



Market situation France.

Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB).

MySwitzerland.com/meetings



1 MARKET SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

1.1 Economic situation

With the coronavirus crisis ongoing for more than a year now, economists know that several scenarios must be considered for the next two to five years.

While GDP in 2020 dropped by 8.2% due to the severe lockdown in spring (first wave), economic growth is expected for 2021 overall. Lockdown measures were not as strict during the second and third waves in France and recovery is in sight. As vaccinating the population continues to progress (forecast 50% by end of June), most sectors should be able to go back to normal or at least take up their activities again. Actual GDP growth in France is 5.8% (source FMI)

Of course, all this still depends on the development of the pandemic. For the moment, transportation, hotels and gastronomy, but also cultural activities and the whole events sector are on hold or severely restrained.

Another important factor is household consumption. A lot of households have gained purchasing power thanks to financial government support during the crisis but have not had the opportunity to spend their money because of a second and third lockdown. The big question now is whether they will or will not spend this extra money once they can travel again, go to restaurants and go shopping...

The unemployment rate has continued to decrease despite Covid-19 and was at 7% at the end of June 2020, but it increased again to 9% during the third quarter of 2020 and then fell to 8% at the end of the year. It currently stands at around 8.5%.

(Source: Insee)

1.2 Meetings industry situation & trends

The situation for the meetings industry in France is still extremely critical. With the general lockdown in March 2020, the French government prevented partial unemployment for the sector, which helped a lot. In June, confidence and hope returned that things would go back to normal from September, and a few events were even organised for October, but the second wave stopped everything again.

This time, corporates and most agencies resigned themselves to organising some virtual events rather than nothing at all. A lot of small team-building activities took place around Christmas. However, it is not easy to earn much money with those “little” activities, and agencies are really looking forward to being allowed to organise “in-person” events again. Even though agencies have not yet declared insolvency, many event professionals have dropped out of the business. Some agencies also used this time to train their employees in organising virtual meetings and

gain other complementary competencies in order to compete for the new digital or hybrid business to come.

There are a lot of questions around hybrid formats and digital events vs physical events. The future will show if the crisis has massively increased the use of digital platforms. For the time being, it seems that many are eager to meet each other IRL again.

Agencies will also be busy rescheduling postponed events, once they are allowed again.

Trends

Digitalisation in the event industry is a topic more current than ever. The true value of face-to-face meetings became clear after three months of meetings on Zoom and other platforms, especially for strategic meetings and brainstorming. But of course, the power of online meetings to help keep social interactions going was also in evidence. So, it seems the future will see a demand for small live meetings (<50 pax) without having to travel too far on the one hand and fully digital or probably hybrid formats for bigger meetings on the other.

New formats have to be and will be tested in the upcoming months.

We recommend **venues update and increase their use of technology**, with high-speed internet, secure Wi-Fi and in-house broadcasting studios.

CSR and sustainability is another topic that is still gaining in importance

Green Evénement, who pushed the meetings industry into CSR, is at the root of the creation of ISO Certification 20121.

LEVENEMENT, the French association of event agencies, has decided that all their members should be certified ISO 20121. It seems that awareness is coming in the first instance from younger employees (aged 20-35) who want to be more responsible and sustainable and do not want to create events with so much waste (food waste, carpets, print material, etc.) and are looking for ways to reduce and recycle wherever possible. We are all responsible for the health of planet Earth.

France has the biggest number of ISO 20121 certified suppliers and events and will increase its number in the upcoming months. The French government has been involved in this process as well.

We highly recommend all players in the Swiss meetings industry wishing to show their commitment towards CSR look into this label.

1.3 RFP situation in France

With the second wave lockdown in October 2020 and quarantine requirements in Switzerland for travellers from red-list countries, it has been impossible to organise a meeting in Switzerland out of France since last autumn.

We have still received some RFPs, but either for virtual studio days or for meetings scheduled in spring or autumn 2021. The spring meetings have meanwhile been cancelled or postponed to autumn as well. For the past two or three weeks, we have received some RFPs for January 2022.

2 TARGETS

- We at no point abandoned our strong market presence and our quality approach towards buyers (agencies, corporates and venue finders) of the meetings sector in France, even in these difficult times with few RFPs, thereby ensuring we spring to mind when travel is allowed again.
- The inbound marketing strategy we have developed over the past few years, through content production (blog) and our presence on social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Slideshare, etc) will help us achieve our targets. We generate awareness for Switzerland with empathy.
- We will put emphasis on venues for smaller groups (>50/100 pax) and target corporates (especially "assistantes de direction") in border regions.
- We will also put emphasis on the association market by evaluating association meeting leads.
- Ongoing updates and hopefully boosting our client database again.
- Presence online and offline through KMM and participation in Meeting Industry Associations

3 CURRENT DATABASE SITUATION

Kind	Contacts
Agencies	1,764
Corporates	1,183
Association	139
Media	20

4 DETAILED MARKETING ACTIVITIES

Further details of past, present and future marketing activities can be found on www.stnet, which can be accessed by using your personal username and password.