Destination matters

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR EVENT ORGANIZERS



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If there's one figure to take away from the Viparis "Events & Destinations" study, it's this: **74% of international business event attendees say their decision to participate was influenced by the host city.** In other words, while the program remains essential, the destination itself is a powerful driver of appeal.

We conducted this exclusive survey to give event organizers clear, actionable insights into what motivates international audiences.

It's a fact: in an increasingly competitive landscape, every detail can make a difference. Attendee expectations are shifting, with environmental and social impact now part of the equation. But what does that really mean when it comes to choosing the right destination?

To answer that question, we not only carried out our own study, but also cross-checked the findings against leading industry research. The conclusion is clear: the location plays a decisive role in the success of an international event.

But this document goes beyond insight alone. It introduces **a five-point evaluation framework designed to help you assess and compare potential host cities** using objective criteria. To put this model to the test, we then applied it to Paris, one of the world's leading event capitals, here explored as a full case study.

In just a few pages, you'll have all the tools you need to choose the right destination and position it effectively with your audiences, with one clear aim: to create a truly memorable experience.

"The conclusion is clear: the location plays a decisive role in the success of an international event."

The checklist for a winning destination

What makes a destination truly effective for hosting an event?

To help answer that question, we've developed an evaluation framework, informed by the Viparis "Events & Destinations" survey and supported by additional benchmark research.

Let's start by challenging a common assumption.

A study conducted by the Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) on the motivations of international visitors attending trade shows in France offers some useful perspective: it reveals that **45% of visitors (nearly one in two) base their decision primarily on a factor that doesn't directly relate to the event itself** (see table opposite). Other considerations come into play, including the overall cost of attending, the quality of the venue experience, its immediate surroundings, and the destination's appeal as a place to visit.

Don't get us wrong: the event offering remains the leading driver of attractiveness. For participants, how well the event reflects current industry challenges is key. They assess this through the quality and diversity of exhibitors, as well as the topics covered in conferences. Another major factor is how innovative the event feels, both in its content and its format. It's no surprise, because people attend to stay up to date and discover what's new. **What is more surprising, though, is that these are far from the only reasons that matter.**

The Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce study also highlights a factor that is often underestimated: the venue itself. When you combine the quality of the experience it offers, the convenience of its immediate environment, and the event's environmental footprint, the host site emerges—directly or indirectly—as the primary decision driver for 20% of visitors. We'll return to this significant influence later, as it can easily be overlooked, although it certainly should not be.

But more interestingly, the Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce study identifies three additional criteria that shouldn't be ignored either: the cost of travel, the destination's appeal, and its scientific and economic environment. Taken together, these three factors—all directly tied to the host city—are the main motivation for one in four visitors. It's worth noting that these findings align with those of our "Events & Destinations" study, which shows that **for 74% of participants, the host city influenced their decision to attend.** For one third of them, that influence was considered significant enough to make them rethink their decision if the location were to change.

Another figure stands out: when the appeal of the venue is included, all destination-related criteria combined are decisive for 40% of visitors. In other words, **choosing the right destination is a major strategic lever.** Which raises one final question: what exactly makes a destination appealing in the eyes of participants?



For

74%

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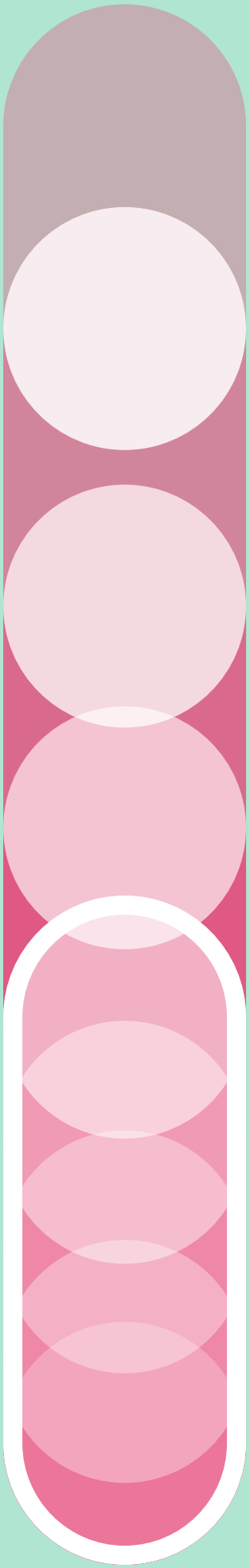
The event venue and its surroundings are the primary decision drivers for

15%

of visitors

VISITORS' MAIN DECISION FACTOR
WHEN ATTENDING A TRADE SHOW IN FRANCE

Paris Île-de-France Chamber of Commerce Study on "New behaviors of international business clienteles at French trade shows" conducted for Congress and Tradeshow Steering Committee (2022 - 2023)



The range of exhibitors at the trade show — **21%**

The innovations showcased at the trade show — **18%**

The content offered by the trade show — **14%**

The overall cost of the trip

The quality of the experience at the exhibition venue

The destination's tourist appeal

The surroundings of the exhibition venue

The destination's economic and scientific ecosystem

The event's environmental footprint

45%

5 criteria to assess your host city

When developing our evaluation framework, we started with a simple question: what really matters to your participants?

The answer comes down to five key criteria. With those in mind, you'll be able to easily put your candidate cities to the test.

Access and connectivity

Criterion 01

The "Events & Destinations" survey confirms what might seem obvious: ease of access plays a decisive role in the decision to attend a business event.

Only 1 in 10 participants considers it of little importance. For everyone else, it is either important (48%) or very important (42%). One important point to keep in mind is that accessibility isn't just about getting to the host city. It's also about being able to move around easily once you're there, whether travelling to the venue or navigating the city itself.

The starting point, of course, is getting there. For international events, air travel is typically the preferred option. But having flights available isn't enough. Direct connections to major global cities and the frequency of services are what really make the difference. So how can you assess a city's performance in this area?

> ***"A wonderful city, easy to access"***
>
> A Brazilian attendee at the ESHRE Meeting

In terms of air transport, the annual rankings published by the Airports Council International provide a useful benchmark, identifying **the European airports with the strongest direct connectivity**. Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, for example, ranks fifth overall. The largest of Paris's three international airports stands out for the diversity of its network, placing second for direct connections to Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as North America.

Rail tends to play a smaller role globally. For instance, only 13% of respondents in the "Events & Destinations" survey chose this mode of transport to reach Paris. However, depending on the audience, it can still be a key option. In our case, more than half of UK participants travelled to the French capital via Eurostar.

Then again, reaching the city is only part of the equation. Once on site, participants need to get around quickly and efficiently. Here, the density, modernity and safety of public transport systems have a direct impact on how the destination is perceived.

To properly assess these factors, you can refer to the "Future of Urban Mobility" index, published by the Oliver Wyman Forum in partnership with the University of California, Berkeley. This index evaluates 70 major cities across 71 criteria, grouped into three pillars: sustainable mobility, public transport, and technology adoption.

It's also worth remembering that, for international visitors, accessibility extends beyond infrastructure. Administrative requirements—such as visas, processing times and nationality-based exemptions—may seem secondary, but they can have a very real impact on attendance decisions.

Finally, accessibility is also about clarity. The easier it is for visitors to find and understand information on transport routes, connections, and access to venues, the smoother their experience will be. Clear, centralised information helps participants plan ahead and move around efficiently from the moment they arrive.

Assess your destination

Air and rail connectivity
from limited to developed

Ease of getting around the city
from difficult to easy

Administrative requirements
from complex to minimal

Accessibility of visitor information
from poor to excellent

Accommodation and hospitality

Criterion 02

Once your participants arrive in the host city, they face a second essential requirement: accommodation.

And indeed, in the "Events & Destinations" survey, 90% of respondents say that ease of finding accommodation is an important factor in their decision to attend, with **36% considering it very important.**

What does "easy access to accommodation" actually mean? *In practice, it comes down to a few key factors.*

But what does "ease of accommodation" actually mean? In practice, it comes down to a few key factors. The first is overall hotel capacity. The city needs to offer a sufficient number of rooms across a range of categories (3-, 4-, and 5-star hotels). Proximity to the event venue also matters, because trade show days are often intense, and **being able to get back to your room quickly to rest and recharge is a real advantage.**

Service quality is another key consideration. From catering and multilingual staff to concierge services, anything that allows participants to focus on the purpose of their trip without worrying about practical details add value, especially in an unfamiliar city. And of course, attendees will be paying close attention to value for money. Accommodation needs to be competitively priced and suited to both their profile and their budget.

Beyond the accommodation offer itself, **access to information once again plays a crucial role.** The ability to quickly identify, compare and book available options makes planning much easier, as does access to clear tourist information once on site.

The overall cost of the stay is another key factor. This includes not only average hotel prices, but also the general cost of living in the city and even local transport costs. However, price should never be considered in isolation. Quality of life, for example, has a strong influence on how a destination is perceived. In our survey, **80% of participants rate this aspect as important or very important.**

To assess these elements objectively, you can refer to the 2024 cost of living survey by Mercer, which ranks cities worldwide based on living costs. The differences are significant: Hong Kong, Singapore, Zurich and Geneva rank among the most expensive cities on the planet, while Amsterdam (30th) sits in a more mid-range position.

In summary, assessing a destination's performance in terms of accommodation and hospitality means looking at a range of interconnected factors. It remains a critical step—especially in today's economic climate.

Assess your destination

Number of hotel rooms
from low to high

Range and quality of accommodation
from limited to varied

Quality of tourist information
from poor to excellent

Cost of living
from high to low

Professional ecosystem

Criterion 03

It's not always something participants consciously consider when attending an international business event.

Yet a closer look reveals a consistent pattern: when a destination already hosts companies, clusters or research centres connected to your event's theme, its appeal increases significantly. This is because **these local roots act as a powerful driver of credibility and influence.**

That said, this criterion can be difficult to measure objectively. The sectors covered by professional events are diverse, and the importance participants place on local industry strength can vary widely. Even so, **useful correlations can be drawn between a region's GDP and its economic vitality,** as well as the presence of high-performing companies and research and development centres.

In this context, rankings such as the one published in 2024 by the Institut Paris Region (based on data from Eurostat and the UK's Office for National Statistics) are particularly insightful. They show that two of the five European regions with the highest GDP are in France: Île-de-France, which ranks first, and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, in fifth position. They are joined by Greater London (2nd), Lombardy (3rd), and Upper Bavaria (4th).

Beyond economic and scientific indicators, a region's ability to mobilise its networks also plays a key role. The presence of **institutional or private stakeholders capable of connecting businesses, research centres and key industry players** makes it easier to involve these ecosystems in events. This local network strengthens both the relevance of the content and the overall value of the event for participants.

"Events & Destinations": an original survey

With our "Events & Destinations" survey, our aim was to capture immediate, on-the-ground impressions from attendees at international trade shows and congresses.

To do this, we used four major events hosted at Viparis venues, gathering feedback from 320 participants from around the world—80 per event, selected at random.

That said, reducing a destination's attractiveness to economic performance alone would be a mistake. A region's dynamism is also reflected in the strength of its talent pool. The concentration of engineers, researchers and scientists is another valuable indicator, because it points to an ecosystem that is innovative, creative and forward-looking. In order to properly assess this human capital, it's important to rely on robust data—whether from international databases, regional reports or specialised studies. Depending on your target region, **combining multiple sources will give you a more accurate and meaningful picture.**

Rest assured that this effort is well worth it. A region's economic strength, combined with the depth of its research and innovation networks, can make a real difference, as it may either reinforce or undermine the relevance of your destination choice. And for industry professionals evaluating your event, these factors play a key role in shaping its perceived value.

Assess your destination

Economic dynamism
from low to high

Strength of local networks
from limited to extensive

Density of engineers and researchers
from low to high

The survey began at the Palais des Congrès de Paris during **EuroPCR**, a leading global event in interventional cardiology. At Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, we spoke with professionals attending **Viva Technology**, Europe's largest event dedicated to innovation and startups. We then moved to Paris–Le Bourget for the **Paris Air Show**, a global showcase for the aerospace industry. Finally, at the Paris Convention Centre, we gathered insights from delegates attending the **ESHRE** Annual Meeting.

At each event, interviews were conducted over two consecutive days, with 40 face-to-face interviews carried out each day. Participants proved both engaged and enthusiastic—many even welcomed the initiative.

A final methodological note: to reflect a broad range of profiles and ensure comparability across different types of events, we chose not to weight the results based on total attendance. Each event therefore contributed equally to the analysis, whether it was a large-scale gathering like VivaTechnology or a more specialised congress such as EuroPCR.



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Venue quality

Criterion 04

As highlighted in the introduction, your event venue is more than just a backdrop. But how do the 20% of visitors who cite a venue-related factor as their main decision driver actually assess it?

For **40% of them, the on-site experience is what matters most.** A further 35% focus on the venue's immediate surroundings, while the remaining 25% prioritise the environmental impact of their experience. In short, your venue needs to strike the right balance between functionality, comfort, innovation and sustainability—not only to attract visitors, but also to meet the expectations of exhibitors.

"Ultimately, a good venue should always be designed with the entire visitor journey in mind."

A strong venue starts with seamless access. Proximity to train stations, airports and major international routes is essential to ensure smooth arrivals. But the "last mile" also matters a lot: efficient local transport links and clear signage around the venue help guarantee a hassle-free journey.

Once on site, participants expect a comfortable and well-designed experience. The size and flexibility of the spaces are key. The venue must be able to accommodate a variety of formats, from conferences to exhibitions, workshops and more. Ideally, these spaces are bright, well-ventilated and fully equipped, with adjacent areas for relaxation and catering that encourage informal interaction and networking. Ultimately, a good venue should always be designed with the entire visitor journey in mind. This includes personalised services, intuitive wayfinding, and accessibility for all audiences. These are all factors that can be assessed firsthand during a site inspection, providing a more accurate picture of the experience visitors can expect.

Infrastructure also needs to meet modern expectations: high-speed Wi-Fi, advanced audiovisual systems, digital event management tools, and even hybrid solutions that connect in-person and remote participants. **Technology has become a strategic lever to enhance and streamline the experience.** The most advanced venues now set themselves apart through immersive experiences. Dedicated mobile apps, interactive journeys and sensory design are becoming standard.

Finally, a venue's quality is also reflected in its environmental footprint, and this point is becoming an increasingly important criterion for many audiences. The most attractive venues are those that take a sustainable approach, implementing waste reduction and sorting, energy efficiency, responsible catering, soft mobility options, and accurate measurement of event-related carbon emissions. Depending on your event's focus, combining operational excellence with environmental responsibility can be a valuable differentiator—or even a core pillar of your proposition.
In short, a high-performing venue does more than host an event: it enhances it, showcases it, and actively contributes to its success.

Assess your destination

Venue accessibility
from poor to excellent

Comfort and innovation
from basic to advanced

Environmental footprint
from high to low

The experience beyond the event

Criterion 05

Let's be honest: even though participants may not always say so openly, when it comes to deciding whether to attend an international event, the event itself isn't always the only factor that counts.

Of course, in our "Events & Destinations" survey, only 48% of the people we interviewed spontaneously identified a destination's tourist appeal as an important or very important factor in their decision to attend. But the reality tells a different story: many visitors will gladly extend their stay or take the opportunity to explore the destination while they're there.

Evidence of this can be found in the same study, nearly three-quarters of respondents said they considered doing some sightseeing while attending a business event in Paris. In fact, 40% even claimed they were certain they would. Another striking finding: two-thirds of participants also plan visits or professional meetings outside the event itself. As a result, attendees book an average of 4.1 nights in Paris, with variations depending on origin (3.2 nights for Europeans, 5.1 for visitors from outside Europe). In other words, they stay longer than strictly necessary.

What this shows is simple: the more attractive the destination, the more it encourages participants to extend their experience beyond the event. For organisers, this is a clear opportunity. Longer stays tend to increase both satisfaction and engagement. That's why a city's image, reputation and overall quality of life play a growing role in the choice of location.

To assess this attractiveness, as always, several factors need to be considered. You can evaluate them individually, but **there are also broader indices that can help.** The Top 100 City Destinations Index 2024 published by Euromonitor International, for example, is based on 55 indicators grouped into six key pillars: economic and business performance, tourism performance, tourism infrastructure, attractiveness, health and safety, and sustainability.

Looking more closely at the last two pillars, in a global context shaped by health and security concerns, public health and visitor safety have become essential criteria—alongside more traditional tourism and leisure considerations. And as climate change remains a major concern, your audiences will also pay close attention to how destinations are addressing it. Green spaces, building quality, measures to reduce congestion in city centres, and support for sustainable mobility are just some of the factors that will influence their final decision. **A truly attractive city is one where people feel comfortable and confident**—before, during and after the event.

73%

of visitors plan to take advantage of their trip to Paris to do some sightseeing while attending an event

Assess your destination

Tourist appeal
from low to high

Safety
from low to high

Sustainability and environmental performance
from low to high

CONCLUSION

It's all about balance

You now have a clear understanding of our evaluation framework and are ready to assess potential destinations for your international gatherings.

The key to a successful event lies in striking the right balance between access and connectivity, accommodation and hospitality, the professional ecosystem, venue quality, and the experience beyond the event. Simple enough.

But **choosing the right destination is only part of the equation**. In order for you to make the most of it, it should become a communication asset, even a marketing argument in its own right. Highlighting the host city in your materials shows that every detail has been carefully considered. Showcasing its strengths—its energy, iconic venues, sustainability commitments—helps position it as a coherent and inspiring destination. This, in turn, gives meaning to the experience you offer and strengthens the credibility of your event.

In the same spirit, sharing practical information early on helps create a smoother experience for participants. Administrative requirements depending on nationality, local currency, time zone, expected weather, cultural highlights... All these details help attendees picture their stay and build anticipation around your event.

The destination can also enhance the content itself. Engaging with local stakeholders like institutions, businesses, universities, or cultural venues anchors the event in the reality of the host region and enriches its overall value.

The final point to keep in mind is that every event has its own identity, audience and priorities. For a fintech summit, the strength of the local ecosystem will matter more than nightlife. For a design fair, creativity, culture and inspiration will be the deciding factors. **Adjusting the balance between our framework's five criteria to suit your audience ensures a choice that is both relevant and impactful.**

And once your event is over, you should take the time to measure how the destination influenced your participants: ask for feedback, gather insights, and analyse how the location shaped their experience. This will help you refine your future decisions, strengthening the value of each new edition.

CASE STUDY

Paris under the microscope

As we've seen, choosing the right location is a critical factor in an event's success.

In order to validate our evaluation framework, we applied it to one of the world's most sought-after destinations for business events: the French capital. Does it live up to expectations?



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CRITERION 01

Access and connectivity

Our first criterion raises a simple but essential question: is it easy to reach the destination? In Paris's case, the answer is clearly positive.

To begin with, the city stands out for its air transport infrastructure. Two major international airports (Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport and Paris Orly Airport) connect it to 119 countries and 328 destinations, making Paris one of the world's leading global hubs. And according to the Skytrax World Airport Awards 2026, these facilities are not only extensive but also of high quality. Charles de Gaulle ranks as the best airport in Europe— a strong mark of credibility—while Paris-Orly is recognised as the continent's top regional airport.

Rail connectivity is equally impressive. France's high-speed rail network, spanning nearly 3,000 km, links Paris to major European cities. Seven mainline stations serve the capital, including Gare du Nord, the busiest railway station in Europe, with 211.7 million passengers in 2022. **These stations are seamlessly integrated with other transport modes,** ensuring smooth onward connections for visitors.

Within the city, Paris offers a dense and efficient urban transport network. The metro, RER, suburban trains and tramways provide comprehensive coverage across the city. This high-performing system places Paris second in the 2024 Urban Mobility City Rankings published by the Oliver Wyman Forum, just behind San Francisco and ahead of Singapore.

Paris Charles de Gaulle also features in the 2025 OAG Megahubs ranking as the 10th most connected hub in the world, further reinforcing its global reach.

And the city continues to invest in the future. Upcoming projects include the CDG Express, a direct rail link connecting Charles de Gaulle Airport to central Paris in just 20 minutes, scheduled to open in early 2027. Another major development is Line 17 of the Grand Paris Express, expected in 2028, which will connect central Paris to Paris Nord Villepinte, with direct access to both Charles de Gaulle and Le Bourget airports in just 12 minutes.

Alongside these infrastructures, Paris also benefits from **the "Welcome Pack", a joint initiative bringing together public and private stakeholders,** including Viparis, Aéroports de Paris, Accor and Visit Paris Region, to improve the arrival and mobility experience for international event participants. In practical terms, it increases the visibility of major events at key entry points and enhances access to transport and tourist information.

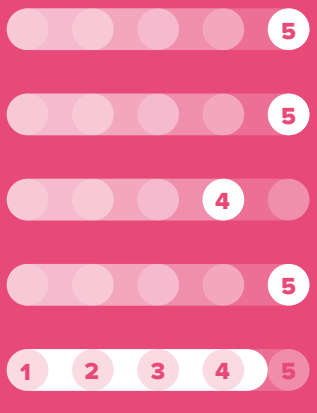
Finally, **Paris benefits from being part of the European Union and the Schengen Area:** travellers from many European countries can enter freely, while visa procedures for international attendees are well-established and efficient for business events.

Taken together, these strengths make Paris an exceptionally strong contender when assessed against the access and connectivity criterion.

1st

Paris Charles de Gaulle was named Europe's best airport according to the Skytrax World Airport Awards 2026

Paris score



Air and rail connectivity
from limited to developed

Ease of getting around the city
from difficult to easy

Administrative requirements
from complex to minimal

Accessibility of visitor information
from poor to excellent

RATING: **4.75/5**

CRITERION 02

Accommodation and hospitality

> ***"Kindness of people, quality of food, accommodation and services"***
>
> An Italian attendee at Viva Technology, on the appeal of Paris

Our second criterion looks at accommodation and hospitality.

So, how does Paris perform in this area? According to our "Events & Destinations" survey, the city once again delivers strong results, with 78% of participants expressing satisfaction. That said, it is the lowest satisfaction score across all criteria, leaving some room for improvement.

One thing is certain, however: Paris offers no shortage of options. The French capital boasts a world-class hotel offering, with nearly 2,500 hotels, including 12 palaces, providing **65,000 rooms in the 4- and 5-star categories and 75,000 rooms in 2- and 3-star hotels.** In other words, the city caters to a wide range of expectations and budgets. And according to the independent World's 50 Best Hotels 2025 ranking, the luxury segment is particularly strong, with **three Parisian properties ranked among the top 25.**

This diversity reflects a distinctive hospitality experience, shaped by decades of expertise. The figures speak for themselves: in 2024, Paris welcomed 48.7 million visitors, including 22.6 million international travellers.

Paris's full hospitality potential is perhaps most evident in the field of business events. In 2022, **the city hosted 648 congresses, bringing together 837,378 delegates, including nearly a quarter of a million from abroad.** The annual rankings by the International Congress and Convention Association, which assess leading global destinations in this sector, have consistently placed Paris among the top cities. Ranked first in 2019, 2022 and 2023, the capital moved down to sixth place in 2024, though this was

Paris 2024: how the Games set a new benchmark for hosting

The opening ceremony, Léon Marchand's four gold medals, Novak Djokovic's Olympic triumph... the Paris 2024 Olympic Games delivered no shortage of iconic moments. But their impact went far beyond sport: they established Paris as a benchmark for hosting. The message is clear: the French capital can deliver world-class events with efficiency, elegance and precision.

With 25 competition venues across Paris and the surrounding region, the city demonstrated its ability to provide a seamless spectator experience thanks to an efficient infrastructure. Viparis also played a key role, with venues including Paris–Le Bourget, Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, Paris Nord Villepinte and the Palais des Congrès de Paris.

largely due to the impact of the Olympic Games, which absorbed a significant share of accommodation capacity. Even so, Paris still hosted 364 trade shows that year, attracting 5.6 million visitors and nearly 90,000 exhibitors.

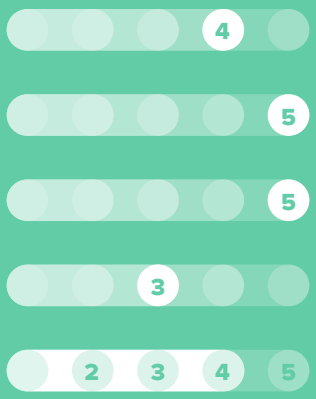
It's also worth noting that hospitality in Paris goes beyond infrastructure. It reflects a broader mindset, one that is continuously being reinforced. A good example is the recent "Hospitality Manifesto" launched by Paris je t'aime. Its roadmap is ambitious, aiming to strengthen the city's appeal while rethinking the visitor experience around three key priorities: **ecological transition, visitor experience and support for the local ecosystem.** Backed by stakeholders across tourism, hospitality, culture and transport, this initiative promotes a more sustainable and inclusive approach to hospitality. The ambition is clear: to make every stay and every event a genuinely Parisian experience.

More broadly, there is a clear drive to simplify and enhance the visitor experience. The "Welcome Pack", mentioned earlier, also plays a role here by improving orientation and access to practical information related to events, taking into account their location, timing and audience. In the same spirit, Choose Paris Region, the region's international attractiveness agency, works upstream to **bring together tourism and event stakeholders, making the Paris offer more visible** and easier to promote internationally.

That leaves one final consideration: the cost of living. While Paris is not known as a low-cost destination, it is far from unaffordable. Ranked 29th in the Mercer Cost of Living City Ranking 2024, the city is more affordable than many comparable global capitals. Above all, it offers excellent value for money.

In short, finding accommodation in Paris can sometimes be a challenge, but once you're there, it's hard not to be won over. Parisian hospitality blends expertise, high standards and quality of life. This is a compelling combination, supported by outstanding facilities.

Paris score



Number of hotel rooms
from low to high

Range and quality of accommodation
from limited to varied

Quality of tourist information
from poor to excellent

Cost of living
from high to low

RATING: **4.25/5**

The scale of the event was remarkable: 10,500 Olympic athletes and 4,400 Paralympic athletes, more than 13 million visitors overall, and 9.5 million tickets sold (a historic record). Delivering this required the mobilisation of 45,000 volunteers and 70,000 public-sector staff, plus 180,000 employees from partner organisations.

But beyond the numbers, what truly sets Paris apart is the lasting legacy of these next-generation Games. Transport networks have been modernised, accommodation capacity expanded, and the visitor experience taken to a new level. Every improvement and logistical innovation can now be leveraged to host trade shows, congresses, conventions and international seminars. The Olympic and Paralympic Games have elevated Paris to an unprecedented level of readiness and expertise, further strengthening its position as a leading global destination for business events.

By combining rigorous organisation, state-of-the-art infrastructure and a strong human dimension, the Paris 2024 Games proved that the capital can welcome the whole world for a few weeks. More importantly, they showed that Paris is fully equipped to host any major event—offering a level of expertise that is now yours to build on.

CRITERION 03

Professional ecosystem

Let's now turn to the third criterion: the professional ecosystem.

And once again, Paris stands out. First, as mentioned earlier, the Île-de-France remains the leading region in Europe in terms of GDP. It alone accounts for more than 5% of the EU's total output and 31% of France's national GDP. The region is home to a high concentration of companies, decision-makers and accessible funding.

But as previously highlighted, a destination's attractiveness also depends on the density of its talent pool, and in that respect, Paris also leads the way. According to the Paris Region Facts & Figures 2024 report, it ranks first among European regions for the number of scientists and engineers, with 774,200 professionals—well ahead of Greater London (619,500) and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (370,200). This concentration of highly skilled talent reflects **a strong capacity to generate innovative solutions to today's and tomorrow's challenges.**

31%

Île-de-France's share of France's total economic output

This momentum is also reflected in international rankings. According to the Destination Competitive Index, Paris ranks among the world's most influential destinations when it comes to the involvement of researchers and experts in international scientific networks and associations. A key indicator of its ability to attract and host high-level congresses.

However, Paris's role as a global scientific hub is not built on numbers alone. It is also supported by strong, well-established connections within academic and professional communities. Through initiatives such as the Paris Leaders Club, **the destination identifies and mobilises leading scientific and medical figures,** many of whom are active in international scholarly societies. Their influence plays a decisive role in securing and delivering major congresses in Paris, strengthening both the scientific credibility of bids and their visibility on the global stage.

This depth of expertise is no coincidence: it is underpinned by **a world-class academic and research ecosystem.** The Île-de-France region is home to 16 public universities, nearly 80 grandes écoles (including institutions such as École Polytechnique, HEC Paris, Mines Paris, CentraleSupélec and ENS) and more than 3,000 research laboratories. Major research organisations such as CNRS, CEA, Inria and Inserm are all based here, while the Paris Saclay cluster brings together a critical mass of research, patents and deep tech start-ups. The result is a strong foundation of expertise, cutting-edge knowledge and a network of researchers and entrepreneurs ready to be mobilised.

In short, this combination of economic strength, scientific excellence and academic depth places Paris at the forefront of professional ecosystems in Europe.

Of course, having these resources is one thing but being able to mobilise them effectively is another. **This is where the "Guichet unique Grands Événements" comes in,** an initiative led by Paris je t'aime and Choose Paris Region. It brings together key regional expertise to simplify processes and accelerate connections.

Beyond its cultural and tourism assets, the region stands out as a place where local stakeholders actively support and enhance the success of the events it hosts.

Paris score

Economic dynamism
from low to high — 5

Strength of local networks
from limited to extensive — 5

Density of engineers and researchers
from low to high — 5

2 3 4 5

RATING: **5/5**

CRITERION 04

Venue quality

Next comes a question that is central—if not critical—to your event: the venue itself. And once again, Paris stands out. In this case, much of that strength can be attributed to Viparis.

"Viparis sets the standard with its 'Guest Attitude'"

As Europe's leading operator of congresses and trade shows, Viparis manages **10 flagship venues across Greater Paris,** including the Palais des Congrès de Paris, Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, the Paris Convention Centre and Paris Nord Villepinte. In practical terms, whether you are planning a specialist conference or a large-scale public exhibition, the French capital offers venues capable of meeting your needs—with consistently high standards of service and quality.

Behind this operational capacity lies a genuine culture of hospitality. Viparis has developed its own standard, known as "Guest Attitude", a combination of operational excellence, iconic venues and premium services. Every aspect of the visitor experience is carefully designed and delivered.

Quality also comes from a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Viparis has rolled out an ambitious strategy, Better Events, built around three pillars: **Better for the Environment** (promoting sustainable buildings, preserving natural resources and addressing climate change), **Better at Heart** (enhancing the employee experience and supporting diversity), and **Better Heritage** (setting high standards for safety and accessibility, working with responsible partners and contributing positively to the local area). This approach is also reflected in Viparis's role as co-founder and long-time host of the French Event Booster, an innovation platform dedicated to the events industry, where new formats and uses are developed. The result is a dynamic ecosystem aligned with evolving market expectations.

These ambitions go beyond marketing buzzwords and translate into tangible improvements on the ground. For instance, the Porte Maillot area has since 2024 been transformed into one of the capital's most efficient transport hubs, with the addition of the RER E line and the T3 tramway to an already extensive network. Gare du Nord can thus be reached in just 15 minutes, and Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport with a single connection. A new station, featuring a glass canopy over 100 metres long, brings natural light deep into the space. The surrounding urban development follows suit, with improved public spaces, increased greenery and enhanced accessibility. The result is **a district that is fluid, modern, and pleasant—perfectly suited to hosting events in the 21st century.**

And this is just one example. From La Villette to Versailles, from Bercy to La Défense, Paris offers a wide range of venues capable of meeting the highest standards. In terms of capacity, accessibility, innovation and comfort, the city's venue offering ticks all the boxes.

Paris Score



CRITERION 05

The experience beyond the event

Finally, let's look at how Paris performs when it comes to the overall experience it offers beyond the event itself.

To begin with, our "Events & Destinations" survey shows that attendees at trade shows in Paris stay an average of 4.1 nights in the city. But beyond length of stay, it's the intention that matters: **nearly 40% plan to extend their visit after the event,** 70% of them for leisure or a mix of business and personal time. In Paris, an event is rarely a quick in-and-out trip. It becomes an opportunity to enjoy a cultural, social and human experience, and that's precisely what amplifies its impact.

It helps, of course, that the city has so much to offer: world-renowned museums, temporary exhibitions, inventive gastronomy, historic and trendy neighbourhoods, the banks of the Seine, leisurely strolls, performances and concerts… **Paris offers an unmatched cultural and tourism experience in Europe—and arguably beyond.** And when it comes to food, the city more than lives up to its reputation: French cuisine is world-famous, and Paris places two restaurants in the top 15 of The World's 50 Best Restaurants 2025.

> ***"Paris is always Paris: an iconic, beautiful and amazing city"***
>
> An attendee at EuroPCR

This excellence is widely recognised internationally. Paris ranks third in the 2026 edition of the World's Best Cities index, which combines objective data and perception-based indicators across three pillars: Livability, Lovability and Prosperity. The French capital is described as both historic and forward-looking, with a visible commitment to urban transformation.

And that transformation is real. In recent years, Paris has evolved to become more fluid, more pedestrian-friendly and more sustainable. With over 1,300 km of cycle paths, a modernised public transport network, expanded green spaces, enhanced heritage, and an ambitious environmental strategy, **the city has set a clear goal: to become a leading European capital of ecological transition.** This momentum is also reflected in the hospitality sector, where more and more establishments are engaging in environmental certification schemes, as well as in the services offered to organisers and exhibitors.

As for safety, it is now better managed and more reassuring for visitors. Recent large-scale events, starting with the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, have tested robust systems combining human presence, technology, enhanced coordination and effective communication. The result is a secure and welcoming environment, particularly for international attendees.

In short, hosting an event in Paris naturally offers a high-value stay, **where business blends with pleasure and practical benefits meet inspiration.** It is this overall quality of experience that turns a successful event into a truly memorable one.

Paris score



Tourist appeal
from low to high

Safety
from low to high

Sustainability and environmental performance
from low to high

RATING: **4.3/5**

Paris: the destination of choice

With a score of 23 out of 25, Paris comfortably passes our evaluation framework. The French capital clearly stands out as a leading choice for hosting all your professional events.

Ready to choose your next destination?

Evaluate, compare and rank your options against the criteria that matter most to your attendees.

Start your evaluation



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CONCLUSION

When the destination becomes a performance driver

Throughout this analysis, we have deliberately taken a specific angle: **assessing a destination's attractiveness from the visitor's perspective**. Why? Because it wouldn't be particularly useful to try to cover every factor involved in organising an event. As you know very well, these vary from one case to another, whether they relate to budget, logistics, or technical and regulatory constraints. What we did want to highlight, however, is a consistently decisive lever for event success: a host city's ability to generate interest, influence the decision to attend, and enhance the overall experience.

Evaluating a destination from this perspective is not straightforward. It means looking at all the factors that shape its appeal: clear and efficient transport infrastructure, accommodation that meets a range of needs and budgets, a strong cultural and tourism offering, a well-structured professional ecosystem, and additional experiences that extend the value of the stay beyond the event itself. Taken together, these elements directly influence how the event is perceived, its ability to attract participants, and overall visitor satisfaction.

However, **for these drivers of attractiveness to have a real impact, they also need to be easy for organisers to activate**. A destination's performance depends on how accessible, understandable and actionable its offering is. This requires clearly identified stakeholders who are available and able to work together to deliver the best possible experience of the host city. Tourism offices, investment promotion agencies, hotels, transport operators, event venues, public institutions and private partners all play a key role.

Alignment and coordination between these stakeholders are essential. They allow organisers to rely on a seamless and secure ecosystem when designing their events, while ensuring that participants enjoy a high-quality experience. This enables you to focus on the added value of your event, while **the destination acts as both a facilitator and a multiplier of your efforts**.

As you've seen, this is precisely where Paris stands out, thanks to a high level of collective maturity. Its experienced, well-structured and highly engaged ecosystem supports organisers at every stage and helps create a smoother experience for participants. By combining attractiveness, reliability and operational readiness, the French capital offers a reassuring and high-performing environment, fully aligned with the expectations of major international events.

It is this unique combination that makes Paris **a leading destination for major events**. capable of turning a location's appeal into tangible, lasting success.

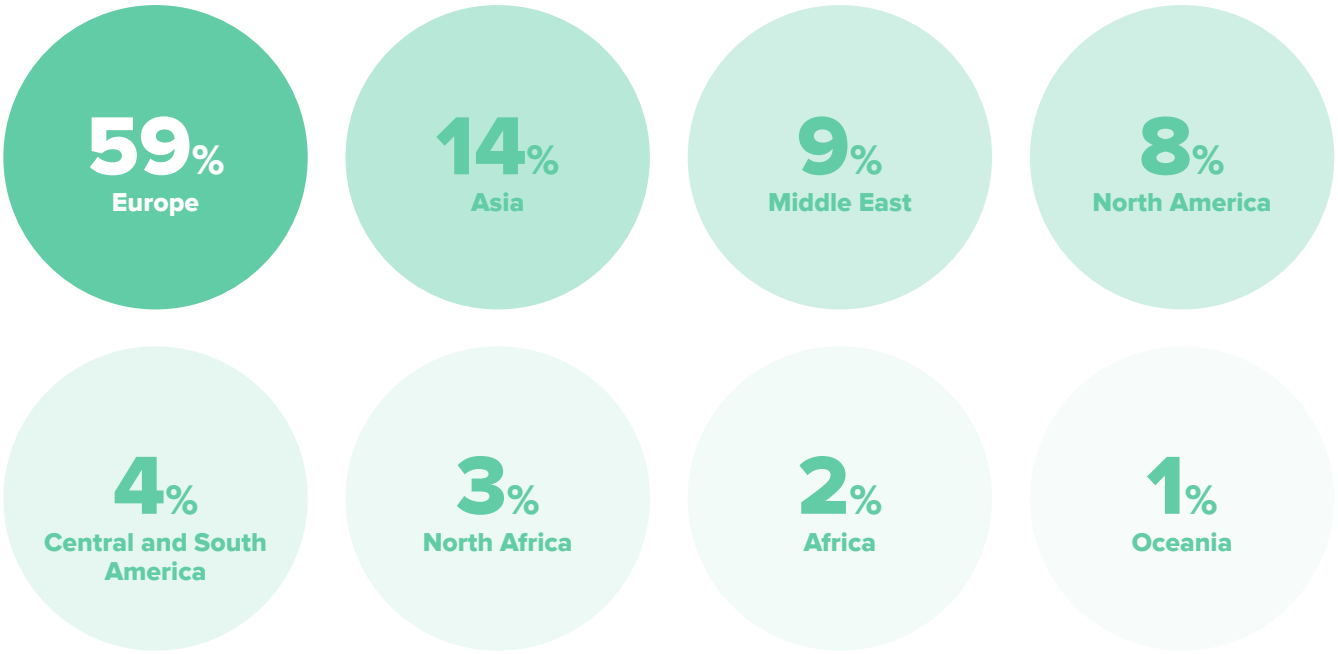
The Viparis "Events & Destinations" survey in detail

In June and July 2025, we surveyed international participants at several events held at Viparis venues.

The following pages present the raw data from this original study.

Visitors' region of origin

The survey reflects a wide range of perspectives, with 320 respondents representing 65 countries.



Looking more closely, here are the top 10 countries represented (accounting for 45% of all respondents):

United Kingdom (29)
Germany (21)
United States (18)
Italy (18)
Turkey (13)
Japan (11)
India (10)
Spain (9)
Belgium (9)
Switzerland (8)

Participation habits

36%
Repeat attendee

18%
Second-time attendee

47%
First-time attendee

PARTICIPATION HISTORY FOR THE EVENT SURVEYED

For nearly half of participants interviewed, this was their first time attending the event.

By contrast, more than one-third were regular attendees.

17%
No other events

22%
One other event per year

61%
Several other events per year

PARTICIPATION IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EVENTS

A majority of respondents say they regularly attend several international business events each year.

Only 17% reported that they attend just the event at which they were surveyed.

Length of stay and transport

Respondents reported an average stay of 4.1 nights in Paris for the event. However, some variations can be observed depending on the event and participants' origin.

European visitors stay an average of 3.2 nights (based on 126 respondents), while participants from outside Europe tend to stay longer, with an average of 5.1 nights (100 respondents).



84% of visitors traveled to Paris **by air**



13% of visitors traveled to Paris **by train**



3% of visitors traveled to Paris **by car**

Influence of the host city on the decision to attend

74% of international respondents said that the host city (in this case, Paris) influenced their decision to attend—either slightly or significantly.

For 24%, the city had a strong influence on their decision.

It is worth noting that geographical proximity slightly reduces the importance of the host city: 68% of European respondents said they were influenced by the destination, including 18% strongly.

Host city-related criteria influencing attendance decisions

Breakdown of responses to the question: "When it comes to the host city of an international business event, how important are the following factors in your decision to attend?"

	Very important	Important	Total important and Very Important	Not important	Responses
Ease of access	42%	48%	90%	10%	313
Ease of finding accommodation	36%	54%	90%	10%	314
Its quality of life and hospitality	22%	58%	80%	20%	319
Its professional interest	40%	36%	76%	24%	312
Its tourist appeal	12%	36%	48%	52%	318

** (presence of major players in the sector, locally developed innovations, etc.)*

Satisfaction with Paris as a host city

96% of respondents said they were satisfied that the event they attended was held in Paris, including 59% who were very satisfied.

Here's a breakdown of responses to the question: *"How satisfied are you with Paris as a host city for an international business event, based on the following criteria?"*

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied + Satisfied	Not so satisfied	Not satisfied at all	Réponses
Its tourist appeal	62%	36%	98%	2%	0%	299
Its professional interest*	52%	45%	98%	2%	0%	291
Its quality of life and hospitality	46%	50%	95%	4%	1%	305
Ease of access	52%	37%	89%	8%	3%	315
Ease of finding accommodation	32%	46%	78%	20%	2%	308

** (presence of major players in the sector, locally developed innovations, etc.)*

Almost all respondents, between 95% and 98%, were satisfied with Paris's tourist appeal, professional relevance, quality of life, and hospitality.

Behaviour beyond the event

Breakdown of responses to the question:
“During your stay in Paris, do you plan to...”

	Yes, definitely	Yes, maybe	No
To arrange business meetings or visits outside the event?	40%	24%	36%
To enjoy the tourist attractions of Paris?	40%	33%	27%
To extend your stay beyond the event?	24%	15%	61%

Analysis of visitor feedback on Paris

As part of the study, we also collected **828 usable comments** from 308 visitors. All respondents were asked the same question: “Could you please share three words that come to your mind when you think of Paris?”

Of these 828 responses, **92% were positive** (or neutral in some cases), while only 8% carried a negative connotation.

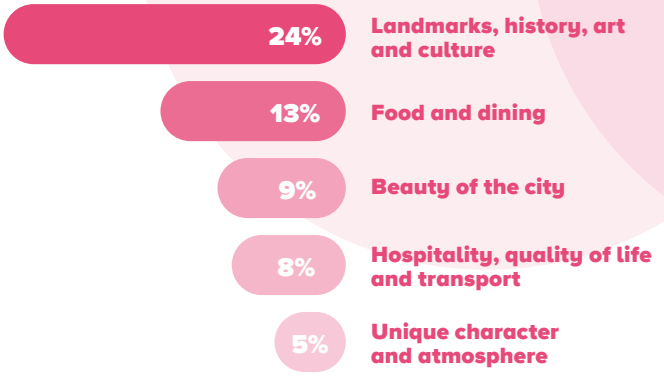
Top 3 most frequently cited words:

1. Food (58 mentions)

2. Eiffel Tower (57)

3. Beautiful (55)

Responses were then grouped into thematic categories. The five main categories are:



Impact of the Olympic Games

The Olympic Games had a positive impact on participants' perception of Paris for 20% of respondents (out of 317).

More specifically, 16% said the Games had a positive impact, but without influencing their decision to attend the event.

4%, however, said the Olympic Games positively influenced their perception of Paris to the extent that it contributed to their decision to attend.

Methodology

The Viparis "Events & Destinations" study was conducted with **320 participants across four international events held at Viparis venues** (80 respondents per event). Surveys were conducted over two consecutive days (40 interviews per day).

The study was based on face-to-face interviews carried out on site, capturing immediate reactions from randomly selected participants. Only international visitors were surveyed.

Note: in the overall analysis, results were not weighted based on the total number of visitors at each event. Instead, **each event was given equal importance**, regardless of its size.

Event	Venue	Interview dates	Interviews	Participants	International leadership
EuroPCR	Palais des Congrès de Paris	May 20-21	80	12,000	**Interventional cardiology**
Viva Technology	Porte de Versailles	June 11-12	80	180,000	**Innovation & technology**
Paris Air Show	Paris-Le Bourget	June 17-18	80	305,000	**Aerospace & space**
ESHRE	Paris Convention Centre	June 30 - July 1	80	12,000	**Fertility & reproductive medicine**

The Paris effect

International Events Hosted in Paris in 2025	Increase in Attendance Between the Previous Edition and the 2025 Paris Edition
European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology Annual Meeting	+6%
EACS - European AIDS Conference	+11%
European Academy of Dermatology & Venerology Congress	+18%
EASL - Liver Cancer Summit	+34%
European Hernia Society Annual International Congress	+57%
European Society of Coloproctology Congress	+65%
EURETINA Congress	+38%
European Congress of Endocrinology	+47%
IUNS-ICN International Congress of Nutrition	+15%



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Florent Maurin

PRESS CONTACT
Vae Solis Communications
David Buzonie
david.buzonie@vae-solis.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Cécile Durand

PHOTO CREDITS
Cover © AzmanJaka/iStock

VIPARIS
2, place de la Porte Maillot
F-75853 Paris Cedex 17

VIPARIS.COM
LINKEDIN • INSTAGRAM • FACEBOOK • YOUTUBE