

**BRITISH CONFERENCE VENUES SURVEY 2008**

The British Association of Conference Destinations (BACD) has published the 2008 'British Conference Venues Survey' (BCVS) results, providing a vital insight into the current state of the industry from a supply-side perspective.

The report includes several new features:

- A revised methodology to provide more consistent and robust reporting. This entails use of a 3-year average for the Survey findings ie. comparing results for the period 2005-7 with the previous 3-year period 2004-6. This is now a fairly standard approach to time series data such as BCVS, designed to address any inconsistencies in the sampling
- Location comparisons based on city, town, rural and seaside locations
- Narrative comments from venues on trends noted in the market

The BCVS 2008 shows that the UK conference market experienced a downturn in the period 2005-7 (in terms of direct revenue to venues) with an estimated value of £8 billion, compared with £9.8 billion in the 3-year period 2004-6. This is due mainly to a reduction in the average number of conferences per venue, down from 422 in 2004-6 to 396 in 2005-7 (a decrease of about 6%). Critically there was also a slight shift away from residential conferences to non-overnight conferences, with a significant economic impact since residential conferences account for almost two-thirds of overall venue income.

Other key findings include the following:

- Shorter lead times: 30% of venues noted a shortening of lead times for conferences, with many venues commenting that this was now becoming the norm
- Tighter budgets: 11% of venues reported greater pressure on client budgets, although achieved day and residential rates were similar to the previous 3-year period
- CSR/Green issues: a greater interest in, and awareness of, green issues and a demand for Fairtrade/organic catering, accompanied by an increasing demand to meet special dietary requirements
- Importance of the not-for-profit sector: the report confirms a trend noted in the 2007 Survey which highlighted the importance of public sector and association conferences, now accounting for 52% of all meetings and conferences. By contrast, the number of corporate meetings and conferences forms just 48% of all events held – traditionally corporate meetings have accounted for two-thirds of the market
- The dominance of city venues: the huge investments in infrastructure and facilities enjoyed by most city destinations over the past couple of decades are reaping benefits in the business events market - city venues hosted on average 423 conferences a year, well above the overall average. By comparison, venues located in rural areas staged an average 244 conferences in 2007.

The cost of this Survey is £140. To order your copy/copies please complete the form below and either fax, post or email to **Sarah Malkin** as soon as possible.

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