Switzerland Meetings Report 2014

Analysis of business meetings in Switzerland over the period 2011-2013
MySwitzerland.com

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1 PREFACE

The Switzerland Meetings Report of 2011 created the first solid basis for making a detailed analysis of the structure and importance of the meetings industry for Switzerland using reliable data. This provided an assessment of the importance of conferences and large incentive trips as well as an overall evaluation of the whole meetings, seminar and congress sector, and delivered important findings that are highly useful for defining future strategies as well as for investment decisions.

The new Switzerland Meetings Report 2014 allows for the first time an examination of developments in the sector over a period of 3 years. Good news: the great importance of business meetings for Switzerland as a tourist destination and Switzerland’s competitiveness in this sector are confirmed.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the partners of Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB) and their hotels, conference centres and event venues, who supplied us with valuable data for the analysis. The production of the Switzerland Meetings Reports 2011 and 2014 would not have been possible without their support.

Jürg Schmid
CEO, Switzerland Tourism
2 SUMMARY

Key findings, 2013:

• In a 3-year comparison, Switzerland proves to be competitive as a location for meetings.
• Switzerland shows growth in meetings, primarily as a result of an increase in the number of single-day events.
• There are structural changes in the composition of meetings. The number of longer, large events (with a duration of 5 days or more) fell slightly in comparison with 2011, while the share of smaller, shorter multi-day events (duration: 2-4 days) increased over the same period.
• Rural areas showed the largest relative growth in events. This is partly explained by a normalisation of the Meetings Statistics Database (in 2011, the volume of data from these regions was relatively small); at the same time, rural regions have benefited particularly from an increasing number of seminars.
• In 2013, the sector was responsible for 18% of overnight stays in Swiss hotels, a small decrease.
• Altogether, the sector generated sales of CHF 1.9 billion in 2013. The decrease in comparison to 2011 (CHF 2.2 bn) can be explained by the increase in the number of single-day events and the shorter average stay of event participants.
• The meetings sector remains an important support for the tourism industry in low season. The seasonal variations observed in the sector in 2011 have been confirmed again throughout the whole period of study.
INTRODUCTION

For the past 4 years, details of events held in Switzerland have been recorded systematically in the Meetings Statistics Database (M-S-DB) of the Switzerland Convention and Incentive Bureau (SCIB). Details of individual events are entered by SCIB on the one hand, and on the other by a variety of event locations (conference centres, hotels, destinations, etc.) and organisers throughout Switzerland. The survey was able to increase the total volume of registered meetings over the past few years from about 18,000 entries to more than 28,000 events. One reason is because the database was able to acquire a variety of new suppliers of data. As sufficient numbers of partners have entered details of their events for the whole 3 years, a reliable 3-year-comparison of the meetings sector in Switzerland is now possible for the first time.

The purpose of this report is to show how Switzerland’s meetings sector has evolved in the past 3 years. The analysis begins with an look at the number, type and duration of events in Switzerland, followed by an examination of the number of participants and the regional distribution of these events. Here, the main focus is on the 4 geographical categories (big cities, small cities, mountain regions, rural areas). The report also gives an update regarding the significance of the sector within the tourist industry (share of hotel overnights) and its economic importance (sales generated in the calendar year). The method of calculation for these figures follows that of the Switzerland Meetings Report 2011. The same methodology and assumptions form the basis for the current extrapolations. Overall, the current report represents an updating of the 2011 report, whose fundamental analytical approach may be maintained – adding credence and simplifying the comparison of results.
4 NUMBER, TYPE AND DURATION OF EVENTS

4.1 Distribution of events through the calendar year

Distribution of events registered in the Meetings Statistics Database, 2011-2013

All 3 years of the current analysis show a similar distribution of the recorded meetings over the course of the calendar year. A striking feature is that the months which were relatively strongest in 2011 – March and May – registered declines in the following years. In 2011, the month of March accounted for 12.5% of meetings, while in 2013 the figure was only 10%. May showed a similar fall. However, a comparison with previous years puts these reductions in perspective: in 2009, May accounted for 8.3% of all events, in 2010, 9%. Overall, it is possible to speak of a normalisation of the situation, with the year 2011 representing an exception.\(^1\)

This conclusion is borne out by a subsequent step: comparison of the annual totals limited to those sources that supplied data in all three years. This allows the exclusion, as much as possible, of random effects that could arise from data-supplying partners joining the survey or discontinuing their participation. The figures show clearly that the participating partners were able to increase their number of meetings by about one third:

\(^1\) cf. Meetings Report Switzerland 2011.
The increase of 32% cannot, however, be equated with a corresponding growth in the sector as a whole. In the past 3 years, efforts to increase awareness among partners of the importance of registering their events in the M-S-DB were further intensified. It is therefore clear that a large part of the increase is the result of higher levels of recording data, although this effect cannot be quantified precisely.

4.2 Duration of events

A glimpse at the duration of registered events shows that the greatest increase is in the number of single-day events:

**Evolution of duration of events 2011-2013**
In 2011, the proportion of day events was 58% (10,091 entries). In 2013, the share rose to 67% (15,240 entries), corresponding to an increase of 51%. This shows an overall tendency in Switzerland for shorter events, although here, too, precise quantification of this trend would not be of reliable use. Nevertheless, arguments can be found to support this conclusion:

a) Exchange rates: over the period of study, the Swiss franc has gained in value against a variety of foreign currencies. This means that Switzerland has become relatively more expensive for foreigners interested in events here. Simultaneously, and over a relatively short time, neighbouring countries have become cheaper still for potential Swiss customers thanks to the relative weakness of the euro. Together, the two factors are likely to contribute to the reduction of duration of events in Switzerland. Potential Swiss clients will be attracted by the prospect of holding multi-day events in a neighbouring country, where the price advantage compared to Switzerland increases with the duration of the event. At the same time, it is clear that potential foreign clients will attempt to compensate for the price disadvantage in Switzerland by shortening events.

b) The economy: over the period of analysis, the overall economic situation in many source markets of the Swiss meetings industry has worsened dramatically. Increased unemployment, lack of economic growth and recession also have a delayed effect on the budgets of companies and associations for events. For Switzerland, this leads to an additional sharpening of competition.

Switzerland remains competitive as a meetings destination in this difficult environment, as proven by the total number of recorded multi-day events. Comparable data suppliers over the period of study recorded 7,122 multi-day events in 2011, and were able to increase this number to 7,468 (+4.9%). Bearing in mind that here, too, part of the growth is the result of an increased rate of reporting, it can be assumed that the sector was able to at least maintain the number of multi-day events. Closer inspection of the figures concerning event duration reveals two additional results that also support the conclusions. The sector was able to increase the number of “short” multi-day events of 2-4 days from 5,088 in 2011 to 6,075 in 2013. Over the same period, the number of longer multi-day events (5 days and longer) fell by 33% to 1,393 entries. This supports the thesis that Switzerland had difficulty in attracting longer events and that the duration of meetings and events has shortened since 2011. The following graph summarises these developments:
The overall picture is revealing. It appears plausible that, in terms of numbers, Switzerland enjoyed a stable position for the past 3 years thanks to its attractive offering – although it was able to benefit only under-proportionately from growth in the sector as a whole.¹

4.3 Type of events

Each event recorded in the M-S-DB is categorised by type. This categorisation is made by the data suppliers, who have precise definitions of each meeting type. In order to make relevant comparisons, this stage of the analysis also focuses purely on entries by those information suppliers that provided data throughout the whole study period. The results for 2013 fundamentally confirm the significance of the different types of events for Switzerland as a meetings destination as specified in 2011.

¹ According to the ITB-World Travel Trend report 2013/2014, the MICE sector grew by 6% (time span: Jan-June 2013).
As in previous years, the most frequently cited form of event in Switzerland in 2013 by far is the “meeting”. Roughly every other event is categorised as a “meeting”. This form of event also showed the highest rate of increase in a 3-year comparison (+12 percentage points). “Seminars” occupy second place at 13 per cent, a small reduction in comparison with 2011 (-1.5 percentage points). The share of conferences (12%) also fluctuated, falling slightly overall with respect to 2011 (-1 percentage point).

As in the preceding years, the types of event with a relatively high potential for creating added value (congresses, information events, annual general meetings) occupy the lower positions in the ranking; their relative importance compared with event types offering a lower economic potential (meetings, workshops, seminars, etc.) has fallen further still.

In principle, the economic potential of an event depends a great deal on its duration (as well as the number of participants). It is therefore important for the success of a destination/event location/company to maximise the proportion of multi-day events in its portfolio. An analysis of the proportion of single-day events for each category of event reveals great differences.
84% of workshops last just one day; the figure for annual general meetings, by contrast, is just 31%. For the most frequently cited form of gathering in Switzerland, the “meeting”, the proportion of single-day events is 69%. As each of the event types listed requires different services and facilities, it clearly makes sense for local providers to specialise on certain kinds of events according to their own strengths. In this way, providers gain not only a clear position in the market but also additional cost benefits. An analysis of the change in proportion of single-day events over the study period reveals that precisely those categories of meetings with a high potential for creating added value have gained additionally in attractiveness.

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Change in proportion of day events according to type of event, 2011-2013

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The majority of types of events represented in Switzerland show an increase in proportion of single-day events. The only falls in the number of single-day events were registered by annual general meetings, seminars, congresses and “other” events. The rise in the proportion of multi-day events in these categories with respect to 2011 increases the potential for creating added value in the Swiss meetings sector. This is an encouraging development, because already in 2011 congresses and annual general meetings specifically showed a high potential for creating added value.

Counteracting this development are decreases, in some cases large, in the proportion of multi-day events among other types of meetings. The majority of the latter, however, were those that in 2011 showed a low potential for creating added value. As these represent a large proportion of meetings in Switzerland, it can be assumed that the positive effect in the field of AGMs, seminars and congresses will be outweighed.

The fact that the overall number of meetings has risen shows that the economic base for the sector has changed little. At the level of individual businesses, the situation may appear very different, as the potential here is dependent on the individual mix of event types.

A critical point regarding the validity of this analysis: it should be noted that the results depend on data suppliers entering information on events accurately. It cannot be ruled out that at least some of the results are influenced by inconsistent data entry patterns by the different partners. In order to ensure that the allocation of events to the given categories always occurs in the same way, partners in the sector should undertake ongoing training to minimise the margin of uncertainty in the analysis.
4.4 Participants

The meetings sector in Switzerland features primarily small and medium-sized providers. This is reflected in the capacity of the individual meeting locations on the market. 58% of the venues can accommodate up to 100 people, a further 22% are geared to events with up to 200 participants, and only 6% of venues are sufficiently large to accommodate major gatherings (500 people or more).

Capacity (number of people accommodated) at Swiss event venues in %

Source: SCIB 2013.

The structure of the offer is also reflected in the size of events during the 2013 calendar year. About 76 per cent of events have up to 50 participants. A further 12% involve between 51 and 100 people. Medium-sized events (101-150 participants) along with larger and big events (151 people or more) take place with sub-average frequency in Switzerland: 3.9% and 8.3% respectively. Just over one meeting in every four in Switzerland has between 11 and 20 participants, while one in eight attracts more than 100 people.

In future, it can be assumed that the proportion of larger and big events will grow. In 2014, new event locations opened in Switzerland (e.g. the SwissTech Convention Center in Lausanne, accommodating up to 3,000 people), which increase the average capacity of Switzerland’s venues.
A comparison of the data from 2013 with figures from 2011 shows that the various size categories specified can be described as typical for Switzerland. Despite the tougher competitive environment during the period of study, the share of individual size categories has only changed slightly in favour of smaller events. The proportion of small meetings with up to 50 participants has risen by 5 percentage points from 71% to 76%, while large events have declined in importance, their share falling from 11% to 8%. The proportion of medium-size events has remained constant.
5 REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

In 2013, as in 2011, events in Switzerland took place predominantly in the cities. In a 3-year comparison, the big cities were able to increase the proportion of events they hosted further still (from 66% to 73%), while smaller cities lost market share, from 24% to 16%. Alpine regions, by contrast, managed to maintain their share at 8.6%, while rural areas gained ground, increasing their share from 1.9% to 3.5%.¹

Regional distribution of events in Switzerland in %

For the definition of the ST zones, see appendix 7.1
Overall, the regional distribution proves to be rather stable, with Switzerland’s small cities appearing to face stiffer competition from the larger cities. Growth in the larger metropolitan areas, then, is above all at the expense of smaller urban centres.

An analysis of the structure of events in cities gives additional detail and further explanations of this shift in market share between urban areas. The table below shows how the number of different events in the small and large cities has changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of event</th>
<th>Big Cities (2011-2013)</th>
<th>Small Cities (2011-2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>-43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>-57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentive</td>
<td>923%</td>
<td>-43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; further training</td>
<td>203%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>-38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>146%</td>
<td>-61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting event</td>
<td>321%</td>
<td>289%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information event</td>
<td>135%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual general meeting</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>-78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (overall)</td>
<td>+44% (+5044)</td>
<td>-13% (-533)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Meetings Statistics Database 2011-2013

Overall, the big cities were able to increase the number of events they hosted by 5,000 entries (+44%), while the small cities registered a fall of 13% (-530 events). This evolution in opposite directions can be seen also with seminars, incentives, sessions and workshops. In these areas, the competitive position of the small cities appears worse than that of the larger metropolitan areas. Big as well as small cities, meanwhile, registered falls in the number of congresses and annual general meetings, although the small cities suffered considerably greater losses than large cities. Here, too, Switzerland’s five major urban centres were better able to stand their ground than their smaller counterparts. Both categories of city registered growth in the fields of conferences, education & further training, meetings and sporting events, although here again rates of increase were lower for the small cities.

A further focus on the regional distribution of single-day and multi-day events reveals, as in 2011, clear differences between the four geographical categories.
As in 2011, the regional share of multi-day events is highest in mountain areas, at more than 50%. Rural areas, meanwhile, reveal the opposite scenario: more than half (55%) of events last a day at most. A similar situation is seen in urban areas, with the dominance of single-day events strongest in the major metropolitan regions. Here, only one meeting in every three lasts more than one day. The Alps, then, are the only region in Switzerland with a predominance of larger events. A comparison with 2011, however, shows that regional relationships have evolved dynamically.

In comparison with 2011, the regional share of day events has increased in three out of four of Switzerland’s regions. Only rural areas have registered an increase in multi-day events. This is explained chiefly by a growth in entries relating to multi-day seminars in this region (+296 events).
6 ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE MEETINGS SECTOR

6.1 Share of total number of tourism overnight stays

Every month, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) publishes figures for the number of overnight stays at Swiss hotels. However, these give no information on the share of overnights generated by the meetings sector. Already in 2011 an attempt was made, by means of a plausible extrapolation, to close this knowledge gap and indicate the number of overnight stays generated by the meetings sector. This calculation was based on figures for events entered in the M-S-DB, which were then extrapolated for the whole of Switzerland.¹ Because the same survey method was used, an analogous extrapolation can be made for the year 2013. The increased number of data suppliers and registered events, however, has led to regional and structural shifts in the database, so parameters for estimates need to be adjusted. The current extrapolation is based on the following parameters:

1) Analogous to the year 2011, the regional rate of recording per tourism region determines the extrapolation factor used for individual meetings in the calculation.

2) The calculation is based on the 4 ST zones. In other words, results are shown for the different regional categories into which Switzerland is divided as a tourist destination: alpine regions, big cities, small cities and rural areas.

3) In comparison with 2011, mountain regions are no longer weighted higher, in order to balance out the difference in recording in the M-S-DB.

4) The rate of recording in the big cities is estimated at 50% (60% in 2011). This stabilises the results and takes into account recording behaviour. More meetings were entered, but not necessarily from more data suppliers; in some cases, recording rates in Switzerland’s big metropolitan areas is just 45%.

5) Once again in 2013, because of the size of companies and the nature of meetings facilities in Switzerland, it is plausible that the overall number of overnight stays cannot be calculated purely by a linear extrapolation. On the assumption that many of the companies that are not recorded can stage only small and medium-sized events, a saturation factor is taken into account. In comparison with 2011, this figure is adjusted from 20% to 5%. This is because significantly more data are available overall (factor +1.5), which must be reflected in the size of the correction factor.

6) Analogous to 2011, data from small cities are weighted higher (factor 1.3); the M-S-DB is still insufficiently well established in this geographical region.

7) Rural areas have gained considerable ground in terms of the number of entries by comparison with 2011; as a result, no systematic correction of data is made here. A “normalisation” of entries in the data bank can be assumed; the database was comparatively small in 2011 and the results of the extrapolation correspondingly uncertain, tending to be too low.

These adjustments ensure that the overall results can be compared with the published calculations for 2011 and any changes interpreted accordingly.

On this basis, it can be concluded that the meetings sector generated about 6.5 million overnight stays\(^1\) in the year 2013. This corresponds to a decline of -0.9% (-60,454 overnights) with respect to 2011. Overall, Switzerland registered a welcome increase in the number of overnights over the period of study, rising by 0.4% from 35.5 million to **35.6 million**. However, this has the consequence that the meetings sector’s market share of the overall figure has dropped to about 18%.

A regional analysis gives the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Meetings overnights</th>
<th>Overall overnights</th>
<th>Change in overnights 2011-2013</th>
<th>Share of meetings</th>
<th>Change in share of meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big cities</td>
<td>3,172,753</td>
<td>9,822,034</td>
<td>-78,443</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>-2.1 percentage pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cities</td>
<td>2,251,906</td>
<td>6,461,196</td>
<td>-185,732</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>-4.2 percentage pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>942,617</td>
<td>3,495,066</td>
<td>+81,962</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>+3.6 percentage pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountains</td>
<td>170,482</td>
<td>15,845,587</td>
<td>+121,759</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+0.7 percentage pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own figures

The large cities show a small decline in the number of overnights, a fall of 78,000. As a result the share of overnights generated by meetings falls from 34% to 32%. Small cities also show a fall in the number of overnights generated by the events sector (-186,000). This relatively large decline is reflected in the regional share, with the proportion of overnights generated by meetings falling from 39% to 35%. By contrast, gains are shown by rural areas (+82,000 overnights) and mountain regions (+122,000 overnights). Since the overall number of overnights in these two geographical regions fell overall (in contrast to urban areas), the meeting sector’s share increased relatively strongly: in rural areas it now accounts for 6%, in mountain regions, 5%.

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\(^1\) The exact final figure from the calculations is 6,537,760 overnight stays

Overall, the structural changes already described in this report as well as the global economic situation are reflected in the results. At a more detailed level, changes in the figures for overnight stays can be interpreted as follows:

- Mountain regions and rural areas can benefit from a relatively stable internal market; here, declines in the leisure market are also responsible for an increase in share of the meetings sector. A statistical effect should also be noted. It can be assumed that because of the small size of the database in 2011 in rural areas, the meetings sector’s share of overall overnights was underestimated.

- The difficult economic situation in foreign key markets (continental Europe and North America) has had a delayed effect on the meetings industry. In other words, the impacts of the economic crisis and the rise in value of the Swiss franc have created a tougher competitive environment for Switzerland as a meetings destination. This expresses itself on the one hand in an increase in the number of single-day events and on the other in shorter multi-day events. Cities suffer more strongly from this effect than the rest of Switzerland because of their greater share of international events.

- As in leisure tourism, the meetings sector worldwide is registering an increase in demand and activity from Asia. In Switzerland, the number of visitors and events from Asia is growing accordingly. However, these gains cannot yet fully compensate declines in the main markets: diversification is not yet as advanced as in the leisure sector.

Overall, Switzerland shows itself to be competitive as a destination for meetings, although it cannot fully escape global trends. The country was able to increase its overall number of meetings through a big rise in the proportion of single-day events compared with 2011. At the same time, these are indications that the sector’s scope for creating added value has reduced in the past 2 years. On the positive side, however, the Swiss meetings sector overall has remained on a path of growth, even though it has generally been able to benefit only under-proportionately from global growth in the industry. Consequently the future also looks positive. Economic prospects have clearly improved, while Switzerland has strengthened its attractiveness as a meetings destination thanks to new facilities and event centres. Both the economic recovery in important source markets in Europe and North America and the growth in activities in Asia should contribute to figures for overnight stays in Switzerland climbing once again.
6.2 Analysis of the economic effects

In order to show the economic benefits of the meetings industry in Switzerland, it is necessary to identify an indicator that is relevant on the national level. In the context of the national economy, the best indicator is the level of sales, as it gives a total for actual products and services sold at market prices. This enables an objective analysis of the effects on the real economy. The staging of an event triggers sales on two levels: firstly, direct sales generated by the organisation holding the meeting; and secondly, indirect sales (e.g. through purchase of goods/services from other companies) that can also be attributed to the event.

The meetings industry, like tourism, operates across different sectors and influences a wide variety of economic fields within Switzerland. As a result, it is difficult to define precisely the economic effects of the meetings industry. For example, with certain large events, the initial costs of designing and equipping event venues, acquiring suitable personnel, etc., may be higher on the first occasion than in subsequent years, if the event is held regularly. In addition, items of equipment purchased and networks created through collaboration with other partners can be utilised subsequently for other events, generating cost savings.

In 2011, an extrapolation model was developed that allows plausible estimates to be made for the whole of Switzerland based on data in the M-S-DB.\(^1\) The basis for these estimates came from figures for the overall economic effects of meetings adjusted to the situation in Switzerland in collaboration with Oxford Economics. In order to have a stable basis for the 2013 extrapolation, these data were once again used as a basis for calculation. Using the current regional division (4 regions) and structure (number, duration and size of meetings), a rate of change was determined for each type of meeting; the overall calculation then followed the procedure from 2011. This ensured consistency and comparability of results.

On the basis of the available data, it can be concluded that the meetings sector in Switzerland triggered sales of CHF 1.9 billion in 2013. This corresponds to a decline of CHF 0.3 billion with respect to 2011.

The fall in the number of longer big events and the shorter average stay of participants not only reduce the share of overnights but also have a disproportionate effect on sales in the sector. The increase in the number of single-day events, which by comparison generate low average sales, cannot fully compensate. The tendency for shorter multi-day events further reduces the economic base of the sector. Nonetheless, first results and booking figures for 2014 appear positive once again, especially in the field of (already confirmed) congresses and major events.

\(^1\) cf. Meetings Report Switzerland 2011.
APPENDIX

7.1 Fact sheet on the definition and demarcation of ST zones in the context of accommodation statistics (HESTA).

1. **Starting point:** The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) divides its statistics relating to overnight stays according to cantons and 13 tourism regions. The ST zones extend this regional division of the FSO’s official overnight stay statistics with an additional geographical classification. In this way, the ST zones fill a gap in knowledge in the official statistics that is relevant for marketing.

2. **Statistical population:** political municipalities throughout Switzerland, independent of their relevance to tourism (= 100%).

3. **The demarcation criteria/methodology:** Number of inhabitants of municipalities, in combination with
   a. settlement structure,
   b. natural and geographical setting,
   c. market research findings and expert assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of ST zone</th>
<th>Definition &amp; demarcation criteria</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Cities &amp; Metropolitan</td>
<td>Municipalities of Switzerland’s five major cities (Geneva, Lausanne, Bern, Basel, Zürich), including the immediate urban surroundings (conurbation).</td>
<td>Densely inhabited regions of Switzerland whereby a big city forms the nucleus of settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Cities</td>
<td>Swiss towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants in rural areas.</td>
<td>Urban municipalities outside the five major metropolitan areas and outside alpine regions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>Swiss municipalities in alpine areas with – an altitude of at least 1,000m, – landscape of an alpine character.</td>
<td>Landscape of an alpine character relates not only to geographical altitude (= classic mountain municipalities) but also valley communities that display alpine character as stated by the national and representative visitor survey Tourism Monitor Switzerland (TMS) and tourism experts. The number of inhabitants is not relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Municipalities in peripheral, non-alpine regions with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.</td>
<td>The Pre-Alpine area includes, in addition to densely populated metropolitan areas, rural regions characterised by a scattered settlement structure. The landscape is flatter than in alpine regions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MAP:

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