The association meetings industry had a strong year in 2014, both in terms of budget and attendance. The mood is *optimistic* in 2015 and beyond, with planners exploring emerging regions and destinations for future meetings.

**THE DECISION MAKERS**

**Survey Participants**
Who are the people who plan *association meetings*?

- Association planner: 46%
- Third-party meeting planner: 17%
- Association executive: 17%
- Association management company: 11%
- CEO: 9%

Of all these participants:
- 81% participate in the destination research process (of association meetings)
- 88% recommend destinations
- 80% plan and organize events

**Research**
When it comes to researching destinations and meeting venues, online resources serve as some of the most important tools to planners, but nothing is quite as useful as working directly with a convention bureau or tourist board.

**Online resources that planners use:**
- Destination and hotel websites: 84%
- Meeting planner guides: 43%
- Online meeting management: 31%
- Travel blogs: 19%
- Social media: 13%

88% of planners work with a convention bureau or national tourist office. Among those planners, the convention bureau services deemed most useful include:
- Site visits: 81%
- Impartial advice: 64%
- Venue finding services: 58%

**Who makes the final decision on destination selection:**

- **Board of directors**: 49%
- **Membership vote**: 5%
- **Site selection committee**: 11%
- **Executive** (Up by 9 points from 2014 survey): 35%
- **Membership vote**: 5%
**THE MEETINGS**

**Meeting Size & Attendance**
Large meetings of **1000+ delegates** are increasingly common, and planners report this number is increasing.

**Size of Largest Meeting:**

- < 250: 18%
- 251 - 500: 23%
- 501 - 1000: 37%
- 1000+: 23%

**Attendance Growth (over the past 2 years):**

- Increase: 46%
- Same: 40%
- Decrease: 14%

**Budgets**
The mood is optimistic—as attendance continues to grow, so have the budgets.

- Increase: 38% (budgets that went up increased by an average of 15%)
- Same: 51% (budgets that went down decreased by an average of 19%)
- Decrease: 6% (budget expectations for next program)

**THE DESTINATIONS**

Europe continues to dominate as the region of choice for association meetings, although planners show signs of exploring emerging destinations.

**Region of Last International Meeting:**

- North America: 15%
- Central America: 1%
- South America: 6%
- Europe: 43%
- Middle East: 5%
- Asia: 20%
- Africa: 2%
- Australia/New Zealand: 10%

Emerging regions on the radar:
Compared to our 2014 survey, a significantly larger percentage of meeting planners indicated that they had hosted or would be hosting international meetings in:
- South America
- Middle East