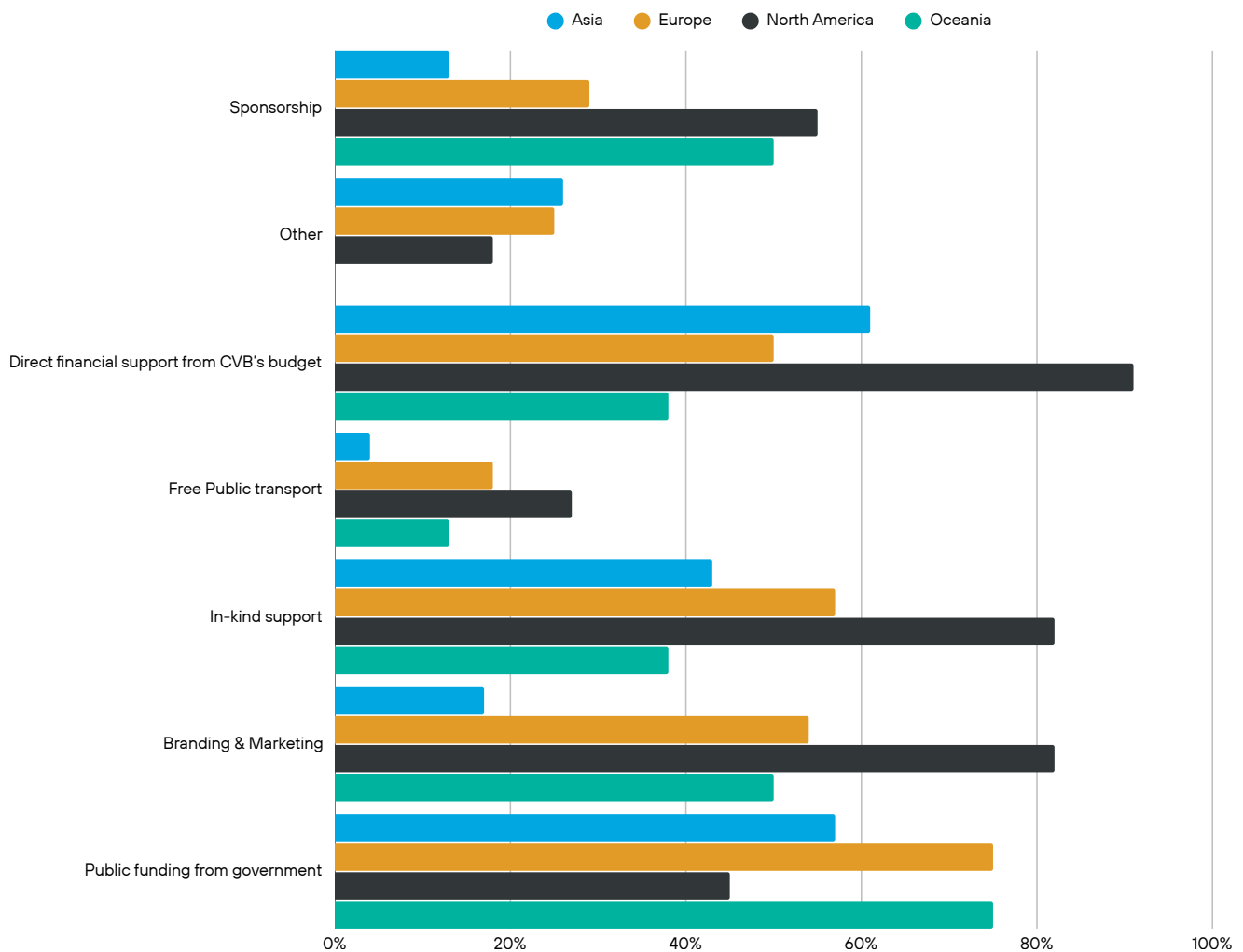
Types of Subvention

Subvention can take many forms, ranging from direct financial contributions to indirect support. We outline the main types of subvention offered by destinations, including cash grants, in-kind support, marketing contributions, and sponsorship. Understanding these different approaches provides insight into how destinations structure their support to attract events and what is perceived as subvention.



Since respondents could select multiple options, totals exceed 100%. The most commonly offered forms of subvention are public funding from government sources (53%) and direct financial support from the CVB's own budget (48%). In-kind support (44%) and branding or marketing assistance (37%) are also widely used - this includes activities such as destination promotion, delegate boosting, and communication support. Sponsorship (27%) typically refers to covering specific event-related costs, often tied to local suppliers or services, rather than general funding.

Regional Differences



Key observations from subvention support on different continents:

- North America stands out with the highest percentage of direct financial support from CVBs own budget, as well as strong use of In-kind support and Branding & Marketing.
- Europe displays a more balanced spread across the different types of support, with In-kind support, Government funding, and Branding & Marketing being the most common. Notably, Europe has a relatively low level of Direct financial support from CVBs own budget.
- Asia reports strong use of Direct financial support from CVB's own budget and Public funding, followed by In-kind support. It shows lower levels of Branding & Marketing and Free public transport.
- Oceania reflects a consistent mid-range presence across most categories, with no single dominant type of support, though Public funding and Sponsorship appear most used.
- Free public transport is the least reported type of support across all regions, suggesting it's still more the exception than the norm.

Subvention Examples: Financial Grants and Practical Support



The **Hamburg Convention Bureau (HCB)** offers targeted in-kind subvention to association congresses that align with the city's strategic sectors or sustainability goals. Support includes marketing on official channels, signage, venue discounts, and assistance with permits or logistics. HCB also connects organisers with local academic and business networks to enhance relevance and legacy. In some cases, they co-create side activities or support sustainability pilots – ensuring events create value not just for delegates, but for Hamburg as a whole.

This support model is designed to reduce financial pressure while amplifying impact. Organisers gain access to a trusted network of local stakeholders, helping them embed the event into Hamburg's ecosystem. Whether it's a civic reception, access to green-certified venues, or aligning with a regional innovation agenda, the offer is always strategic. Hamburg's in-kind subvention is more than logistical help – it's a gateway to relevance, resonance, and long-term value.

The **Vienna Convention Bureau** offers the Vienna Meeting Fund. This fund provides direct cash subvention to international congresses that help strengthen Vienna's position as a global meeting hub. The programme is specifically designed to support events taking place in the shoulder months (January, February, March, April, July, August, November, December), when the city is less busy with leisure tourism.

To be eligible, events must host at least 50 on-site participants, with a minimum of 50% international attendance, and use a paid Viennese venue. Grants are structured in two modules:

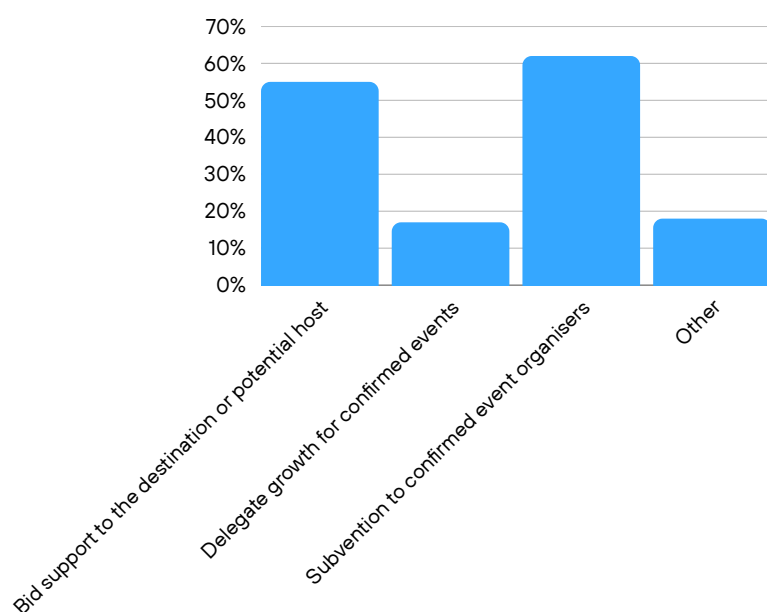
- Module 1 provides base funding tied to participant numbers and event days.
- Module 2 rewards sustainability, offering additional support for events certified as ÖkoEvent (City of Vienna) or holding the Austrian Eco-Label for Green Meetings and Green Events.

Provided both module criteria are met, grants can reach up to €60,000 per event.



Nature of Subvention

Subvention programmes are not uniform; their design reflects the strategic priorities, economic goals, and event ambitions of each destination. In this section, we explore the different ways subvention is structured, the factors that influence its size and conditions, and how destinations balance financial support with broader objectives.



Overall, in the vast majority of cases, the financial incentive is provided either directly to the event organiser upon confirmation of the event, or to the destination or local host during the bidding phase. Since respondents could select multiple options for this question, the percentages do not add up to 100% but instead reflect the relative frequency of each response across all participants.

There is no significant variation across continents or between local and national convention bureaus, indicating a consistent approach to how subvention is distributed, regardless of geographic or organisational structure.

Responses listed under “*Other*” highlight that subvention is sometimes used to enhance the event itself, with a focus on generating positive economic and societal impact. One noteworthy example mentioned is the Pre-Financing & Guarantee Fund, which functions more as a risk-mitigation instrument than a traditional financial incentive - offering organisers a form of financial security rather than direct cash support.

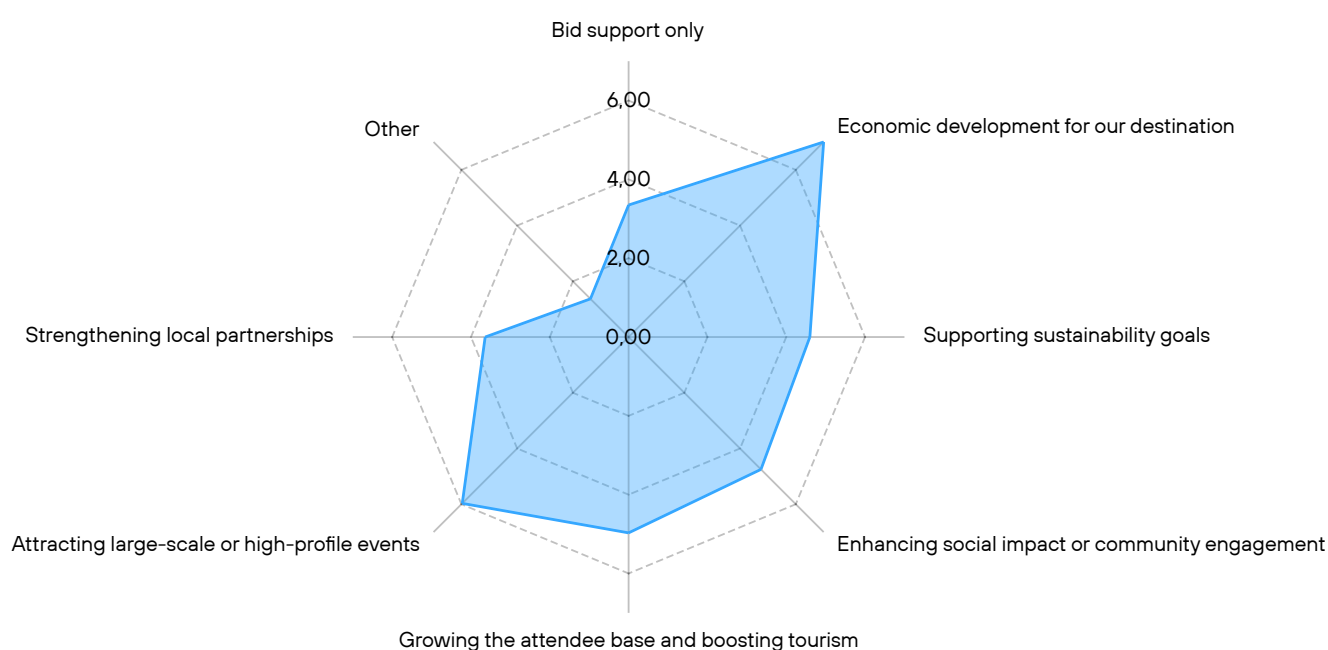


"Subvention isn't just about handing out money – it's about enabling bold decisions. The Netherlands' VGF proves this by offering zero-cost pre-financing and guarantee schemes that eliminate early cash flow stress and protect against financial losses from low attendance. It's a smart, risk-sharing model that gives associations the confidence to plan big, impactful conferences in the Netherlands – without fear holding them back."

Paul Gruijthuisen - VGF

Strategic Objectives Behind Subvention Programmes

Subvention is never just about financial support; it is a strategic tool linked to broader destination goals. In this section, we outline the key objectives behind subvention programmes, including economic impact, local partnerships, destination positioning, and long-term legacy creation. Understanding these objectives provides critical context for how subvention programmes are shaped and prioritised.



When asked to rank the most important objectives for offering subvention, respondents placed **'economic development'** and **'attracting large-scale or high-profile events'** at the top of the list. These priorities clearly reflect a strong focus on subvention as a tool for driving measurable return on investment and raising the international profile of the destination.

In second tier, we find objectives such as growing the attendee base, boosting tourism, enhancing impact and community engagement, and supporting sustainability goals. These reflect an increasing awareness of the broader value that business events can bring - beyond economic impact - by fostering knowledge exchange, stakeholder collaboration, and long-term societal benefits.

Objectives like 'strengthening local partnerships' and 'providing bid support' were ranked lower, suggesting that while they are recognised as valuable, they are not primary drivers behind subvention policies.

In the “Other” category, respondents offered thoughtful additions that reveal a broader strategic vision. Some destinations see subvention as a way to increase their global competitiveness, helping them stand out in a crowded international landscape. Others emphasized the role of subvention in promoting the destination as a place to live, work, and study, linking business events to talent attraction and regional branding. Another key insight was the idea of using subvention to motivate local associations to take an active role in the bidding process, recognizing that strong local advocacy is often a critical success factor in securing association events.

Together, these findings underscore that while economic value remains a primary motivator, many destinations are thinking beyond short-term wins - using subvention strategically to align with long-term goals around identity, innovation, and impact.

“

In Flanders, the approach to subvention goes beyond financial support – it's about sparking a mindset shift. The region actively encourages international associations to reflect on the impact their conferences can generate, both environmentally and socially.

Tuya Beyers - International Association Expert, VisitFlanders

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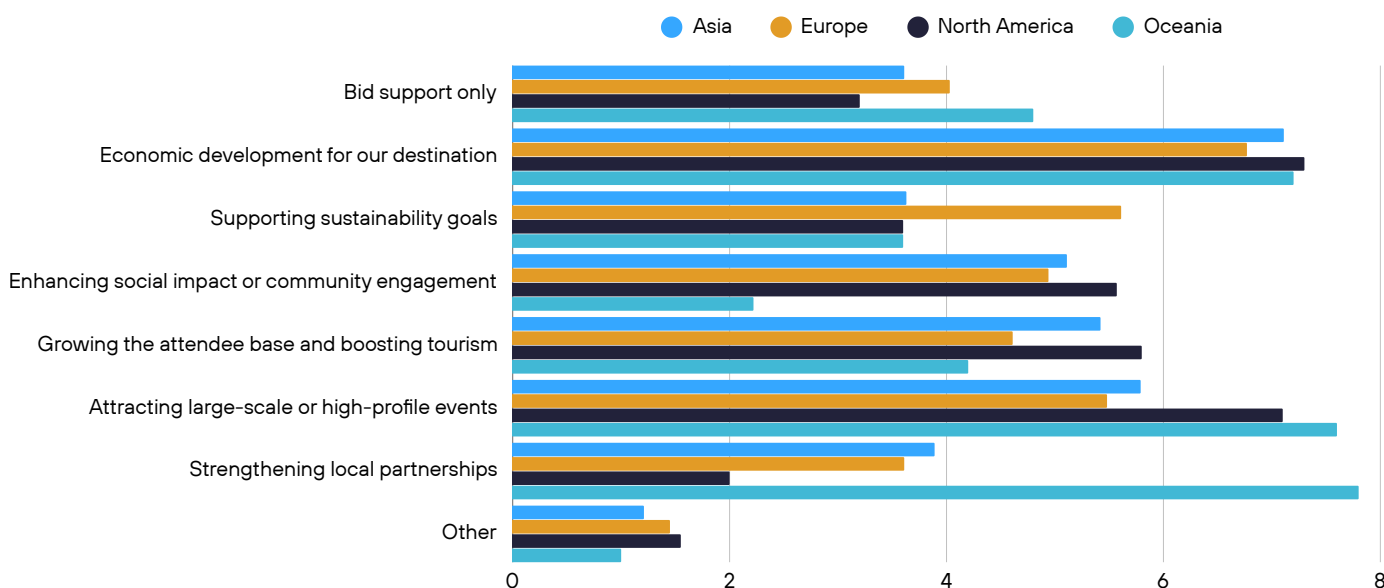
Regional Differences

While economic development ranks as the most important objective overall, regional differences reveal diverse strategic priorities across continents.

- In Oceania, destinations place the strongest emphasis on strengthening local partnerships, suggesting a more community-driven or collaborative approach to subvention. This contrasts with the global trend and highlights the region's focus on reinforcing internal networks and stakeholder alignment.
- In Europe, supporting sustainability goals stands out as a higher priority compared to other regions. This reflects Europe's broader commitment to green policies and climate-aligned event strategies, where subvention is increasingly used as a lever to drive more responsible practices.
- Meanwhile, North American destinations place the highest value on enhancing social impact and community engagement, positioning subvention not just as a business incentive but as a way to deliver long-term societal benefit to local communities.

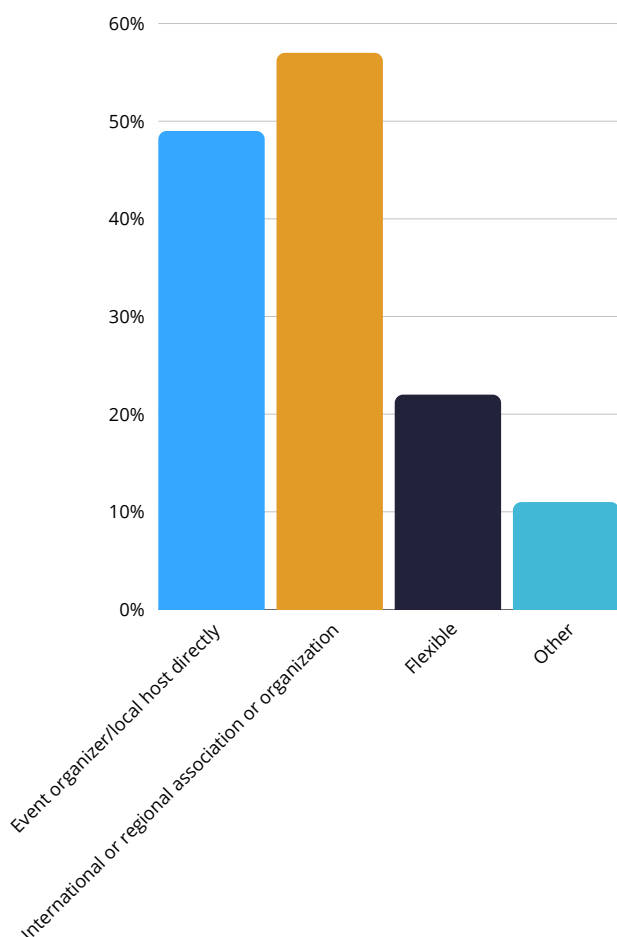
These regional insights demonstrate that while financial return and visibility remain universal motivators, the role of subvention is evolving into a more strategic and purpose-led tool - shaped by local context, political climate, and destination priorities.

Main Objective Subvention Programme



Who Qualifies for Subvention?

Subvention programmes are often targeted toward specific types of events and organisers. In this section, we examine who is eligible to receive subvention support, the criteria destinations use to select recipients, and how priorities may differ between association events, corporate meetings, incentive travel, and other event formats.



In general, subvention is most commonly offered either directly to the international association or to the local host or event organiser. These are the primary recipients, particularly in connection with formal bid processes or confirmed event commitments.

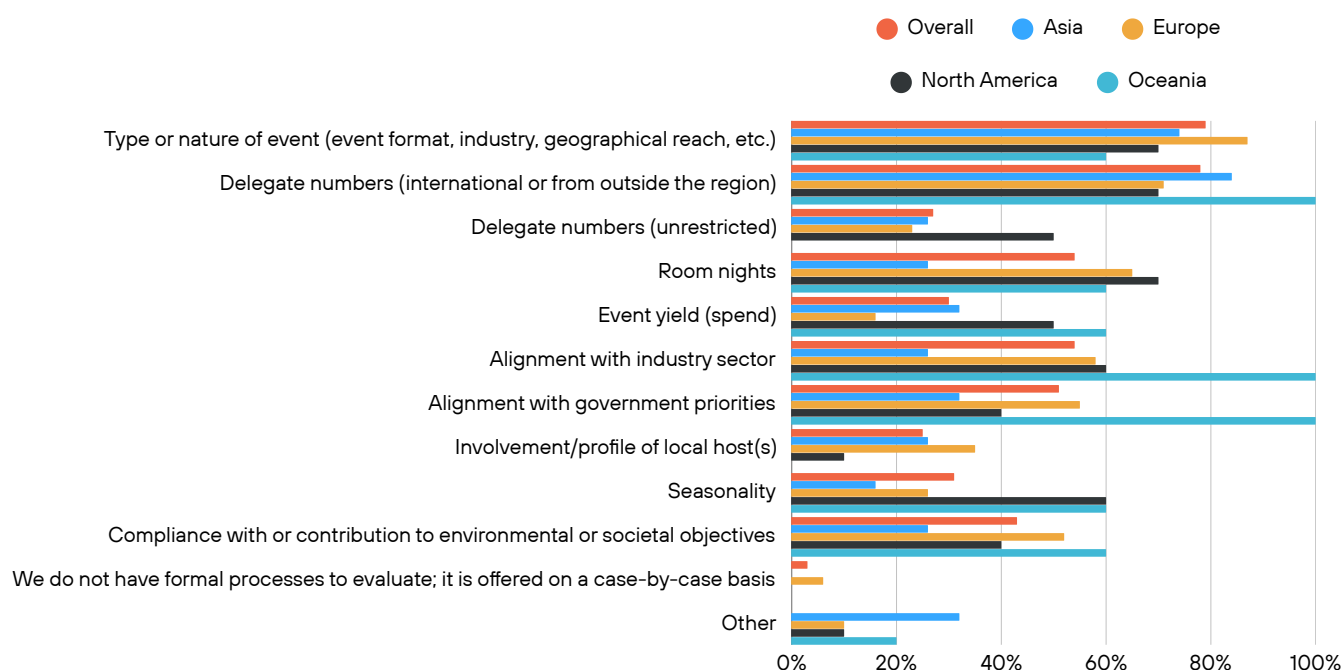
Some respondents noted a flexible approach, where the allocation of subvention depends on the specific case or bid requirements, allowing destinations to adapt their support strategies as needed.

Under "Other," it was mentioned that corporate events may also be eligible, and in some cases, national convention bureaus provide subvention directly to local CVBs. This internal funding reflects how national-level support is used to empower regional or local bureaus in attracting international business.

APPROVED

Subvention Award Criteria

Subvention is rarely granted automatically; destinations apply specific criteria to assess applications. In this section, we outline the key factors that influence whether subvention is awarded to an event.



When examining how subvention applications are assessed, the majority of respondents indicate that **decisions are primarily based on the type or nature of the event, and the number of delegates traveling from outside the region.** These are followed closely by alignment with the destination's priority industry sectors, the number of room nights generated, and compatibility with broader governmental goals. In other words, most evaluation criteria are rooted in the strategic objective of boosting a destination's economic viability.

Notably, compliance with or contribution to environmental and societal goals ranks only sixth overall – highlighting that while such impact-related metrics are acknowledged, they are not yet central to the majority of subvention decision-making frameworks.

The data also reveals clear regional variations:

- In **Oceania**, subvention is most strongly linked to delegate volume, sector alignment, and governmental priorities, suggesting a highly strategic and nationally coordinated approach.
- **Asia** prioritises delegate numbers above all, indicating a focus on volume-driven impact.
- In **North America**, the number of room nights appears to be the most dominant metric – reflecting a transactional, hotel-impact-driven model.
- **Europe and Oceania** stand out for giving above-average weight to environmental and societal contributions, indicating a more mature integration of sustainability and impact into subvention thinking.

“

Sustainability and inclusivity should be considered more systematically – either as mandatory conditions, as we have with the plastics ban, or as part of the evaluation criteria when reviewing applications. The aim should be to encourage organisers to reflect more intentionally on the broader impact of their events, while allowing some flexibility depending on their context and resources.

Prague Convention Bureau | Michaela Smetanová | Head of Business Events

”

Under “Other,” respondents mentioned additional criteria such as the inclusion of an Indigenous component, recognizing traditional land ownership or integrating Indigenous culture into the event. This reflects a shift toward inclusive, place-based strategies. Other factors noted include the event’s duration and the percentage of high-level (C-suite and above) delegates, emphasising a focus on event quality, business influence, and long-term economic value.

Financial Scope of Subvention

When asked about the financial value of subvention, many destinations were reluctant to share specific figures. This lack of transparency makes it challenging to compare offers directly or provide continental differences. Instead, this section focuses on identifying common ranges, patterns, and funding structures to better understand how subvention is typically shaped – without naming or highlighting individual amounts.

45%

Formula that calculates amount based on different criteria

17%

Fixed amount per delegate

2%

Fixed % per delegate

2%

Full Bid support only

26%

Fixed amount per event

5%

Fixed amount based on roomnights

2%

Fixed % of event expenses

Most destinations use a structured formula to determine the subvention amount, typically based on a combination of criteria - such as event type, delegate numbers, alignment with strategic sectors, and duration.

While each subvention offer is customized to match the specifics of the event, several common models emerged from the responses.

Some destinations apply a fixed amount per event, while others use a fixed contribution per delegate. A few base their calculation on a percentage of the total event expenditure.

However, due to the confidential nature of subvention policies, we are only able to present estimated ranges rather than detailed figures by destination, continent or category.



Per delegate: €20 – €60



Percentage of total event expenses: 4% – 10%



Fixed amount per event:
Between € 2.000 and € 600.000 (with the majority falling between € 10.000 and € 50.000)

These ranges highlight the variation in financial support mechanisms, reflecting differences in local funding structures, priorities, and the competitive landscape. It is important to note that subvention is often capped at a maximum amount.

“

“We look at the math of the average rate times room nights to get a number, and from that we obtain a % regarding the lodging tax which can be translated to in-kind support. We calculate the room nights generated by the event and multiply them by the average room rate to estimate the approximate hotel tax (4%). This amount is then provided as support.”

Ligia Gonzáles, MICE Manager Guadalajara CVB, Mexico

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Frankfurt, Germany



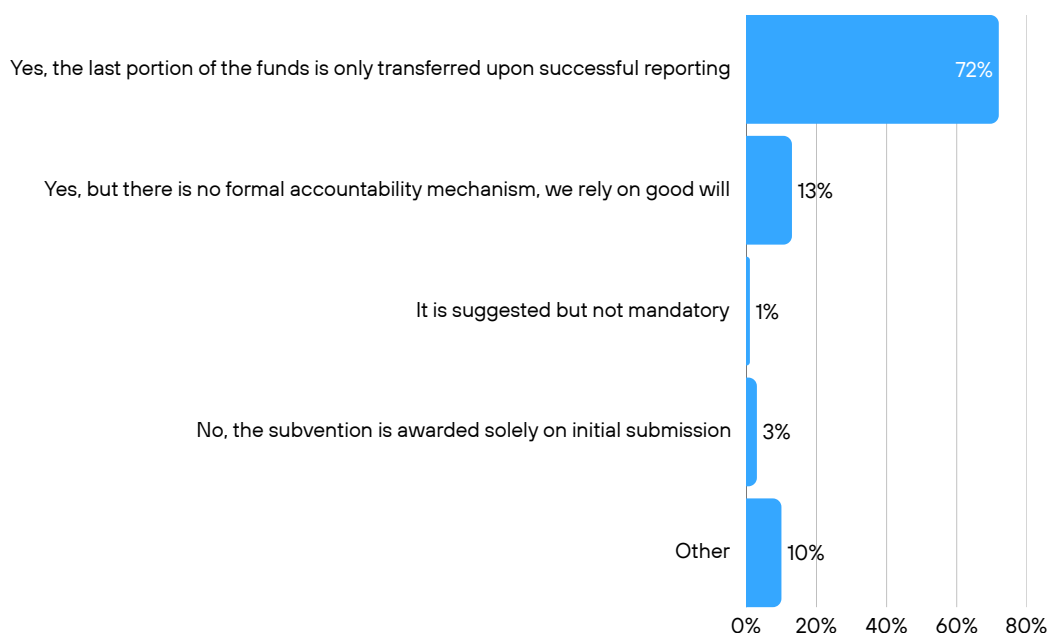
Wellington, New Zealand



Utrecht, Netherlands

Reporting Requirements for Subvention

Not all destinations require formal reporting linked to subvention support. In this section, we explore whether reporting is requested, how often it is mandatory, and the role it plays - if any - in the overall subvention process.



The vast majority of respondents indicated that a **formal reporting process is required** in order to transfer the subvention - particularly the final installment. This typically includes submitting post-event reports, proof of performance (such as delegate numbers or room nights), and financial documentation. These procedures are designed to ensure accountability and transparency, and to confirm that the event has met the agreed-upon criteria.

Interestingly, there is no significant difference across continents in how this requirement is applied. Regardless of region, most destinations require some level of performance validation before releasing full financial support. This reflects a broader shift from subvention as a flat incentive to a results-based partnership model, where measurable impact and accountability are key to securing and maintaining public support.

“

The end user only receives funds post event once an audit is conducted by the CVB. We require room pick up from each hotel, that the convention centre and HQ finances are in good standing (paid in full) and in some cases we require the delegate final registration list including postal codes so that we can do an analysis to confirm the projected economic impact was indeed achieved.

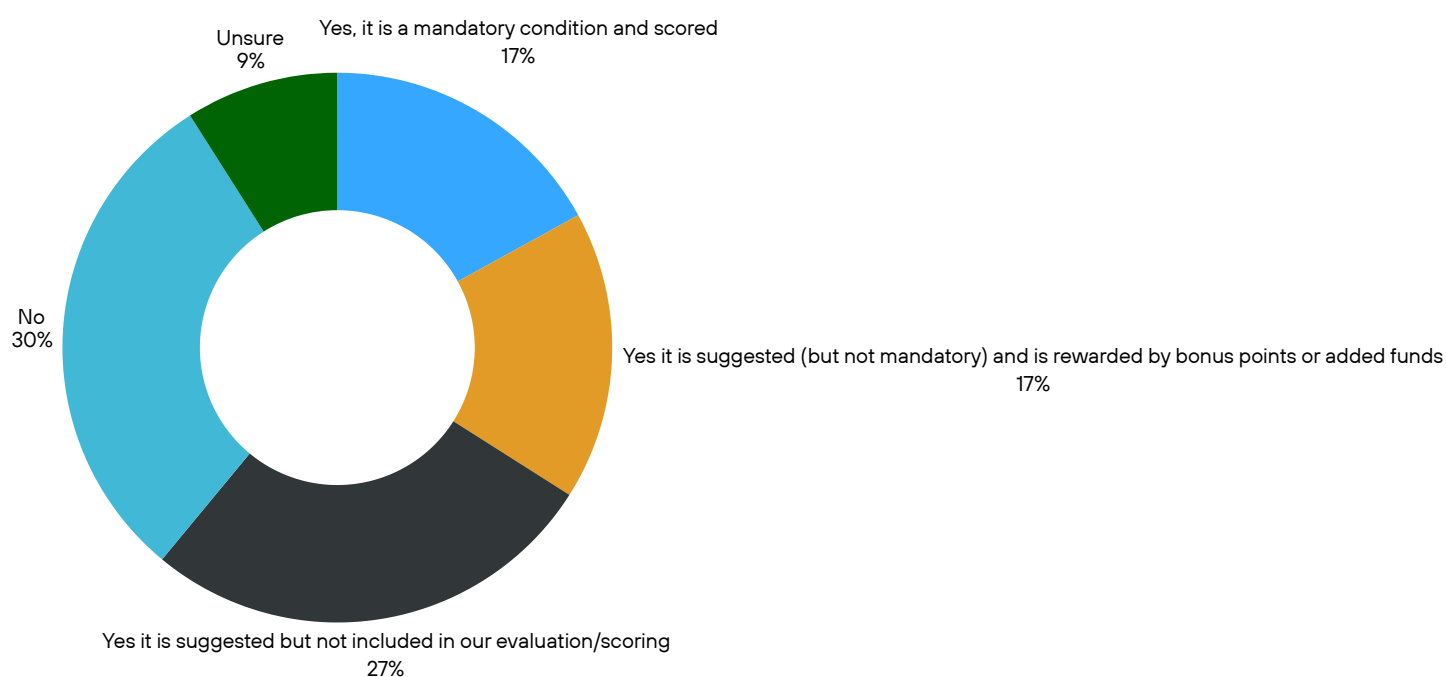
North American Destination

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Outcomes Beyond Economic Impact

While economic impact remains a primary driver for offering subvention, many destinations are now broadening their objectives. In this section, we explore how subvention programmes increasingly aim to deliver outcomes such as community engagement, social impact, sustainability, and long-term legacy, reflecting a more holistic approach to event value.

Is the recipient of the subvention expected to deliver specific outcomes beyond economic impact?



When asked whether destinations expect outcomes beyond economic impact (such as social or environmental legacy), 30% of respondents said no – making this the central challenge identified in the research. Yet there is also strong momentum: 17% already include such outcomes in their formal subvention criteria, 27% are actively developing frameworks to integrate them, and another 17% are advocating for their inclusion. Altogether, 61% of destinations are working to move subvention beyond economics and toward broader societal value.

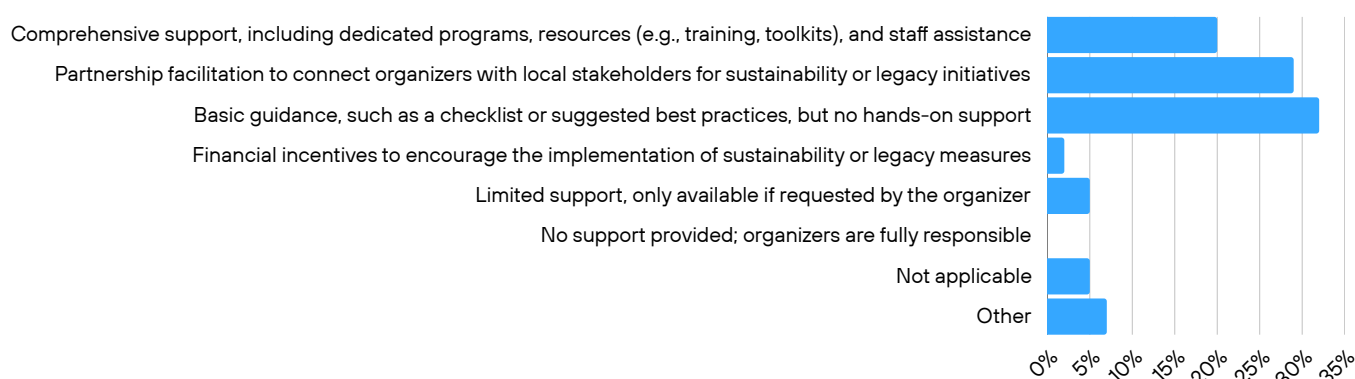
This suggests that while the conversation around legacy and impact is gaining momentum, subvention programmes remain primarily focused on traditional economic metrics, such as delegate spend and room nights.

Importantly, this trend appears consistent across continents, indicating that the shift toward impact-based evaluation is still in its early stages globally. The only few notable exceptions are in North America, 50% of respondents stated that no impact outcomes are expected at all. Conversely, in Oceania, 40% of destinations reported that impact and legacy are suggested elements, even though they are not yet formally included in evaluation or scoring systems.

Supporting Broader Outcomes

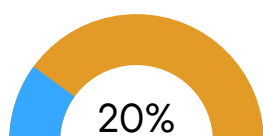
From the 61% of destinations that expect outcomes beyond economic impact 88% of them offer additional support to drive knowledge sharing, sustainability, community engagement, or legacy initiatives. In this section, we explore the level of support these destinations provide to encourage broader outcomes and how they embed them into their subvention strategies.

What support do you provide to help deliver on these outcomes?

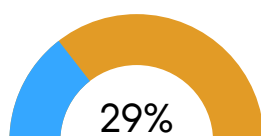


Other refers to comprehensive, non-financial support such as phone guidance, best-practice discussions, access to tools and checklists, educational forums, municipal updates on sustainability, and dedicated programmes like Responsible Tourism analyses.

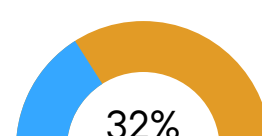
Among the destinations that offer subvention beyond purely economic impact, the vast majority (88%) also provide some form of additional support.



offer fully comprehensive assistance -integrating sustainability, community legacy, and impact strategy into their event approach.



facilitate partnerships between organisers and local stakeholders, helping embed events into the local ecosystem and enabling long-term benefits.



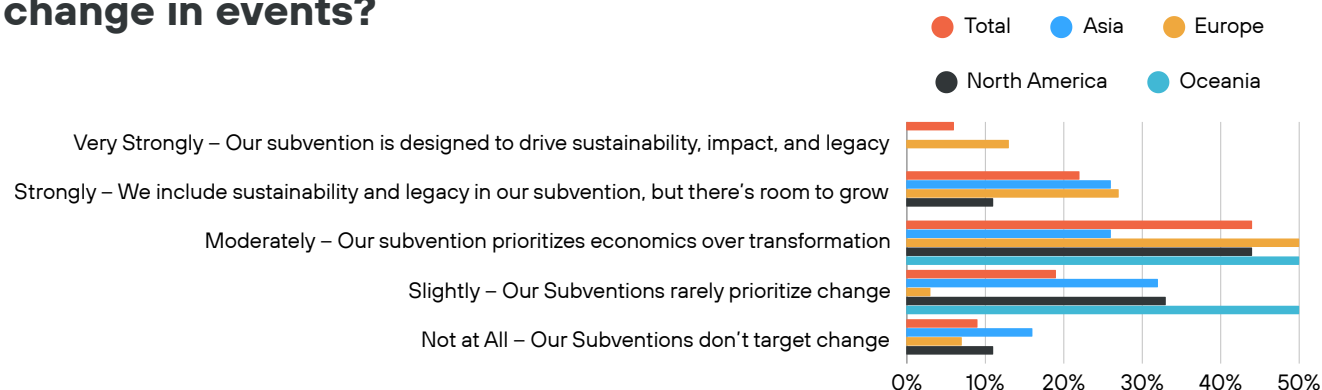
provide basic guidance, such as checklists, templates, or access to best practices that encourage event organisers to consider broader environmental or social outcomes.

Notably, there is no significant variation between continents, suggesting a globally shared direction – even if the level of maturity varies.

Subvention as a Catalyst for Change: Momentum is Building, Integration Remains Limited

One of the central goals of this research was to assess whether subvention is currently being used as a tool to foster positive transformation - from encouraging sustainability to supporting legacy initiatives and community impact.

How strongly does your organisation use subventions to drive change in events?



The results are telling. Only 6% of destinations currently use subvention with a clear and intentional focus on driving change in the events industry. An additional 22% are actively integrating change-focused criteria, such as environmental or social outcomes, into their subvention models, but acknowledge there's still room to grow.

44% of respondents express an ambition to foster change, but still center their subvention approach primarily around economic objectives. Just 9% do not use subvention to encourage any form of change, highlighting that this conversation is very much alive across the industry.

Taken together, 91% of destinations recognise the importance of aligning subvention with broader societal and environmental goals - a clear signal that this is no longer a fringe ambition, but a core expectation for the future.

Regional dynamics further underline this shift:

- **Europe** leads, with 13% of respondents already strongly embedding change-driven goals into their subvention frameworks.
- **Asia (26%) and Europe (40%)** outperform other continents in actively integrating change.
- **North America** lags behind when it comes to strong integration, while **Oceania**, though not leading in full integration, is well above average in making incremental progress and piloting new approaches.

Subvention is no longer just a financial tool - it is increasingly being viewed as a lever for systemic change. The momentum is there. The challenge now is to transform intent into action through structured frameworks, accountability, and innovation.



Key Finding

While only a small number of destinations formally tie sustainability or legacy outcomes to subvention amounts, many are actively working to embed impact and sustainability thinking into their event support services.

Current practices include:

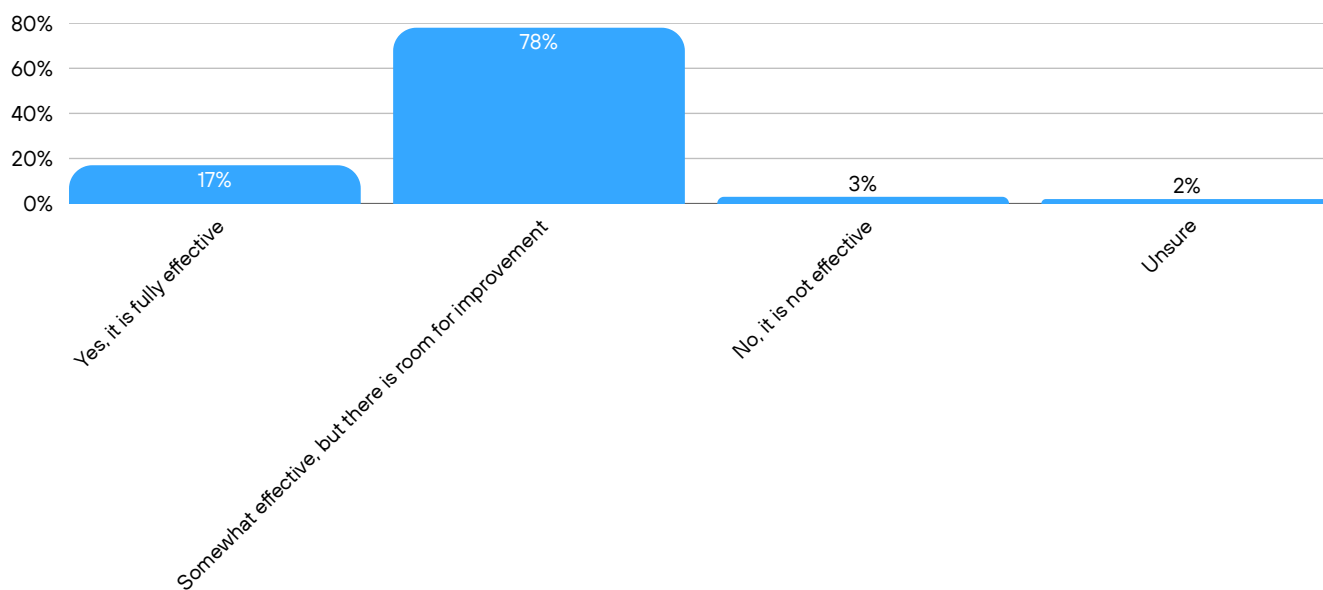
- Pre/post-event surveys covering sustainability and legacy
- Tailored impact support packages and carbon calculators
- Additional subvention for applying sustainability manuals
- Dedicated sustainability leads within convention bureaus
- Legacy-focused consultations with ambassadors and hosts
- Strategic alignment with GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) criteria and national KPIs

Conclusion:

Destinations are evolving from informing and encouraging sustainable and impact practices to incentivising and requiring them - marking a shift from optional add-ons to embedded criteria in subvention strategies.

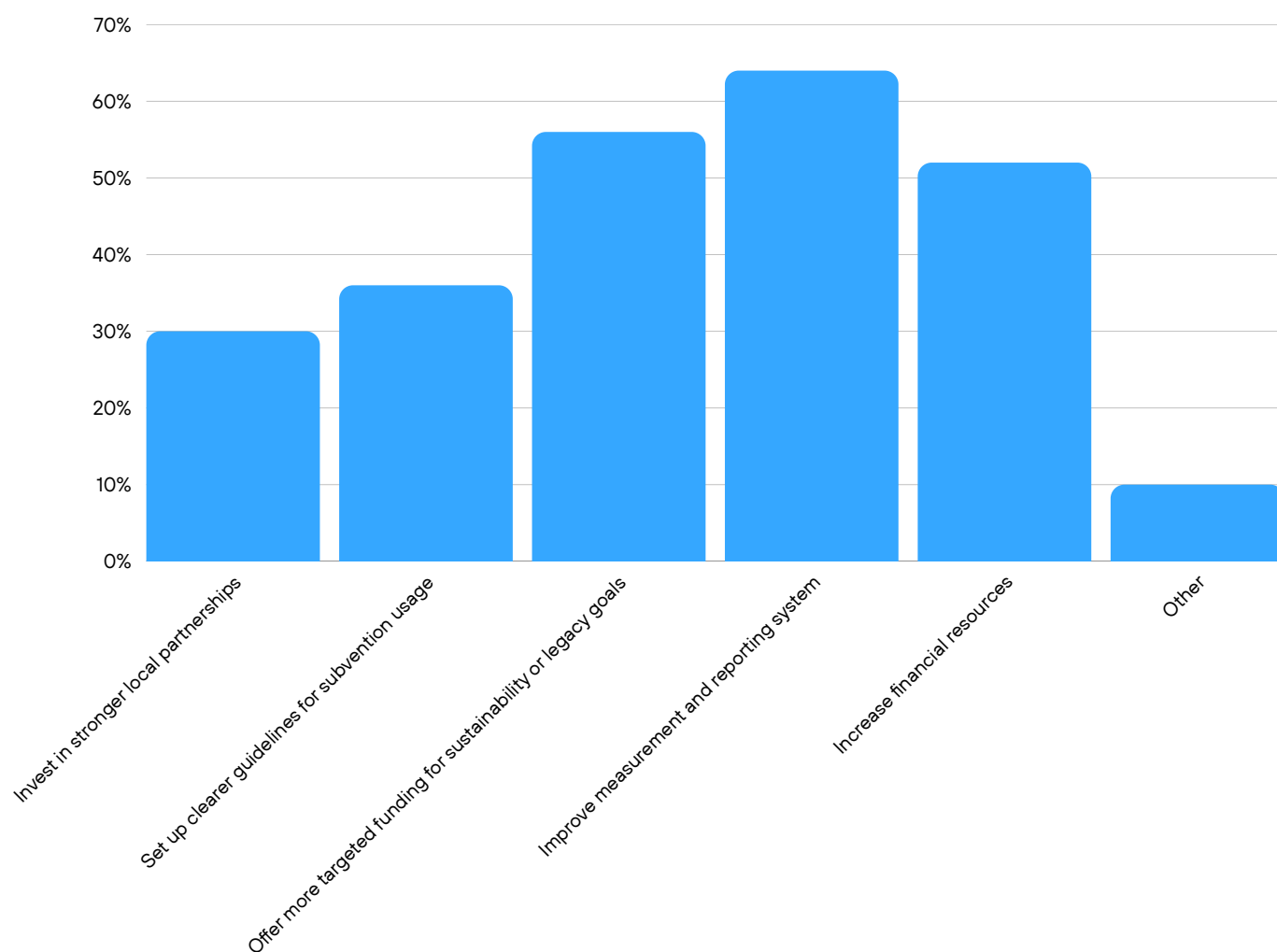
Subvention Programmes under Review: Destinations Acknowledge the Need for Improvement

78% of destinations believe there is room to improve their current subvention programme, a finding that holds consistently across most regions. Notably, North America stands out, with 56% of respondents in that region indicating that their subvention programmes are already fully effective – a significantly higher level of confidence than in other parts of the world.



When asked what specifically needs improvement, the most common response (64%) was the need for better measurement and reporting systems. As highlighted earlier in this report, reporting on subvention impact remains fragmented, highly case-dependent, and often customized, making it difficult to assess outcomes systematically or benchmark performance across destinations.

The second most mentioned improvement (56%) was the desire to offer more targeted funding for sustainability and legacy goals, reinforcing the industry's broader push toward purpose-driven event strategies. Additionally, increasing the overall financial resources available for subvention was frequently cited as a practical barrier limiting current effectiveness. Under 'Other' the most given comment was to reduce the administrative burden.



Suggested Areas for Improvement



Develop standardised reporting frameworks

Shift from case-by-case reporting to structured models using shared KPIs - especially for sustainability, community impact, and economic return.



Integrate outcome-based funding models

Tie a portion of subvention to clearly defined sustainability or legacy metrics (e.g., carbon savings, local stakeholder engagement, accessibility improvements).



Create tiered support packages

Offer different levels of subvention based on the event's alignment with strategic goals - e.g., legacy, innovation, inclusivity, or SDG alignment.

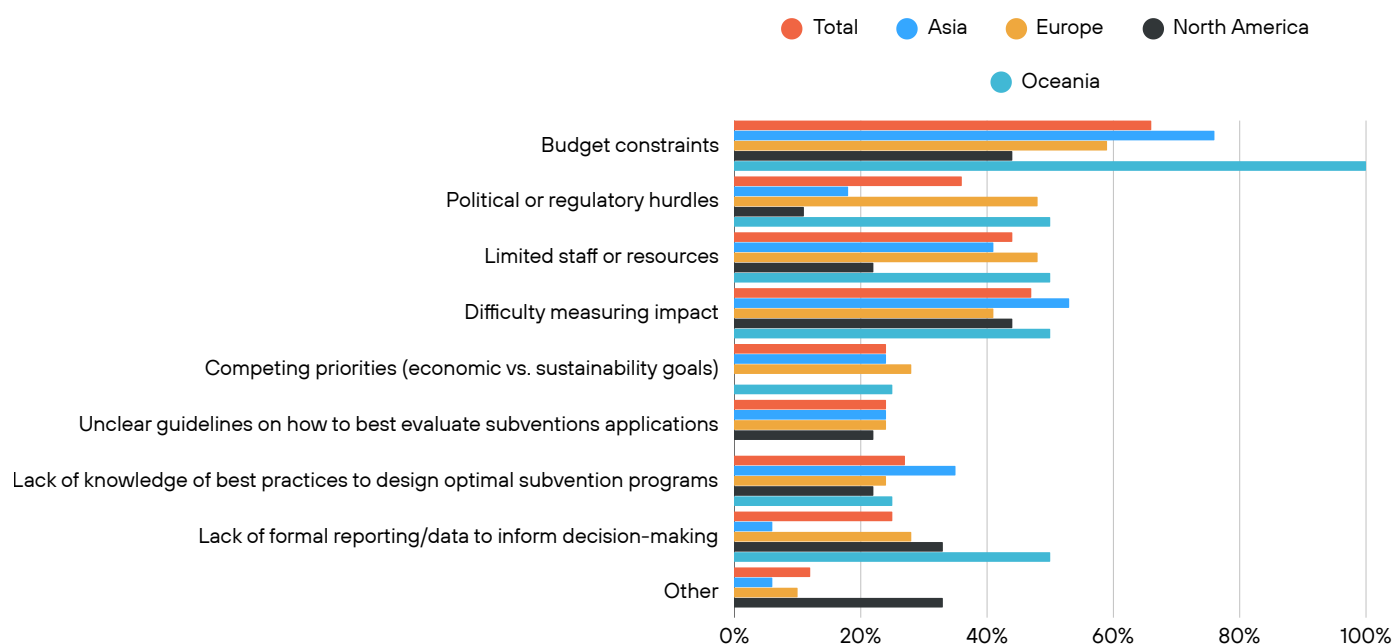


Expand collaboration between destinations

Facilitate knowledge exchange and co-development of tools to harmonise measurement approaches, possibly under the umbrella of existing frameworks like the GSTC or GDS-Movement.

Key Challenges in Managing Subvention Programmes

Managing subvention programmes comes with a range of challenges. In this section, we highlight the main obstacles destinations face, including limited budgets, political pressure, administrative complexity, and the lack of knowledge and transparency about best practices.



When examining the barriers destinations encounter in optimising their subvention strategies, budget constraints emerge as the most significant challenge, cited by 66% of respondents. This challenge is particularly acute in **Oceania and Asia**, where limited financial resources exert even greater pressure on the ability to offer or expand subvention programmes effectively.

Other major challenges include:

- **Staffing limitations**, where reduced team capacity impacts the ability to manage, evaluate, and evolve subvention strategies
- **Political or regulatory hurdles**, with changes in government priorities, funding structures, or public scrutiny often slowing progress
- **Difficulty in measuring impact**, cited by 47% of respondents, reinforcing earlier findings that reporting and quantification of subvention outcomes remain areas of significant complexity and fragmentation.

These findings suggest that operational, financial, and governance factors collectively form the backbone of the subvention challenge landscape, and that systemic solutions - not just incremental adjustments - are needed.

"Monetary support is just part of it, but our partners need to build a holistic approach, from city council to tourism office. Post and claim poses a challenge to us as organisers will have marketing activities beforehand."

"It takes time to generate structural change, administration is slow and difficult and not enough knowledge on how we can use new business models."



Best Practice

VisitBritain Business Events Growth programme

The VisitBritain Business Events Growth programme is a strategic funding initiative designed to attract and develop international business events across the UK.

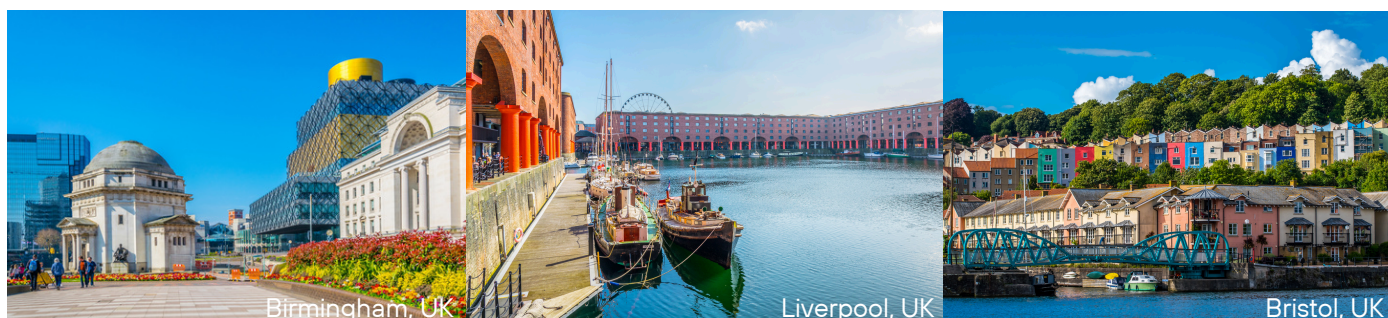
The programme supports two key areas:

- Candidate City Bid Support – to help British cities bid for new association congresses.
- International Delegate Growth Support – to enhance confirmed congresses and B2B trade events.

The programme targets events in high-priority UK sectors, including medical and life sciences, advanced manufacturing, energy transition, education, technology, and creative services.

Impact & Performance

- Between 2018 and 2023, the programme supported 62 events in 18 UK cities, generating £45.5 million in direct economic return with an impressive ROI of 33:1.
- From 2023 to 2025, a further 65 events in 12 cities received support, with evaluations currently ongoing.





Application & Evaluation Criteria

Applications are reviewed by an independent expert panel and must align with UK Grant Management rules. The evaluation focuses on **five key areas**, reflecting both economic and impact-driven objectives:

1. Economic Value – Estimated delegate spend using official VisitBritain data.
2. Wider Economic Benefits – Including trade and investment potential, start-up involvement, and business partnerships.
3. Environmental Sustainability – Policies and actions such as local sourcing, plant-based catering, transport planning, and carbon offsetting.
4. Intellectual & Policy Legacy – Tangible event outcomes such as new research, skill-building, partnerships, or influence on public policy.
5. Social, Cultural & Human Impact – Community engagement, student access, charitable contributions, local culture promotion, and public well-being initiatives.

Applicants are not required to cover all dimensions, but are encouraged to recognise and amplify existing impact efforts. Sustainability and legacy planning are mandatory for funding eligibility.

Support Tools & Frameworks

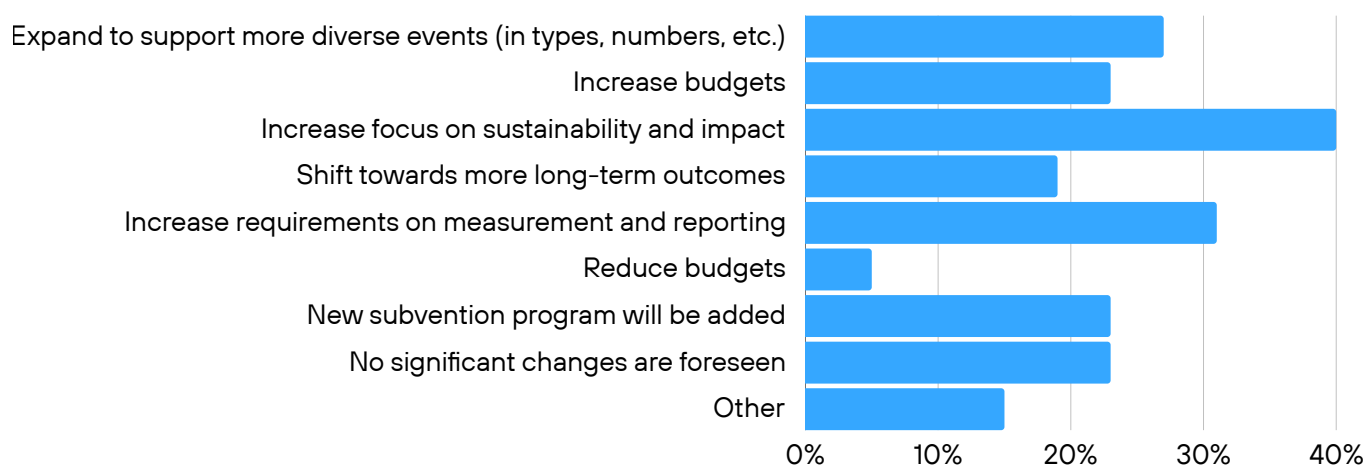
VisitBritain provides tailored tools such as the VisitBritain Legacy Toolkit and the BE-Impactful Framework®, helping event organisers design and measure impact across eight capital areas: human, social, intellectual, financial, cultural, built, political, and natural.

Conclusion

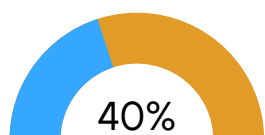
The VisitBritain Business Events Growth Programme is more than a financial grant - it's a catalyst for change. By linking funding to tangible outcomes and broader impact, the UK is positioning itself as a leader in sustainable and legacy-focused business events. The programme offers practical support to organisers while fostering long-term value for destinations, industries, and communities.



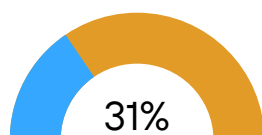
Future Outlook: Subvention Strategies are Poised for a Major Shift Toward Impact and Accountability



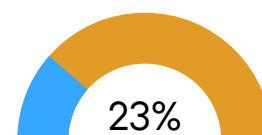
One of the critical objectives of this research was to understand how destinations expect their subvention programmes to evolve, particularly in the context of fostering sustainability, legacy, and measurable societal impact. The findings reveal clear momentum for change:



of respondents foresee a stronger integration of sustainability and impact objectives into their subvention programmes within the next 24 months.



anticipate an increase in requirements related to measurement and reporting, signaling a shift toward more evidence-based, outcome-driven funding models.



predict growth in budgets or the introduction of entirely new subvention programmes, indicating that some destinations are investing even further into strengthening their event acquisition strategies.

However, it is important to note that 23% of destinations do not anticipate any significant changes to their current subvention offerings, suggesting that while momentum is building, the pace of transformation will vary across regions and destination types.

In addition to these core findings, responses under 'Other' reveal further nuances:

- Some destinations are actively planning reviews of their schemes, aiming to increase the focus on sustainability and impact or rethink how delegate expenditure calculations influence support levels, especially in light of post-COVID cost increases.
- Several destinations are working behind the scenes on structural plans to stimulate sustainable products and services, suggesting that broader destination development goals are starting to link back to subvention strategies.
- Others mentioned waiting for leadership changes or evaluating their programmes at the end of fiscal cycles, reflecting that internal governance and leadership stability will play a role in driving future innovation.
- A few are considering redirecting subvention funds to other activities or exploring ways to track longer-term conference outcomes and legacy impact, demonstrating an emerging ambition to move beyond immediate economic returns toward longer-term societal benefits.



One respondent summarized their future ambition poignantly:

We want our organisers to strengthen partnerships with the local industry, which could eventually help us develop grants specifically for sustainable initiatives. A dream perhaps, but an important one.



91% of destinations want to drive change, but only a small slice have fully integrated impact & sustainability into their programmes.

- 6% fully embed impact
- 22% piloting models
- 44% economic-first with change ambition
- 9% no change agenda

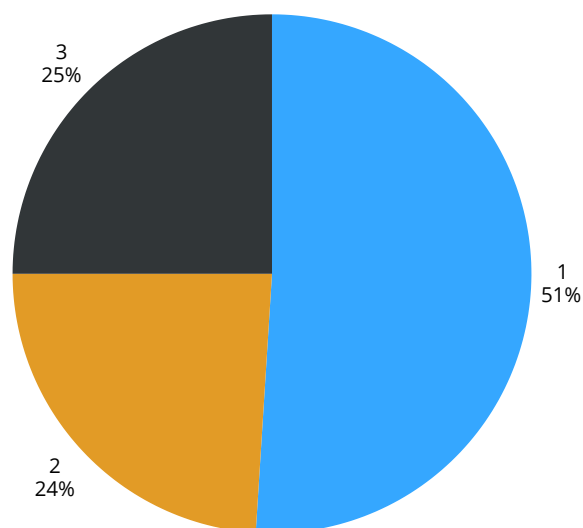
Strategic Insight



These findings confirm that subvention is no longer seen purely as an economic tool. A growing share of destinations recognise its potential as a lever for systemic change - driving sustainability, legacy, and community value. The industry's challenge will be to translate ambition into structured, accountable, and scalable frameworks over the coming years.

Multiple Subvention Programmes Within Destinations

Some destinations offer more than one subvention programme to meet different types of event needs. In this section, we explore how these programmes are structured, the differences in their focus, conditions, and funding models, and if and how they are used to target specific markets or event types.

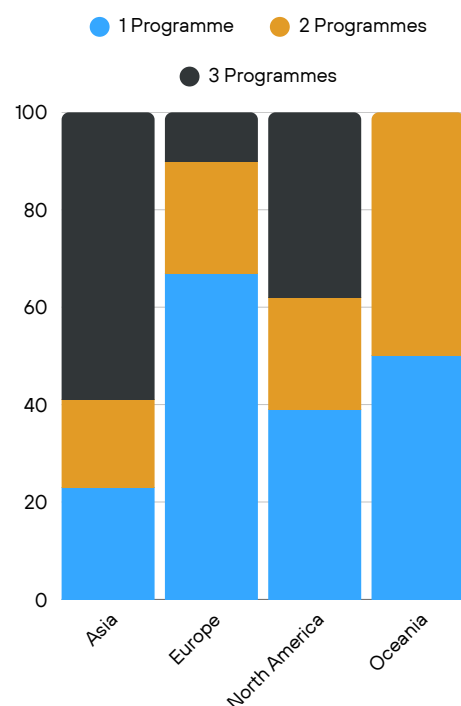


Half of the responding destinations offer a single subvention programme, while the other half provide two or even three different types of subvention schemes. However, this distribution varies significantly by region. In Asia, the vast majority of destinations report offering three or more types of subvention, suggesting a more diversified and structured approach. In Europe, most destinations indicate they offer only one subvention programme, which may reflect a more targeted or resource-constrained strategy.

“We’ve now developed four distinct subvention programmes, because one-size-fits-all simply doesn’t work anymore. Each programme, responds to different goals and impact potential. Three of the four are primarily designed to drive economic impact and maximise event scale, while our exhibition-focused programme is aimed at generating new business opportunities for local industries. Sustainability practices are embedded within our conventions and meetings & incentives support, and our Unique Venues programme is tied to legacy-building initiatives. This layered, strategic approach allows us to be more targeted, more transparent, and ultimately, more effective in using public funds to attract the right kind of events. It’s not just about filling hotel rooms – it’s about investing in events that align with our city’s long-term vision.

Yuko Suga - Fukuoka Convention & Visitors Bureau

Regional differences with multiple subvention programmes



Evolving Subvention Models: Why Some Destinations Offer More Than One Programme

While many destinations operate a single subvention programme, a growing number have introduced second or even third layers of support. These additional programmes aren't just more of the same - they reflect a shift in strategy, audience focus, and desired outcomes.

So why offer multiple subvention programmes? Here's what we learned:

From Bidding to Impact: A Shift in Priorities

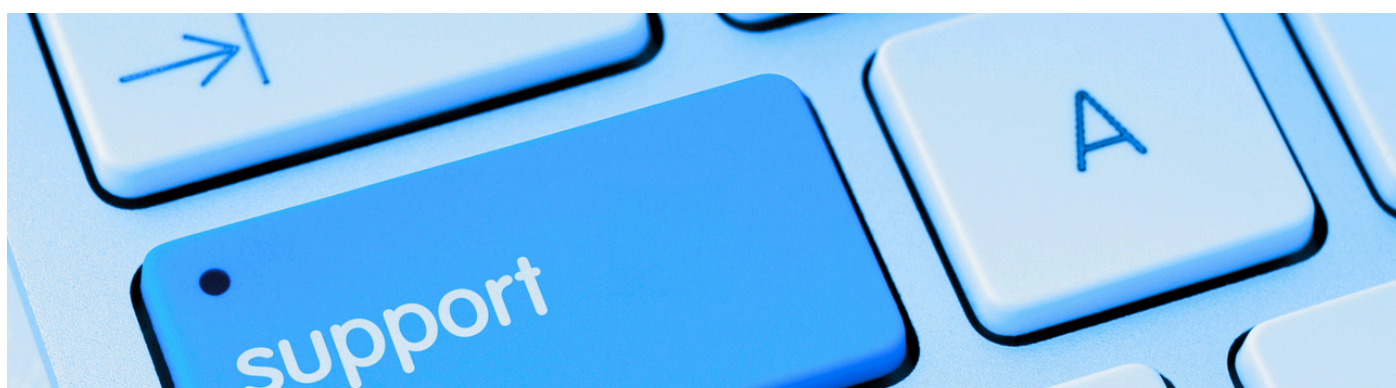
Secondary and tertiary subvention programmes often move away from bidding support and focus more on confirmed business generation, such as boosting delegate numbers or enhancing the overall event experience. For example, while primary programmes might support bid-stage costs, second or third programmes often reward tangible outcomes like actual attendance or community engagement.

New Audiences: Empowering Local Stakeholders

Several destinations revealed that their second programme targets local hosts or ambassadors - particularly academics and professionals - encouraging them to champion international bids. This model fosters local engagement and advocacy, while the third layer of support might focus on organisers themselves to stimulate innovation, hybrid formats, or cultural integration.

"Our second programme is for local hosts. It's how we activate our own ecosystem." *European Convention Bureau*

"The third layer helps us support events outside the traditional congress model. Think creative or hybrid meetings." *Asian Convention Bureau*



Different Goals for Different Programmes

Each layer serves a different strategic goal:

- Primary: Attract large international events that align with economic and sector priorities.
- Secondary: Support local bidding efforts, sustainability efforts and community activation.
- Tertiary: Boost delegate numbers, promote hybrid innovation, or drive legacy initiatives post-confirmation.

For example:

- Programme I: Funds a welcome reception
- Programme II: Supports cultural or impact activities
- Programme III: Aims at major, non-traditional events (e.g., hybrid summits, innovation festivals)

Tailored Incentives

Multiple programmes allow destinations to tailor incentives by event size, format, or sector relevance.

Reporting & Flexibility

While primary programmes usually have stricter reporting requirements, secondary and tertiary programmes are often more flexible. In 13% of second-tier programmes, no formal post-event reporting is required, indicating a lighter administrative burden and a more tactical, trust-based approach.

Conclusion: One Programme No Longer Fits All

Destinations that layer their subvention offerings are building flexible, strategic portfolios – not just offering more money, but adapting to a more complex events landscape. From legacy to logistics, these multi-tiered models reflect a shift toward targeted support, local empowerment, and measurable outcomes. When destinations develop second and third programmes, it is often with more varied strategic intents, expanding the focus beyond pure economics.

Key Insight



The deeper you go (from 1st to 3rd programme), the more performance-driven and outcome-based the support becomes.

Best Practices: Subvention Programmes Driving Change

Across the global events industry, subvention is shifting from financial incentive to purposeful investment. Leading destinations now use funding as a lever to drive long-term value, economically, socially, and environmentally. In Canada, subvention comes with intent: up to \$1 million per event, but only for conferences that align with national growth sectors. Flanders challenges organisers to co-create impact, offering flexible support only after a clear sustainability plan is presented. Wales ties every euro of funding to real-world outcomes through its four pillars - Place, Planet, People, Profile - backing events that leave a lasting legacy beyond delegate numbers.

In Christchurch, funding is linked to sector development, ensuring events help shape the city's future as a knowledge hub. And in Vienna, the Meeting Fund actively steers events toward off-peak months and certified sustainable practices, proving that smart subvention can shape visitor flows and responsible tourism.

Together, these models show what's possible: subvention as a strategic tool - not just to win business, but to create shared value for destinations, associations, and communities.

Flanders: Inspiring Sustainable Impact Through Subvention



In Flanders, the approach to subvention goes beyond financial support, it's about sparking a mindset shift. The region actively encourages international associations to reflect on the impact their conferences can generate, both environmentally and socially.

Rather than simply offering a subsidy, Flanders Convention Bureau invites organizers to submit a case: a clear vision of how they intend to make their conference more sustainable. This includes their ambitions, the strategy to achieve them, and the concrete actions they plan to take. It's not just about what they want to do, it's about how they will do it.

These proposals are reviewed internally, and if approved, the bureau provides the means to bring these ambitions to life. The support isn't rigid or prescriptive; instead, it is adaptable, tailored to the needs of each event. From funding sustainable transport for speakers and attendees to promoting inclusive programming, measuring the carbon footprint and focusing on reusable materials, the package is both practical and purpose-driven.

What sets this program apart is its willingness to evolve. The team behind it readily admits it's a work in progress, one that will continue to grow in response to the changing needs of the industry. Yet even in its current form, it achieves something powerful: it encourages organisers to think differently, to view their event not just as a gathering, but as a catalyst for change.

By co-creating impact with event organisers, Flanders positions itself not just as a host destination, but as a proactive partner in building a better future through conferences.



Canada: Strategic Subvention Aligned with National Priorities

International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF)

Canada is taking a bold, future-focused approach to subvention through its International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF), a programme managed by Destination Canada that redefines the purpose of financial support in the global events industry.

Launched to increase Canadian competitiveness on the international stage, ICAF provides up to \$1 million per event to eligible Canadian destinations bidding for major international conventions. But beyond the size of the investment, it is the design and intent of the fund that sets it apart.

ICAF operates as a strategic tool that positions business events as catalysts for broader national goals. The programme specifically targets events that fall within Canada's six priority sectors:

- Life Sciences
- Digital Industries
- Natural Resources
- Agri-business
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Finance and Insurance



Edmonton, Canada



Calgary, Canada



Events that align with federal government mandates or initiatives may also qualify, underlining the fund's focus on supporting conferences that contribute to national innovation, investment, and talent attraction.

Unlike traditional subvention programmes, ICAF does not fund events post-confirmation. Instead, it provides a financial commitment during the bid phase, delivered as a formal letter of support. This strengthens the destination's proposal and provides additional confidence to organisers and decision-makers—effectively increasing Canada's ability to secure high-value, high-impact conferences.

The funding allocation is based on a scoring system, evaluating each event's anticipated economic impact, the number of international delegates, and its alignment with national priorities. This evaluation framework ensures transparency and strategic ROI, while also enabling consistency across applications from different cities.

ICAF is available exclusively to eligible Destination Marketing organisations (DMOs) that already have dedicated financial and human resources toward attracting international business events. This ensures that support is directed toward destinations actively investing in long-term growth and international positioning.

By linking subvention to sector development and strategic alignment, Canada demonstrates how national-level funding can be deployed not only to attract events, but also to drive economic diversification, enhance innovation ecosystems, and leave a meaningful legacy for local communities and the country as a whole.

ICAF exemplifies a next-generation subvention model: competitive, criteria-based, future-focused, and designed to create shared value across economic, social, and innovation goals.





Wales Subvention Programme – Purpose-Driven Support for Business Events

Overview

Wales has taken a bold stance: subvention here isn't a handout – it's a strategic investment. Since 2018, the [Meet in Wales programme](#) has supported business events (including associations and corporates) through targeted funding that adds value, not plugs gaps.

Support focuses on enhancing the delegate experience, integrating Welsh culture, and driving social and environmental legacy – all underpinned by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Funding Priorities

Events are evaluated against strategic pillars:

- PLACE – economic uplift through visitor economy
- PLANET – sustainable, circular practices
- PEOPLE – inclusivity, equality, and Welsh culture
- PROFILE – raising Wales' visibility as a host nation

This isn't just about bringing events to Wales – it's about shaping better events with real impact.

Case Studies

1. SQLBits (2022–2023, ICC Wales)

Challenge: Tech delegates hesitant about live events.

Solution: Inclusive design – event chaperones, chill-out zones, multi-faith rooms, crèche, free Saturday access, wellness sessions, and heavy cultural integration (Welsh food, language, D&D-themed party with local flair).

Impact: Massive uplift in engagement, new partnerships, and commitment to return to Wales.





2. IEEE ISTAS 2023 (Swansea University)

Challenge: Low awareness of Wales among global delegates.

Solution: Pre-event campaign on Wales' USPs, bilingual comms, local cultural activities (Welsh cake making, male voice choir), and immersive experiences.

Impact: Boosted registrations, cultural engagement, and academic visibility for Swansea.

3. World Chefs Congress 2026 (In Progress)

Challenge: First time in the UK — perception barriers around Wales' culinary identity.

Solution: High-impact marketing campaign around sustainability, food heritage, and accessibility. Global ambassador engagement.

Next Steps: Ongoing awareness and registration drive leading up to 2026.

4. COVID Recovery Campaign

Response: Launched two sector development funds to help Welsh events industry rebuild sustainably post-COVID.

Focus: Inclusion, accessibility, skills, and innovation tied to people, place, and planet.

Why It Works

Wales has created a blueprint for subvention with substance:

- ✓ Clear strategy
- ✓ Structured process
- ✓ Proof-based funding
- ✓ Real-world impact

This is what happens when funding is aligned with purpose. Wales shows how destinations can support events that mean something — for delegates, for communities, and for the future.

Lessons for the industry

1. Don't just fund: Co-create value, ensure public money goes toward outcomes that matter.
2. Start early: 12–18 month lead-in, real impact takes planning, not last-minute bids.
3. Tie subvention to strategic goals: With a clear framework, Wales measures what matters.
4. Use subvention to drive behavioral change: From carbon reduction to bilingual delivery — this model walks the talk.





Christchurch New Zealand Business Events Legacy Programme

The Christchurch New Zealand Business Events Legacy Programme is a forward-thinking initiative that supports international events which bring long-lasting social, economic, and knowledge-based benefits to the city of Ōtautahi Christchurch. Central to the programme is the Legacy Investment Fund, which offers financial support during the critical bidding phase, helping local stakeholders secure strategically aligned conferences that contribute to the city's future.

Funding Criteria & Strategic Alignment

To be eligible for funding, events must attract a majority of international delegates, include an overnight stay in Christchurch, and align with the city's key growth sectors:

- Aerospace & Future Transport
- Antarctic Research
- Food, Fibre & Agritech
- Health Tech & Resilient Communities
- High-Tech Services
- Urban Development

Social and environmental impact, city values alignment, and proven event success are also critical to funding decisions.

ChristchurchNZ

Case Study: IPA World Conference 2026



The successful bid to host the International Play Association (IPA) World Conference 2026 is a powerful example of the Legacy programme in action.

Event Profile:

- A four-day triennial event expected to attract 1,000 global delegates to the Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre – the first time the event will be held in the Southern Hemisphere.

Bid Collaboration:

- Led by Play Aotearoa and supported by ChristchurchNZ and Tourism New Zealand, the bid emphasized Christchurch's unique contributions to the global play movement, including its approach to bi-culturalism, diversity, and inclusion.

Legacy Potential:

- Positions Christchurch as a global hub for research and innovation in play and childhood development.
- Encourages international knowledge exchange with local educators, researchers, and city planners.
- Highlights the city's investment in inclusive urban environments, such as the award-winning Margaret Mahy Playground, located just steps from the conference venue.
- Supports local capability-building in child well-being, play environments, and community development.

Why It Matters

The IPA World Conference illustrates the core mission of the ChristchurchNZ Legacy Investment Fund: enabling events that create meaningful, measurable outcomes far beyond delegate spend. It demonstrates how the right event, aligned with city strengths and values, can create enduring positive change - locally and globally.



Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028



(Association) congresses and corporate events play a key role in Vienna's tourism industry, serving as economic drivers, catalysts for internationalisation, and enablers of local value creation. To strengthen Vienna's position as a leading meeting destination, the City of Vienna launched the Vienna Meeting Fund for the first time in 2021. This funding initiative supports national and international organisers planning and hosting meetings in Vienna.

Since January 2025, the Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 has been in place with updated criteria to further promote sustainable meetings and encourage events during traditionally lower-demand months. The fund is designed to optimise visitor flows.

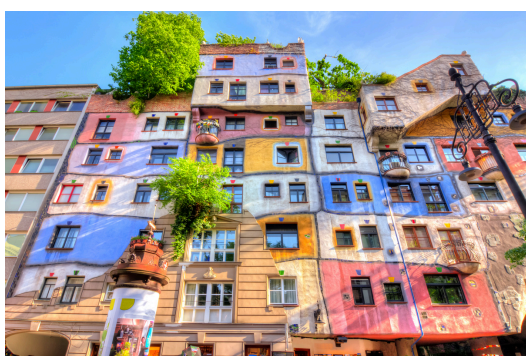
Anita Paic, Director B2B Management at the Vienna Tourist Board and Head of the Vienna Convention Bureau: *"The Vienna Meeting Fund is a cornerstone of our city's commitment to fostering a vibrant and sustainable meeting industry. By supporting international congresses and corporate events, we not only enhance Vienna's global appeal but also drive economic and intellectual value for the city and its inhabitants. The extension of the fund until 2028 underscores our dedication to innovation, sustainability, and positioning Vienna as a year-round destination for world-class events."*

Basic requirements

The Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 provides funding for international events lasting several days (programme elements on at least two consecutive event days) that take place between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2028.

Funding is only available for international events with a subject-specific agenda that take place in the eight months of January, February, March, April, July, August, November and December. Thereby, Vienna is supporting months with traditionally lower demand.

The fund supports business events – events with (registered) participants known to the organiser – contribute to Vienna's status as an innovation and business hub. This includes (association) congresses, corporate events, and meetings.



MEETING
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Vienna, Austria



Funding Modules

The Vienna Meeting Fund 2025-2028 consists of two modules. To qualify for Module 2, events must first meet the criteria for Module 1.

Module 1

- Events over several days (business events taking place during the day)
- At least 50 participants on site
- Minimum 50% international participants (traveled from abroad)
- Hosted in a Viennese location against payment of a room rental/conference flat rate

Module 2 (sustainability incentive)

To qualify for additional funding, events must either:

- Be awarded with the label ÖkoEvent of the City of Vienna, OR
- Obtain certification with the Austrian Eco Label Green Meetings and Green Events

The maximum funding per event – provided the criteria for both funding modules are met – is € 60,000.

Application process

The fund is available to all national and international organisers who plan and execute their events independently or through a third party, bearing the financial risk and full responsibility. Applications must be submitted online via the Vienna Convention Bureau website at least three weeks before the event start date. After the formal evaluation, applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and possible until December 3, 2028, or until all available funds are allocated. If the funding is exhausted before the deadline, a notice will be posted on the Vienna Convention Bureau website.

Impact 2021-2024

Originally launched by the City of Vienna in May 2021, the Vienna Meeting Fund has significantly contributed to the city's meeting industry. Between 2021 and 2024, the fund supported 700 conferences, reinforcing Vienna's reputation as a premier international meeting destination.

With €8 million allocated from 2021-2024, the extension of the fund until 2028 with another €4 million ensures that Vienna remains a dynamic and supportive hub for international congresses and corporate events. This initiative strengthens the city's economic impact and aligns with Vienna's sustainability and innovation goals.

Association Perspective

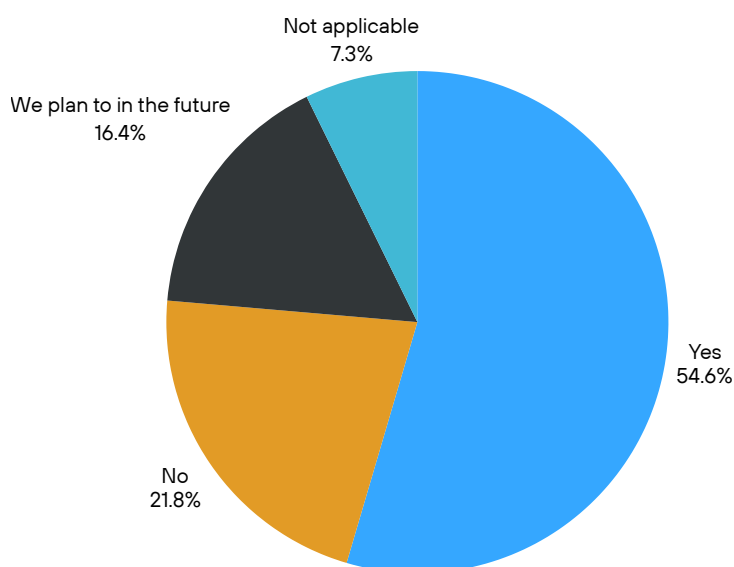
What associations need, expect, and demand from subvention



The Current State of Subvention from an Association Perspective

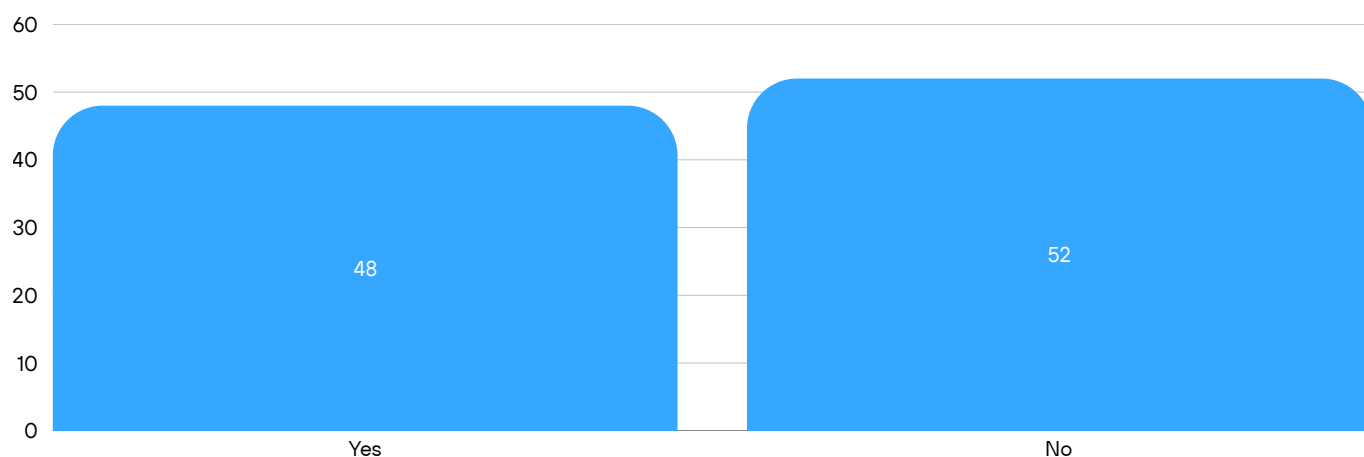
Subvention: A Significant Factor for Associations

When asked whether their organisation requires any type of subvention, financial or in-kind, to support its events, 55% of respondents indicated that they do, showing that subvention plays an important role in enabling conferences. An additional 16% reported they plan to seek subvention in the future, signaling a growing interest in support mechanisms. Meanwhile, 22% stated they do not require subvention, and 7% marked the question as not applicable.



Subvention as a Decision-Making Factor

When asked about subvention, 55% of associations said they request it. Yet, within this group, only 52% consider it a deciding factor in destination selection. This means that for less than a third of all associations overall, financial or in-kind support truly influences where they choose to host their events, while for the majority, other elements – such as infrastructure, accessibility, or strategic alignment – weigh more heavily in the decision-making process.

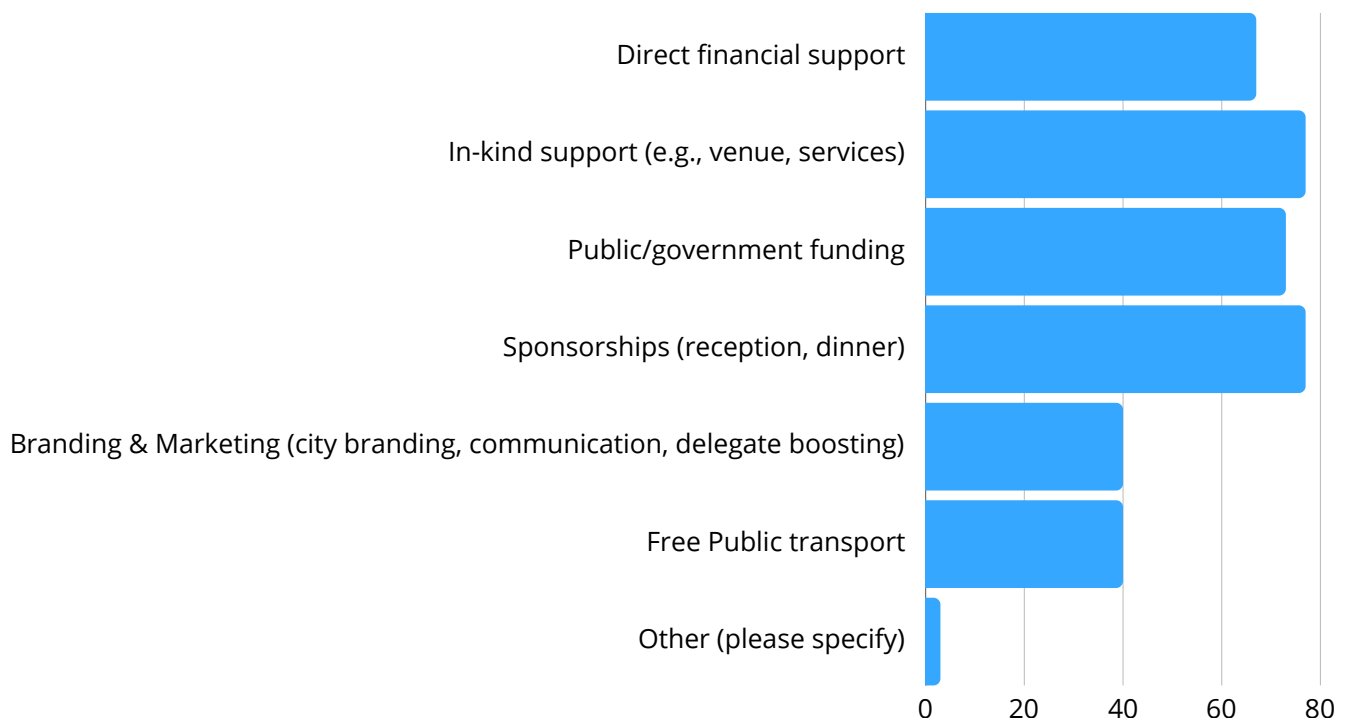


What Support Really Matters: A Breakdown of Subvention Types

One of the most revealing insights from this study is the diverse mix of subvention types associations actually make use of. In-kind support and sponsorships - such as free venues, services, receptions, or dinners - were each selected by 77% of respondents, making them the most frequently used forms of support. Close behind, 73% reported accessing public or government funding, underscoring the value of institutional backing.

While direct financial support was used by 67%, the results show that non-cash subventions play an equally, if not more, critical role. Notably, 40% leverage branding and marketing assistance, and another 40% benefit from free public transport for delegates - both essential tools for boosting attendance and local visibility.

These findings challenge the assumption that cash is king. Instead, they highlight a clear appetite for holistic, value-added support that goes beyond funding alone.



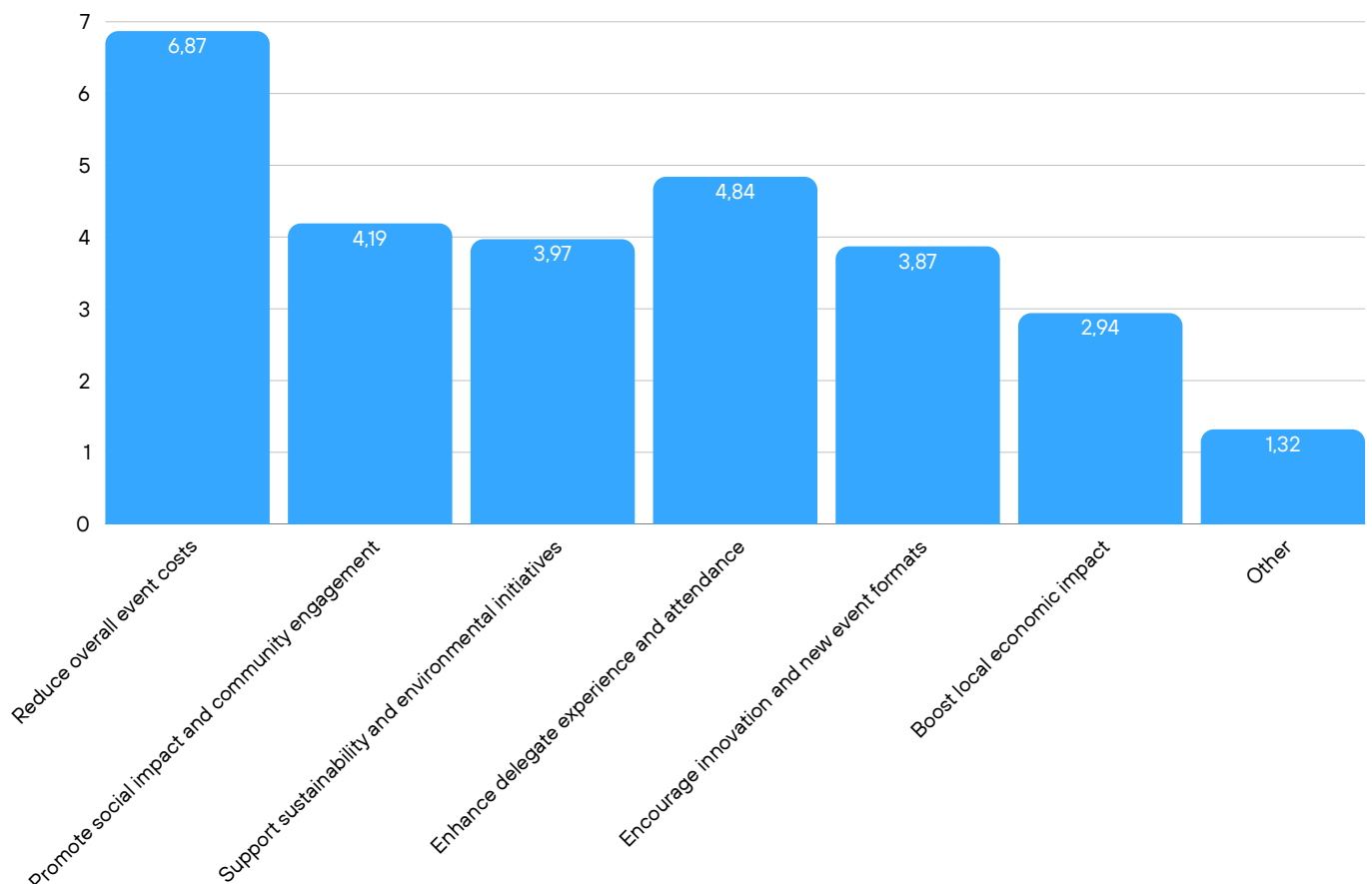
Why Associations Apply for Subvention: Priorities Revealed

When ranking their main goals for applying for subvention, associations made their top priority crystal clear: reducing overall event costs. This goal received the strongest score by far, underlining cost-efficiency as the primary driver behind subvention applications.

Interestingly, delegate experience and attendance followed as the next most important motivation, with associations seeing subvention as a tool to enhance participation and improve the overall event experience. Social impact and community engagement, sustainability initiatives, and innovative event formats were all closely ranked in the middle range - highlighting a secondary role for subvention in driving strategic and legacy-based objectives.

Boosting local economic impact and "other" motives ranked lowest, suggesting that while destinations often focus on economic return, associations are driven more by mission-aligned goals and tangible event outcomes.

These results show that while cost reduction remains the strongest driver for associations, subvention is also increasingly viewed as a means to support broader objectives - hinting at a gradual shift toward more purpose-driven partnerships.

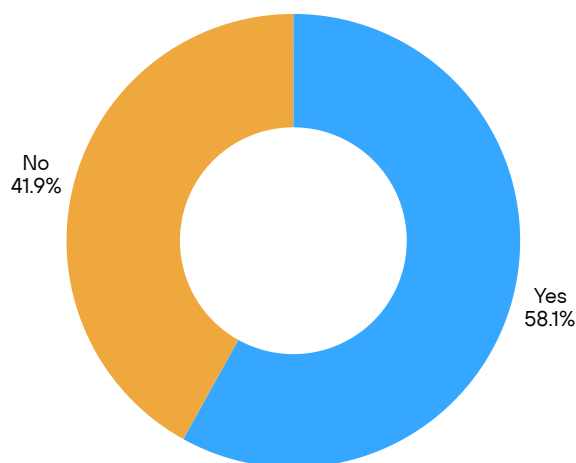


Do Associations Measure the Value of Subvention?

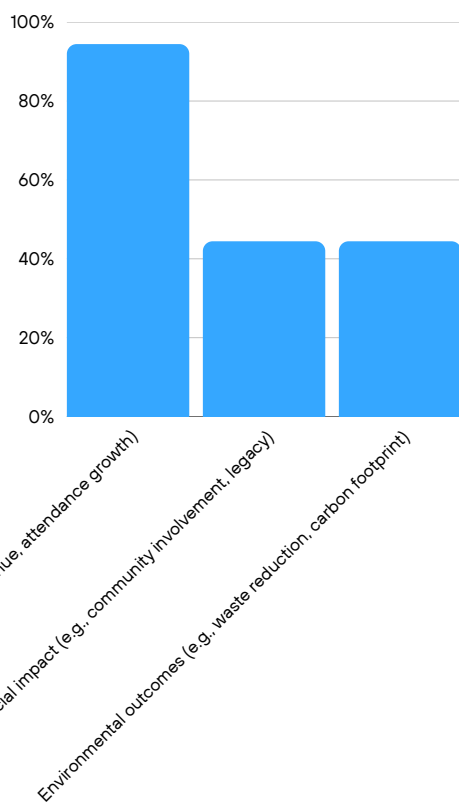
When asked whether they evaluate the effectiveness of the subvention they receive, 58% of associations confirmed that they do, actively measuring whether the support contributed to achieving their intended goals.

However, 42% stated they do not assess subvention impact, indicating that nearly half of the respondents either lack the tools, resources, or incentives to measure outcomes.

This insight points to an important opportunity for both destinations and associations: **introducing clearer KPIs and evaluation frameworks** could enhance transparency, improve future support strategies, and strengthen the overall case for subvention as a strategic investment.



How Associations Measure Subvention Success



Only those associations that indicated they do measure the effectiveness of subvention (58% of respondents) were asked how they assess its success. Among them, a resounding 94% cited economic outcomes - such as revenue generation or increased attendance - as their primary indicators. This confirms that for most, the return on subvention is still viewed predominantly through a financial lens.

A shift is emerging: among the associations that do measure subvention outcomes, 44% look at social impact (community engagement and legacy) and another 44% track environmental performance (waste reduction or carbon footprint). These figures point to a growing awareness of the broader role subvention can play in advancing sustainability and community value - even if measurement practices are not yet universal.

No respondents selected "Other," indicating that most assessments fall within these three key categories.

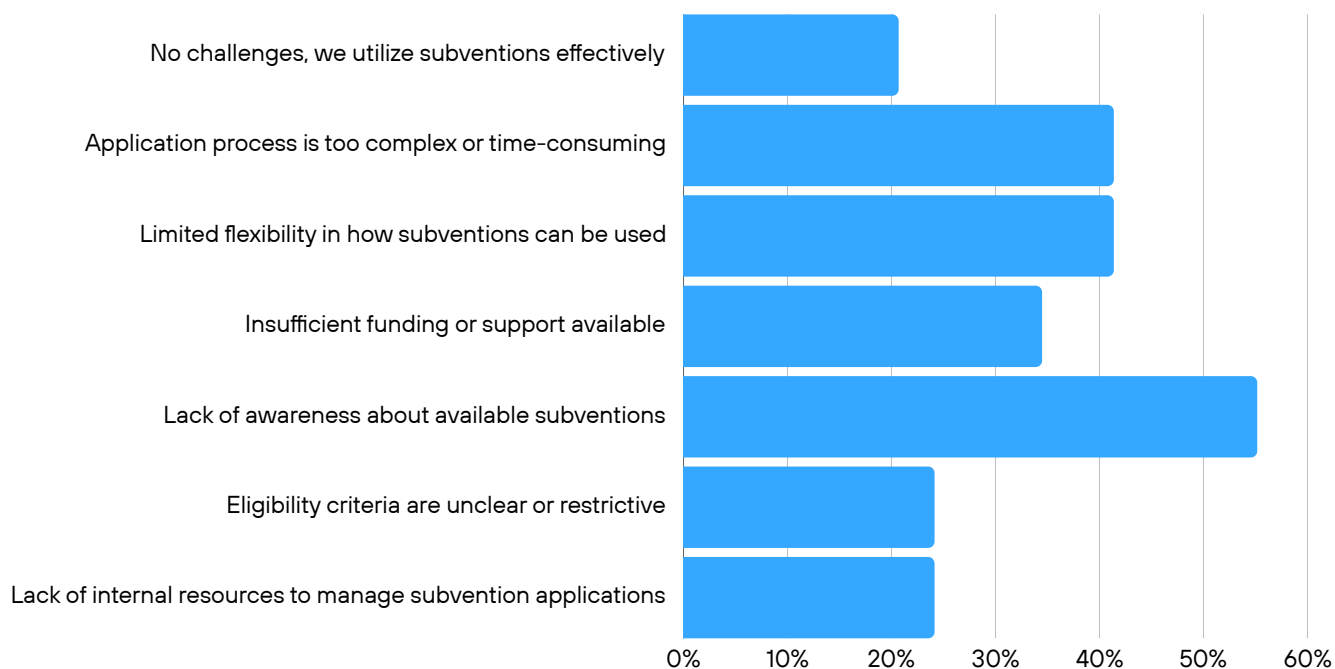
Barriers to Subvention: What's Holding Associations Back

When asked about the challenges they face in utilizing subventions, only 21% of respondents reported no issues, stating they use subventions effectively. The remaining majority pointed to several significant obstacles that limit access and effective use.

The most cited challenge, selected by 55%, was a lack of awareness about available subventions, highlighting a clear communication gap between destinations and associations. Additionally, 41% pointed to a complex or time-consuming application process, and an equal 41% noted limited flexibility in how subventions can be used - suggesting that both bureaucracy and rigid structures are getting in the way.

Insufficient funding (34%), unclear eligibility criteria (24%), and lack of internal resources to manage applications (24%) were also noted as key barriers.

These findings make one thing clear: for subvention to truly support association goals, it must become more transparent, accessible, and adaptable to the realities of event planning today.

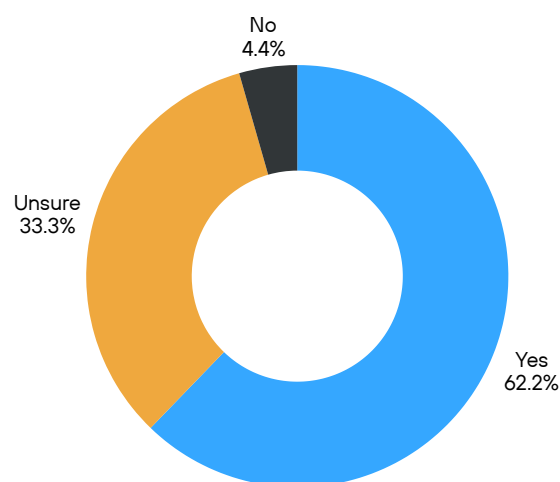


Should Subvention Drive Positive Change? Associations Say Yes

At the core of this study lies a key question: Can subvention do more than just support events — can it also drive positive change? An overwhelming **62% of associations believe that subventions should indeed play a role in advancing sustainability, reducing environmental impact, and supporting legacy or community-based initiatives.**

Another 33% said they are unsure, signaling openness but also a need for clearer frameworks, examples, or impact evidence. Only 4% disagreed, showing limited resistance to this evolving purpose of subvention.

This response sends a powerful message: associations are ready — and in many cases, eager — for subvention to evolve from a transactional tool into a strategic driver of long-term, purpose-driven outcomes.



A Note of Caution: When Subvention Feels One-Sided

While the majority of associations see potential in using subventions to drive positive change, not all are convinced. One respondent noted:

"I think a monster has been created and question the sustainability of it over the long term. From an association point of view, is it really our role to fund a city's objectives?"

This perspective highlights an important challenge: the balance of benefit and responsibility. When subvention strategies lean too heavily on serving a destination's goals - without aligning with the association's mission - it risks becoming transactional and losing credibility.

As destinations aim to use subvention for legacy, sustainability, or impact, transparency and mutual alignment are key. Associations must feel like equal partners - not vehicles for someone else's agenda.

Reimagining Subvention: A Catalyst for Sustainable and Impactful Events

When asked what role subvention programmes could play in fostering more sustainable and impactful events, respondents painted a powerful picture of transformational potential, but also voiced clear boundaries and conditions.

Many highlighted that subvention can enable better choices - from sustainable venues to greener transport and inclusive practices - that might otherwise be financially out of reach. Associations noted that opting for eco-friendly solutions often comes with a higher price tag, and that subvention could be the tipping point that allows these choices to happen. As one respondent put it:

"It pushes us to think beyond the event itself - when linked to local partnerships, it becomes a win-win: better events and stronger ties with the host destination."

Others stressed that subvention should act as an incentive, not a lifeline. It should motivate sustainable behavior - for example by requiring reporting on sustainability KPIs or linking funding to tangible outcomes such as reduced waste, carbon offsets, or community engagement. Several proposed tying subvention to clear sustainability criteria, suggesting destinations should provide both funding and the tools to implement change.

However, the feedback was not without caution. Associations warned against using subvention to plug the holes left by rising venue or operational costs, or to serve only the destination's agenda.

There is a clear call for balance and autonomy:

"It should not vanish from the association's own budget. It's not a handout - it's a shared investment in impact."

Key themes that emerged include:

- Supporting legacy projects and local partnerships
- Funding environmental upgrades (e.g., digital programmes, water stations, zero-waste policies)
- Enabling accessibility and inclusion
- Encouraging data collection and impact measurement
- Offering guidance and vetted local vendors aligned with sustainability goals

One striking quote captured the tone of many:

"If subvention is conditioned on sustainability, it will influence provider, supplier, and venue choice. That's powerful."

In short, associations are not just asking for funding - they are inviting destinations to co-create impact. Subvention, if designed strategically, can be a driver of change - but only if it's flexible, transparent, and aligned with shared values.

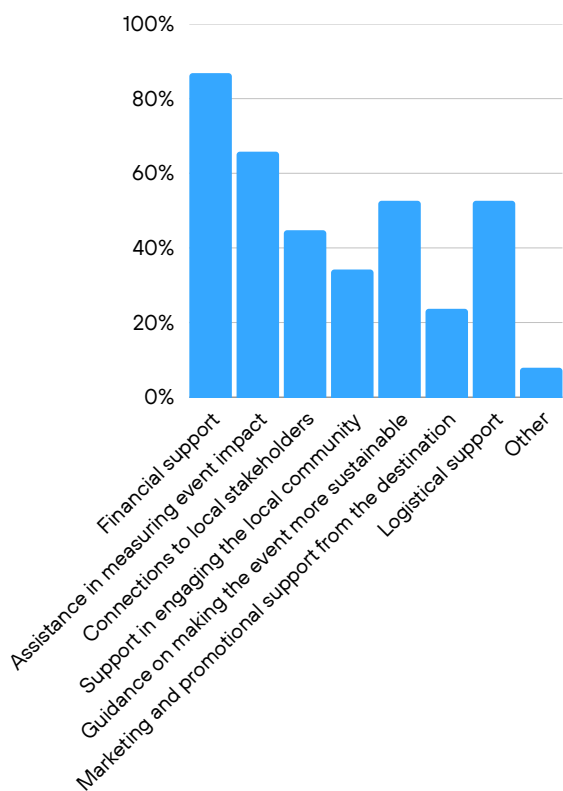
What Associations Really Need to Create Impactful Conferences

When asked what type of support would be most valuable in organizing a more impactful conference – one that enhances sustainability, creates lasting legacy, or strengthens community engagement – not a single respondent said they weren't interested. This sends a powerful signal: the desire to organise purposeful events is widespread. **What's holding associations back is not motivation, but support.**

By far the most requested resource was **financial support**, cited by 87% of respondents, including grants, subsidies, and venue discounts. This reaffirms the foundational role that funding plays – not just in making events happen, but in making them better. Beyond finances, 66% said they **need help in measuring impact**, such as sustainability metrics and legacy tracking – highlighting a clear demand for tools and frameworks to evaluate progress.

Other forms of valuable support included:

- Guidance on sustainability (53%)
- Logistical help (53%)
- Connections to local stakeholders (45%)
- Community engagement support (34%)
- Marketing and promotion by the destination (24%)



Additional comments under "Other" revealed that sustainability shouldn't be limited to environmental efforts. Associations pointed to the value of educational programmes in the destination, co-created legacy initiatives with local stakeholders, and practical support such as sustainable materials (e.g., eco-friendly badges and lanyards). One respondent noted the importance of balancing local engagement with global missions, reminding us that "acting locally is not the core business of a global association, and can sometimes create tension" – a clear call for structured, collaborative approaches. These findings point to a clear opportunity for destinations: step beyond the funding and become a true partner in impact. Associations are looking for more than money – they want co-creation, shared goals, and structured support to ensure their conferences leave a meaningful footprint.

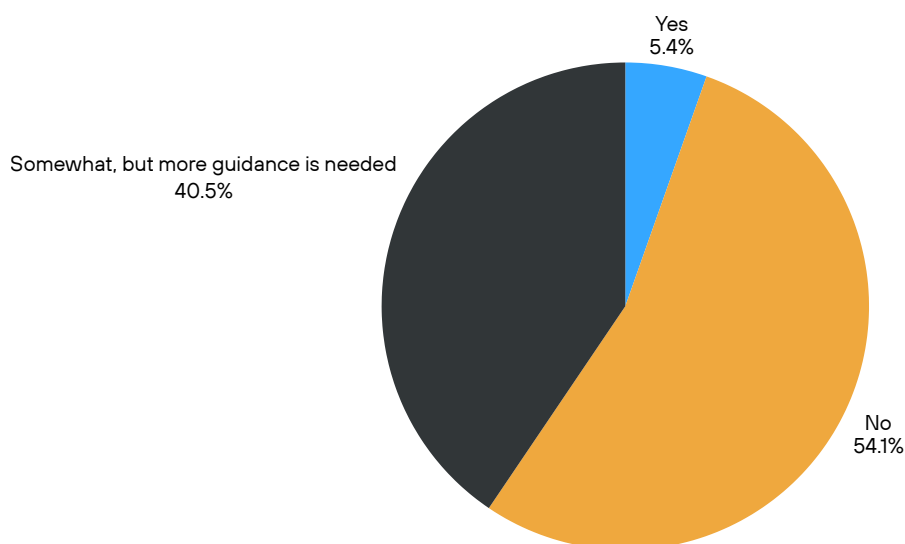
Clarity is Lacking: Destinations Must Step Up on Guidance

When it comes to using subventions to achieve sustainability or long-term impact, the results are clear: the vast majority of associations are navigating in the dark. Only 5% of respondents said destinations provide clear guidance on how to align subvention with impact-driven goals.

Meanwhile, 54% stated outright that no guidance is provided, and another 41% said that while there is some direction, it's not nearly enough. This signals a significant gap between ambition and execution.

For subventions to become a true tool for transformation, destinations must do more than just offer funding - they must **clearly communicate how it can be used strategically**. Whether that's through checklists, best practices, measurable KPIs, or support in co-designing legacy programmes, the call from associations is loud and unmistakable: *don't just fund – guide*.

In your experience, do destinations provide clear guidance on how subventions should be used to achieve sustainability or long-term impact?







From Sponsorship to Strategy: Best Practices for Impact-Driven Subvention Use

When asked to share best practices in using subventions to create lasting impact, responses reflected a broad spectrum of experience, from those just getting started to others already experimenting with locally rooted initiatives.

Several associations noted that they had never used subvention before, often relying instead on sponsorship income. Others expressed that while no formal link currently exists between subvention and impact, they are open to developing this connection in future collaborations with destinations.

Among those with more experience, compelling examples emerged:

-  One association used local funding to support the participation of young professionals and students, especially in countries where high fees would otherwise limit access. This approach not only increased attendance but also strengthened local capacity and international exchange, allowing the event to serve as a platform for global knowledge-sharing and local empowerment.
-  Another highlighted a programme where donations were made to local STEM education initiatives aimed at children and teenagers, aligning the event with a long-term legacy in skills development and future talent pipelines.
-  Practical sustainability efforts were also cited, such as working with destinations to reduce waste and promote public transport, including the rollout of mobile vouchers activated only for attendees who opt in - showing that impact can also be embedded in logistics and attendee experience.
-  One respondent mentioned public outreach in local schools, expanding the event's reach beyond delegates to the broader community.

While many associations are still in the early stages, these examples show that when destinations and associations align, subvention can evolve from a funding tool into a platform for purpose.



Building Global Communities Through Event Hosting – The EFRJ Approach

The European Forum for Restorative Justice (EFRJ) offers a striking example of how event support can move beyond transactional funding and foster long-term community value. Despite being a small team of just four FTE, EFRJ has developed an international event model that strengthens a professional ecosystem across continents, one built on intentionality, collaboration, and human connection. This approach is crucial for nurturing and sustaining innovative social movements (like the restorative justice one), where long-term impact depends on deep relationships and collective engagement.

At the heart of this model are EFRJ's Biennial Conferences, Seminars, and online and in-person training. Each event is more than a meeting; it becomes a platform for multidisciplinary dialogue, cross-sector partnerships, and cultural exchange. Topics are carefully curated around pressing societal themes, blending academic insights with lived experience, practice and policy work, creative expression, and public engagement.

A defining feature is how EFRJ works hand-in-hand with local hosts. Events rotate across European cities, aligning with local initiatives in justice reform, social innovation, and community building. This co-creation model ensures that while global conversations on restorative justice take place, local stories, projects, and stakeholders take center stage. Examples include the conference in Tallinn focusing on restorative justice in times of war, or the seminar in Pamplona highlighting regional policy innovation.

Crucially, EFRJ integrates informal gatherings and public-facing moments (such as plenaries hosted in the city theatre to allow citizens' participation, social dinners in local community centers instead of traditional restaurants) - to deepen connections among participants and between visitors and host communities. The EFRJ also proposes art festivals, such as REstART, connecting artists, restorative justice professionals and the wider public.

By doing so, EFRJ demonstrates how events can actively nurture professional communities and spark lasting impact. Subvention programmes that embrace similar principles, co-designed events, cultural integration, focus on human connection, may find themselves not just funding gatherings but helping shape entire movements. Want to hear more, listen to their [podcast](#)!

What Associations Want: Reframing Subvention Priorities

When associations were asked what the main focus of future subvention programmes should be from their perspective, the message was unmistakable: **legacy and impact matter more than economic gain.**

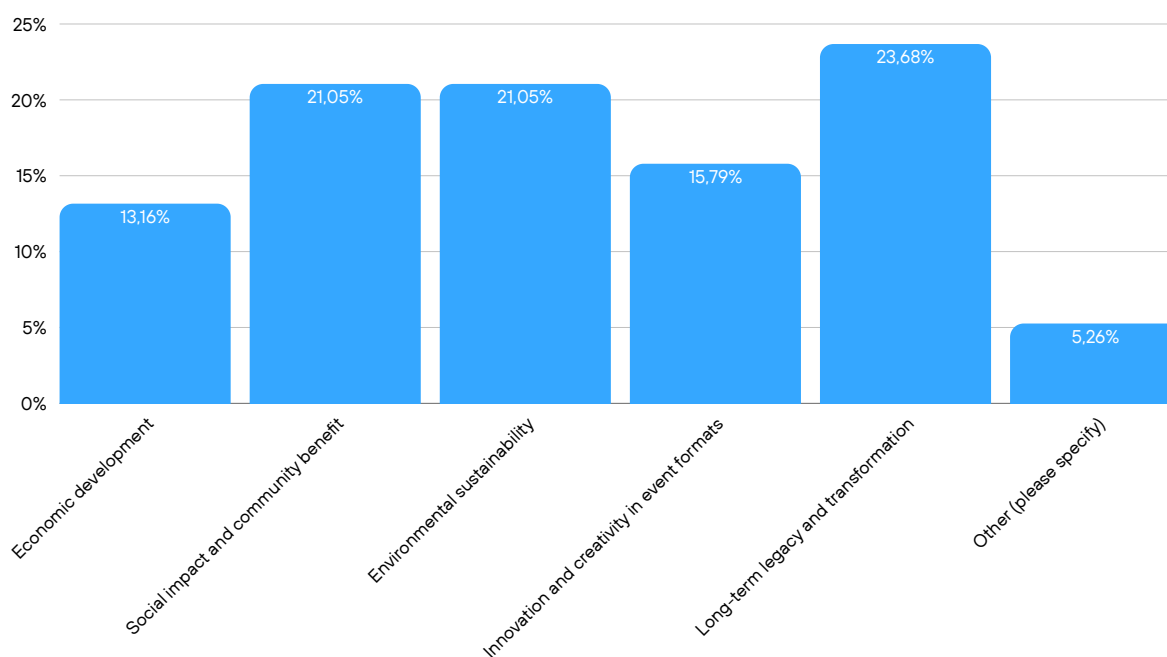
Only 13% of associations selected economic development as the primary focus - traditionally the main driver for destinations. Instead, they called for a shift in priorities, with the top answers being:

- Long-term legacy and transformation (24%)
- Environmental sustainability (21%)
- Social impact and community benefit (21%)

This clearly shows that associations want subvention programmes that support their mission, values, and long-term goals. Innovation in event formats followed at 16%, pointing to a desire for fresh, engaging ways to deliver content and connect with audiences.

A small number (5%) suggested "Other," calling for flexibility and deeper co-creation between associations and destinations.

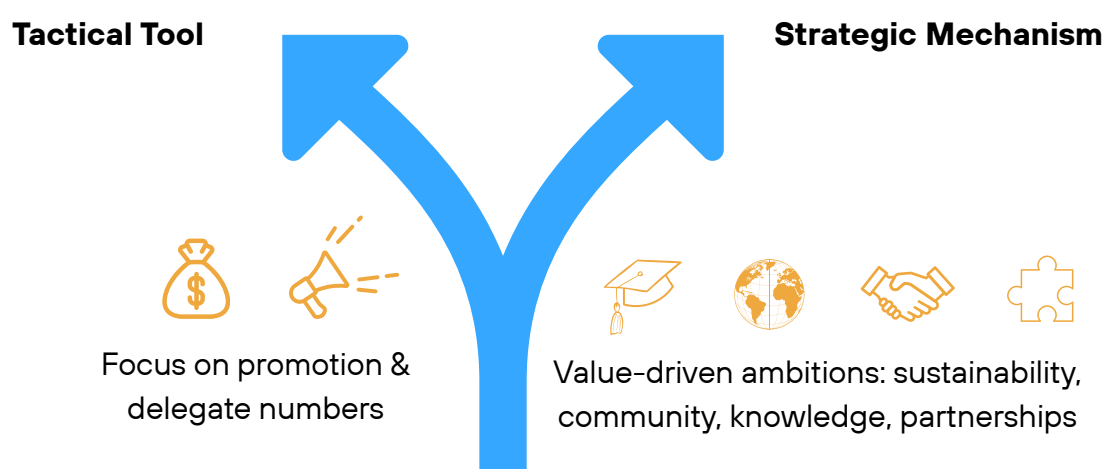
From the association's standpoint, subvention must evolve from a transactional tool into a strategic enabler - one that empowers them to deliver more meaningful, sustainable, and transformative events.



Overall Conclusion: Redefining Subvention for the Next Generation of Events

This research makes one thing abundantly clear: the global events industry stands at a crossroads. Subvention, once viewed primarily as a tactical tool for destination marketing, must now evolve into a strategic mechanism that reflects the complex, value-driven ambitions of today's associations - and the societal shifts that demand new thinking.

Evolving role of subvention From cost driver to change driver



This dual-perspective study highlights a tension: destinations have long framed subvention around economics, while associations want to prioritise impact, inclusion, and legacy. With 91% of destinations signalling a desire for change, the gap is less about willingness than speed of adaptation. Signs of progress are already visible. Multi-tier models, sustainability pilots, and destination-led legacy initiatives mark a shift from sales agents to facilitators. Associations are ready to co-create, provided the mechanisms are flexible, transparent, and built on trust.

To realise the full potential of subvention, the industry must now adopt a new standard:

For destinations, this means **rethinking the purpose of subvention** from attracting short-term business to enabling long-term transformation. It requires embedding sustainability and impact into application frameworks, tying funding to outcomes, and providing meaningful support beyond cash - through education, data, and strategic partnerships. Equally important, is aligning more closely with association objectives and ensuring greater flexibility in awarding subvention.

For associations, this means **clarifying their ambitions**, proactively integrating sustainability and legacy goals into event planning, advocating for more intelligent and aligned subvention programmes, and systematically tracking their effectiveness.

This study is not a call to abandon economic logic. Rather, it is a call to expand the value equation - to integrate environmental and societal outcomes alongside delegate spend and room nights. Because in the future, success will not be defined solely by size, but by substance.

If destinations and associations can build subvention frameworks that reflect this new reality - **collaborative, measurable, and mission-aligned** - then subvention will no longer be seen as a tool for bidding. It will be recognised as a **tool for building**: stronger communities, greener cities, empowered associations, and a future-ready global events industry.

That is the real challenge - and opportunity. To move subvention from bidding tool to building tool, we need a shared roadmap. That's why we are creating a practical **guidebook/ toolkit** for destinations and associations: a framework to design, implement, and evaluate subvention programmes from both perspectives. It will help cities align with association missions, measure effectiveness beyond delegate numbers, and test models that reward sustainability, legacy, and community outcomes. This will not be theory but a hands-on playbook for the next era of subvention - to be released at the end of this year.

We invite associations and destinations to contribute their insights, so this becomes not just a guide, but a shared industry standard.



Strategic Recommendations: Moving from Intention to Action

The findings in this report clearly show that the industry is ready for a fundamental reset. Below are strategic, actionable recommendations tailored to both destinations and associations to help transition subvention from a transactional tool to a transformative force.

For Destinations



Reframe Subvention as a Strategic Policy Instrument

- Integrate subvention into broader city, regional, or national policies on economic development, innovation, sustainability, and inclusion.
- Move beyond marketing or tourism metrics and ensure alignment with long-term strategic outcomes.

Develop Tiered and Outcome-Based Subvention Models

- Create multiple programme layers (e.g., bid support, legacy initiatives, hybrid innovation).
- Tie funding to measurable KPIs: delegate diversity, sustainability actions, knowledge transfer, community legacy.

Establish a Clear, Transparent Subvention Framework

- Define eligibility, criteria, and decision timelines up front.
- Create publicly available toolkits, FAQs, and templates to reduce friction and level the playing field.
- Invest in Measurement and Reporting Tools.
- Adopt or develop standardised KPIs across economic, environmental, and societal dimensions.
- Build post-event reporting into subvention contracts with support from local partners.

Offer More Than Money: Be a Strategic Partner

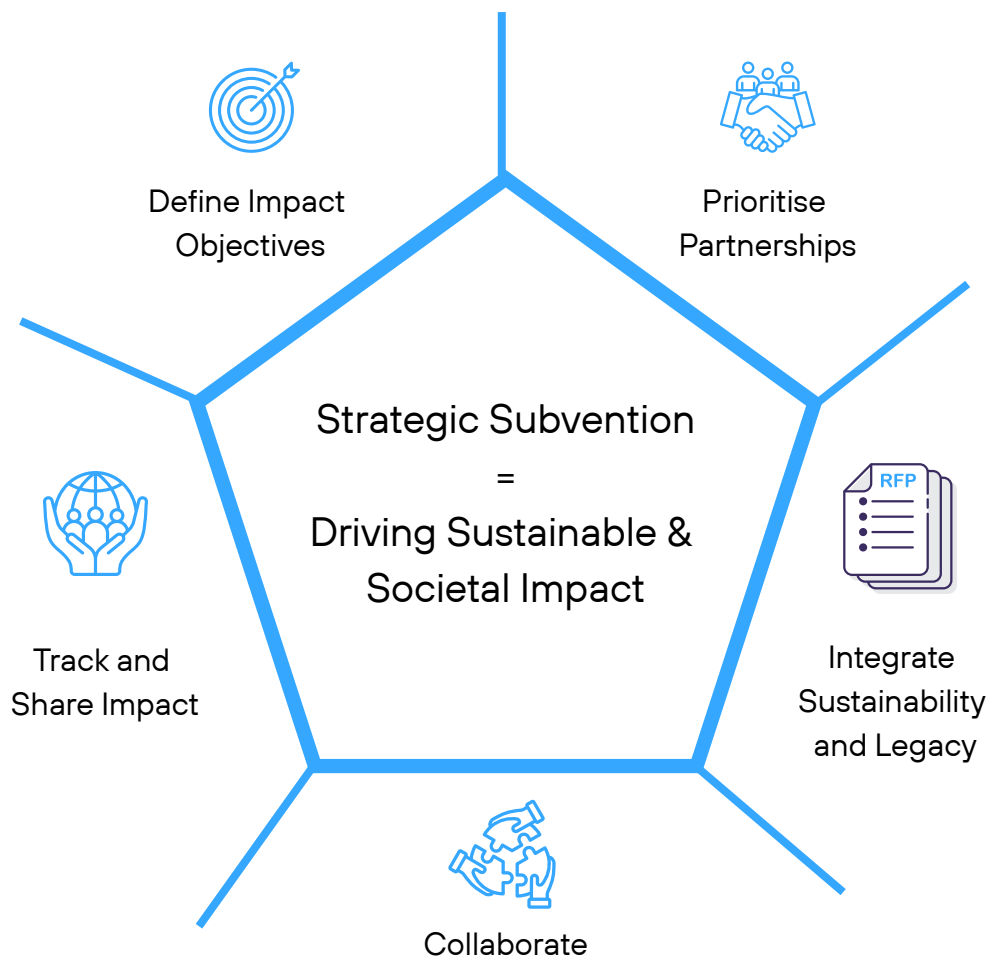
- Provide support in legacy planning, impact assessment, and community engagement.
- Facilitate matchmaking with local stakeholders (universities, startups, NGOs, policy makers).
- Ensure subvention frameworks are flexible and adaptable, aligning with association missions and long-term objectives.

Collaborate Across Borders

- Share best practices with other destinations.
- Join initiatives or work within national frameworks to harmonize subvention strategy and impact reporting.



For Associations



Define Impact Objectives from the Start

- Clarify the social, environmental, or policy-driven outcomes your event aims to deliver.
- Include these in RFPs and use them to guide conversations with destinations.

Prioritise Partnerships, Not Just Discounts

- Seek destinations that offer co-creation and flexibility - not just cash incentives.
- Ask for guidance, matchmaking with community partners, and local knowledge integration.
- Ask for subvention in your RFP documentation.

Integrate Sustainability and Legacy into Planning

- Build subvention into your sustainability plan - not as an afterthought, but as an enabler.
- Be transparent about how subvention will be used and what outcomes you commit to achieve.

Collaborate to Strengthen the Case for Smarter Subvention

- Advocate for impact-based subvention with your destinations and industry bodies.
- Join working groups or initiatives pushing toward unified standards and greater transparency.

Track and Share Your Impact

- Measure more than delegate numbers: track accessibility, diversity, local engagement, carbon savings.
- Share outcomes back to funders and with peers to build best practice libraries.

A Final Word

For subvention to reach its full potential, both associations and destinations must treat it as more than a grant - it must be a **shared commitment to progress**. That means aligning on goals, investing in relationships, and holding each other accountable for the outcomes we all claim to value: impact, inclusion, innovation, and long-term transformation.

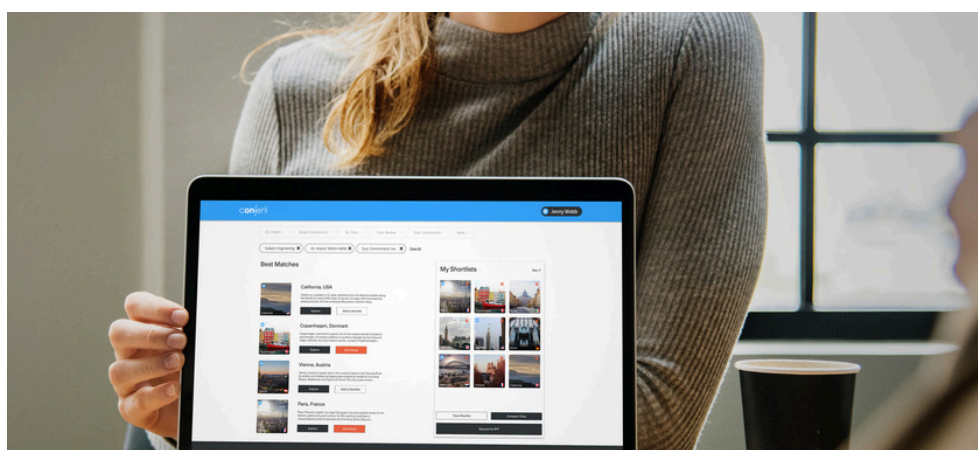
The road ahead is clear. Now it's time to build it, together.



ABOUT CONFERLI

Conferli is a conference matchmaking platform for associations, venues and destinations. Our aim is to level out the playing field in the event industry, enabling events of all shapes and sizes to find best-suited destinations - easily and efficiently. We do that by creating access to independent benchmarking data, supported by smart technology and fueled by our passion for the conference world. Associations will get free support on destination matching, shortlisting, benchmarking and assistance during the entire RFP process.

www.conferli.com



ABOUT #MEET4IMPACT

#Meet4Impact is a Montréal-based social enterprise dedicated to transforming the global events sector into a driver of positive societal and environmental change. Through its proprietary methodologies and frameworks, it equips destinations, event organizers, and institutions with tools to define, manage, and measure impact aligned with the SDGs and local priorities – helping turn events into powerful levers for transformation.

<https://www.meet4impact.global/>

ABOUT GDS-Movement

The GDS-Movement is a pioneering, data-driven international change agency that acts to catalyse socio-economic and environmental transformation in cities and regions across the world. Our mission is to empower tourism and events professionals with the mindsets, skill sets, and toolsets to co-create more regenerative and resilient destinations to visit, meet, and live in.

www.gds.earth

THANK YOU FOR READING

Questions or suggestions, please contact us



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