Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

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Master's Thesis

Sustainable development tendencies in MICE tourism events

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Faculty of Economics and Management

DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

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Economics and Management

Thesis title

Sustainable development tendencies in MICE tourism events

Objectives of thesis

The aim is to identify the place of sustainable development in MICE tourism events. This thesis will show the difficulties of combining CRS objectives of companies with the desires in terms of events. For that we will take the example of an event of Agence Lully and analyze the tendencies of this market. This thesis will also show the possibilities to improve the sustainability of the event.

Methodology

This thesis contains two main parts – one theoretical and one practical.

The theoretical part is based largely on a review of current literature, used to create a summary of current thinking on the topic. The practical section comprises qualitative research based on a sample of French companies using interviews, and an analysis of an event of Agence Lully.

The proposed extent of the thesis

60 to 70 pages approx

Keywords

event industry, sustainable development, MICE tourism

Recommended information sources

ATTAL V., Raphaël DORNIER, T. DELECOLLE, N. SELMI. 2012L'appropriation du développement durable par les agences événementielles et de tourisme d'affaires. In : Regards croisés sur la RSE, DUPUICH F. (Ed), L'Harmattan, pp. 223-251.

CLERGEAU, C., & PAULUS, K., 2014. Démarche RSE dans l'"événementiel". Mondes du tourisme, hors serie, décembre, 10-22.

Paulus, K., 2017. Les conditions d'émergence d'une démarche RSE dans l'événementiel: une analyse à partir d'Angers Expo Congrès et du salon professionnel SIVAL. Mondes du tourisme.

Expected date of thesis defence

2022/23 SS – FEM

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my diploma thesis titled "Sustainable development tendencies in MICE tourism events" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 27.03.2023   _____

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Professor Richard Selby, Ph.D., for his support and help during my work on this thesis.

Sustainable development tendencies in MICE tourism events

Abstract

The thesis seeks to identify the different motivations and barriers of sustainability in events. The aim is to understand how CSR is applied in events, the progress of the sector and the challenges faced.

The author extends the literature by analysing the perceptions of six industry professionals, one event agency and five advertising companies. The author provides a calculation of the carbon footprint of an event, analyses it, and then compares it to the interview findings.

Consequently, the author concludes that sustainability in the events sector is now present in companies in the form of CSR policy, but that integration into events faces challenges. Based on the global results, some recommendations are provided, which aim at increasing the sustainability of an event.

Keywords: event industry, sustainable development, MICE tourism, Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Tendence udržitelného rozvoje na akcích cestovního ruchu MICE

Abstrakt

Práce se snaží identifikovat různé motivace a bariéry udržitelnosti v událostech. Cílem je porozumět tomu, jak se CSR uplatňuje v událostech, pokroku odvětví a výzvám, kterým čelí.

Autor rozšiřuje literaturu analýzou vnímání šesti profesionálů z oboru, jedna eventová agentura a pět reklamních společností. Autor poskytuje výpočet uhlíkové stopy události, analyzuje ji a poté ji porovnává se zjištěními rozhovoru.

V důsledku toho autor dochází k závěru, že udržitelnost v sektoru událostí je nyní ve společnostech přítomna ve formě politiky CSR, ale že integrace do událostí čelí výzvám. Na základě globálních výsledků jsou poskytována některá doporučení, jejichž cílem je zvýšit udržitelnost události.

Klíčová slova: sektor událostí, udržitelný rozvoj, MICE ruch, Společenská odpovědnost firem (CSR)

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1. Introduction

The events sector, in particular the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) industry, is a major economic activity, which has grown exponentially over the past decades. The event business, in general, uses a large number of resources to produce the different facets of the event. In today's society where ecological and social concerns are at the forefront, we wonder about the environmental impact of each sector. The event industry can be questioned as to its sustainability.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a crucial issue for event companies. The aim is to integrate a social and environmental aspect into the activities of companies and to minimise their impact on the environment.

The event industry for the corporate world is the MICE sector (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions). Also known as business tourism, it is increasingly confronted with sustainability issues. This dimension must now be integrated into the organisation of events, the social and environmental impact must be taken into account, and the ways in which events are organised must be optimised and improved. It has now become a societal transformation to which the MICE sector must adapt. Event clients are also increasingly concerned about these issues and expect commitment from service providers in order to meet their own obligations. Event professionals are therefore gradually changing the market offer.

This talk will provide an overview of CSR practices in the MICE sector and look at the challenges for supply chain actors to understand what level of sustainability integration we are at in 2022.

I chose this topic for my thesis because I worked for high-end clients for whom we were organizing seminar and incentive trips. I was confronted with the ecological issue quite quickly. How to manage an eco-responsible luxury event? This question was in my mind for a while. I therefore decided to investigate this issue with this thesis.

2. Objectives and methodology

2.1. Objectives

The aim of this thesis is to identify the importance of sustainability in MICE tourism events today.

The research seeks to identify the different motivations and barriers of sustainability in events. The aim is to understand how CSR is applied in events, the progress of the sector and the challenges faced.

What are the evolutions and trends of CSR in the event industry?

What are the CSR policies in event services and how are they applied to the event?

What are the challenges faced by companies and agencies?

Through a qualitative analysis of the interviews conducted, the aim of this thesis is to collect primary data on the perceptions of the interviewed companies on sustainability in the event industry. The results of the study will provide additional knowledge to the existing literature.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is in several parts. Firstly, a review of the current literature in order to understand the sector, the developments, the size of the current activity. The sustainability of the events will also be developed in a section on CSR.

Then the practical part will aim to explore the subject through the study of concrete cases. Three different research studies will be carried out in order to compare them and draw conclusions. The results of the study will therefore come from the analysis of the three studies. The methodology is different for each research and will be explained in the relevant section.

The first research is an interview with the CEO of a French event agency. The method used is a qualitative unstructured interview, with open-ended questions organised by theme, which are asked according to the flow of the discussion. The analysis of the interview follows the content analysis method. It summarises the ideas of the interviewee in an objective way and reorganised by theme.

The second research is a set of 5 interviews with companies organising events. The interviews are semi-structured, with open-ended questions that allow the interviewee to express his or her ideas fully. The content analysis is organised by theme and compares the respondents' answers.

The third research is a calculation of the carbon footprint of an event. It is an estimate of the CO_2 emissions and therefore the impact of the event. The analysis of the totals allows us to understand the results and adapt them to the issues mentioned above.

Finally, the results of the practical part will be elaborated according to the data of the three researches by comparing, confirming or contradicting the hypotheses of each part.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

The literature review presents the MICE event sector and its components. A first part on the MICE industry allows to define the sector and to understand the different branches. The characteristics of the Incentive sector are further explored in a second part. Then a third part analyses the sizes of the MICE sector and its evolutions. Finally, the CRS in the event industry is explained in a last part.

3.2. MICE industry

3.2.1. Definition of MICE

Event marketing can be defined as non-media communication. The markets for corporate event communication are known as MICE. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines MICE events as "a niche market segment of the tourism industry that comprises meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions."

MICE is an acronym that stands for:

Meetings, **I**ncentives, **C**onferences, **E**xhibitions/Events

This term, used in event, tourism and hospitality sectors, refers to the corporate events. These gatherings involve a significant number of participants and are designed to serve a specific purpose, such as to share knowledge, showcase new products, or to celebrate achievements.

MICE events can be organized for a variety of industries and purposes: business conferences, trade shows, corporate events, product launches, professional meetings. These events can take place in a wide range of venues, including convention centres, hotels, exhibition halls, and other purpose-built facilities.

According to Filloux and Vienne in their 2021 book, the MICE sector can be segmented into three main market by characteristics: the meeting market, which gather teams for the purpose of information, sharing, or by legal obligation. The promotion market which allows the public to satisfy their curiosity by meeting, discovering, or testing products. Finally, the market for major sporting and cultural event which will not be covered in this literature review.

3.2.2. MICE typology

The events are detailed according to the two markets meeting and promotion and sorted by the audience: internal, external guests, or public.

3.2.2.1. Meeting market

Internal events

- General Assembly

The purpose of a general assembly is to discuss significant issues pertaining to an organization or community. This phrase is frequently used to describe a formal assembly of members of a corporation, non-profit, or political body where they have the chance to debate and cast votes on crucial matters like choosing a new board of directors, approving financial reports, or amending the bylaws of the organization.

The general assembly is frequently the highest decision-making body in organizations, where decisions are made democratically with equal voting rights for all members. These gatherings typically happen at least once a year and are accessible to all organization members. It therefore represents an event promoting democracy and transparency within the company despite its formal and compulsory nature.

- Corporate convention

A convention is usually a general gathering of people, often organized by a trade association or commercial organization, to present results or strategy for upcoming events with collaborators from this company (De Sèze, 2002). Conventions involve presentations, workshops, and networking opportunities, but also have a festive side with a buffet or a show to entertain the guests.

- Seminar

A seminar is a meeting for learning or development on a particular topic that the company wants to improve. This is usually a training initiated by human resources. Seminars can also be for the purpose of working on a particular project or motivating the team for a new goal.

These events consist of workshops or training sessions, usually led by experts in the field, consultants or trainers with specific expertise on the topic. The organization requires special equipment and spaces. They are often held outside the company to provide a different setting from everyday life and to keep participants focused. The seminar is a multi-faceted tool for human resources. Many seminars are organized abroad when the guests can come from different countries, for example in the context of training for a certain type of profile.

- Team building / team learning.

Two distinct approaches to enhancing the abilities and performances of the team are team building and team learning (Filloux and Vienne, 2021). The goal of team building is to strengthen relationships within the group by fostering trust, cooperation, and communication. The focus of team-building activities is frequently on role-playing games, group challenges, problem-solving exercises, and other activities that help team members get to know one another and work together.

The team learning, on the other hand, focuses on enhancing individual and team skills in problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and other areas that are crucial for teamwork. The team's members can develop their individualized skills through team learning activities such as workshops, training sessions, coaching sessions, mentorship sessions, and other activities before applying them to a teamwork setting.

- Incentive

Will be detailed in a next part. An incentive is a particular kind of event that is typically planned to recognize employees for their exceptional work or to inspire them to meet predetermined goals. The incentives may consist of leisure activities, vacations, excursions, or one-of-a-kind experiences, and they may take place in exotic locations or opulent settings.

- Cocktail / parties

Cocktails and parties are the freest corporate events in terms of creativity and animation. It is an opportunity to bring teams together to thank, congratulate or announce news. In any

case, these moments must be appreciated and perceived as relaxing. The content will be event-based with more or less festive entertainment. There is generally no work, although some people may chat business with each other or network.

Companies often want to offer the best to their employees and make these evenings unforgettable moments in order to keep a good image of the company. The choice of venue is therefore a key criterion for the organizer. The caterer is also a key point to mark the spirits of the guests, then comes the atmosphere and the animations.

Corporate events with external guests
- Conference and congress

A congress or conference is an event organized by a company or corporation to bring together peoples who are interested in one topic. Conferences or congresses can be internal to the company or external in particular with the presence of stakeholders more or less close. The primary purpose is to exchange ideas and share results of studies in order to make progress on the issue. These are generally events followed by a community.

Corporate congresses can be an important part of a company's marketing and communications strategy, as they provide a platform for the company to communicate its message, strengthen relationships, and generate leads. They can also be a valuable tool for employee development and engagement, as they provide opportunities for employees to learn and grow within the company. Congresses may also include exhibitions or displays showcasing the latest products or services in a particular field.

- Colloquium

A colloquium is a type of academic conference or seminar that brings together scholars, researchers, and experts in a particular field to present and discuss their work. Colloquia are typically focused on a specific theme or topic, and may be organized by academic institutions, research centres, or professional associations.

Unlike larger conferences or conventions, colloquia are usually more intimate and structured, with participants presenting their work in the form of papers, presentations, or panel discussions. The emphasis is on intellectual exchange and debate, and participants are often expected to actively engage with each other's ideas and contribute to the discussion. A colloquium can be either an internal or external event for a company, depending on the purpose and audience.

Colloquia may be organized as one-time events or as part of a larger series, and may be held at universities, research centres, or other academic institutions. They can be an important forum for researchers and scholars to share their latest findings, discuss emerging trends and issues, and network with colleagues in their field.

- Forum

A forum is a gathering of experts and professionals who come together to talk, share ideas, and exchange information. Some forums are open to the public, while others are invitation-only or limited to specific groups or organizations. These events are typically organized around a particular theme or issue. Speaking engagements, roundtable discussions, presentations, debates, and question-and-answer sessions are all common during forums that can span several days.

- Press event.

Press events consist of inviting journalists to develop the company's brand image. They can be considered both as media and non-media communication. They will be considered mainly as media communication tools if they use the media to reach their target audience, for example, a press conference with only one objective: to pass an official message.

On the other hand, press events can also be seen as a form of non-media communication and come under the heading of MICE, as they often involve direct interactions with stakeholders such as journalists, bloggers, or influencers, as well as guests and speakers at the event. These face-to-face interactions can be an effective way to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and generate positive word-of-mouth.

3.2.2.2. Promotion market

Public event
- Fair

A fair is an event where exhibitors present their goods and services to an interested audience, such as potential customers or industry professionals. The duration of the salons can range from a few hours to several days, and they can either be open to the general public or reserved for professionals. Visitors have the opportunity to network with exhibitors, learn about new goods and services, watch presentations and demonstrations, and make business contacts. (UNIMEV)

- Product launch

Events are held with the purpose of launching a new good or service onto the market. The major goals are to increase awareness, build excitement for the new product or service, and enhance the company's reputation. These occasions might range from a straightforward product demonstration to a lavish launch party complete with entertainment, exhibits, freebies, and famous visitors.

The company must communicate about new products. These events are very important for the company's communication and subsequent sales. This type of event is then directly linked to marketing, with campaigns generally following the event (Filloux and Vienne, 2021). The emphasis is on the scenography and the choice of venue. The organizer must adapt to the product and be creative in order to increase the engagement of the community.

- Open days

The objective of the open house is the discovery by the general public, the seduction so that in a second time the customer adheres to the project. The open house event has its own organization, the emphasis is not on the place because the goal is to welcome in the premises of the company or the institution. The strategy is then centred on the communication, the one made upstream, the one during the coherence of the speech of each actor who promotes the institution, and the one on the visuals and their graphic chart. Also, for the organizer on the technical and practical details that allow participants to enjoy their visit.

Overall

The MICE market includes events of quite different nature as events open to the public and others that are only internal. To get an idea of the market share that each segment represents within the MICE market, a study by Xerfi (2022) shows the segmentation of the events held in France in 2019, in percentage of number of events (data from UNIMEV):
- 86.1% are "internal" corporate or institutional events.
- 12,9% are "external" corporate or institutional events.
- 0,7% are congress.
- 0,3% are fairs.

The meeting market, and in particular internal meetings, represents a much larger share of MICE than the promotion market.

3.3. Incentive

The subject of this thesis focuses mainly on corporate travel for its tourist character. In the acronym MICE, they can belong to the "I" for Incentive. This part is dedicated to explain in more detail the characteristics of incentive (or similar events) to understand the issues related to the organization.

3.3.1 Incentive as management tool

An incentive is an event, reward, or recognition program designed to encourage or motivate individuals or groups to achieve a specific goal or objective. The incentive is an organized trip for leisure. The company generally offers this trip to its employees to reward them. The target of participants is often salesmen because they are the most likely to receive rewards because of their sales objectives. By motivating them, sales will increase. But the offer is not reserved only for them, it can be proposed to production workers, support staff or anyone in the company (Lau, 2016). The company can also invite stakeholders such as business partners and in some cases customers.

Incentives are human resources tools that integrate the reward strategy. It is in fact a means used as an alternative to the financial rewards that companies generally offer. These events are a source of motivation towards a specific objective but also a factor of job satisfaction. Indeed, the relationship between non-financial rewards and employees job satisfaction is positive (Haider, Aamir, Hamid, & Hashim, 2015).

It is also a way to reduce turnover by encouraging longer tenure with the company (Fisher, 2015). Let's take the example of consulting companies. Consulting has been a growing sector for a few years now, and recruitment is done right after graduating from business schools. Young consultants have many job opportunities because companies have a growing need. For HR, talent management is a carefully thought-out strategy, their goal is to attract the best consultants and keep them, the cost of turnover being not negligible. This sector is prone to high turnover, which can be explained by the difficulty of the job in terms of time invested and the desire for change of these ambitious young people. To avoid the flight of talent to competing companies, rewarding events are used. Incentives are scheduled on specific dates, which encourages them to postpone the potential resignation date by a few months. As a

result, employees stay longer in the company and the events increase their satisfaction. This is a very interesting tool for HR departments.

3.3.2. Characteristics of incentive event

Content

Incentives, or business trips of this type, are organized trips for leisure. The guests may or may not know each other and may be required to spend time together depending on the program of the trip such as activities, visits or restaurants. The organization of this event will then be filled with activities to entertain the participants. The program is sometimes not busy if the company wishes to leave freedom to the guests, in this case only certain moments like dinners will be reserved for them.

The stay can also be linked to leisure and work if the company decides to make a seminar as an incentive. One part of the day will be dedicated to training or to a work project and the rest of the time will be for activities and fun.

The common point of the incentive is generally a gala evening with an award or thank you ceremony that will gather the guests around a cocktail and a dinner. All activities are designed to make the guests live a unique journey, customized experiences, privatized places, starred restaurants. These are mainly luxury events where the guests are treated as VIPs.

This type of event and this clientele represents great opportunities for the hosting venues. Firstly, companies have large budgets, they do not deprive themselves of offering the best to their guests and therefore sign contracts, although negotiated, with significant volumes. Around 65% of the budget for one guest is spending on hotels for rooms and hotel dining (Lau, 2016).

Secondly, during the trip, there are extra expenses, either added and paid by the company or on the initiative of the client, who is more likely to spend on extras as the trip is almost entirely free. The purchasing power of business tourists is therefore higher than individual tourists (Simha, 2021). Overall, the budget and spending for one business tourist is 2 to 3 times more than individual (Spasić, Njeguš & Pavlovic, 2014). Moreover, because of the word of mouth of the customers and the possibility that they themselves come back to this

place during a next trip, the hospitality venues are very caring for the guests and the organizers. (Simha, 2021).

Venue

"Venue", "site" or "facility" are the terms used in the event sector to define the location where the event is held (Van der Wagen, 2010).

An incentive event requires several venues, the most important of which is the hotel. The guests will spend a large part of their stay in a hotel, for sleeping of course, but also for some dinners or lunches, or during their free time. Organizers choose star hotels or resorts, depending on the budget and the capacity of the hotel in question for the number of rooms.

The hotel is the most important budget in the organization of the event, but it is also what gives the wow effect, and what makes the incentive trip offered by this company different from an individual trip. When choosing a hotel, certain criteria are analysed (Van der Wagen, 2010), such as the amenities, the configuration of the rooms (double or twin), the advantages offered to the group, all the facilities (downstairs, number and quality of restaurants, swimming pool, spa, gym) and the surrounding environment (private beach, green space). The hotels also have reception and meeting rooms that are of interest to project managers depending on the nature of the event.

The incentive will also require a space to host the gala dinner or party that takes place at least once during the trip. This cocktail party or festive evening is not usually held in the hotel as the aim is to offer a new venue. Atypical spaces are appreciated, some examples: barge, museum, castle, roof top, circus, charming restaurant (Filloux and Vienne, 2021). The place will be privatized and decorated according to the theme. This evening is an event within the event, in terms of organization it requires sound and light equipment, decoration, security, catering, etc (Nolan, 2017).

Timing

The timing of an event is a major factor in its success. The dates chosen must consider (Allen 2008):

- Climate of the destination.

- Celebrations, holidays, or particular events in the destination that could disturb the organization, with for example the unavailability of service providers (religious festivals such as Ramadan, Chinese New Year, etc).
- Other events held at the same time in the hotel.
- Availability of guests according to school holidays, busy periods, etc.

Business tourism has a seasonality, winter and summer are not good times for events, while spring and autumn are (Van der Wagen, 2010; Spasić, Njeguš & Pavlovic, 2014). In the summer it is the employees' holidays, in the winter it is not wise to plan a date close to the Christmas holidays, nor at the beginning of the year, which is a busy period. On the other hand, spring and autumn are perfect for seminars and incentives, the hotels are empty, the climate is not extreme and the period is right for rewards.

The average duration of an incentive trip is 4.7 days (De Sèze, 2002). Organizers plan a minimum of 2 nights on site up to 5-6 nights for the most distant destinations. These are therefore long events and the programme must be thought accordingly, with time off or possibility of adapting the schedule to avoid events too full of activity and tiring.

3.3.3. Stakeholders

The organisation of MICE events, such as incentives and seminars abroad, involves many stakeholders. To better understand who is involved in the project we can outline the distribution of roles.

A study by Spasić, Njeguš and Pavlovic in 2014 defined the different stakeholders in MICE tourism in three categories: customers, intermediaries and providers as in the figure 1.

Figure 1, MICE tourism stakeholders

Customers	Intermediaries	Providers
Corporate companies	DMOs	Hotels
Government and public sectors	CVBs	Transport companies
Academic institutions	PCOs	Restaurants
Associations	**DMCs**	Audio/Visual companies
Non-profit organisations	Incentive travel agencies	Venues
SMERF groups	Event and activity organisers	Food and Beverage companies
	Venue finding agencies	Other suppliers
	Exhibition/Conference/Convention organisers	

Source: Spasić, Njeguš and Pavlovic, 2014

- Customer or "advertiser"

The customer, also known as the "advertiser", is the entity, company or institution that wishes to hold an event. In some companies, a person or department may be in charge of the event. For strategic or budgetary reasons, they can organise the event themselves without going through intermediary agencies. For those who wish to delegate part of the organisation to an intermediary, they become the clients of the event/travel agency.

The division of tasks depends on the client's field of action, he usually gives the brief, chooses the destination (or listens to the proposals), and takes care of the communication and contact with the guests. He is the final decision-maker on every element of the project.

- Travel and event agency

The event agency is the intermediary hired to manage all the logistics of the event. A project manager is responsible and becomes the link between all the stakeholders of the event. We can speak of an event agency or a travel agency because the characteristics are the same as long as they deal with group travel such as incentives, in some cases they can have both labels.

The agency, under the direction of the client, takes charge of the event from A to Z, transport, accommodation, catering and activities. In cooperation with the client, they imagine and create the program.

Then, the agency can decide to do everything itself, for example if the event takes place in the same city, it will deal directly with the providers. Or it can subcontract a part to another intermediary (Davidson, 2018). This is often the case if the event is taking place abroad in a destination that is not well known by the agency, it will be more efficient to go through a Destination Management Company (DMC) who is a specialist in the city or country. In this configuration there will be additional costs as each intermediary takes a margin.

With or without an intermediary, the agency has a major role in the project because it centralises all the information from the client, intermediaries and suppliers. The agency's project manager has a close relationship with the client, acting as an advisor who accompanies the client from the beginning to the end of the event and can follow the client over several years.

- DMC (Destination Management Company) and DMO (Destination Marketing Organization)

Destination Management Company or "DMC" is an agency that belongs to the intermediaries according to the stakeholder classification (Spasić, Njeguš, Pavlovic, 2014; Davidson, 2018). The DMC is a specialist in a destination, city or country. He knows the restaurants and the interesting activities according to the type of event. thanks to his expertise he is the most able to advise clients on the activity of the destination. He is in contact with all the service providers and can obtain discounts more easily thanks to his partnerships. In the organisation of the event, the DMC then takes care of booking restaurants, activities, service providers (photographers, DJs, etc.) and sometimes hotels and venues.

Taking on a DMC allows the event to be organised by local people who are already familiar with the problems that the client may encounter. For example, in an event abroad, the culture of the host country can lead to conflicts of understanding. The DMC agency project manager is then familiar with both cultures and can facilitate exchanges by adapting to both (Filloux and Vienne, 2021).

Advertisers who do not wish to go through an agency but who still want an intermediary on the spot can call on the DMC directly. Otherwise, the DMC's main clients are travel and event agencies (Spasić, Njeguš, Pavlovic, 2014)

Destination Marketing Organization or "DMO"s are non-profit organizations, they provide information about the destination for free because their goal is to market their area and schedule events to boost their economy. Their actions can include marketing campaigns, advertising, and public relations efforts to raise awareness and generate interest in the destination.

The difference between both intermediaries is that DMCs provide travel services and DMOs promote destinations.

- Venue finders

A venue finder is a tool or service that helps event organizers find the most appropriate venue for their event. It can be a website, an application, or an agency specialized in searching for venues for events (Filloux and Vienne, 2021).

By using a venue finder, the organizer can save time and effort by avoiding contacting each potential venue individually and comparing offers quickly and efficiently. Venue finder services may also offer additional benefits such as negotiating preferred rates, managing rental contracts, or providing recommendations for complementary services such as catering, accommodation, equipment rental, etc (Nolan, 2017).

- Hotel

The hotel as a stakeholder and a key partner for the client. As explained above, accommodation is the most important part of the budget. This is also where an exclusive group discount can be negotiated the most. The advantage of intermediaries, agencies and DMCs, is that they are used to negotiating and interacting with hotels, they can have better negotiations than the advertiser directly (Allen, 2008). On the other hand, more and more hotels are offering event management services almost like an agency with a project manager or even concierge assistance. The advertiser can therefore contract directly with the hotel if they do not want an intermediary.

In business trips the hotel pays particular attention to the group, the client (agency or advertiser) can ask for extras such as amenities, special treatment, private space (Lau, 2016). The project manager may have access to the rooms to add gifts or bouquets of flowers before check-in. There are therefore many exchanges between the hotel and the project manager beforehand, to exchange rooming lists and negotiate extras.

- Services providers

Finally, we find all the service providers for the event, such as restaurants, transport companies, activities; and for specific needs: florists, photographers, guides, translators, sound and light control for a venue, venues, DJs, beauties, gift suppliers, etc. The list is obviously not exhaustive.

Overall, we have seen the different stakeholders in the MICE market for an event abroad. The main client can therefore go through an intermediary or directly to the service providers. To summarize the different possible configurations, figure 2 shows the business travel supply chain with the relationships between advertisers, intermediaries and service providers (Davidson, 2018).

Figure 2, The corporate meetings supply chain
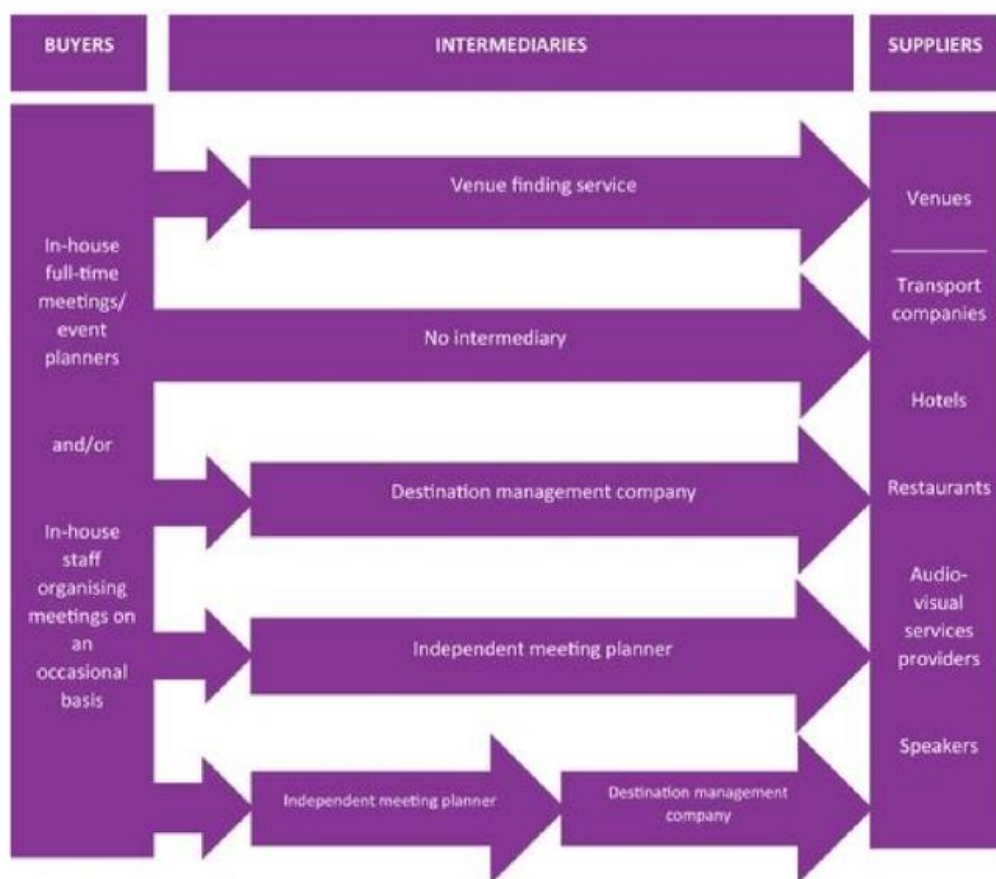
Source: Davidson, 2018

Legend: Independent meeting planner is event and travel agency

Buyer corresponds to advertiser.

3.3.4. Destination

There is no official ranking of the most popular incentive destinations. However, there are reports published by associations or companies in the sector. Global DMC Partners, the largest network of independent hand-picked Destination Management Companies conducted a survey in Q4 2022 with 200 professionals (corporate advertisers and intermediaries) to analyse trends in the MICE market.

Out of 200 respondents, 69% are based in the "USA and Canada", the remaining 31% form a group called "International". Among the international group, 85% are from Europe, and only 15% from South America, Asia and others.

The study analyses the regions of interest for both groups according to the events organised in 2022, Figure 3. The trends are quite different for each group. For respondents from North America, events were mainly organized in their region (1st place) as well as in nearby regions (Mexico, Caribbean, Central America). Europe reaches second place though. For the "international" group of respondents, which is mainly made up of Europeans, there is more diversity in the choice of regions. The first place is also attributed to its own region (Europe), then North America, Middle East, Asia and Mexico. Almost all continents are represented in this top 5.

Figure 3, Regions of interest according to events organised in 2022

In what regions did you organize programs in 2022?

US/CANADA

Value	Percent	Resp
United States/Canada	96.2%	
Europe & UK	47.3%	
Mexico	35.9%	
Caribbean	32.8%	
Central America	17.6%	
South America	11.5%	
Asia	11.5%	
Middle East	6.1%	
Australia & South Pacific	6.1%	
Africa	5.3%	

INTERNATIONAL

Value	Percent	Resp
Europe & UK	93.2%	
United States/Canada	55.9%	
Middle East	32.2%	
Asia	30.5%	
Mexico	23.7%	
South America	18.6%	
Africa	16.9%	
Australia & South Pacific	13.6%	
Central America	10.2%	
Caribbean	6.8%	

Source: Global DMC Partners, 2022

In a different article, Global DMC Partners has published its top 10 MICE destinations in 2022 for international destinations and the rising destinations for 2023 (excluding USA destinations), figure 4. In 2022 the destinations are mostly European countries, while the new trends in 2023 would be more "exotic" destinations. In the new trends, we can find paradise islands (Bahamas, Bali, Ibiza and Nevis), the diversity of rising continents (Dubai and Cape Town), and the return of Asia in the rankings (Tokyo, Vietnam, Bali).

Figure 4, Top destinations for MICE events

Top destinations 2022	Trending destinations 2023 *(unranked)*
1. Mexico	Athens, Greece
2. Spain	Bahamas
3. Iceland	Bali
4. Greece	Cape Town, South Africa
5. Italy	Dubai, UAE
6. Costa Rica	Ibiza
7. Denmark	Nevis
8. France	Stockholm, Sweden
9. England	Tokyo, Japan
10. Germany	Vietnam

Source: Global DMC Partners, 2022

Asia's tourism market is picking up since the reopening of its borders, it has long been impacted by covid restrictions as well as air inflation. Asian countries such as Japan, Indonesia, China and Thailand were among the most popular incentive destinations prior to COVID-19 (Global Destination Index 2019 by Global DMC, Pacific World and ACCESS).

Selection criteria

The selection of the destination of an Incentive is trendy depending on the year. The company that organizes an award event every year has to reinvent itself to keep its image as an active and trendy company. It must propose new destinations, especially if the guests are going to be invited several times. The selection of the destination can be analysed by criteria.

The first two selection criteria are appeal and safety (De Sèze, 2002; Incentive Travel Industry Index and SITE foundation, 2019). De Sèze adds the criterion of exoticism. The elements looked carefully are infrastructure; access; image and notoriety of the site; climate; quality of services offered; quality/price ratio (De Sèze, 2002; Incentive Travel Industry Index and SITE foundation, 2019).

The choice of destination is a major factor in the success of the event, it is the first element that the guests will judge, which will make them want to participate and put them in a positive frame of mind. Companies must obviously adapt the whole event to their budget, but the destination remains a priority element in the decision-making process.

However, according to the Global DMC Partners 2022 report cited above, recent increases in airfare costs are affecting destination choice. 68% of companies answered "yes" to the question *"Are rising airfare costs affecting the destinations that you choose for your upcoming programs?"* Some commented that they would prefer a destination that is accessible by train if the guests are from the same region. For international companies inviting employees from different regions, the problem cannot be solved by other means of transport, so the destination is less affected by the airfare criterion.

3.3.5. Factors of satisfaction

The factors that contribute to the satisfaction of an incentive trip may vary depending on the participants and their expectations, but in general, the following factors can contribute to a satisfactory experience for the participants:

- Unique and memorable experiences: Incentive trips that offer unique, once-in-a-lifetime experiences can be particularly memorable for participants and contribute to their overall satisfaction (Filloux and Vienne, 2021).
- Attractive destination: destination will contribute to a memorable experience.

- Well-planned program: interesting and varied activities to keep participants engaged and interested but also not too busy program to let free time for leisure to the guests.
- Personalization: customizing the incentive trip to each participant's interests and preferences can enhance their satisfaction and sense of value.
- Quality of accommodations and services: guests expect a certain level of service. The company must play on the quality of the service to show its strength (Van der Wagen, 2010).
- Social engagement: organizing group activities and meetings with colleagues can help to strengthen relationships and engagement with the company.
- Ease of logistics: A well-organized and smoothly executed incentive trip can contribute to participants' overall satisfaction by reducing stress and inconvenience.

Lee, Choi, and Chiang (2017) examine the impact of multiple quality attributes on overall satisfaction for incentive events. The study collected data from 181 participants who attended an incentive event in Taiwan and analysed the data using structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques.

The results of the study indicated that location, program content, and food quality were significant factors that influenced overall satisfaction for the incentive event. Location and program content had a positive direct effect on overall satisfaction, while food quality had a positive indirect effect on overall satisfaction through its impact on perceived service quality. The study also found that perceived service quality mediated the relationship between multi-quality attributes and overall satisfaction.

3.4. Evolution of MICE market

3.4.1. MICE overview

It is difficult to find an official measure of the MICE market because it is a fragmented and diverse market, involving a wide variety of players, activities and destinations. In addition, MICE events are often organized by companies and associations for specific needs, which makes it difficult to collect complete and accurate data on the whole market. However, there are estimates of the size of the MICE market based on surveys of market players, as well as on analysis of economic and tourism data.

To get an idea of the size of the market we will use the report on business tourism worldwide "Global business travel" produced by Statista in 2022 based on data from several research institutes which will be specified.

Market evolution

Until 2019 the MICE market has been growing steadily for several years. One indicator that shows the growth of this market is the total expenditure of business tourists worldwide, figure 5. This corresponds to the expenditure made by people attending congresses, meetings, and trade fairs, for instance. Its growth to US$1.450 trillion just prior to the pandemic reflects an increase in the number of business tourists and spending on these events.

Figure 5, Expenditure of business tourists worldwide from 2001 to 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars)
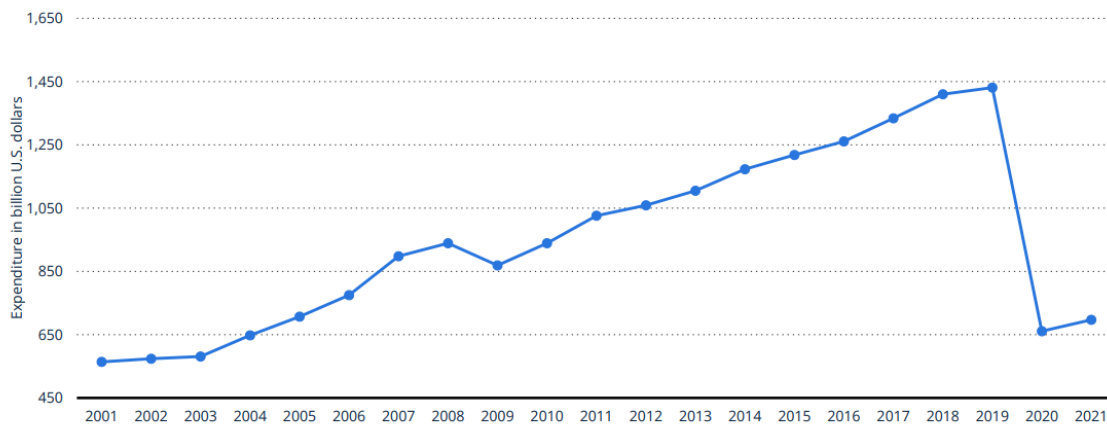
Source: Statista, 2022, based on Oxford Economics and WTTC data

The business travel segment represents about 20% of the tourism market in 2019 (Statista, 2022). This proportion has remained the same in 2021, which shows the stability even after a major crisis (Statista, 2022).

According to International Meeting Statistics of the Union of International Associations (UIA), in 2016, approximately 458 000 international meetings held worldwide. However, it is almost impossible to evaluate the entire MICE market in terms of the number of events because most of them are organized directly by companies internally and are therefore not necessarily included in the calculations of groups and associations.

Covid impact

Obviously the covid period had a strong impact on the events sector which was at a standstill for several months. Gatherings were forbidden and the event was put aside by the companies which had to concentrate their efforts on relaunching production first. Uncertainty has marked the professionals in the field with the risk of cancellations at the last moment until the end of 2021. Asia in particular is the continent that has been slowest to reduce its restrictions and open its borders to tourists.

As a result, the percentage change in expenditure of business tourists worldwide was -50% in 2020 to bring total expenditure down to the same level as in 2014, figure 5.

Virtual events were set up (see digital events section) but the resumption of real events was desired by all. The early days have been difficult, but the outlook is good. According to the forecast made by Allied Market Research in 2020, the market value of the business travel industry worldwide will reach around 2 000 billion U.S. dollars in 2028 (Statista, 2022). The economic impact of COVID-19 will therefore only be temporary according to the studies.

"Revenge travel" is an explanation for the rapid growth of the tourism business in the short term after the covid (Xerfi, 2022). People have been deprived of travelling for more than a year, which leads to a rapid increase in visitors when the borders are opened. The consequence on business travel is also noticeable as guests are more willing to travel.

Nevertheless, COVID-19 has left its mark on the sector. Still in 2022 the stressors of business travel are covid oriented: Understanding COVID-19 regulations and preparing documentation 54%, Rebooking in case of changes or cancellations 44% (Statista, 2022 based on BCD Travel data)

Economic impacts of MICE

The MICE market has a strong economic impact on the destination where guests are received (Simha, 2021). The impacts can be direct or indirect.

Direct economic impacts:
- Participants' expenditure on accommodation, catering, transport, tourist activities, shopping, etc. As mentioned before, business tourists are the ones with the most budget and potential for the host venues.
- Expenditure by event organizers on venue hire, equipment, event agency services, etc.
- Expenditure on promoting the destination to attract MICE events. For instance, campaign by DMO (Destination Marketing Organization).

Indirect economic impacts:
- Spin-offs for local businesses that supply goods and services to MICE events (suppliers of audio-visual equipment, furniture, decoration, caterers, etc.).
- Stays extended by participants on a personal and individual basis. This has a strong economic impact on hotels (De Sèze, 2002).

- The creation of direct and indirect jobs linked to MICE events (jobs in hotels, catering, transport, leisure, security services, etc.).
- Positive effects on the image and reputation of the destination, which can stimulate leisure tourism and investment.
- The impact on local tax revenues, due to taxes on participants' and organizers' expenditure, as well as wider economic spin-offs.
- The contribution to the foreign exchange reserves in the country. Tourism is the primary income (Thommandru and al, 2021)

3.4.2. Market transformations

The events market adapts to demand. By default, it follows the major societal and technological transformations. Periods of crisis such as that of the crisis of the COVID-19 accelerate certain transformations.

Supply chain

The value chain of the event industry has been evolving for several years. Due to the search for cost optimization, or the desire of certain players to diversify, traditional relationships are more flexible and can be different for each project. We have seen in the stakeholder's section the different possibilities of supply chain, from the client to the service providers, passing or not by intermediaries.

The arrival of new digital intermediaries has changed the way we work. Now it is easily possible to organize an event without going through an agency, and it can even be more cost-effective. The main advantage of agencies was their unique knowledge of the sector, which offered the client a catalogue of valuable possibilities. Nowadays this information can be found on the internet. Venues finders, for example, operate on a digital platform model that is fast and attractive to clients because its remuneration system is commission-based (Xerfi 2019). As an example, already in 2014, about 60% of professionals searched for information and chose their venue through the internet (Spasić, Njeguš & Pavlovic, 2014).

Traditional intermediaries (business travel specialists, travel agencies) also face competition from hotel groups and venue managers. The expertise of hotel groups in group

management and their concierge skills enable them to offer clients direct event management services. This is often the case for simple seminars or conferences where the main venue is the hotel and its catering service. For clients, this represents a cost saving by eliminating the intermediaries.

The MICE sector is therefore gradually breaking down. In response, the intermediary agencies are responding by diversifying too. The aim is to bring added value to the agency and to adapt to new demands. They are responding by bringing related activities in-house, such as opening their own photo studio, or offering a tour leader service for events. The development of digital platforms managed by agencies is taking a prominent place in event organization (Spasić, Njeguš & Pavlovic, 2014; Xerfi, 2019). The purpose of these platforms is to manage participants and costs. The offer of agencies is then transformed towards data analysis for future event optimization.

The structure of the market offer with the digitalization of the players tends towards a binary market with, on the one hand, a low-cost offer, accessible directly by clients, and on the other hand, a premium offer proposing secondary services (Xerfi, 2019).

Digital events

In recent years, the digitization of events has begun to pick up speed. Since the 1990s, when event planners first used big screens and sound systems to improve the audience experience, technology has been used to support live events. Since then, technology has advanced and been integrated into the production, planning, and promotion of events more and more.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's restrictions on in-person gatherings, event organizers had to develop new ways to hold events online, which dramatically expedited the digitalization of events.

Digital events require more or less complicated logistics, e.g. conferences are quite simple, others a bit more complex like virtual fairs.

Digital events, especially in the beginning, faced different problems than normal events. The IT difficulties encountered pushed not only the experts but also the individuals in general to improve their technological skills. However, 100% virtual events have left a part of the population behind. There is a division between the generations born in the new

technologies and the older ones. Older people are less able to control the tools and are therefore less likely to participate in digital events (Perdana and Mokhtar, 2022).

Moreover, virtual events raise a real problem of monetization. How to evaluate the real cost of the event, how to make a profit as an intermediary to support the company... questions that have been explored during this year of restrictions.

Digital events are, thanks to COVID-19, mastered and integrated into the event industry. The digital demand has remained after the pandemic, especially for the meeting market such as seminars and meetings. The hybrid format allows to meet the new societal expectations that have emerged during the covid: the need for flexibility to better balance personal and professional life. These changes in work organization are also influenced by the new generation of employees, Generation Z, who break the codes of conventional work (Jayathilake et al, 2021).

Hybrid models are now being integrated into meeting events. On the other hand, 100% digital events have not really been adopted by participants and organizers. Some events do not work virtually because the visual, contact, touch is essential for some sectors (Simha, 2021). A large part of the MICE sector, particularly the leisure incentive sector, makes no sense in virtual terms. Physical events remain for the majority the most suitable and effective way to achieve objectives.

The figure 6 shows the preferred corporate events' setup worldwide in 2023 by region (Statista, 2022).

Figure 6, Favourite formats of business meetings planned worldwide in 2023, by region
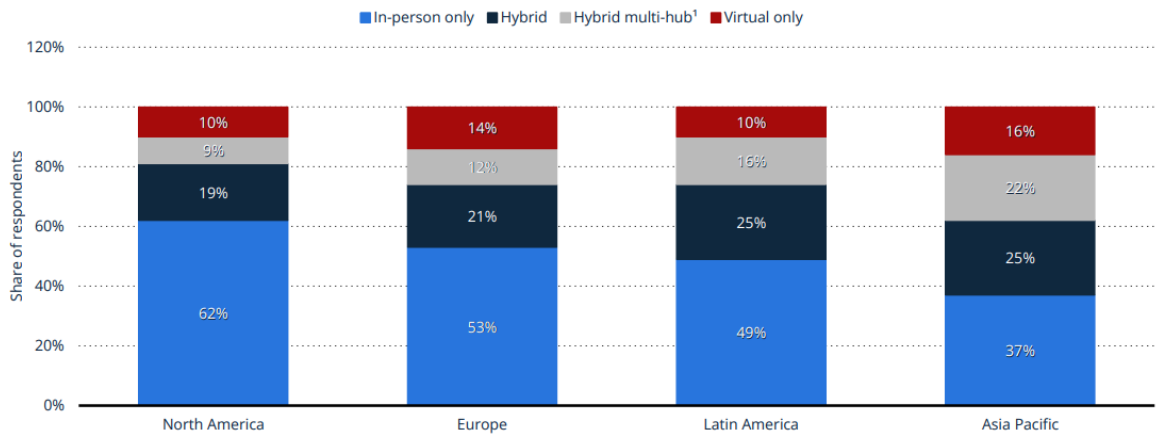
Source: Statista, 2022, based on Amex GBT data

Hybrid models represent a significant share of preferences in 2023, particularly for Asia with 47%. Asia stands out from the other regions because of its low rate of in-person events, which can be explained by the health restrictions still in place in some countries and the increased risk of event cancellations due to a potential outbreak of COVID-19. What the regions have in common is the low percentage of preference for virtual events only, less than 16%. The in-person format is the preferred format in all regions.

3.5. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) tendencies

3.5.1. Definition CSR

The notion of CSR, or corporate social responsibility, strives to incorporate social, environmental, and economic concerns into company activities. It is predicated on the notion that businesses must act responsibly toward their stakeholders since they have a part to play in addressing the social and environmental issues facing our society (shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, local communities, etc.).

In order to minimize the company's negative effects on the environment and society while boosting its positive effects, CSR procedures and policies are implemented. It can manifest as behaviours like enacting diversity and inclusion policies, adopting environmental standards and the involvement of the company in projects of general interest, etc.

CSR should be integrated cross-functionally into the company's strategy and governance rather than being restricted to a straightforward charitable or communication approach. All of the company's stakeholders, including its management and employees, must be constantly concerned about it.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has changed very fast in recent years. It was viewed as just a philanthropic concern before, but it is now incorporated transversally into corporate strategy and governance, making it a crucial issue for companies. Climate change, poverty, inequality, discrimination, and corruption can be used in particular to explain how CSR has evolved. These difficulties have forced companies to reconsider their obligations to society and the environment.

Awareness at the international level was led by the United Nations (UN) in 2015 when it adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aimed at eradicating poverty, fighting inequality, and protecting the planet. This initiative encourages companies to commit to these goals by integrating CSR principles into their strategy and governance.

At the national level, regulatory measures and legislation have been put in place in many countries to promote CSR. In France, for example, the law on corporate duty of care was adopted in 2017. Companies must identify and prevent human rights and environmental abuses caused by their activities and those of their subsidiaries and subcontractors.

It is therefore since the last few years that companies have become aware of the importance of CSR for their performance and sustainability. Companies that integrate CSR into their strategy generally have better financial performance, a better image and a greater capacity to please customers. CSR has evolved in its themes. It now includes issues such as diversity and inclusion, transparency and fiscal responsibility, cybersecurity, etc. CSR is also very important for employees, who increasingly need their company to be involved in societal issues so that they can identify with the values it holds (Jayathilake et al, 2021).

3.5.2. CRS in event industry

The MICE sector is one of the most dynamic sectors of the tourism industry. However, the MICE sector is the most polluting and energy intensive in tourism, so it faces significant challenges in terms of environmental responsibility.

First of all, for host venues, especially for conferences, conventions, fairs and events of this type, the environmental challenges will be related to mass consumption.

The activity leads to a very high energy consumption due to electronic equipment such as lighting, sound systems, air conditioning systems and computers.

The consumption of goods is also to be taken into account. The events generate an important quantity of waste, packaging, paper, cardboard... The management of this waste is of course a major challenge for the venues. Generally, waste management policies are implemented with sorting garbage cans, recyclable materials, awareness. Events often lead to food waste because it is difficult to guess exactly how much guests will eat. In this case donations are possible, but difficult and supervised.

Regulations are established to reduce the impact of this sector, at the European level the GreenEvents initiative in 2013 by the European Commission encourages event organizers to adopt sustainable practices. In France, for example, the subject is beginning to enter the legislation. As early as 2010 with the Grenelle 2 law which requires the implementation of waste management plans for large public events. Or more recently in 2020 the law on circular economy which introduces new obligations on food waste reduction and preventive communication to participants.

Secondly, the impact of MICE events on greenhouse gas emissions, are notable. This is mainly due to the travel of participants, but also activities of suppliers and organizers. Air travel is a particular source of greenhouse gas emissions. In 2018, commercial aviation contributed 2.6% to global greenhouse gas emissions, and between 2000 and 2018, it contributed 5.1% to anthropogenic global warming (Amant et al, 2022).

Finally, events can have an impact on biodiversity and local ecosystems. This is particularly the case for incentives and seminars in foreign countries where the trip takes the form of an organized tour. There are often group activities to discover and enjoy the destination. The activities have an impact more or less important according to their nature. Sometimes the organized activities can damage the biodiversity of the host country if they do not respect nature.

3.5.3. Measuring the environmental impact of events

The carbon footprint is the measurement tool used to assess the environmental impact of an activity, its contribution to climate change and more specifically the greenhouse gas emissions related to this activity. This impact is expressed in carbon dioxide equivalent or CO2e.

The carbon footprint is calculated by physical emission bills. It is an estimate of the amount consumed multiplied by the emission factor of the unit consumed (Watrinet, 2023).

The carbon footprint is used to calculate the consumption of an event. There is no legal obligation to do so, but some companies do. Public events are more committed to provide accurate reports because they must respect sustainability rules. For internal events it is according to the guidelines of the company.

In an event, the calculation of the carbon footprint takes into account all the items of CO_2 consumption, it can be transportation, accommodation, activities, catering, purchases and supplies for the event, etc.

Not all events consume the same amount of CO2 because they do not have the same programs. Indeed, an event taking place in a single location, such as a conference or a trade show, will have significant expenses in material and energy consumption. While an incentive event may have more activities or restaurants.

Kitamura et al (2020) studied the contribution of each item to the carbon footprint by type of event. This study, based on the event industry in Japan, gives us a representation of the distribution of the elements of an event that emit the most CO2.

Acronym M, I, C, (ICCA), E for Meeting, Incentive, Convention (based on an international conference standard from the International Congress and Convention Association), Exhibition.

Figure 7 breaks down the 804.8 t-CO2eq carbon footprint, by item (transportation, planning, accommodation, souvenir and shopping, food and beverage).

What is obvious is that transportation is the main source of CO2 emissions with 56%. Then the "planning" item, which represents the tourism program and the administrative management of the event, is at 13%. Just after accommodation and souvenir and shopping follow.

For the distribution by event the interesting element in this figure is that the incentive represents 19% of the 56% of the transport. It is therefore the type of event that consumes the most transport.

Figure 7, Contribution of M,I,C(ICCA),E in carbon footprint of event
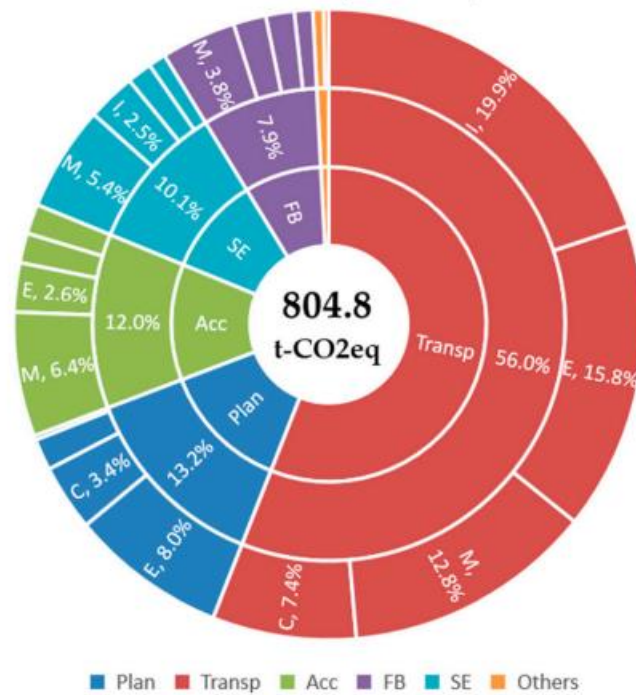
Source: Kitamura et al, 2020

Next the study shows the top 5 contributors in detail for each type of event in the figure 8. The main contributors vary according to the categories of events, which shows that the challenges of each are really different. If we analyse the Incentive part, transportation is particularly important, whether it is international or domestic.

Figure 8, Top five contributors to the carbon footprint by event category

	M	I	C-ICCA	C-JNTO	E
1	(O) Domestic Transport	(O) International Transport	(OP) International Flights	(OP) International Flights	(OP) International Flights
2	(O) Accommodation	(O) Domestic Transport	(E) Shipping	(DP) Domestic Flight	(DP) Domestic Flight
3	(OP) Souvenirs and shopping	(OP) Souvenirs and shopping	(OP) Accommodation	(DP) Accommodation	(E) Shipping
4	(O) Food and beverages	(O) Accommodation	(DP) Domestic Flights	(O) Transportation of up to venue prefectures	(E) Conference decoration and construction
5	(DP) Souvenirs and shopping	(O) Food and beverages	(OP) Souvenirs and shopping	(O) Food and beverages	(DP) Train transport

Source: Kitamura et al, 2020

To conclude, within the MICE sector, the environmental aspect of CSR can be measured and detailed through the carbon footprint. This allows to see the most important points and to define the improvement areas.

Monetary compensation:

The carbon footprint can then be transformed into a monetary value through a monetary factor. The kilograms or tons of CO_2 emissions become an exact sum. This monetary equivalence allows to value the impact of an event on the environment and then to compensate it by buying carbon vouchers. Offsetting means investing this amount in an association that will work for the environment by reforesting forests or by investing in projects to repair the planet. The logic is to reach a net zero level at the global level.

There is no legal obligation to offset one's carbon footprint in the event industry for the moment, but regulations could very well lead to this in certain countries. Some companies impose it and communicate on it.

On the other hand, this can quickly turn into greenwashing if the company is not part of a real CSR approach. Greenwashing is the fact of communicating an image of ecological and responsible company when in fact it is not really committed. If a company offsets its carbon footprint with carbon vouchers but does not try to really improve its actions through a global strategy to reduce emissions, then it is not transparent and committed. Offsetting must be integrated into the process of change (Climateseed, 2022).

3.5.4. The application of CSR to incentive events

This thesis focuses more on the incentive branch of MICE events, and business tourism events with similar characteristics. Given the completely different nature of the programs, the application of CSR will not be based on the same elements as the organizers of fairs or conferences for example, as well as general public events. Business tourism requires more leisure activities, so providers have different issues. CSR can be controlled via labels, via the service providers who play a major role in the event, or via the choice of destination.

3.5.4.1. Labels in events

Event labels allow an event or a company to be recognized as respecting environmental, social or ethical standards. They respond to a growing demand from consumers and parties. They have become more and more common in the event industry in recent years. These certifications allow event organizers to show their CSR commitment, on sustainability and ethical aspects. It is a sign of confidence for clients and participants.

ISO 20121 is one of the best known internationally in the events sector. It was created for the London Olympic Games in 2012 and is now one of the most widely used. This label requires that event organizers take into account the environmental, social and economic impacts of their activity and implement measures to reduce these impacts. The advantage of this label is that it can be adopted by all companies in the supply chain, whether they are agencies, DMCs, providers, venues, etc. (Sandy, 2020).

Other ISO standards can be applied to the event industry such as ISO 14001 and ISO 9001, but ISO 20121 is the label that encompasses the entire event industry.

The Green Globe is another international label that is used in the event sector rather professional. It is awarded to organizations that demonstrate their commitment, it contains 44 criteria and more than 380 indicators concerning the three dimensions of sustainable development (Sandy, 2020).

Other labels are developed on a national level which is more difficult to recognize when companies work with international clients. There are also labels that are more specific to certain actors, such as labels for services only, for example.

3.5.4.2. Providers

In the tourism business, the role of the organizer is to ensure that CSR is respected throughout the value chain. Indeed, as we have seen previously, the supply chain can be very large with many intermediaries and service providers. It is the providers who have the final action, they are the ones who deliver the service. The organizer, the advertiser or the agency must make sure to choose the service providers who correspond to the expectations.

The guarantee of the respect of CSR by the service providers can be verified with the help of labels but is generally done through trust. The service provider can adapt to the client's

request according to the advertiser's obligations. To illustrate this, we can again use the Global DMC Partners survey conducted in Q4 2022. In the "international" category (which is mainly composed of European companies), when asked *"Do you require your vendors/suppliers/venues to have a certification of sustainability*?" 50% answered sometimes, 21% yes, 19% no and 11% unsure. The majority answer "sometimes" shows that certificates are not always required and that the market is still flexible in this respect.

To meet the growing demand of customers, service providers have changed their practices. Now many new businesses are developing on the market and are 100% eco-responsible. For example, electric car rental companies with drivers for events like Caocao Mobility.

3.5.4.3. Destinations

The choice of destination can play a role in the ease of applying CSR to an event. Some destinations have developed a lot in this direction recently. The benefits of a sustainable destination are to attract tourists who are concerned about these issues, which are becoming more and more numerous. These destinations are also becoming more popular with agencies and companies for organizing events. Infrastructures are being adapted to become more energy-efficient and to be able to host events in better conditions. Social measures are being taken to make the whole city more responsible.

Changes can be initiated by DMOs, for example, who are responsible for promoting and improving destinations.

Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) has released its new 2022 report on the results, trends and rankings of the most responsible destinations.

GDS-Index identifies key trends:

- 80% of GDS-Index destinations now have a sustainable tourism policy and strategy. This percentage has almost doubled since 2019, showing its rapid evolution.
- Democratic participation of citizens in the decision-making process is increasing in many destinations.

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is evolving, but there is still room for improvement.
- More destinations are getting certifications.
- Only 26% of DMOs are measuring the environmental, economic, and social impact of business events compared to 48% for impact of tourism.

GDS-Index gave awards in three categories, figure 9. Firstly, the leadership award for Gothenburg which has a score of 92.8%. Secondly, the best improvement award for Bangkok. Thirdly, the innovation award for Belfast with its food initiative.

Figure 9, GDS-Award winners 2022

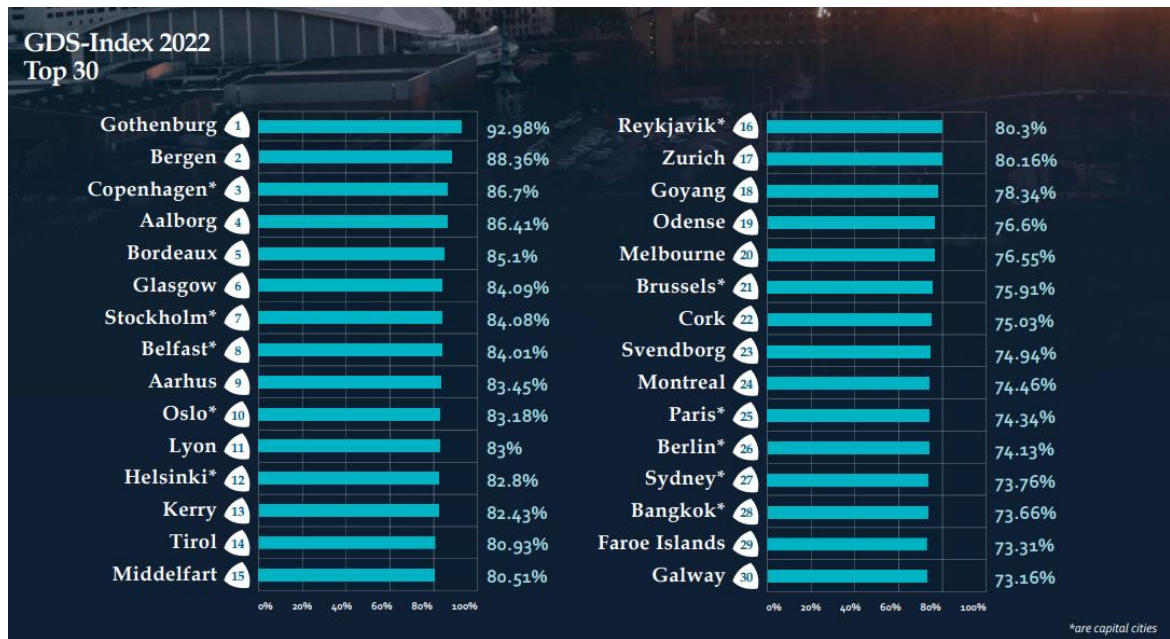*Source: GDS-Index, 2022*

Finally, the ranking of the 30 most sustainable cities, figure 10 (GDS-Index, 2022).

This ranking presents the cities with the best sustainability indices. Northern European cities are in the majority in this ranking. Some French cities are present and several capitals (represented by *).

Figure 10, GDS-Index 2022: top 30 sustainable cities

Source: GDS-Index, 2022

4. Practical part

4.1. Introduction

Objectives of the research:

The thesis seeks to identify the different motivations and barriers of sustainability in events. The aim is to understand how CSR is applied in events, the progress of the sector and the challenges faced.

Scope of the research:

As the MICE sector is composed of several segments with completely different approaches, we will focus the practical part on business tourism and in particular on incentives (leisure trip) or related seminars. In this sense, the main feature is the notion of an organised trip with leisure activities, accommodation, with or without working workshops. The target of the guests can be internal or external.

The research is based on primary data collected in France. Agence Lully is based in Paris and works with French clients or international companies. The project managers interviewed are French and work for mostly international companies with headquarters or a branch based in Paris.

Research plan:

In order to give a comprehensive answer to the problem and to take into consideration several points of view, the research is organised in three parts:

- Firstly, with an overview of the developments, the current situation and the challenges of sustainability in the event industry from the perspective of an event agency through an interview with the CEO.
- Then, a comparative analysis of the CSR obligations of companies in events and the points of view of project managers on the advertiser side, with 5 interviews.
- Finally, to illustrate with a concrete example, a calculation of the carbon footprint of an incentive event.

The different parts of this research will allow us to analyse the challenges of the market by comparing the expectations of companies with the perception of an agency. The example analysed in the third part will illustrate some of the aspects discussed in the interviews and allow conclusions to be drawn.

4.2. Research on event agency

4.2.1. Research approach

The practical part of this thesis begins with a statement on sustainable event management by the CEO of an event agency.

This interview is a qualitative unstructured type which is considered a "controlled conversation" biased in favour of the interviewer (Jamshed, 2014). Themes have been thought out in advance to guide the respondent, but the exact questions arise from the conversation.

The interview lasted 1h15, with video activated to analyse non-verbal language.

The analysis, based on the verbatim script, summarises the different themes discussed to present the thoughts of the agency's CEO in a structured way. It follows the principle of Content Analysis, a method developed by Berelson (1952), which consists of explaining and reporting on the interview as objectively and reliably as possible (Andreani and Conchon, 2005).

4.2.2. Agence Lully presentation

The Lully agency is a B-to-B events agency positioned on the high-end. Cédric Onillon, founder and CEO, and his team of project managers organise various types of events. The agency specialises in three areas: sports events, with expertise in Formula 1; corporate events, incentives, seminars and parties; and, more recently, luxury. The agency was created in 2015 and is growing rapidly, hiring constantly.

Cédric Onillon developed his expertise in other agencies before creating his own, he has a great knowledge of the sector and is interested in the future challenges of the event industry. The meeting with this CEO was very enriching to understand the ambivalence of this sector.

4.2.3. Analysis of the interview

4.2.3.1. CRS developments

The interview started by asking about the evolution of CSR in the event industry.

CSR is the major topic of the new generations. CSR is now present in all client requests. The interviewee speaks of the "*hyper presence*" of this subject in companies and in the reflections.

According to the interviewee, two major changes have occurred since COVID in the event industry: digitalization and the integration of CSR.

These issues already existed before, but the pandemic allowed them to be really integrated. These two mutations followed a similar integration process, first a period of very high demand and then a slight slowdown following an awareness of the difficulties. Virtual events were at their peak after the pandemic, but then they were no longer popular, so face-to-face events became the norm. For CSR, it's the same path, after the acceleration after COVID, there is now an awareness of the problems and ambivalence of CSR in the event industry.

According to him, the events sector is "*rarely prescriptive*", it follows market and social trends. "*The event industry is only a reflection of society*", explains Cédric.

However, once the developments are integrated, there is no turning back. An interesting fact about innovations noted by the interviewee is that in the event industry "*we don't replace, we add*". Developments are integrated into practices.

"For example, when I started in the event industry, I never had a topic on diets, we had a fixed menu for everyone. Today, on an event, we have between 7 and 12 different menus because we have to integrate the diets of each person".

He adds that societal issues change with each generation. "*In my generation, for example, the subject was drink-driving. For you today it's obvious. For the new generation that is coming, it will be CSR that will be obvious*". Moreover, he finds that the CSR issue has been carried by the employees. He first observed "*a refusal by some people to participate in certain events*" which accelerated the awareness of companies for change.

4.2.3.2. CSR, balance between different aspects

CSR is an approach to be taken as a whole. Cédric emphasises the balance between the societal and environmental aspects.

"*When we talk about CSR today, especially in the events sector, we tend to put a lot of emphasis on the environmental aspect and little on the societal aspect. And yet it has a big impact*".

According to him, we must not forget that totally abandoning a solution for environmental reasons can have an impact on society. He takes the example of Morocco and all the countries that are economically based on tourism and are mainly accessible by air. If the plane is banned by everyone, it is a whole country that will be socially impacted.

On the social aspect of CSR, he believes that a lot of progress has already been made because the subject has been worked on for a long time. Actions are already in place in the event industry "*whether it's about the working conditions of employees, the working conditions of suppliers, or how we pay our partners*".
He explains that the environmental aspect came later, hence the lack of regulations.

4.2.3.3. The CO2 impact of events and the carbon footprint calculation

In the following conversation, the interviewee discussed the environmental impact through CO2 emissions. He explained that calculating the carbon footprint of the event is "*an important request from our clients*".
The CO2 calculators give an amount in euros of the value of the event, and it is possible to compensate by buying carbon vouchers. He is critical of this "*highly regulated*" market, which is not very transparent in terms of monitoring the investment. Moreover, he added,

"*the disadvantage of these carbon vouchers is that they do not encourage people to reduce their consumption*". He thinks that carbon offsetting is not necessarily the most appropriate solution.

Cédric also notes the "*perverse effect*" of the carbon footprint. In the event industry, the volume of CO2 is sometimes impressive and can worry clients. The reality is much more ambivalent because a large part of the carbon footprint is not specific to the event. In the context of incentive travel, the CO2 emitted for the daily life of the participants, such as meals, is a normal amount that is necessarily spent.

"*The problem is that the client forgets that the guests also have a carbon footprint when they are at home*", he says, adding that since the activities are done in groups, the footprint is not necessarily higher than at the individual level. He adds, "*In my experience, if you compare the average CO2 consumption of the event with the average consumption of a French person, the difference is only in transport*".

4.2.3.4. The different issues depending on the target audience

When asked about the difficulties of integrating CSR into the luxury and high-end sector, the interviewee rectified the problem by turning it around. The problem is not luxury, it is the target audience. A distinction must be made between B-to-B corporate events aimed at internal employees and B-to-B-to-C events which invite external people, clients, journalists and partners.

"*When a company organises an internal event, it does not have too many problems imposing its choices on its employees. When you do B-to-B-to-C, it is much more difficult to impose some form of regulation, restriction or constraint on a client*".

The objectives of external events are different, the aim is to build customer loyalty, to make them buy, the company takes a risk, "*if the destination or the trip is not to your liking, you lose the customer*". This is particularly true of luxury events, but not only.

4.2.3.5. Labels and quality of providers

The interviewee gave his opinion on labels in the event industry, according to him a label is a guarantee of commitment, but not having one does not mean the absence of a CSR approach.

He thinks that it is a controversial subject, the ISO 20121 label for example "*allows us to become aware of and integrate CSR into the company's processes*", the company's objective is to improve, the label does not focus on long-term actions.

When asked about Agence Lully's desire to obtain a label, he replied that for the time being his agency was in the midst of a "*company transformation*" due to a "*growth crisis*". The process of obtaining the label takes time and has a financial cost; he will start the process when he can free up time for these issues. For him, it is usually the agency that responds to the demands of clients who arrive with a brief and already defined CSR objectives.

To the question "As an agency, are you very careful with the partners and subcontractors you choose?" He justified this answer by the agency's positioning at the top of the range. Clients are looking for quality in their choice of service providers, so the agency has "t*he chance to do long-term work and not be constrained by budgetary constraints*".

The more qualitative service providers are more expensive and are generally those who best integrate CSR. On the social level, for example, a 5* hotel will pay its employees better than one with fewer resources. On the environmental level, Cédric adds, "*The hotel industry has taken up the CSR issue from the start and now all hotels, especially the big chains, optimise water, towel washing, disposable items, etc.*".

4.2.3.6. Clients' CSR policies

The questions related to this part of the interview sought to understand what companies are doing in practice and the difficulties they are facing.

RES is now included in the briefs of clients, especially in calls for tender where the criteria imposed are very clear. The interviewee adds "*it is not applied everywhere, but in any case it is no longer possible not to include it in the response*". However, during the interview he emphasised that CSR is a European reflection and that international clients do not have the same expectations.

As transport is the most CO2 intensive part of an event, access to the event is increasingly discussed by clients. "*It's true that we have a lot of clients who now restrict themselves to*

train destinations". The means of transport is therefore a concrete change that is being implemented by companies.

On the other hand, the interviewee underlines the complexity of this subject, "*it's never that simple*". A train journey for the French is perceived as the most ecological means of transport, however when the train crosses the German border, the electricity is produced with coal, so it is difficult to calculate the impact.

The same goes for water bottles instead of plastic ones, when participants are in insecure countries, they won't want to drink tap water, explains Cedric.

Following on from the discussion on transport and choice of destination, the interviewee notes a major difficulty in integrating CSR into events of this type: international seminars.

"*The guests are spread out globally. We are organising an event in Bali where the clients arrive by plane. But as they come from all over the world, whatever destination they choose, they will have to fly*".

This is why, according to him, the subject is complex, and the agency's objective is to optimise the event without being able to produce a 100% ecological event. "*The CSR reflection will therefore focus on how to integrate it into the destination, the hotel, the activities, etc.*".

When asked about the flexibility of the client's budget and the CSR trade-off in their choice of service provider, the interviewee said that at the top end of the market, as at Lully, "*price is not necessarily a constraint*". For the same quality, the client may increase the budget a little for certain services that would be more CSR.

The lack of service providers able to respond to large events can be a brake on the negotiating power of the agency, which has no other alternatives. However, the interviewee recognises that there is change and that efforts are being made.

To conclude this interview, here is a quote from Cédric: "*All human activity has an impact, whatever it is. The objective today is how do I minimise my impact on my environment? There is no ready-made solution to say that we can do events without having an impact on the environment*".

4.3. Research on adviser companies' side

4.3.1. Research approach

The second research of this practical part is a comparative analysis of the expectations of different companies.

Five qualitative interviews were conducted to compare them and to highlight trends in this market. Semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews with predefined open-ended questions. The questions can be adapted slightly depending on the course of the interview, but the themes must remain the same in order to analyse and compare the results (Jamshed, 2014).

Sample

The companies were chosen according to the condition of organising incentive and seminar travel events to match the study.

In the interests of confidentiality, the names of the interviewees and their companies will not be disclosed. They will be referred to by letters or numbers.

The interviews were conducted remotely via video meeting or telephone.

Summary of interviews:
- Interviewee 1 – "J.": 20 minutes via Zoom meeting without video
- Interviewee 2 – "H.": 15 minutes via Zoom meeting
- Interviewee 3 – "E.": 20 minutes via telephone
- Interviewee 4 – "Ch.": 25 minutes via Zoom meeting
- Interviewee 5 – "C.": 35 minutes via Zoom meeting

For the sake of clarity, a summary table of key ideas has been created and placed first.

Then, the analysis, based on the verbatim script, summarises the different themes discussed and compares interviewees' thoughts. It follows the principle of Content Analysis, a method developed by Berelson (1952), which consists of explaining and reporting on the interview as objectively and reliably as possible (Andreani and Conchon, 2005).

4.3.2. Summary table of interviews

Figure 11, Summary table of interviews

	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
CHARACTERISTICS					
Company - Sector - Size	Insurance company 1500 employees in France	Federation of pharmacy associations Small company but large network of pharmacy partners in France	Telecommunication company 140 000 employees worldwide	Consulting company 2 600 employee worldwide	Real estate consulting company 90 000 employees worldwide
Event characteristics - **Internal/ external** - **Guests** - **Event type** - **Guest origins** - **Objectives**	- **External**: Guests: client/brokers Event type: trip VIP Guest origins: mostly from France Objectives: maintain relationships, initiate purchases - **Internal**: Guests: sales team Event type: incentive trip Guest origins: from France Objectives: team cohesion	- **External**: Guests: partner pharmacies Event type: pharmacist convention trip Guest origins: from France Objectives: meeting, thanks	- **External**: Guests: clients Event type: trip Guest origins: from Europe Objectives: loyalty, intimacy - **Internal**: Guests: salesmen Event type: incentive trip Guest origins: from all over the world Objectives: award ceremony, gift	- **Internal**: Guests: all employees Event type: seminar trip Guest origins: trip organised by business unit, by region/ sometimes mix of 2 business units on the same trip Objectives: meeting between units, cohesion, enjoy	- **Internal**: Guests: competitor selected for a project Event type: final of a competition Guest origins: from all over the world Objectives: competition - **Internal**: Guests: seniors' employees Event type: convention trip Guest origins: from Europe Objectives: announcement, networking

	DESTINATION				
Type of destination - Cultural (city) / leisure (beach) / wild (nature activity) - Locations	- **External client trip**: 3 possibilities, without prerogative All around the world - **Internal trip**: without prerogative France or Europe	Cultural (city) Europe	- **External**: Europe - **Internal incentive**: Leisure (beach) All around the word	3 possibilities All around the world, depends on the business unit region	Country in which there is an office Europe
Choice destination - Criteria: Access/ safety / cost/ quality of infrastructure/ originality	- **External client trip**: Choice with CSR prerogative New destination Originality and experiences offered - **Internal trip**: RSE Access by train	Access (maximum 3h30 by plane) Cultural visits and activities offered Security	Easy access Security For external client trip: cost of the destination For internal incentive: originality	Capacity and quality of infrastructures Distance and access Cost of the destination (fit in the budget)	Capacity of their office Cost of the destination For internal seniors convention: access (CSR and cost)
	CSR POLICIES				
- CSR policy for event department or general guidelines	CSR policy integrated, obligations and bans, No paper, 100% recyclable gifts policy Program trip and destination CSR policy	No, small company so no CSR specifications	CSR discussed and integrated Communication recyclable policy Gift eco-friendly, no goodies policy Staff local during event guideline	The company's overall CSR policy is adapted to events Charter of good conduct to sign by guests CSR team in charge of carbon footprint and control	No official rules Depends on the project manager 0 paper policy
Practical application to event - Carbon footprint/ quality of providers/ type of activity/ transport	Quality of providers for security and values respect (CSR) Transport because of the air-travel	Respect values and ethic Visio meeting	Carbon footprint calculated and donations to compensate sometimes Quality of providers watched, hotel controlled, menu restaurant local food But no CSR on transport or activities	Activity CRS oriented Transport as sustainable as possible, train, bus privileged	Transport first source of optimisation Catering watched but to improved Recyclable material and communication Carbon footprint calculated sometimes and compensated with donations or activities

- Evolution of CSR policies	developments since 2021 New comity CSR	No developments, no future policy discussed	Started just before COVID, developments even more soon Initiatives and request from guests	Started just before COVID, beginning of 2020 Exponential increase Conscious and demanding employees	Draft of requirements specification but not finalised 5 years ago Now improvements Thanks to COVID guests lost habits and more open to change
- Willing to give up for CSR reasons: Destination/ hotel/ activity	Yes	-	No, objective of incentive is to please	Yes, except for accommodation due to lack of supply	Yes, but quality primordial
- Budget flexibility for CSR	No, fixed budget	-	Sometimes	Yes	Yes Willing to compensate carbon footprint
- Difficulties	Limit of budget Never 100% recyclable Difficulty in finding new CSR destinations, travel must be reinvented	-	International guests so air-travel cannot be changed	Air-travel still needed for some seminars	Changing guests' habits Catering, too much meat

Source: own processing

4.3.3. Analysis

4.3.3.1. Event type and target

The first questions were about the types of events, the objectives and the people invited to situate the context.

The 5 interviewees all have different events, either for external guests (interviewees 1, 2, and 3) or for internal employees (interviewees 1, 3, 4, and 5). External guests are usually customers (interviewees 1 and 3) or partners (interviewee 2). Internally they are for employees (interviewees 3 and 4), or for salespeople only (interviewees 1 and 3).

The events are incentive trips for internal and external events, it means leisure trips without work (interviewees 1, 2, and 3). For interviewee 4, they are seminar trips, with leisure and workshops. Note that interviewee 5 organises slightly different events, the notion of leisure is less present, the primary objective is work (the competition or the convention/conference).

The objectives of the internal events are similar, and we find the notion of meeting, cohesion (interviewees 1, 2, 4, and 5). For external events with clients, the aim is to work on the relationship with the client, to build loyalty (interviewees 1 and 3). "*The aim is to maintain relationships. It is a showcase of services, we seek to create intimacy with the customer and of course to build loyalty*" (E.).

The origin of the guests was asked whether the events were national, regional or international. The results are mixed, out of 8 different events, 3 are national, 2 are regional, and 3 are global.

4.3.3.2. About the destination

In an attempt to understand the criteria for destination selection, several questions were asked.

Firstly, the question on the type of destination preferred was phrased in such a way as to allow a choice between a cultural destination, such as cities to visit, a paradisiacal destination for leisure, such as the beach, or a wild and adventurous destination, such as safaris or hiking.

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It was difficult to obtain closed-ended responses as for most the type of destination is not a major criterion in the choice of destination.

For interviewees 1 and 4 there are no prerogatives, all three types of destination are suitable. For interviewee 2, cultural destinations are preferred. For interviewee 3, incentive trips are the first choice of destinations, "*like Bali or the Maldives*" (E.).

The choice of location of the destination was found to be an important criterion. Events can be limited to the region (interviewees 1, 2, 3, and 5). Others can be anywhere in the world (interviewees 1, 3, and 4). According to this data there is no link between the external/internal nature of the event and its destination.

Then we discussed the criteria for choice that are important. It turns out that there is no one particular criterion that stands out and is the first criterion chosen by all, all interviewees gave importance to different criteria.

However, access to the destination was the one that came up the most. The interviewees may have conditions to respect in accessing the destination. Interviewee 2 must respect a maximum distance of 3.5 hours by plane. Interviewee 3 also talks about ease of access because some destinations do not have enough flight possibilities.

Access is also discussed on the means of transport by train is preferred for the internal events of interviewees 1, 4 and 5. "*We prefer the train, at the end of last year we even took the bus, and sometimes planes if we can't do otherwise*" (Ch.).

They explain that this restriction is introduced mainly to reduce the environmental impact: "*to respect our CSR prerogatives*" (J.). We can also add the cost saving: "*we chose [London] to avoid all these paths from a financial point of view and from an ecological point of view*" (C.).

The originality of the destination is an important criterion for the events (interviewees 1, 2, 3, and 4). The interviewees spoke of their challenge to find a new and original destination.

"*For the first criterion, knowing that the trips have been made since 2002, it is a real challenge not to do a city that has already been done*" (J.).

"*For the incentive trips, the originality of the location is very important. We need new destinations each time, with great interest because it is a reward trip that must please the guests*" (E.)

We understand from all the interviews that the destination has to be different every time and the experience provided must be interesting for the guests.

The cost of the destination came up several times (interviewees 3, 4 and 5). "*We position ourselves on the cost of living and the cost of the event on site.*" (C.).

Other criteria were discussed, such as the CSR nature of the destination (interviewee 1); security (interviewees 2 and 3); or the quality of the infrastructure (interviewee 4): "*the problem for us today is which hotel complex can accommodate us, so we're going to work on that basis.*" (Ch.).

4.3.3.3. CSR in event

The questions about sustainability started in a general way to find out whether or not there was a CSR policy in the company's events department, then how it was applied to the event, on which elements in particular and the evolutions in recent years. Finally, questions to understand what companies are capable of doing in order to have a sustainable event.

Policies

To begin, three of the five companies interviewed have CSR strongly integrated into the event department (interviewees 1, 3, and 4). In none of them is there a written charter detailing the CSR obligations of the events. The interviewees explain that it is more the commitment and global policy of the company that is, in fact, part of the events department. "*My manager is the marketing, recruitment, and CSR director. She knows the CSR policy and will just take it into account in the events*" (Ch.).

However, zero paper policies, 100% recyclable gifts and no goodies are implemented (interviewees 1, 3, and 5). These obligations therefore concern communication and events.

Some examples:

"*This summer we worked hard to ensure that we would use 100% recyclable products. For our end-of-year gifts, we now only use edible items, we avoid plastic and non-recyclable materials. And we have an almost zero paper policy.*" (J.).

"*We have a strict policy on what we have to do. For example, the signs with the logos on them must be made of recyclable material. For all our displays we have a special CSR graphic charter. This means that if the communication visual is to be printed, the*

background, which is usually black, will be replaced by a white background to limit ink. We also have to respect the new rules for gifts, no goodies for example." (E.)

"*There are zero paper policies that work well. There are no more brochures, no more documents. There is no official 0 goodies policy, but we are optimising, there are hardly any.*" (C.)

Other policies and actions are established in some companies. In the case of interviewee 1, the CSR policy must be integrated into the briefs for choosing the destination and organising the programme around it.

Interviewee 4 has introduced a charter of good conduct specifically for events.

In addition, working groups are created specifically to improve CSR in the company (interviewees 1 and 4).

Interviewee 5 explains that there are no official rules in the events department. "*We don't really have clear instructions. It really depends on the affinity of the people who organise the event in our company*" (C.). For one of their two events, they did a CSR report. She adds, "*We were not asked to do so, but we wanted to be able to measure the impact, to be accountable afterwards and also to improve. But this is not at all part of the specifications for the moment.*" (C.).

Finally, interviewee 2 does not have a CSR policy within the company, nor does have reflection in events. "*We are too small a company, so we don't have that. It's not a priority to look into the CSR issue in relation to the number of events we do.*" (H.).

Trends of CRS policies

Overall, the thinking on the sustainability of events has changed a lot in recent years. Policies are more defined and there are more actions established. As mentioned above, working groups have been created (interviewee 1).

"*It is the awareness that we have to act and that we are a big company with a lot of employees. We have to set an example and our events have to reflect our values.*" (J.)

"*It started already a little bit before the covid, in the future the awareness and measures will be even more important in my opinion.*" (E.)

The emergence of the demand for sustainable events from the participants themselves is also a notable change (interviewees 3 and 4).

We can use COVID as a time reference, following the pandemic there was an acceleration of processes (interviewees 3, 4, and 5). Interviewee 5 explains what she thinks about it: "*People lost their event-based habits. So it was easier to make changes because it had been two years since people had attended events and the change was made in their personal lives.*" (C.).

Practical application to event

To find out about the concrete actions taken at the events, a series of questions were asked. In order to discuss similar topics, the questions were oriented towards the following themes: overall carbon footprint, quality of service providers, nature of activities, communication, transportation.

As interviewee 2 does not have a CSR policy, it was not useful to discuss the themes in detail. However, during the interview we talked about the respect of the company's values and ethics regarding the choice of destination. She also mentioned that they are doing more and more videoconferencing to limit travel.

Carbon footprint:

The carbon footprint is carefully looked at by the 4 interviewees. All were familiar with the subject. It appears to be a challenge and needs to be improved for the most part, especially in the area of transport. The companies find themselves in a situation where transport weighs heavily on the carbon footprint, especially the plane.

"*For the carbon footprint of the event, it is a real issue because when, for example, we travel to Egypt, we leave by plane, so it is a real issue, and the committee will be working on how to compensate for this carbon footprint that we leave with each trip by plane.*" (J.).

"*For the carbon footprint, the problem with our events, whether internal or for clients, is that we travel by plane.*" (E.).

The catering part is also discussed (interviewees 4 and 5). Vegetarian menus are increasingly proposed because meat has a high CO_2 impact.

Transportation:

Following on from this topic, the means of transport were discussed. As mentioned in the previous section, transport is an element that is complicated to improve, especially when one has to fly to a distant destination (interviewee 1 in the case of client events). Another problem is the event with international participants, in this case there will always be a CO_2 impact (interviewees 3 and 5). "For internal incentives, as the winners are in the four corners of the world, we can't choose a destination without flying". (E.).

On the other hand, many of them impose the train on themselves, or at least try to do so as much as possible (interviewees 1, 4, and 5). What is interesting is to see that for the same company, some events will be held by train and others by plane, policies are different depending on the type of event. This is the case of interviewee 1 who has a strict policy for internal events, access by train, but who on the other hand, for VIP client trips, chooses far away destinations with air travel.

Quality of providers:

The quality of service providers is an important point mentioned by two interviewees in particular (interviewees 1 and 3).

"This year, 2023, we are launching a CSR working group, and events will be included in it, so to answer your question, What do we look for when we prepare a trip?: first of all, the quality of service providers in relation to safety and our values, one of our values being CSR." (J.).

Interviewee 3 talks about surveillance, especially in the hotel. Many details are checked, the hotel must respect CSR measures. The same is true for restaurants, that there is a certain consistency in the origin of food and seasonality.

"The hotel business is very important to us, we make sure that the hotel does CSR actions. We make sure that the hotel is doing CSR. The guest must have the choice to change or not the sheets and towels. All amenities are checked by us [...]" (E.).

Nature of activities:

Finally, concerning the nature of the activities, i.e. whether the choice is for an activity that will have an impact on the environment or not, the answers are varied. Programmes are sometimes organised with CSR characteristics (interviewees 1 and 4). They seek to reduce impact with simple activities. *"For the nature of the activities, yes it is chosen according to,*

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for example rafting, or free game on the beach so no carbon footprint. Or choose electric quad bikes." (Ch.).

For interviewee 3, this is not the case, the most important thing is to please the guests (in the case of the internal incentive event). "*For the activities in the incentives, no, we don't necessarily choose according to the CSR character. On the trip to Bali we have a day in a Jeep, for example, I personally would not have taken it. Or jet skiing, which is not very environmentally friendly, but it's a fun.*" (E.).

Flexibility for CRS purposes

The question 'Would you be willing to give up certain destinations, hotels, activities for CSR reasons?'*,* was asked to test the flexibility of companies.

The majority of responses were positive but often nuanced. Interviewee 1 is ready to give up: "*Yes, totally. We have eliminated certain destinations, for example, we don't go to the United States. And besides, we're doing an internal seminar in September with the marketing team and we really have a 100% CSR experience.*" (J.)

Interviewee 4 qualifies his answer, yes they are ready to put aside a destination or an activity but the hotel will be the exception if it is the best option in terms of capacity.

Interviewee 5 agrees but emphasizes that quality is the most important criterion. "*Yes, we did it. But quality is very important, so if the provider is not as good, no.*" (C.)

On the other hand, interviewee 3 for these incentive trips explains that she cannot give up these elements for CSR reasons. "*Not really. The objective of the incentive is to have a wow effect for the clients, we still do everything according to the trends and the destinations and activities that will appeal.*" (E.)

Concerning the flexibility of the budget the answers are varied. It is a yes for two of them (interviewee 4 and 5). Respondents mentioned the possibility of offsetting the carbon footprint through donations (interviewee 3 and 5). For interviewee 1 the budget is not flexible at all. "*Our budgets are fixed, impossible to move them. They are determined every year, so we have the CSR prerogative, but we also have the prerogative not to spend too much on events, so the budgets do not move. It's up to us to find solutions.*" (J.).

4.4. Application to an event

4.4.1. Experience approach

To finish the practical part of this thesis it is interesting to analyse a real event. This part allows to realise the size of an incentive event, to understand the programme, the type of trip which is organised. The aim of this experience is to calculate the carbon footprint of the event and to draw conclusions.

The calculation of the carbon footprint is difficult to do as many criteria remain vague. In the professional world, companies specialising in carbon footprints use specific methods to establish the calculations. On an individual scale, there are online carbon footprint calculators to obtain the total CO2 equivalent emitted. These calculators can be used to find out the domestic carbon footprint, i.e. the consumption of an individual's home or daily life.

There are also online calculators to calculate the carbon footprint of an event. These tools, proposed by associations such as Myclimate, GoodPlanet and Greenly, are forms to be filled in on a website. However, they are tedious and cannot be adapted precisely to all events.

After this observation, I decided that it was interesting to calculate the carbon footprint of an event myself to show the details of each element and to be able to understand what has the most impact in an event.

Please note that these calculations are not exact. The emission factors are based on reliable sources. However, many elements are approximate, and it is sometimes impossible to predict precise figures because there are many characteristics that come into play; for example, fuel consumption depends on external criteria such as weather conditions. In these cases, averages will be used. The aim is to get closer to reality in order to draw trends.

4.4.2. Presentation of the event

The event presented is a real event, organised by a large international company and held in April 2023. It is an incentive trip type event, which is offered to the company's top salespeople. It takes place during 6 days in Bali. The hotel is a 5* resort in Ubud. A total of 41 participants.

A gala evening with an awards ceremony is planned at the end of the trip. Activities, visits and restaurants are planned for the other days. The aim of this event is to please the employees who have won this trip.

The winners are selected according to their performance during the year and are chosen from the different countries where the company operates. This year they come from Asia, Europe, and the USA. They can be accompanied by a spouse or friend.

4.4.3. Carbon footprint calculation

Methodology

The unit for calculating the carbon footprint is the "CO2e" CO2 equivalent.

The unit was created in the IPCC First Assessment Report. It allows all greenhouse gases to be combined into a single unit.

There are two methods for calculating the carbon footprint.

- The monetary approach, which consists of converting sums of money (spent on goods or services) into CO2eq emissions using monetary ratios.
- The physical approach, which consists of converting physical data (km, kWh, kg) into CO2eq emissions using emission factors.

The method chosen for these calculations is the physical approach:

Physical data x emission factor (kg CO2eq/physical data) = kg of emissions of CO2eq

The emission factors are mainly found on the official French government database Base Empreinte® whose data are validated by ADEME "Agence de la transition écologique". The data is recent and updated daily.

Figure 12, Carbon footprint calculation

	TOTAL in kg of CO2eq	CALCULATION
Air-travel	58 123	From Amsterdam: 1148 kg CO2eq x 4 guests From Chennai: 681 kg CO2eq x 2 guests From Chicago: 1863 kg CO2eq x 1 guest From Cologne: 1111 kg CO2eq x 2 guests From Dusseldorf: 1113 kg CO2eq x 2 guests From Geneva: 1428 kg CO2eq x 4 guests From Hong Kong: 449 kg CO2eq x 6 guests From London: 1552 kg CO2eq x 2 guests From Paris: 3088 kg CO2eq x 2 guests From Paris: 1488 kg CO2eq x 5 guests From Paris: 2016 kg CO2eq x 6 guests From Singapore: 343 kg CO2eq x 1 guest From Tampa: 1825 kg CO2eq x 1 guest From Washington: 2156 kg CO2eq x 3 guests *Source: ICAO Carbon Emissions Calculator based on flight tickets bought*
Accommodation	24 600	Hotel 5* Average rate carbon footprint for a 5* hotel in Indonesia: 120 kg CO2eq per night 120 kg CO2eq x 205 nights = 24 600 kg CO2eq *Source: Greenview hotel Footprinting tool, using industry's global benchmarking index – the Cornell Hotel Sustainability Benchmarking (CHSB) index 2021*
Restaurants	617	9 times at the restaurant (without gala dinner) Meal with meat: 38 guests Emission factor of meal with meat: 1.58 kg CO2eq/meal Emission factor additional for restaurant service: 0.17 kg CO2eq/meal 38 guests x 9 meals x (1.58+0.17) kg CO2eq/meal = 598.5 kg CO2eq Vegetarian meal: 3 guests Emission factor of vegetarian meal: 0.51 kg CO2eq/meal Emission factor additional for restaurant service: 0.17 kg CO2eq/meal 3 guests x 9 meals x (0.51+0.17) kg CO2eq/meal = 18.4 kg CO2eq Total = 616.9 kg CO2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*

Water bottle	53	Average carbon footprint of a plastique water bottle: 0.107 kg CO2eq 2 bottles per days for 6 days 2 bottles x 6 days x 41 guests x 0.107 kg CO2eq = 53 kg CO2eq *Source: Evian report December 2022*
Transportation airport	202	Transfer airport-hotel for arrival day and departure day Distance DPS airport - Ubud: 40km 8 transfers by car: Average consummation 6.8 l/100 km of essence 6.8 litres/100 km x 40 km x 8 cars = 21.76 litres of essence Emission factor of essence: 2.7 kg CO2eq/litre 21.76 litres x 2.7 kg CO2eq/litre = 59 kg CO2eq 3 transfers by mini bus: Average consummation 11.2 l/100 km of diesel 11.2 litres/100 km x 40 km x 3 mini bus = 13.44 litres of diesel Emission factor of diesel: 3.1 kg CO2eq/litre 13.44 litres x 3.1 kg CO2eq/litre = 42 kg CO2eq Same calculation for the return: 101 kg CO2eq x 2 = 202 kg CO2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*
Transportation in Bali	417	5 minibuses at disposal for 4 days Average of 60 km per day Average consummation 11.2 l/100 km of diesel 11.2 litres/100 km x 60 km x 5 minibuses x 4 days = 134.4 litres of diesel Emission factor of diesel: 3.1 kg CO2eq/litre 134.4 litres x 3.1 kg CO2eq/litre = 417 kg CO2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*
Jeep VW	762	Classic jeep VW 181 convertible Distance of the trip: 120km Average consummation 11.2 l/100 km of essence 11.2 litres/100 km x 120 km x 21 cars = 282.24 litres of diesel Emission factor of diesel: 3.1 kg CO2eq/litre 282.24 litres x 2.7 kg CO2eq/litre = 762 kg CO2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*

Catamaran cruise	336	Private catamaran (80 people capacity) Day cruise with a stop, 6 hours of navigation Average consummation: between 3,50 and 30 litres/hour for catamaran between 11 and 36m and depending on navigation condition. Estimation of 20 litres per hour 20 litres x 6 hours = 120 litres Emission factor of marine fuel: 2.8 kg CO_2eq/litre 120 litres x 2.8 kg CO_2eq/litre = 336 kg CO_2eq *Sources:* *Average consummation from nautal.com* *Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*
Rafting	0	Rafting on the Ayung River does not emit CO_2
Gala dinner	207	*Estimation: The evaluation of the gala evening is difficult. the carbon footprint will be an approximation according to personal knowledge.* It includes the energy used by the DJ and the sound and light equipment: approximately 80 kWh. Emission factor of Electricity in Indonesia: 0.7 kg CO_2eq/kWh 80 kWh x 0.7 kg CO_2eq/kWh = 56 kg CO_2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME* *KWh quantity estimation based on information from the provider himself*
		Single menu and cocktail for 41 guests Emission factor of meal with meat + appetizer: 2.04 kg CO_2eq/meal Emission factor additional for restaurant service: 0.17 kg CO_2eq/meal 41 guests x (2.04+0.17) kg CO_2eq/meal = 90.6 kg CO_2eq *Source: Emission factor from Base Empreinte®, ADEME*
		The privatized place is a restaurant, there will be some decoration, but no furniture bought for the occasion. Decoration: 15 kg CO_2eq *Source: estimation based on personal knowledge and readings of similar carbon balance*
		Awards have been created by an eco-responsible supplier from Bali, these are engraved wooden awards. 39 awards x 0.5 kg CO_2eq = 20 kg CO_2eq *Source: estimation based on personal knowledge and readings of similar carbon balance*
		Emissions related to waste management. Approximately 1 kg of waste per person. Emission factor per kg of waste: 0,6 kg CO_2eq 1kg x 0.6kg CO_2eq x 41 guests = 25kg CO_2eq *Source: estimation based on personal knowledge and readings of similar carbon balance*

TOTALS	
Total trip	**85 317 kg CO2eq**
Total per person for the trip	2 081 kg CO2eq
Total per person and per day	347 kg CO2eq

Source: own processing

4.4.4. Analysis

The total carbon footprint of the CO2eq emissions of this event is 85 317 kg (85.317 tonnes).

The calculations in the table show the carbon footprint per person. It is then interesting to compare with an individual's usual consumption to see if the event has a high impact or not. Below the calculations summarized in figure 13.

Figure 13, Totals per category calculation

	Kg CO2eq
Total per person	2 081
Total per person per day	347
Total per person without air-travel	663
Total per person per day without air-travel	111
Total per person without air-travel and restaurants	648
Total per person per day without air-travel and restaurants	108
Average carbon footprint per person per year*	8 500
Average carbon footprint per person per day*	23
For an OECD resident	

Source: own processing

The data used for the average carbon footprint is the OECD average. The OECD average is more representative than the global average for the participants of this event.

Average carbon footprint per year per capita: **8.5 tCO2eq** (OECD, 2019).

To begin we can compare the total CO2eq emissions per person per day of the event with the average per day of a normal individual. A person spends 347 kg of CO2eq per day by

participating in this event when he or she would have spent only 23 kg of CO2eq with an average lifestyle.

The difference is very impressive, this is mainly due to air-travel. Air travel is indeed the biggest impact in the calculation of the carbon footprint of this event.

If we compare the daily total without air-travel, the daily total drops to 111 kg CO2eq.

Then it is interesting to look at the daily carbon footprint without the restaurant part. Indeed the restaurants of this trip are classic restaurants and the guests are commercial people living in big cities. We can take into account that this type of population eats at the restaurant in a classical working week. If they had not come to the event, they would probably have spent this carbon footprint in restaurants too. In addition, the food itself is not specific to the event because it must be eaten. The carbon footprint of the catering part (except the one included in the gala dinner) does not have a very important weight in the total.

By deducting the total of the restaurants we arrive at a daily total of 108 kg of CO2eq.

In this event, the activities are CO2 emitting. The river rafting is the only activity that has no carbon impact. The Jeep Day and the cruise on the private boat have a high volume. These activities are specific to the event, unlike restaurants and transport, which can be services used by participants even if they stay at home (private car, taxi, restaurant or meal at home). On the other hand, when we calculate the total of the Jeep Day + catamaran cruise + gala dinner activities and divide it by the number of people, we get:

(762 + 336 + 207) /41 = 32 kg CO2eq.

This number is therefore the CO2eq emission per person for the activities of the entire stay.

In addition to air travel, the hotel also has a large volume of CO2e emissions. Calculating the carbon footprint of the hotel is difficult because the emissions are mostly indirect, everything depends on the use of the room and the amenities of the hotel. The estimate used is proposed by the Greenview website which gives an average according to the number of stars of the hotel and the country.

In conclusion, the elements that have a large impact on the overall carbon footprint are air-travel, accommodation, and in the case of this event, the activities. It is on these elements that it is possible to work to reduce the real and unique impact of the event.

Monetary conversion

This volume in kg of CO2eq can then be converted into monetary value. The objective is to donate the money to charitable causes or to buy carbon credits to officially offset one's carbon footprint.

This common practice is regulated by interregional agreements. In Europe, the carbon market is the "Emission Trading Scheme" (ETS) and is one of the most developed. The price per ton of CO2e fluctuates according to the market price.

As of March 20, the price of the carbon market in Europe is €92.34 per ton of CO2eq (European Energy Exchange EEX).

Calculation of the carbon footprint in monetary value:

85.317 tCO2eq x 92.34€/tCO2eq = 7 878.17€

The environmental cost of this event is therefore 7 878€ which can be offset by carbon credits with a specialized association.

5. Results and discussion

5.1. Results

The practical part of this has been organized in 3 parts to compare the different points of view. The fact of having an interview of an agency but also of the companies, which could be their customer, allows to know if the reflections of the various actors converge.

The results of the interview with the agency

The interview with Cedric first showed the rapid growth of CSR in the organization of events in recent years. Sustainability is indeed more and more requested by the advertiser and discussed in the sector. CSR policies have developed exponentially since COVID. The pandemic has intensified the integration of measures in events.

This interview especially showed the ambivalence of CSR in the event industry in general. This contrast can be seen in the attitudes of clients, with demands that are sometimes too far removed from their final choice. The ambivalence is also reflected in the calculation of the carbon footprint. The gross volume that the carbon footprint announces needs to be qualified and compared to a more realistic framework. The ambivalence is also in the labels, because of a variety of different labels that make the official character of the label lost. Labels are a guarantee of commitment but at the same time do not prove the disengagement of actors who do not have it.

Ambivalence is also present in all the difficulties faced by clients in organising sustainable events while respecting the company's objectives. Indeed, the primary objective of the event can be an obstacle to the integration of CSR policies. This is the case for events aimed at an external audience such as clients, as the primary goal is the satisfaction of the guest and the wow effect that the event will create.

Another difficulty is the scope of the event. Organising an event with guests from all over the world is not sustainable. Despite all efforts, air travel will remain the biggest impact on the carbon footprint.

The interview showed that 100% sustainability is not possible for an event. The search for optimisation must be the objective of the agencies in order to respect the different imperatives of the company.

The results of interviews with advertisers

The comparison of the interviews with the advertising companies showed, firstly, that the strategies of the companies were all different. It is difficult to identify clear trends.

For example, according to the results there is no link between company size and the level of CSR integration. Companies 3 and 5 are very large groups (around 100 000 employees) and yet do not have the same CSR strategy or level of commitment. Nor are they the companies with the most stringent obligations of the 5.

The results of these interviews are uncertain about the link between external/internal target and CSR policy. More respondents should be interviewed to find out whether CSR policies are applied more for internal events than for customer events.

The interviewees all answered in a different order of importance regarding the CSR actions implemented. With these results, it is difficult to single out one particular criterion. The same is true for the flexibility of the budget and the programme/provider, there is no majority opinion that would confirm whether or not companies are flexible. As CSR is a complex subject that is still being adapted to the events sector, the answers are nuanced.

However, there were a number of areas where companies agreed on their CSR integration strategy. For example, transport was an important topic discussed by everyone, both as an axis of improvement of sustainability with the use of the train and the optimisation of the distance of the destination; and as a difficulty with the problem of the plane which remains an unavoidable means of transport for some.

The comparative interviews show that the strategies on communication media are similar, zero paper policy, reduction of gifts and goodies.

The opinions also converge on the desire to improve CSR in events.

Link between the agency's findings and companies' expectations

Some of Cedric's observations are confirmed through interviews with advertisers. This shows that the agency understands the expectations of companies and can potentially

respond positively. The difficulties he mentioned, particularly concerning transport or the type of event, were also noted by the clients.

On the other hand, the hypothesis announced by Cedric concerning the internal/external nature of the target group of event guests, which would be linked to the integration of CSR, cannot be confirmed. Indeed, the hypothesis may seem logical: if an event is aimed at external clients, it is more difficult to impose CSR constraints than if it is an internal event; however, the interviews conducted do not confirm this, as the opposite case was also observed.

Finally, the interviewees' thinking about the carbon footprint has a different trajectory to Cedric's. The opinions are slightly different because Cedric spoke directly about the ambivalence of the carbon footprint, whereas the interviewees who did speak about it did not address the subject and are open to the idea of calculating and offsetting their carbon footprint.

The contribution of carbon footprint to the study

The carbon footprint calculation is useful to have a concrete example of the impact of an incentive event. This is a typical example of an incentive trip for an international company that is forced to fly. The chosen destination, Bali, and the travel programme show that the company is organising the trip with the aim of satisfying the customer as much as possible.

The company explains that it has an integrated CSR policy in its processes and events, however the carbon footprint results show a very high volume of CO2 related to this event. Air transport was the main impact of the event. This result confirms the common trend from the agency and advertiser interviews.

Then accommodation is the second biggest impact in this carbon footprint. This information is new, the interviews did not discuss this point much except with one of the companies who is very concerned about the quality of the hotels. According to this calculation and this event, the hotel is an unavoidable element of the event, yet it represents a lot of CO2eq emissions.

The analysis and the calculations made show that the event activities do not have a very important weight in the total. As Cedric said, the CO2eq emission of the event activities is

equivalent to the average CO2eq emission of a normal individual. Excluding transport and accommodation, it is in fact proven by these calculations that the weight of emissions is not significant and could be emitted by participants even if they had not come to the event, especially for the restaurants. It is therefore possible to differentiate the elements of the carbon footprint according to this criterion, on the one hand those specific to the event and on the other those that represent daily expenditure.

Overall results

In conclusion, the research carried out aimed to give a comprehensive overview of the different views of the event industry on the issue and to show the trends of sustainability in the incentive industry today.

This research enriches the literature on the subject. All events are unique with different issues and strategies for different companies. This is why the topic should not be approached with closed questions. The research results are more exhaustive if they take into account the difficulties and divergences of each actor. As a result, this research allows us to understand a variety of points of view, sometimes converging and sometimes diverging.

5.2. Discussion

This research can be compared with the study conducted in 2021, "The sustainability of French event companies: an exploratory study", by Raphaël Dornier of the University of Savoie Mont-Blanc, France.

The study is based on qualitative interviews with 6 French event companies. The comparison of the discourses of these professionals specialised or not in sustainable event management yields results on several general involvement, pillars of sustainability, motivations and obstacles for involvement, and issues of sustainability.

Dormier's study analyses the agencies' point of view, and in the motivations for involvement section, it was found that commitment to sustainable development is primarily a matter of personal conviction (Dormier, 2021). In our results we also have a company that mentioned that the project manager must support CSR in order for it to be integrated into the briefs. However, on the side we can say that most of them have CSR obligations to respect, on the

side of the companies the approach is not the same, they apply the policies of the group more than initiate them.

As regards obstacles, Dormier mentions the price factor first. In our study this issue is not predominant for companies, price does not appear to be a barrier for companies. The lack of customer awareness would be an important obstacle to the involvement of generalist companies in sustainable development (Dormier, 2021). However, our study proved the opposite. 4 out of the 5 companies interviewed have integrated policies and a high level of awareness on this subject. The interview with Cedric, the agency's CEO, also confirmed that CSR is now everywhere, in briefs, in discussions, etc. Our results confirm a point that Dormier addresses, that is the ambivalence of sustainability in the event industry, the "hypocrisy" of marketing. Whether it is companies that want to offset their footprint but at the same time organise activities that are not at all eco-responsible. Our survey also shows this.

6. Recommendations

The international character of this event obliges the organisers to choose the aeroplane as a means of transport because the participants come from different regions. Therefore, transport cannot be the element to be improved. This means that the carbon footprint will remain as high as this.

To integrate CSR into this event, the rest must be optimised. Creating a sustainable programme will reduce the impact on the environment. The overall carbon emissions of the activities are not the most important in the total but they do play a role in the degradation of the local environment. The choice of activities is a lever to preserve the biodiversity of the host destination and respect the local population. Travelling sustainably means making choices but it is possible to rethink the programme and keep the wow effect that guests expect.

With the rapid evolution of CSR in society, the entire event industry has adapted to this change. It is a societal transformation that is taking place. As a result, the players are increasingly able to respond to the demand for sustainability. Service providers are now accustomed to offering sustainable alternatives or integrating them directly into their services. Organising a sustainable event is therefore feasible.

The coherence of the programme with the company's communication should be a priority. The transparency of the company is the most important element to gain the trust of the guests. Air transport will be the negative point of the event's impact, it must not be hidden otherwise criticism will be immediate. The interest is to communicate to the public the points of improvement and the compensations made. It is important to educate the public about CSR; to explain the ambivalence and difficulties; to explain that actions necessarily have an environmental cost and to show the impact that is specific to the sector or not. The recommendation is therefore transparency in communication and optimisation of the event programme by using responsible service providers.

In the case of non-international seminars the main source of improvement may be in transport and access to the event. It is possible to reconsider the type of destination and choose regional locations. Favouring the train is indeed a good way of reducing its impact, even if it is not always easy to choose this means of transport. For annual events that require

an original event each year to satisfy the same guests, the strategy can be based on a reconstruction of the event. Instead of relying on the destination to be original, companies can change the programme, making participants discover another facet of the trip.

In both cases, carbon offsetting can be considered. But this will depend on the flexibility of the budget. As we have seen in our study, the carbon footprint is a significant amount, and it is important not to forget to include it in the event budget from the start of the process.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Interview Cédric Onillon, Agence Lully

Interview Cedric Onillon – Agence Lully

Interview via Zoom meeting. The interviewee's camera was activated.
The meeting lasted 1h15 minutes.
The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview and follows the flow of the interview.

What are the developments in CSR in the events sector?

There have been two major changes since COVID, firstly hybridization, the digitalization part, and secondly the integration of CSR, which is now three letters that are very present in all requests, all calls for tender and all client projects. What is interesting is that, whether it is the digital or the CSR part, in both cases, we have experienced the same thing, that is to say that we have experienced a big wave where we were told that we must integrate these subjects everywhere and then finally, as always after a while, everyone becomes aware of the difficulty. We will create remote events almost everywhere and then after a while nobody is amused anymore. So, we went back to face-to-face. It's the same thing with the CSR, that is to say that we started wanting to

put it in all the company's subjects and we realize that there are problems that are sometimes not easy to manage.

For example, we were talking about very, very high-end customers. Clients want to start integrating CSR. But when we deal with a Dior customer, for example, who is going to buy thousands of euros worth of jewellery, we can't make him come by public transportation. He will stay in a Mercedes S class and arrive with his private jet.

So, we have this ambivalence all the time.

Nevertheless, the subject of CSR is present and reflected in all companies. It is the major subject of the new generations!

In my generation, for example, the subject was drink driving and preservation. For you today, it is obvious. The new generation that is coming up for them will be CSR, which will be logical.

CSR social and environmental responsibility.

When we talk about CSR today, especially in the events sector, we tend to put a lot of emphasis on the environment and little on social issues. And yet this has a significant impact. How to balance social and environmental issues?

Sometimes, one has consequences on the other.

I'll give you an example: when we talk about the environment, we often say to ourselves "I don't fly anymore" and we think that the plane is a means of transport to be banned as much as possible. It is a solution, why not indeed, whatever happens, transport remains the most

important CO2 impact in an event but we cannot completely avoid the impact it can have on the social aspect. If tomorrow we stop taking the plane to go to Morocco there will be a societal impact on the Moroccan economy because the first resource is tourism and the only way to go to Morocco is to take the plane.

IMPACT CO2

In the event industry, when we study the CO2 impact. The biggest impact of an event is its transportation. The easiest way is to use the calculators proposed on the internet to calculate the carbon footprint like Good Planet or Greenly.

We enter all the information on the site number of people, transportation, hotel nights, meals et cetera et cetera. Then this calculator gives us the volume of CO2 that is generated for our event which are more or less valid.

Most of these associations propose to make donations to "compensate". However, this market is very regulated, to compensate in an official and legal way you have to buy carbon vouchers from approved companies. Planting trees as we do with the ecofest association is not a carbon offset.

The disadvantage of these carbon vouchers is that it doesn't encourage you to reduce your carbon consumption because you know that you will compensate it anyway. This is not our mentality in the Lully Agency. Moreover it is very hard to follow the investment, we don't know if 50% goes to the administration. It's

still a bit unclear, it's not necessarily the most suitable solution.

The carbon footprint is an important demand from our customers. However, the calculation has a perverse effect. The volume of CO2 can be impressive for incentive events if we announce it in a raw way. The problem is that the client forgets that the guests also have a carbon footprint when they are at home, a part of the volume is not specific to the event. We can't calculate exactly what each individual would have done that weekend if they hadn't come to the event. According to my experience, if we compare the average CO2 consumption of the event with the average consumption of a French person, the difference is only due to transport. And I would say almost me because the activities are in group so sometimes it is equal.

On the other hand, it is true that the transport is really impacting ecologically. Therefore, the will of many companies today is to organize an event with access by train. It's true that many clients now restrict themselves to destinations by train. However, it depends on the region, today CSR is a European reflection, if we look at American companies, they don't have this level of reflection at all. For an Asian population, very little either and for an African population, it is very far from their subject.

The problem is international seminars. Australians, Singaporeans, Hong Kongers, if they want to move, they have to fly. The CSR reflection will therefore focus on how to

integrate it into the destination, the hotel, the activities etc..

The issues are different, Americans want water bottles, they have realized that plastic is not good and the trend is towards water bottles. But if they go to Mexico or Morocco, they won't want to drink tap water. It's never that simple.

Even for the train, the train is very efficient in France because we produce a lot of electricity with nuclear plants. Tomorrow, if I bet Frankfurt by train, the line to the French border is electrified with nuclear energy, ok. But from the French border to Frankfurt, it is German electricity, and it is produced by coal plants, so a lot of CO_2 and we are unable to measure it.

So these are very heavy and complex subjects, where at our level of event agency we don't have absolute answers.

What we can do today is to treat your request, we will try to find solutions, we will try to optimize but we will not be able to make an event without producing CO_2.

Nevertheless, this does not prevent us from having this reflection and saying to ourselves, how do we integrate these subjects in our daily life?

The groundswell is interesting, it's a bit like the hashtag Me Too, it's a realization.

The hotel industry has taken the CSR subject from the beginning and now in all hotels, especially the big chains, they optimize water, towel washing, disposable elements...

Concerning the luxury sector, the very high-end, do you think it is the most complicated sector to integrate CSR?

It is the special case. You talk about luxury, but that's not exactly the issue.
It's because it's a B to B to C event in fact.
When a company organizes an internal event, it doesn't have too many problems imposing its choices on its employees. When you are doing B to B to C, and this is the case for the luxury industry because they invite their clients, it is much more difficult to impose a client to whom you sell something, a form of regulation or restriction or constraint.

So this is the case for luxury but also for other companies in this format, or as for travel press. If you don't like the destination or the trip, you lose the client, or the journalist won't write a nice article.

The guests are distributed worldwide. We actually organize an event in Bali where the clients arrive by plane. But since they come from all over the world, no matter what destination you choose, you will have to fly anyway. So we have to segment the different events to have a precise reflection on CSR in the event, B to B, B to B to C, international.

And for social part?

This is not a new subject for companies, trade unions have been involved in this subject for a very long time, whether it is about the working conditions of employees, the working conditions of suppliers, or how best to pay our partners. Many things have already been done. The environmental part came a little later with the youth and therefore it is still much less regulated and therefore it was rather carried by the employees. At first, some people refused to participate in certain events, and that's how they became aware of it.

As an agency, are you very careful about the partners and subcontractors you choose?

Yes and no. As far as Agence Lully is concerned, we have the chance to do long-term work, and not to be constrained on the budgetary part. We are positioned at the top of the range, which means that our clients are more interested in quality than in price.

It's not the same thing when you're working on events with very small budgets, and so you have to go and find suppliers who are sometimes the cheapest in terms of price and therefore sometimes a little less careful about quality.

In the qualitative sector, we can be more selective and work on a long-term basis. A supplier like Four Seasons pays its employees much better than very small hotels that don't have the means.

Do customers ask for guarantees such as labels?

Today there is no single label, not one that dominates over another.

It's a controversial subject. Just because we don't have a label doesn't mean we don't do the same things as an agency that has paid to have the official label.

The ISO 121 label allows us to be part of a process of awareness and integration of CSR in the company's processes. So it's a commitment more than an action, the label doesn't really check the long-term actions, it checks the commitment.

Does the Lully agency want to have a label in the next few years?

We don't have it because it's a real process, it takes time and today we have a company transformation that doesn't allow us to have the time to respond to our customers' requests. For the moment we don't have the time to commit ourselves to these subjects because of our growth crisis, but it will inevitably be a subject that we will integrate at one time or another.

This is a thought I had about the second half of 2023, after the pure impact of an event agency, it is very minimal. We're just offices, a few staff and laptops. We have no resources, we have no factory, we have no vehicle.

Generally speaking, it is the client who arrives with his brief and asks us to apply his wishes.

It can happen for companies that are asking for this kind of subjects and will ask us how you integrate it in your event.

How do you rate the application of their CSR policy to the event? Is it really applied?

More and more, yes. Post COVID it is really written into the briefs.

It's not applied everywhere, but in any case, it's no longer possible not to include it in the response. Everything is taken into account, especially in a call for tenders, and before, it was the client who expected us to propose CSR solutions. Today, it is the client who imposes his constraints on us. This is really the big evolution of post COVID. For me, this will be the subject of the next 5-10 years and it will no longer be the major subject in the future.

So for you, even on B or B to C events, is the client ready to make sacrifices? Take one provider rather than another even if the alternative is less good

At the top of the range, as the price is not necessarily a constraint, yes, for the same quality, it will not be a problem for them to pay a little more and to have an electric car for example.

On big events, the problem is the lack of providers. Sometimes, there is only one that is adapted to this type of event. But even in these cases things are changing and there are efforts made by the client and the provider.

In conclusion, how will the events sector evolve?

Every human activity has an impact, whatever it is. The objective today is how do I minimize my impact on my environment? There is no ready-made solution to say that we can do events without having an impact on the environment.

Again, we will follow the major market trends of our clients.

Our sector is rarely prescriptive.

But every time there are new trends, we will integrate them, and we won't be able to go back on the subject.

For example, when I started in the event industry, I never had a topic on diets at the beginning, we had a fixed menu for everyone. Today, on an event, we have between 7 to 12 different menus because we have to integrate the diets of each person.

And in fact, what's interesting in the evolution and in events, and this is often the case with technology, is that we don't replace, we add.

We have integrated different diets, we have integrated CSR issues, we have integrated digitalization, we have integrated all these elements.

Events are just a reflection of society.

8.2.   Interviews Advertiser companies

Interview 1 - "J."

Interview via Zoom meeting. The interviewee's camera was not activated.
The meeting lasted 20 minutes.
The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview and follows the flow of the interview.

What type of event are you organizing and what are the objectives?

We have several types of incentive events. The first one is for the clients/brokers. We have two per year, the VIP trip, organized by our agency, and another broker trip that takes place in June. The objective of the client seminars is to maintain relationships and to engage in purchasing.

We have a second type of incentive trip that is for internal use, so it's more of an internal seminar. For our teams, most of the time, the sales team.

Where the guests come from?

For events with our clients, our brokers, so these are our clients all over France, they are invited by our salespeople who are located in all regions of France. For internal events, the sales team is based in all regions of France, so we have very few foreign participants. It can happen on events with our customers since we have an international branch, but that is really 2-3 people maximum.

Are these the same destinations for internal and external?

For the VIP trip with our brokers, it's more of a remote destination. On an 8-day basis. For the June seminar for our brokers, it is a European destination, outside France.

For our internal seminars for our sales staff, it is regularly France but we can go to Europe, for example in February we went to Lisbon. This remains in nearby Europe. In fact, it is clearly defined by the budget. And we prefer the train.

Why do you prefer the train? In order to respect our CSR prerogatives, I think we'll get into the subject later, so I won't elaborate.

What type of destination do you prefer? (city, cultural / beach paradise, leisure / wild activity)

For the VIP trips, we have no prerogatives on where the trip will take place. It can be in Europe, it can be in Asia, it can be in the United States, it can be a cultural destination, it can be a seaside destination, there is no prerogative. On the other hand, we must have a CSR dimension, in our program, we must integrate a CSR dimension and at the maximum in our choice of hotels. It is more or less complicated depending on the destination, but we will also select the destination based on this principle. This year our 2 destinations were Costa Rica and Tanzania/Zanzibar. Costa Rica is the country with about 25% of its territory classified as a natural reserve. So we also base our research on this for the VIP

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trips in any case. And if the destination is not CSR we will create a program around that.

What is most important in choosing a destination?
e.g., reputation of the destination, distance and transport, cost of living, quality of infrastructure (hotels and restaurants), experience and originality of the place, safety.

For the first criterion, knowing that the trips have been made since 2002, it is a real challenge not to make a city that has already been made. The second criterion will be the experiences that we can offer to our participants. But knowing that we are dealing with a rather lively population that has travelled a lot, we have to respect our internal prerogatives, so in relation to the flight time, in relation to each other's agendas and to the company's guiding line on line X.

For internal seminars, the destination is chosen according to the business. For example, we went to Lisbon this year because we were simply meeting a partner there. Last year we went to the ski resort because we hadn't been there for a few years and the teams wanted to go there. There is no specific criterion, it's a little bit what or where we haven't been, where we could go, we take the train, except for Lisbon we took the plane, but generally we take the train. And we need a destination that suits everyone because we have participants who come from all over France, so in terms of pre-routing, we need to be more rigorous.

How is your company's CSR policy integrated into the events department? (Guidelines or strict policies)

I joined this company in 2021, so it was already a topic. To give you an example, every year we send a greeting card to all our brokers, so we send 1,700. And we also send a little summer treat, which is a little gift for our brokers in the summer. When I arrived, we were really on a bit of a useless gadget if I may say so. Now, we really have to integrate this CSR dimension, so we can't send just anything to our brokers. This summer, we worked hard to ensure that our products are 100% recyclable. The project is that we tend to make these small items disappear, precisely for CSR reasons. For our end of year gifts, we are now only on edible things, we avoid plastic and non-recyclable materials. And we are on a policy of almost zero paper.

So, for example, when we go on a trip, we will no longer give small notebooks to our participants, everything is on mobile application.

We have already talked about the nature of the activities, communication, and transport. Are there any CSR actions on these points: carbon footprint and quality of providers?

You see, this year, 2023, we are launching a CSR working group, and events are going to be included in it. So, to answer your question, "What are we going to look at when we prepare a trip": first of all, the quality of the service providers in terms of safety and our values, one of our values being CSR.

For the carbon footprint of the event, it is a real subject because when, for example, we travel to Egypt, we leave by plane, so we are really on a real subject, it will be worked in committee to think about compensating this carbon footprint that we leave with each trip by plane.

Would you be willing to give up certain destinations, hotels, activities for CSR reasons?

Yes, totally. We have eliminated some destinations, for example, we don't go to the United States. I can confirm that this is the case for VIP trips as well as for other trips. And besides, we are doing an internal seminar in September with the marketing team and we really have a 100% CSR experience.

Is your budget flexible in order to improve CRS?

No, our budgets are fixed, impossible to move them. They are determined every year, so we have the prerogative of CSR but we also have the prerogative of not spending too much on events, so the budgets do not move. It's up to us to find solutions.

What have been the developments in recent years?

In 2021 it was much less than now, now we have committees, we make working groups around that. It's a real issue now.

And this is due to what? Did COVID play a role? No, I don't think it has anything to do with COVID. It's the realization that we have to act and that we are a big company with

a lot of employees. We have to lead by example and our events have to reflect our values.

Are you experiencing any difficulties?

Yes, it's not really difficult, it's done, but there are difficulties. For example, on everything that is going to be goodies, it will be much more complicated because you have to know that, for example, if you want to print a greeting card, the paper is recyclable I think at 60% maximum, so there will be 40% that is not recyclable. So we have to find alternative solutions to a classic greeting card to avoid using paper. It can be a challenge, always respecting the same budget. You also have a challenge at the end of a moment since we have been doing trips for more than 20 years or even 30 years, there are a lot of destinations that have been done and since we can't go to destinations that are not CSR, it's hard to reinvent the trips that we do to find other alternatives and other solutions to satisfy our customers.

Interview 2 - "H."

Interview via Zoom meeting. The interviewee's camera was activated.
The meeting lasted 15 minutes.
The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview and follows the flow of the interview.

Define the type of event and the type of guest.

We organise pharmacy conventions. The guests are our partner pharmacies, so we can consider it an external event. The objective is to meet pharmacists to exchange through this trip.

Do you have other types of events, such as incentives or seminars?

We also have internal seminars for steering committees. These are internal meetings. After that, we are a federation, but at the level of the regional groups, they hold regional congresses for their members. But I don't organize them.

Where do the guests come from?

The guests come from France, not from abroad. More or less from the same destination.

What type of destination do you prefer? (city, cultural / beach paradise, leisure / wild activity)

All destinations that currently correspond to being in Europe since we must not be beyond 3h30 of plane.

What is the reason for this? Because we only do this on weekends of 4 days, 3 nights. For conventions and seminars. We do not propose stays beyond 4 days.

What is most important in choosing a destination?

I always need to bring some culture, but I also need to bring some adventure, so a more or less sporty activity, whether it is nature or seaside.

For example, Dubai is a destination that we have never proposed and that does not interest us. In terms of ethics, it is a destination that is really starting to displease us. There is no history, Petra in Jordan, yes it would please but Dubai not. Afterwards, we have already been to countries that were economically, politically, the opposite of what the Republic is and of our values, but there was a history. The present events do not necessarily reflect the country, so we should not stop at the current situation of the government.

The reputation of the destination?

Yes, the potential to be discovered.

The infrastructure?

Yes, these are the facilities available to accommodate a group. And the activities proposed for a group.

Is safety important?

Oh yes, it's very important. We wouldn't go to a risky country. For example, we did Egypt, but I'm not sure we would take the risk of doing Egypt again like we did. Because at the moment, it is a country that is a little unstable, at risk. Well, it's better than before, but when it's too risky due to attacks, we don't take for a group of hundred people.

In terms of CSR policy, do you have any specifications to follow in your company?

No, no, we don't have any specifications at the company level.

So do you do CSR in events?

We keep it very simple, we're not too environmental yet, we don't look at that first. We are still in the old budgetary way. As long as it corresponds to what we are looking for, we don't go any further.

When we went to Ireland, we did a CSR activity, we rode electric bikes. On the other hand, we also made a sea trip with zodiacs to go and see whales, so yes, it will be more in terms of activity that it plays.

Have there been any developments in recent years or not at all? Have you started to talk about it maybe internally?

No, no, we're too small a structure for us. It doesn't correspond to a volume of figures nor to a priority to focus on the CSR issue in relation to the number of events we do.

For the classic internal meetings, we do everything in Paris because it's central. People travel by TGV, we only have one group from the South who take the plane but that's fine. Otherwise, we also use video now. It's true that since COVID we've made savings, we do a lot more videoconferencing for our meetings, instead of having everyone travel, that's obvious. It's also since technologies have evolved following the pandemic.

And eventually, this will be a topic of conversation in the next few years?

Well, let's say no, we'll stay like that. I think we will have more and more remote meetings, but face-to-face is still good. It's still good to see and share with each other, face-to-face as in conventions. We don't do as many as we used to, but it's always good to see

members, to participate and to do things with them. It's unifying for the teams.

Any other comments?

We now take it into account, but if we are not an industrialist, nor a manufacturer, we do not have any constraints. Nevertheless, we now use paper bags instead of plastic bags for our members. It was initially a regulation for there was the evolution of mentalities. CSR is now integrated in all companies without having an official policy in place or a committee that manages it.

In everything that is event-driven or from the moment you do big events, it is very difficult. I just came out of a big trade show, there is a pollution of paper, cardboard, there is a huge waste! So, it is sure that these organizations which set up these events should make a big work. Afterwards, in travel, we can do more and more eco-responsible things.

Interview 3 - "E."

Interview by phone. The interviewee's camera was therefore not activated.
The meeting lasted 20 minutes.
The following is a reconstruction of the speech from the detailed notes taken during the call, it follows the flow of the interview.

What type of event are you organizing and what are the objectives? Which are the guests?

These are incentives offered as rewards to internal employees, often for the best salespeople. We are an international company so they are selected in each region.

We also have customer events, the goal is to maintain relationships. It's a showcase of service, we seek to create intimacy with the customer and of course to build loyalty. These are annual events. Most of the invited customers are from Europe.

What type of destination do you prefer? (city, cultural / beach paradise, leisure / wild activity)

For incentives the first choice is a beach destination like Bali or the Maldives. For customer events, the annual event will be in Europe

What is most important in choosing a destination?
e.g., reputation of the destination, distance and transport, cost of living, quality of infrastructure (hotels and restaurants), experience and originality of the place, safety.

First of all I would say the access. For example, Seville is an attractive city and we could like it but at the same time it is a low cost city. There are not many planes during the day. It is therefore complicated to get there from different destinations.

Then, safety is obviously an important criterion.

For incentive trips, the originality of the location is very important. New destinations are needed every time, with a great interest, because it is a reward trip that must please the guests.

For customer trips it is a little different, the choice of the destination will be more according to the budget thus the criterion of cost of the destination.

How is your company's CSR policy integrated into the events department? (Guidelines or strict policies)

This is an issue that is often discussed. For customer events, everything in the image of our company to constantly remind that we are the organizer, the customer experience comes first. So, we have a lot of decoration. However, on this point we have a strict policy on what we must do. For example, the panels with the logos must be made of recyclable material. For all our displays we have a special CSR graphic charter. That is to say that if the visual of communication is intended to be printed, the background, usually black, will be replaced by a white background to limit the ink. We must also respect the new rules for gifts, no goodies for example. Or for example, the staff working on the production of the event must be local.

Are there any CSR actions on these points: overall carbon footprint, quality of service providers, nature of activities, communication, transportation…

For the carbon footprint the problem in our events whether internal for customers, our trips are by plane. On the other hand we compensate via associations with donations. It is not mandatory in our CSR policy but we

must minimize the carbon footprint of the company and our events. It is true that it is sometimes complicated to make this compensation because we must respect the budget, there is not really a line in the budget granted for this donation in advance, it is done according to what we can.

The quality of the providers is also looked at yes.

Concerning the means of transportation, for external events, it is the client who decides to take the train or the plane, so we cannot control this point.

For the incentives, as the winners are all over the world, we cannot choose a destination without a plane. Moreover, we don't know where the winners come from, because they are always announced at the last moment, after having already organized a good part of the event.

For the activities in the incentives, no we do not necessarily choose according to the CSR character. On the trip to Bali we have a day in a Jeep, for example, personally I would not have taken it. Or jet skiing, which is not very environmentally friendly, but it is fun.

How to apply it to events?

Hotel for us is very important, we make sure that the hotel makes CSR actions. The customer must have the choice to change or not the sheets and towels. All amenities are checked by us, we remove all disposable items such as combs, toothbrushes, they will be added at the request of the customer. or we

prefer soap dispensers rather than individual soaps. We prefer water fountains rather than plastic bottles, sometimes we offer water bottles because it can shock the participants if they see all the water bottles. We take care of the flowers we offer or use for decoration. The restaurants are also monitored to ensure that there is consistency in the menus, only local and seasonal products. The company is generally very committed to CSR.

Would you be willing to give up certain destinations, hotels, activities for CSR reasons?

Not really. The objective of the incentive is to have a wow effect for the clients, we still do everything according to the trends and the destinations and activities that will please.

What have been the developments in recent years?

This has already started a little bit before the covid, in the future the awareness and the measures will be even more important in my opinion. The guests speak for themselves now.

Interview 4 - "Ch."

Interview via Zoom meeting. The interviewee's camera was activated.
The meeting lasted 25 minutes.
The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview and follows the flow of the interview.

What type of event are you organizing and what are the objectives?

Seminars for employees include meetings, workshops and so on, depending on the needs and the themes. There is not really a main axis, it is also according to the countries where we organize because not all have the same business unit (B.U). There are workshops and there is also a plenary session unique to each seminar. Then there are more tourist and cultural activities. The goal is for employees to meet each other internally, for there to be group cohesion. That the consultants can meet people they don't see on a daily basis because the consultants are attached to BUs, even if they are transversal, that allows them to see other things, to talk about other subjects and potentially also there are quite a few consultants who, depending on their career, actually change BUs, they ask to be transferred. So it also allows us to see a little bit on which axis people could potentially work.

At the beginning, it was more to party, to meet, to exchange and to have fun. It's also to retain consultants and it's also a big publicity stunt. I see there is an event in which we had a seminar in Marrakech in 2018 and we had Daft Punk come, everyone has filmed, to put videos on the networks. Inevitably it has made talk about the company.

Where the guests come from ? is the event international or regional?

It evolves every year, in fact we cross regions. For example, we had a seminar in Bali for Asia and the Middle East. We had all the consultants from Saudi Arabia and the Arab Emirates come and meet the Asian teams. For example, the seminar in Bali that took place this weekend was Asia + Australia. I believe that the Middle East this year was invited along with the United States.

In the choice of regions, we also pay attention to CSR and carbon footprint. It has to be coherent. We also look at the size of the offices, but for example, for France we are so big, I think about 1200 people, so we only do French seminars. We can even separate the group in two with the juniors and the seniors. I don't think France will ever go to the United States because there are too many people to move.

In fact, there are no real rules, but the idea is to make the different countries meet each other.

What type of destination do you prefer? (city, cultural / beach paradise, leisure / wild activity)

In fact, the problem today is more which hotel complex can accommodate us, so we will do according to that. For the destination there is a little bit of everything, we made rather exotic places. We are already looking for a financially accessible destination, where there are still cultural things to visit.

For example a big company anniversary in Venice in 2019. There were 1000 people, the choice of Venice was to mark the blow because it is an exceptional place even if it was not practical for hotels.

For events we always go to 5 star hotels, we do fancy things, it's a standing that not everyone can afford.

So in fact in terms of choice of destination, it is according to what is possible with the season, the given period, the logistics of the hotel complex and transport and that it is still something cultural to do.

What is most important in choosing a destination?

The reputation: yes, it is important

The experience and originality of the place: yes

The distance, the means of transport with the cost, the time of the journey: yes, of course, that is also taken into account, but I also see, for example, the Italians who have to come to Paris on Friday, I was surprised, I thought they were all going to take the train and in fact no, I didn't realize that Milan and Rome especially, it's 6 hours by train I think, and so they all take the plane. I thought they were all going to take the train for CSR because there are many, especially in Italy, who are quite concerned about this and who want to be careful about what they do. But we had to take the plane because they have to work on Friday, until half day, and then fly to Paris to be there for the evening.

The cost of the destination? Yes, there is a budget. A global budget that is given per head and then the Agency proposes places. Then, it is the CEO who makes the choice.

The quality of the infrastructure? especially the capacity of the hotels.

The security of the country? Indeed, we choose rather European destinations, we will say, we will not go to Egypt or in tense zones. We did this in Portugal, in Morocco

For the security inside the event, there were things to put in place because of certain excesses, we now have charters of good conduct. We realize that even on corporate events, there can be conflicts or inappropriate actions because there is obviously a lot of alcohol, it is very festive and it can get out of hand. We double the security.

How is your company's CSR policy integrated into the events department? (Guidelines or strict policies)

At my level, we don't talk about it much with my manager, who is the Marketing, Recruitment and CSR Director. She knows the CSR policy and will just take it into account in the events.

It has set up the charter of good conduct and included it in the questionnaires, which is now mandatory. For the carbon footprint, it is the CSR team that asks to make a point following the event and the calculation. I know that on the CSR part it is something that is very present in our company and they discuss it with the CSE, the social economic committee and the people who work on CSR. There is awareness and monitoring, yes.

For example, at the Olympia, in the registration questionnaire, in order to minimize the environmental impact, we proposed a vegetarian menu. 60% of people said yes.

Is it the participants who talk about it?

In our country, there are people who are very sensitive about the CRS and, indeed, they are the ones who will even discuss it and ask for answers. For example, for Venice there were Parisians who did not want to take the plane to go to Venice and who wanted to leave the day before by train, in a sleeper.

Are you looking at the quality of the providers?

For the nature of the activities, yes it is chosen according to, example rafting, or free play on the beach so no carbon footprint. Or choose electric quad bikes. We've been on four-wheeler outings before but that was in 2018, CSR was less present.

And for transportation?

Then we privilege the train even end of the last year we took the bus. By plane if it is impossible to do otherwise.

What have been the developments in recent years?

I think it's right before COVID so I would say early 2020. Yeah late 2019, early 2020. And now it's exponential.

Would you be willing to give up certain destinations, hotels, activities for CSR reasons?

The last word is still going to be the CEO, so I feel like saying in relation to an activity, yes we can put it aside. In relation to a destination, I think so, because if it's really ridiculous, we won't do it. Afterwards, in relation to a hotel complex, again, I think we could very well say that we make an exception because we need this hotel complex in relation to the number of rooms.

Is your budget flexible in order to improve CRS?

Yes, ready to increase.

Interview 5 - "C."

Interview via Zoom meeting. The interviewee's camera was activated.
The meeting lasted 35 minutes.
The following is a verbatim transcript of the interview and follows the flow of the interview.

What type of event are you organizing and what are the objectives? Where the guests come from? Is the event international or regional?

There are 3 types of events that I work on, some of them are virtual, some are physical.

The first type of event is an internal competition on certain business lines. The participants travel to the grand finale to present in front of a jury. They are chosen according to the quality of the project. The participants are international, e.g., 2 people represented projects from South Africa.

Another type is a big event, recently, which brought together the 200 most senior people in Europe. The event was a meeting day and the

announcement of the year's positionings and novelties. The objective is also networking because there are different business lines, and the employees did not necessarily know each other. The event took place in London. In total they spent almost 2 days in London. There was no activity other than the conference, but they travelled, slept there and there was a restaurant in the evening as well.

Then, there is an internal seminar that takes place in each country, so it is played out at the local level.

What type of destination do you prefer? (city, cultural / beach paradise, leisure / wild activity)

I can't really answer because our seminars are for work so we're not really looking for a beach or tour activity.

What is most important in choosing a destination?

So it's a good question because the two events will take place again, in other formats, but they will take place again this year and so there is the choice of destination to be made.

What is taken into account is first of all that it is a city in which we have an office. Because the internal competition is held in our offices.

Then we position ourselves on the cost of living and the cost of the event on site. Less than on the destination itself because the

countries in which we have offices that can accommodate us are more or less the same, France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, England. So for the trip, we are pretty much there in terms of costs and ecological impact.

For the 200-person event, we chose London because the majority of the participants were based in London. Even if London is rather expensive, we chose it to avoid all these travels from a financial point of view and from an ecological point of view. On this event, we made a CSR impact report on the transportation, to minimize the carbon footprint of the event.

So we talked about cost of living and distance. What about the infrastructure?

Yes, when they are big events. I mean, when it involves having 30 people travel, frankly, we always manage to find hotels or restaurants. The big event that we did, we asked ourselves the question yes. For this one, we rented a place in London and the location also played a role in knowing if we had enough hotels nearby so that people could come on foot, not have to take a cab, etc. And again, to reduce, to minimize the impact.

And for the security of the country?

Here, as these are countries where we are already present, it is not like a seminar where we want to go on a very cool safari, and we find ourselves in countries where we think it could be complicated. Here we are not at all on this type of destination. So, in fact we have

never really been confronted with the problem of security.

It happened to us to move an event because of the Brexit or the COVID for political or sanitary reasons, of regulation yes.

How is your company's CSR policy integrated into the events department? (Guidelines or strict policies)

We don't have any real rules, there's a specification that was made a few years ago that was never shared. I mean, I was shown it when it was in draft form. I don't even know if it was ever finished because I still haven't received it. We don't really have clear instructions. It really depends on the affinity of the people who organize the event in our company.

For example, we did the CSR report on the event for 200 people, we had not been asked to do so but we wanted to be able to measure the impact, to report afterwards and also to improve. But this is absolutely not part of the specifications for the moment. At least not in a compulsory way, we don't have any objectives in the event teams.

When you want to improve the CSR of an event, what will you look at first?

Travel is the first source of optimization.

Then the part where we have not been very good and where we can improve very quickly, is everything that is catering, restaurant and so on. There are habits that have been established for years, we eat meat, we eat fish, we don't only provide vegetarian menus. This has

affected our score quite a bit. Because on everything else, we want as much recyclable material as possible, and have done for years. We avoid branding with the name of the event, the communication is rather on screens.

What have been the developments in recent years?

I have been in this company for 5 and a half years, yes, there have been evolutions, there are a lot more alternatives like dishes or vegetarian pieces.

Has COVID played a role?

I think so, because people have lost their event habits. So, it was easier to implement changes. Because it had been two years since people had attended events and also the change was made in their personal lives.

Before COVID, I was working for France, so I was organizing a lot of catered events all year long. The employees who were invited from one year to the next or even from one semester to the next had a kind of routine, they always expected the same thing and if you shook things up a bit it was complicated. People weren't too ready for change.

Are there any other elements on which you apply CSR?

There have been policies, 0 paper that work well. There are no more brochures, no more documents. This had already started a little before COVID and COVID made it a lot easier. People didn't want to touch anything that potentially could have been touched by someone else before. So it made it possible to

remove them, you could say, and it never came back and that's good.

There is no policy, 0 official goodies, but we are on an optimization, there is almost none.

Would you be willing to give up certain destinations, hotels, activities for CSR reasons? Is your budget flexible in order to improve CRS?

Yes, we did. On the other hand, quality is extremely important, so if the service provider is less good, no.

We can give preference to a provider on a call for tenders with a slightly higher budget if we know that it is better in terms of CSR policy, recycling, optimization.

Also, for destinations?

Yes also, it was a destination that was not very accessible by train and almost all the populations had to take the plane and so the destination was abandoned.

Typically, London, we have all the people who lived in London who were there, but we also had all of Paris and Amsterdam who could go there by train.

Obviously, the other criteria have to be met, but that is taken into account.

There are currently calls for tender and this time CSR is integrated into the criteria, so the company is changing. They have made very strong commitments in terms of carbon neutrality over the next 10 years. But for the moment, this has not been translated into our company, it is the global policy for the moment.

Have you ever thought of offsetting the carbon footprint of an event with money from donations?

Yes, we have. In London, we calculated the carbon footprint because we wanted to improve on the next events and also, and we compensated by making a donation to an association that does reforestation in Scotland. It doesn't really compensate, but it's better than nothing.

On a seminar that was done before COVID, they went to South Africa but compensated with donations and workshops. On the other hand, the message was more or less well received by those who did not participate because they denounced the hypocrisy of choosing a distant destination for just a workshop.