



1 MARKET SITUATION AND OUTLOOK

1.1 Economic situation

French GDP grew by 2.6% in 2022 and is projected to grow by 0.6% in 2023. In fact, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, supply chain disruptions and elevated energy prices have dented economic prospects but have not generated recession. Inflation reached 6% in 2022 and is expected to stay at this high level for 2023 (source OECD "Economic Outlook November 2022").

The outlook depends on the sectors. Supply chain difficulties tend to decrease in the industry and construction sector. Stocks were quite high (too high) at the end of 2022 probably due to a lower demand of goods or to unfinished products (due to supply chain difficulties). Sectors like IT, Electronics, Pharmaceuticals, Automobile, and industrial products are quite optimistic concerning further growth whereas Chemistry and Clothing expect further declining (source La Banque de France survey January 2023).

In general, fiscal policy of French government will gradually become less supportive. The temporary caps on regulated energy prices and temporary subsidies and cash transfers have smoothed energy price shocks, but these measures are expected to be progressively phased out in 2023.

The unemployment rate is quite low since the pandemic; it stayed stable during Q2 2022 at 7.4% and continued to decrease to 6.9% in January 2023; some sectors still have a lot of difficulties to find employees for their vacancies. This concerns particularly service jobs like hospitality, transport, cleaning, etc.

(Source: Insee)

1.2 Meetings Industry situation and trends

Meetings Industry in France has continued to do very well in second half of 2022. Despite continuous presence of the Corona virus, meetings have been planned and organised. Thanks to vaccines, no more restrictions had to be imposed by the French Government and fortunately, most of the meetings could take place as "in person meetings".

These were not only small events to gather teams and re-create team spirit; the group size came literally back to pre-corona standards. As a result, Event Agencies continued and continue to be overbooked.

Despite a certain optimism, uncertainties subsist for the Meetings industry in 2023. What impact the economic situation with inflation and high costs will have on the budget of Meeting Planners? What impact the war in Ukraine will have in Europe and for certain travel destinations? The upcoming months will tell.



Another major challenge is still the lack of employees. During CoVid lockdown a lot of persons have changed activity. They left Paris to live in smaller towns or at the countryside. We estimate the loss of qualified workers in the Tourism and Event Business to around 25-30%.

We also continue to observe changes within the Event Agencies in France: more of the bigger agencies have merged to be able to offer a 360° experience and to survive on the global market. Some of the very small agencies didn't survive after the recovery.

Trends

Even though "in person meetings" are the favourite form of meetings, **digitalisation in the event industry** is not gone. For some type of meetings and organizers, it still represents >50% of all meetings (source: client questionnaire 11/2022). The power of online meetings (**fully digital or hybrid**) avoiding unnecessary travelling or giving the opportunity to enlarge one's public cannot be neglected. We recommend **venues to update and increase their use of technology**, with high-speed internet, secure Wi-Fi and in-house broadcasting studios.

CSR and sustainability is still the topic that is gaining on importance. Green Événement, who pushes the meetings industry into CSR, has initiated the creation of ISO Certification 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. But pressure is also coming from CAC40 corporates who need to show their CSR engagement and actions. They will increasingly choose venues who are committed to CSR.

LEVENEMENT, the French association of event agencies, has decided that all their members should be certified ISO 20121 asap. Thus, 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. Tools to easily measure and evaluate the carbon impact of a Business Event are developed and promoted in France and the LEAD-label has been launched.

We highly recommend all players in the Swiss meetings industry wishing to show their commitment towards CSR to have a look at these tools and labels, but also to communicate on their efforts (whatever they are) in sustainability more clearly and proactively.

1.3 RFP situation in France

2022 ended up being an excellent year. We expected about 70 RFPs in our forecast in January and finished the year with 140 RFPs. Our advantage was and still is the proximity to France with easy and **sustainable** access by TGV.

34 Events (handled through SCIB) took place in Switzerland in 2022 which was much better than in 2020/21 but not yet on 2019 level.

2023 has started quite well. We will see how it goes, as our weakness is the strong Swiss Franc which makes us a lot more expensive than the EURO countries.

2 TARGETS

- We keep our strong market presence and our quality approach towards buyers (agencies, corporates, and venue finders) of the meetings sector in France; we want to stay in their mind and make them consider Switzerland for travel and live events
- The inbound marketing strategy we have developed over the past years, through content production (blog) and our presence on social media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Slideshare, etc.) help us achieve our targets. We generate awareness for Switzerland with empathy.
- We put emphasis on venues for smaller groups (>50/100 pax), on sustainability and target corporates (especially “assistantes de direction”) in border regions.
- We go meet clients (new and existing ones) at different platforms (our own or Third Party platforms) in Paris and “Province”
- Ongoing updates (many changes within the industry) of our client database
- Presence online and offline through KMM and participation in Meeting Industry Associations

3 CURRENT DATABASE SITUATION

Kind	Contacts
Agencies	1562
Corporates	905
Association	170
Media	21

4 DETAILED MARKETING ACTIVITIES

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