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**Preparation of Destination Management Organization (DMO)  
Development Model for the Republic of Armenia**

**Ref. Number: DMO-01**

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**ASSIGNMENT 2**

**TASK 4**

**Tourism Niches Identification and Development  
Plans**

**Niche 5: EVENT-BASED TOURISM**

Deadline: 05.01.2023

**ARS Progetti SPA**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
<b>ACB</b>	Armenian Convention Bureau
<b>CAGR</b>	Compound Average Growth Rate
<b>CCIs</b>	Cultural and Creative Industries
<b>CB</b>	Convention Bureau
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DMO</b>	Destination Management Organization
<b>FestPac</b>	Festival of Pacific Arts
<b>GIZ</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
<b>IBTM</b>	Incentives, Business Travel & Meetings (Important fair in Barcelona, Spain)
<b>ICCA</b>	International Congress and Conventions Association
<b>MICE</b>	Meetings Incentives Conventions Exhibitions
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>OTA</b>	Online Travel Agency
<b>PCO</b>	Professional Congress Organizer
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership
<b>RA</b>	Republic of Armenia
<b>SIT</b>	Special Interest Tourism
<b>TALC</b>	Tourism Area Life Cycle (Butler's model)
<b>TC</b>	Tourism Committee
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study refers to Assignment 2 of “Preparation of Destination Management Organization (DMO) Development Model for the Republic of Armenia”, whose main objectives are:

- Analyze and assess the top potential niches for tourism development, through desk review, physical visits, key informant interviews and focus groups;
- Provide conceptual 3 to 10 years’ approach to develop the niches, based on identified locations/towns/regions pertaining to each category based on historical or present data and/or future development potential;
- provide through the conceptual approach the brief SWOT analysis and status quo data per each niche, followed by 3-10 years hard and soft infrastructure needs to develop each niche and identification of potential market sources/countries per niche.

Particularly, the present task analyses the niche “**Event-based Tourism**”.

The study is organized in **five sections**. The first one is intended to provide the **conceptual framework** for the interpretation of the tourism niche and introduces a **first important distinction between leisure event-based tourism (festival, sport and other leisure events) and MICE tourism**. The section includes a definition of events tourism and MICE along with key features of respective travelers. A brief historical background and key figures are provided. Travel motivations and expected tourism experiences depend from the leisure event type and the type of MICE event. Emerging patterns and best practices are deepened to provide an insight with regard to main trends affecting the sector. Finally, the value chain tool is introduced to detail primary and secondary activities that can be adapted to address the specific needs of the segment.

The second section analyzes the current **performance of event-based tourism in Armenia**. It uses secondary sources, integrated, where necessary, by primary ones, and illustrates the following elements:

1. the supply, distinguishing between leisure and business events, and among their sub-categories;
2. the demand, distinguishing among international and domestic demand, and providing also insights about tourism revenues;
3. key stakeholders, including Government actors, private operators, NGOs and international actors.

The section concludes with the formulation of the **SWOT analysis** of the Armenia event-based tourism niche, which highlights key gaps to be covered for future development.

The synthesis brings to the formulation of **Recommended Development Policies** (section three), where the strategy is illustrated, including main and specific objectives, followed by the action plan. The action plan is driven by four **strategic objectives, both for leisure and MICE events**:

1. Creation of a competitive and sustainable portfolio of event-based tourism products;
2. Assurance of the market visibility and accessibility of such portfolio;
3. Increase of the economic impact from event-based tourism;
4. Adaptation of the institutional framework for event-based tourism development.

To each strategic objective corresponds one or more **specific objectives**, which in turn bring to **key actions**. Each action is deepened in Annex 5.

The fifth and final section provides a **sustainability assessment of the action plan** to highlight possible drawbacks and risks to be prevented, along with positive impacts. These include providing economic benefits, limiting socio-cultural problems and encouraging community involvement, as well as preventing negative environmental impacts. Planning of manpower, adaptation of legislation and implementation of investment policies and particularly micro-incentives are also considered as essential tools to ease the implementation of the plan. Governance and management of the tourism niche, both at the national and at the local level through a convention bureau is finally discussed.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Definition of Event-Based Tourism

#### 2.1.1. Typology of events

Planned events are spatial–temporal phenomena, which are unique due to the interactions among setting, people, management (event design and programme).

According to their difference in purpose and form, events can be divided in macro-categories according to their features<sup>1</sup>:

- **Celebrations:** cultural, political and state, arts and entertainment
- **Business events:** business and trade, educational and scientific
- **Sport and recreational events**
- **Private events:** wedding, parties, socials

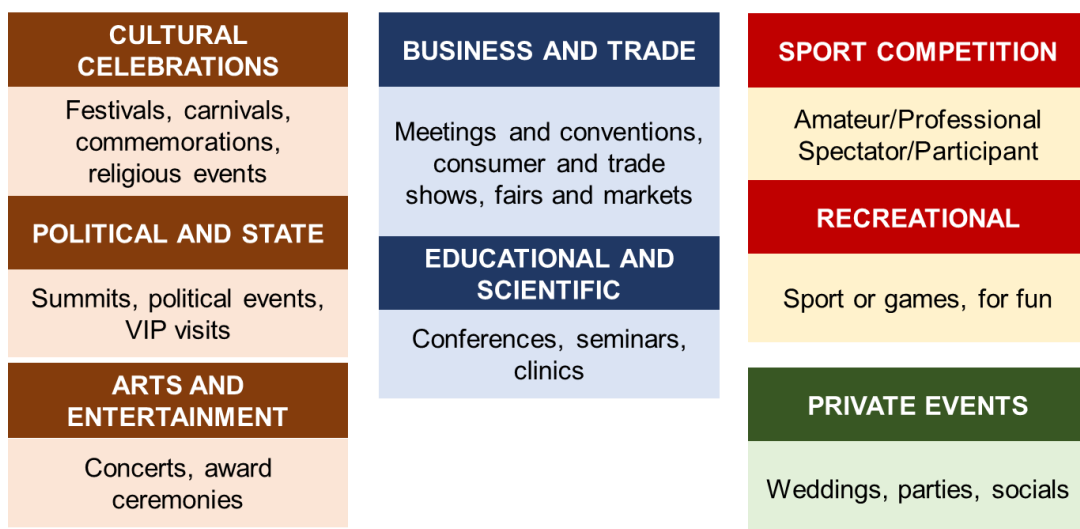


Figure 1: Type of events

Events can further be described according to their:

- **Organizer/implementer:** Events can be implemented by the community and/or public sector, or by private organizations and professionals.
- **Planning purpose:** some are community celebrations, whereas others can be events organized for fun, competition, entertainment, business or socializing.
- **Special-purpose facilities and staff required:** Due the composite nature of events, a plethora of highly specialized professions related to event planning and management has entered the market, as to leave their organization to amateurs is risky, especially for big-sized events.

#### 2.1.2. Event-based Tourism

**Event-based tourism** is defined as:

- ▶ *“The development and marketing of planned events as tourist attractions, catalysts, animators, image makers, and place marketers. This process includes bidding on, facilitating and creating events, and the management of portfolios of events as destination assets.”<sup>2</sup>*

When taking into account the tourism dimension of an event, an additional distinction can be identified and suggests the role of the DMO towards them: for **individual events**, also organized by external subjects, the DMO should take a marketing orientation with the aim to attract tourists, knowing that this can also not be

<sup>1</sup> Getz, D. (2014). Festival and event, tourism. In: Jafari, J., Xiao, H. (eds) Encyclopedia of Tourism. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6\\_84-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-01669-6_84-1).

<sup>2</sup> Getz, D. (2014). Op. cit.



the primary goal for their organization. **Destination events**, on the other hand, recognize the attraction of tourists as a main goal.

As events target both business and leisure tourists, they are internationally recognized by DMOs as a mean to de-seasonalize the tourism demand and, when applicable, to actively engage their partners, which often are private organizations that consider events as profitable business opportunities.

Events	MICE	LEISURE
Boost local economy	X	X
Enhance destination’s reputation and make it recognizable to potential tourists	X	X
Create employment opportunities in tourism and in multiple associated sectors (e.g. meeting planners, venues, catering, logistics, transportation operators/providers, etc.)	X	X
Year-round travel product, so it is not affected by seasonality	X	
Generate increased tourism expenditure as business travelers usually spend more than leisure tourists	X	
The development of event-based tourism can give an input for improving destination infrastructure and amenities	X	X

**Table 1:** Economic benefits of MICE and leisure events organization

Events should be considered by the destination with a **portfolio-driven approach**. This is a goal-driven and value-based approach to events organization, based on a similar methodology as the one adopted by for-profit organizations to evaluate and define their product lines. Destinations should decide what **benefits** they want to achieve from events and how to measure their value, while keeping an eye on **sustainability and limitation of negative social and environmental effects**.

A tourism destination should therefore identify the “right” mix between:

- **Mega Events**, where feasible (e.g. Olympics, sports World Cups etc.), considered as the main tourism attractors that enhance destination image while supporting its development;
- **Periodic Hallmark Events** (e.g. Carnivals, Festivals etc.) that are big-sized events that have a recognized value for the destination as they provide it with a competitive advantage. Indeed, in time a hallmark event can become inextricably linked to one destination (e.g. Carnival of Rio de Janeiro, Oktoberfest of Munich etc.)
- **Local and regional events**, which occupy the basis of the pyramid. These are problematic from a tourism perspective as concerns and divergent objectives could be risen by stakeholders when evaluating to use them as tourism attractors. Firstly, **not all local and regional events have potentials for tourism attraction**. Secondly, they require a big investment to meet tourism standards and the community could not be interested in spending public funds for their organization or might be threatened by tourists.

► If local events are primarily community events and/or cultural oriented it might be advisable **not to exploit them to preserve their authenticity**.

According to such approach, destinations should select typology of events in their portfolio based on **functionality**, intended as the “*degree to which certain economic, tourism or political goals can be met through hosting and marketing events*”<sup>3</sup>.

► This means that selection of events from the present report should be **conductive to the achievement of strategic objective of other tourism niches**.

With regard to event organization a couple of key issues emerge:

- In the past, there has been a tendency to self-organize hallmark events, whereas currently destinations prefer to diversify their portfolio by bidding to attract already existing mega/hallmark events;
- as the organization/bidding for events is a complex and specific profession, DMOs might choose to externalize this function and entrust it to a committed agency (e.g. convention bureau, sport tourism alliances etc.).

<sup>3</sup> Getz, D. (2014). Op. cit.



**Possible measurement of «value»:**

- Growth potential
- Market share
- Quality
- Image enhancement
- Community support
- Environmental value
- Economic benefits
- Sustainability
- Appropriateness

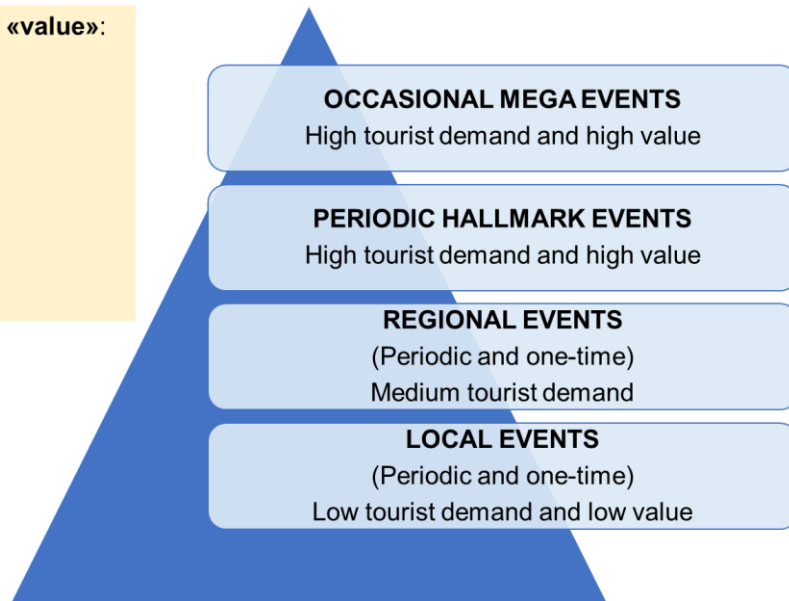


Figure 2: The portfolio approach to event tourism strategy-making and evaluation<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2. The Event Tourism Market

Event tourism is composed by two main segments: **MICE and Leisure Event Tourism.**

- ▶ Both segments are not only composed by visitors, but also by **operators, which often represent the key customer for the destination** (e.g. Agricultural producers in Meghri, at a local Agribusiness fair).

### 2.2.1. MICE market

#### 2.2.1.1. Background

MICE tourism beginning<sup>5</sup> can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe and North America, thanks to Universities which needed to share their advancements in academic circles and therefore organized an increasing number of gatherings and enlarged public spaces to accommodate audiences. At the same time, together with the development of the railway, also hotels with special-purpose rooms to rent were opened at large railway stations.

MICE tourism industry began in 1896 when a group of businessmen decided in Detroit, Michigan, to employ a salesman to invite meetings to be held in their town, giving birth to the first **convention bureau** in history. The establishment of professional associations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century also gave a useful insight into the origination of the industry. As from 1960, mayor investments were unlocked to support the growth of the industry throughout Europe, America (e.g. Durham) and Australia.

#### 2.2.1.2. MICE typologies

In business tourism, groups of different sizes come together in a particular place to attend a meeting, incentive travel, conference or exhibition (MICE) event. This is the main motivation to attend such a trip. The International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO) provides the following definitions:

Type of event	Definition	Frequency
<b>Meeting</b>	General term indicating the coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity.	It can be organized on an <b>ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern</b> , as for instance

<sup>4</sup> Getz, D. (2014). Op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.seebtm.com/en/the-history-and-development-of-meetings-industry/>



		annual general meetings, committees meetings, etc.
<b>Incentive</b>	Meeting event as part of a programme, which is offered to its participants to reward a previous performance.	No special connotation as to frequency.
<b>Conference</b>	Participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving and consultation. As compared with a congress, a conference is normally smaller in scale and more select in character - features.	No special connotation as to frequency. Though not inherently limited in time, conferences are usually of <b>limited duration with specific objectives.</b>
<b>Exhibition</b>	Events at which products and services are displayed.	It can be organized on an <b>ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern</b> , mostly on a yearly or biennial base

Table 2: MICE events definition and frequency

### 2.2.1.3. Travel determinants

MICE organizers choose a destination for their event according to:

- **Location:** this should be accessible, secure and adequate in terms of capacity.
- **Quality:** this refers to several components of the trips, such as customer service, safety/security and reliable transport, clean and comfortable accommodation, good catering, and conference rooms with excellent technical infrastructure.
- **Experiential value:** The location of venue and the destination should offer unique and memorable experiences at a reasonable price, for example by mean of the leisure programme, which might be part or not of the formal programme.
- **Sustainability:** it is one of the most important features, as several companies have now in place Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) procedures. Recent studies prove that aforementioned sustainable travel style is especially important for attendees from Generation Y and Z, which in general are more influenced in their behavior, hence travel choice, by ethic and fairness, moral values, environmental concerns and desire to positively impact on local communities.

► **Because of current security issues, due to the creeping conflict with Azerbaijan, it is much questionable whether Armenia can be considered a location for hallmark events, excluding at the outset mega events.**



Figure 3: Travel determinants of MICE Tourists

With regard to MICE travellers' behavior, we observe that they are more demanding and high-spending than other niches. **Business groups are indeed ready to spend 17,5% more at destination with respect to leisure travelers<sup>6</sup>.**

### 2.2.1.4. Expected tourism experience

Apart of participating to MICE events, while on destination, MICE tourists also expect to be provided with an adequate leisure program to discover the destination in which the event is held, such as cultural visits, adventure and nature-based tourism experiences or wellness (*bleisure*). Research<sup>7</sup> suggests that **60% of**

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/references-and-resources/tourism/MICE\\_English\\_2016.pdf](https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/references-and-resources/tourism/MICE_English_2016.pdf)  
<sup>7</sup> <https://advertising.expedia.com/about/press-releases/bleisure-travelers-are-hungry-for-sunshine-sightseeing-and-cuisine/>



**business trips are extended for leisure purposes. This depends on destinations assets and attractiveness, but also to the length of the business trip and the distance from their hometown.**

Business trips lasting 2-3 nights (50%) and in destinations within 400 miles from home (49%) are most likely to result in “bleisure trips”. Other main factors influencing the choice to extending the trip for bleisure include entertainment activities at destination (48%), visiting an iconic or bucket list destination (43%); others worth to mention are easy-to-navigate destinations, proximity to the weekend and amount of additional personal costs to be personally bore to extend the trip for leisure.

### 2.2.1.5. Profile of MICE Tourists

MICE tourism follows economic patterns, therefore the industry is **dominated by Europe and the Asia Pacific regions, which together account for a 70% share of the value of the market.** The Asia Pacific region is predicted to witness the highest growth rate until 2025, driven by China, India and Singapore.

**Millennials are currently the key market for MICE.**<sup>8</sup> Statistics for MICE travels amongst Gen Z are still limited, as they just recently entered the job market. In the future however, it is highly anticipated that both Millennials and Gen Z will be important growth markets for the sector, including *bleisure*.

Consumer group	Demographics	% of MICE Travellers
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	born 1946 and 1964; age 57-75	8%
<b>Gen X</b>	born 1965 and 1980; age 41-56	23%
<b>Gen Y/Millennials</b>	born 1981-1995; age 26-40	38%
<b>Gen Z</b>	born from 1996; age up to 25	n/a

**Table 3:** Percentage of MICE travellers per demographic group

### 2.2.1.6. International markets and emerging trends

Despite the shock of COVID-19, which affected event-based tourism greatly, the demand for MICE tourism is growing dynamically and is anticipated to gain a relevant market share.

According to IBTM World Trends report 2023<sup>9</sup>, MICE tourism is affected by the following trends:

- **The Dynamic Office:** 74% of employees declare that working from home is better for their mental health and 84% of them declare home-officing would make them happier. In such context, MICE Events are increasingly re-branding as **“the place where to escape the ordinary working day, retreating from day-to-day activities”**. Businesses are therefore putting more and more value in these, historically unfashionable, gatherings.
- **The metaverse and the virtual experience economy:** It is estimated that by the end of this decade 5-13 trillion in global GPD will be in the metaverse. In creating an event experience, it is important to look how the metaverse can supplement event offer by creating mixed interactions (e.g. a medical event on DNA and RNA models can be held in the metaverse in order to better picture advances in the field through “live” dissections with a subsequent discussion in person).
- **Ethic events:** Gen. Z is already demonstrating values-based purchasing: 79% of them are less likely to buy products from companies that they consider to be “macho”, racist and homophobic. This highly proactive and reactionary demographic group can both dissert and widespread negative word-of-mouth on unfair events<sup>10</sup>.
- **Incentive Travel:** Now, more than ever, there is an emphasis on gaining, engaging, and nurturing talent. These are key drivers of the incentive market. Experience, authenticity, and wellness are the main drivers for choosing an incentive program. DMOs and private service providers able to combine and personalize such elements with the ability to execute services outstandingly will outstand. This also means that whereas previously the focus was to bring guests to a premium destination, city or resort, now there are **teaser experiences with more local destinations**, connected to a central gathering. This might unlock opportunities for Armenian Regions.
- **The rise of informal accommodations:** Millennials and Generation X travelers are also more inclined to choose local guesthouses and AirBnB accommodations instead of large hotel chains for their **Bleisure stay**. As such, accommodations are usually located away from the main business districts,

<sup>8</sup> CBI Foreign Affairs (2021). Entering the European market for MICE tourism product: <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/mice-tourism/market-entry>

<sup>9</sup> Turner A. (2022). [IBTM World Trends report 2023 preview](#).

<sup>10</sup> A very powerful example is the Qatar 2022 Football World Games. Systematic abuse of labor, (6500+ migrant workers have died in the realization of infrastructure for the tournament) and the discrimination against women and LGBTQ+ community have led to several online movements to boycott the event. In this context, Montclair State University conducted a study on Twitter: A sample of 22,000 tweets with the #boycottqatar2022 hashtag were analyzed with 18,412,437 potential impressions reaching more than 43 million people. The vast majority of users (92%) demonstrated support of the boycott and human rights activism.



they are giving the chance to live a more authentic experience and further widespread MICE tourism benefits to the community.

### 2.2.1.7. Key specialized tour operators

There are numerous operators specialized in MICE tourism operating on the European market. Examples include Corporate Travel Management<sup>11</sup>(UK), Travel Perk<sup>12</sup> (UK), AirPlus International<sup>13</sup> (Germany), DER Touristik Business Travel<sup>14</sup> (Germany), Egencia<sup>15</sup> (France), Patterson Travel<sup>16</sup> (Spain).

The main OTAs that serve the MICE market are Expedia and Booking.com for booking flights, hotels and car hire. However, as younger business travelers are seeking more authentic travel experiences, as mentioned above also AirBnB is increasingly becoming an important booking channel for MICE tourists. The OTA has indeed created a specific webpage for business travelers, addressing them with the motto: *Feel at home, wherever the job takes you.*

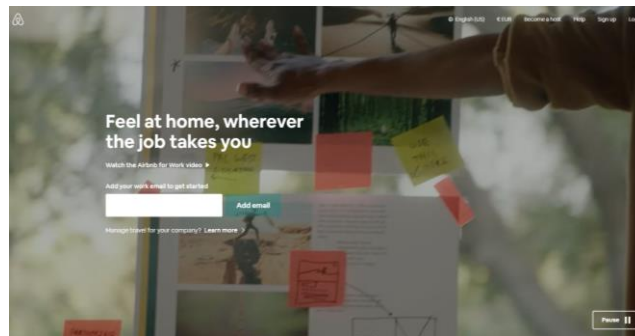


Figure 4: AirBnB business travel landing page

In Europe, the most important MICE tourism source markets are the **UK, Germany and France**. Switzerland, Spain and Italy rank lower with a similar share of respectively 1.1 million and 1.0 million outbound MICE trips<sup>17</sup>.

#### a) United Kingdom

With a population of 67 million and a GDP of €2.4 trillion, the UK is the most important country of origin for outbound MICE tourism. With a GDP per capita of €38 thousand per year, the British have an income above the EU average. According to CBI report, in 2012 the country counted 4.5 million outbound MICE trips, the majority of which are likely to be for meetings and incentives, as the number of MICE trips to conferences and exhibitions is relatively small. The United Kingdom market looks promising for tourism services providers in the field of leisure, as **29% of business travellers** that were interviewed during the corona pandemic would like to **extend their stay to enjoy leisure time at the destination in the future**.

#### b) Germany

Germany has Europe's largest population: 83 million. It is also the largest economy in the EU and the 4<sup>th</sup> in the world, with a gross domestic product of €3.8 trillion and €40 thousand per capita. The German outbound MICE market is the second largest, with 3.3 million trips in 2012, constituting over a third of all outbound business trips (35%). Companies, mainly in finance, insurance, pharma and automotive, allocate indeed high budgets on events and incentives. However, only **15% of the travelers** that were interviewed during the COVID-19 pandemic say they would like to **extend their business trip at the destination for leisure purposes**.

#### c) France

France has the third-largest population in the EU, with approximately 67 million people. It is also the EU's third economy and the seventh largest economy in the world with a €2.3 trillion GDP. France is the third-largest MICE source market in Europe, but its size is much smaller (1.6 million outbound trips). The French MICE market takes a large share of outbound business travel (40%). One in five travellers that were interviewed during the COVID-19 pandemic say they would like to extend their business trip with some leisure time.

<sup>11</sup> <https://uk.travelctm.com/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.travelperk.com/>

<sup>13</sup> [www.airplus.com](http://www.airplus.com)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.dertouristik.com/markenwelt/business-travel/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.egencia.it/it>

<sup>16</sup> <https://patterson.travel/>

<sup>17</sup> CBI (2021), op. cit.



### 2.2.1.8. International best practices

For what concerns MICE tourism, the well-known “World MICE Awards” competition is opened yearly. In 2022, Dubai **has been voted the best MICE destination in the World**. This was no surprise for the sector as in 2021 it was also awarded with the title of best MICE Tourism destination by the International Congress and Conventions Association (ICCA)<sup>18</sup>.

Dubai Business Events is the city’s official conventions bureau, a division of Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing, which main goal is to establish Dubai as a premier business event destination through the promotion of the destination and attraction of MICE events that can help Dubai growing its economic development and knowledge creation. Dubai Business Events offers the following services to MICE tourists free of charge:

- **Venue support:** checking hotel and venue availability throughout Dubai
- **Proposals:** Obtaining proposals and quotes from venues and other service providers
- **Reservations:** Blocking rooms and venues
- **Inspections:** Facilitating and hosting services
- **Local services:** assistance in appointing DMC, PCOs and other service providers
- Development of pre and post **social programs**
- **Lobbying:** Introduction to local industry leaders and government representatives
- **Marketing collateral:** access to media and promotional assets, videos, images and brochures about Dubai.
- **Local PR** and assistance with **press relations** in Dubai
- **Visitor guides** for delegates and **information booths** at large events
- **Provision of landing pages** for conference registration

Other top destinations for MICE Tourism in 2022 are **Auckland (New Zealand), Chicago (US), Guayaquil (Ecuador), Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), Jamaica, Madrid (Spain), Mauritius, Nairobi (Kenya)**<sup>19</sup>.

► Beyond the availability of business meeting assets such as conference centers, meeting rooms and other specialized travel services, a key to the development of MICE tourism is the existence of a **Convention Bureau**, which is a special organization that promotes the development and marketing of a destination to increase visitor numbers by focusing on the meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition markets. **We can consider it as a DMO focused on business tourism, which can co-exist in the same destination with other DMOs committed to leisure travel**. These are usually PPP organizations that merge the public motivation to promote the destination towards an affluent market together with private operator willingness to market their business assets and accommodation.

## 2.2.2. Leisure Event Tourism

### 2.2.2.1. Background

Historical roots of meetings can be traced through the history of mankind. First gatherings were indeed mainly connected to sports or religious events<sup>20</sup> and originated before the appearance of money. It is only in recent times (20th century), along with the advent of capitalism, greater customers’ purchasing power and modern lifestyle that events became a mean to stimulate economic development and employment and started to be recognized as tourism attractors, despite literature on this subject is still underdeveloped.

Usually, event tourism strongly relates to the identity of a destination and hence to its history and culture, but also to its contemporary Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). Due to this tight relation, Central Asian and Eastern European countries have progressively adopted policies to favor the revival of intangible heritage also through events, festivals and revivals as part of strategies to strengthen cultural identity, boost local productions and favor territorial development through tourism.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.connectingtravel.com/news/dubai-ranked-worlds-leading-mice-destination>

<sup>19</sup> <https://worldmiceawards.com/award/world-best-mice-destination/2022>

<sup>20</sup> Trišić, I., & Arsenov-Bojović, V. (2018, June). The role of MICE industry in tourism development. In *Tourism International Scientific Conference Vrnjačka Banja-TISC* (Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 275-293).





### 2.2.2.2. The leisure event market

Leisure event tourism falls under the broader realm of entertainment. Festivals and events celebrate theatre, dance, film, crafts, visual arts, and more.<sup>21</sup> Category of events include<sup>22</sup>:

- Arts & entertainment: Award ceremonies, concerts
- Cultural celebrations: Commemorations, carnivals, festivals, religious events
- Educational and scientific: Clinics, conferences, seminars
- Political and state: Political events, royal occasions, summits, VIP visits
- Private: Parties, socials, weddings
- Recreational: Games or sports for fun
- Sports competitions: Amateur/professional, participant/spectator

Specific travel motivations depend on interests (e.g. music, art, sport). However, in general, a key **driver is to network**, by meeting people and establishing new contacts with same passions<sup>23</sup>.

### 2.2.2.3. International markets and emerging trends

Internationally, **the market of event**, which was very affected by the COVID-19 pandemic **is expected to grow steadily, reaching USD 2.1 trillion in 2032, surging at CAGR of 4% through 2022-2032**<sup>24</sup>. In the last 30 years the number of festivals worldwide has indeed increased dramatically.

New trends and marketing capacities, gave birth to a large number of artificially-designed festivals, which add up to cultural and religious related celebration. There is a growing trend worldwide to attend certain globally-recognized festivals, some of which are sold out within hours from their opening time (e.g. Carnival in Brazil, Burning Man and Coachella in the US, etc.).

A primary role in leisure event tourism is covered by cultural events, which currently account for about **20% of the total tourism market in the world**. Cultural events do indeed further stimulate the growth of cultural ecosystems and are often chosen as means to revive local culture, boost creativity and favor participation of locals to territorial development<sup>25</sup>.

Sport events are also a driver for tourism development. They can be related to destination's features (e.g. winter sports, adventure sports, etc.) or new and artificial using dedicated venues.

► "Tourism and sport are interrelated and complementary... both are powerful forces for development, stimulating investment in infrastructure projects such as airports, roads, stadiums, sporting complexes and restaurant-projects that can be enjoyed by the local population as well as tourists who come to use them."<sup>26</sup>

For instance, since 1980, US and UK cities "*put heavy emphasis on sports, entertainment and tourism as a source of revenue for the cities*"<sup>27</sup>. Much cities have nowadays sport tourism initiatives, often organized and managed by dedicated staff or specialized agencies.

In 2017, the international market size for sport events was USD 762.92 billion. Europe was the largest regional market, with a market value of USD 268.78 billion. In the 2022 report, Technavio forecasted that this niche will witness a year over year growth (CAGR) of 11,58% during the period 2022 – 2027 and Europe is predicted to experience the most significant growth during the forecasted period. This is due to the increasing number of sporting events organized worldwide<sup>28</sup>. Major sporting events are of course the ones that gain the most gravitas<sup>29</sup> as they bring millions of tourists to the host destination. In addition, some type of sport events are also calling tourists to participate (e.g. Marathons). At international level, the market is however extremely competitive, with businesses of all sizes operating in it and trying to find a space in the market.

<sup>21</sup> Westcott, M., Bird, G., Briscoe, P., Freeman, R., Glazer, K., Henry, K., ... & Wilson-Mah, R. (2012). Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality in BC Introduction to Tourism and Hospitality in BC. Chapter 6

<sup>22</sup> IWTA (2022). [Event tourism market to progress at a CAGR of 4% between 2022-2032](#). Accessed November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

<sup>23</sup> Hardie C. (2013). [Why Do People Attend Events?](#). Accessed November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

<sup>24</sup> IWTA (2022). Op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-bringing-cultural-tourism-back-game>

<sup>26</sup> <https://olympics.com/ioc/news/world-tourism-day-2004>

<sup>27</sup> D. Getz / Tourism Management 29 (2008) 403–428

<sup>28</sup> Sports Tourism Market by Type, Product, Area, and Geography - Forecast and Analysis 2023-2027, Technavio

<sup>29</sup> Some examples of mega events to be held in 2023 are Ryder Cup 2023, first time in Italy (Rome), Super Bowl 2023, US (Arizona), ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, first time in India.



#### 2.2.2.4. Key specialized tour operators

At international level, some of the main players for leisure event tourism are Exodus Travels<sup>30</sup>, Sputnik Events<sup>31</sup>, Project Expedition<sup>32</sup>, Sportsnet Holidays<sup>33</sup>, MVP Travel<sup>34</sup>, Sports Traveland Tours<sup>35</sup>, Elite Sports Tours<sup>36</sup>, Sports Travel International<sup>37</sup>.

#### 2.2.2.5. International best practices

The international **practice of event-based tourism is very rich**; therefore, the consultant has summarized some international well-known events and best practices in Annex 1. On a yearly base, the International Festival and Events association (IFEA) awards the IFEA World Festival and Event City Award. 2022 IFEA World Festival & Event City Award Recipients included Hongseong Hero Festival in Jinju (South Korea), South Texas Book Festival in McAllen (Texas, USA), Pennsylvania Horticultural Society in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA)<sup>38</sup>. Applicant cities were judged by an international panel of industry experts in the following areas:

- **Community, government, NGO, private sector support** to provide a conducive setting for events/festivals organization and create new partnerships;
- **Diversity and success of current festivals** and events among city residents and visitors;
- **Support to health and long-term sustainability during COVID-19 Pandemic**;
- **Market Leveraging of the “Community Capital” Created by Festivals & Events**;
- Capacity to **involve local universities, TVET Programmes** by implementing an extra-credit scheme.

Recent trends also show the attitude in putting emphasis on social value of regional and local events for the community and not only to income generation<sup>39</sup>. Best practice in event-based tourism also highlight their **power to foster development in cultural policy**.



Figure 5: Mau Power performance and Marshallese woven flowers / Festival of Pacific Art and Culture, Guam, 2016

For instance, **Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac)** accounts since 40 years as an important venue for the perpetuation of Pacific arts and cultures, strengthening social cohesion and community pride<sup>40</sup>. Organized every four years in a different Pacific Island nation, the FESTPAC draws artists, cultural practitioners, scholars and officials from member nations of the Pacific Community to:

- Preserve and revival of traditional arts and cultures of the Pacific,
- Explore new forms of cultural activities suited to the needs of the Pacific,
- Create greater awareness of the cultural richness of the Pacific throughout the world,
- Foster a greater sense of unity throughout the Pacific to promote excellence in arts, and
- Promote the development and use of ethnic (indigenous) languages<sup>41</sup>.

As recalled previously in this report, another trend that will deeply affect the sector in the following years is the **advent of the metaverse**. In 2022, for example, the artist Travis Scott was able to hold a concert for 8 million people thanks to the simultaneous broadcast in 280 multi-verse simulations. With less people needing to be at the event itself, teams of technicians and organizers can continue working on the event at local locations and travel costs and carbon footprint of “metaverse event tourists” can be neutralized.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.exodustravels.com/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://sputnikevents.hu/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.projectexpedition.com/activity/cultural-immersion/local-flavor/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://sportsnetholidays.com/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://mvptravel.co.uk/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.sportstravelandtours.com/>

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.elitesportstour.com/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://sportstravelinternational.com/>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.ifea.com/p/industryawards/worldfestivalandeventcityaward/worldfestivalandeventcityawardthisyear>

<sup>39</sup> Getz, D. (2014). Op. cit.

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-bringing-cultural-tourism-back-game>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.spc.int/festival-of-pacific-arts-and-culture>



Figure 6: Travis Scott 2022 concert in the metaverse

Another major event, worth to mention for the context of Armenia, is the **Gathering Ireland 2013**. This hallmark event was designed to motivate members of Irish diaspora and people interested in Irish culture to come to Ireland to celebrate the best of Irish culture, arts, sports, music and heritage. The project provided a platform for Irish citizens and communities to organise events and to connect with their home country<sup>42</sup>. The strategy for event organization followed a triple approach:

- Leverage existing festivals and hallmark events by including them under the “umbrella” of the Gathering;
- Create/support medium to large-scale bespoke Gathering events with the potential to become future hallmark events iconic of a particular Irish region;
- Support local or community-generated events in accordance with local inhabitants (through a specifically designed stakeholder engagement strategy).

The project was financed by the Irish government by 24 million EUR<sup>43</sup>. This was supplemented by a further 1 million USD provided by Fáilte Ireland, the organizer of the event, and further 13 million EUR in cash and non-cash donations received by project partners<sup>44</sup>. It was indeed clear that: “*The Gathering could not meet its potential without leveraging the support of a wide range of organisations*”<sup>45</sup>. The cross-governmental support for The Gathering helped directly in addressing key project needs and also contributed to building a national support base on a **collaborative model for event implementation**, resulting in more than 5,000 events organized in the framework of the gathering, over 2,000 viable ideas for future events, a **combined attendance of 7,000 people**.

## 2.3. The Event-Based Tourism value chain

### 2.3.1. The value chain concept

According to the approach recommended by the UNWTO<sup>46</sup>, a tourism product must encompass a range of services, which include primary and foundation activities.

These represent the **tourism product value chain**, which shall be tailored to address the specific needs of segments of the tourism demand. Each tourism product ideally owns its value chain, consisting of primary and foundation activities. These are partly peculiar to certain tourism products and partly shared with other products.

<sup>42</sup> Source: [The Gathering Ireland. Final Report](#) (2013)

<sup>43</sup> A designated budget of €12 million was provided for the project by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, €5 million in 2012 and a further €7 million in 2013.

<sup>44</sup> The Dublin Airport Authority provided substantial promotional support at their airports at Dublin and Cork. Major air providers offered increased seats for a 6% increased seat capacity, which were retained also the year after.

<sup>45</sup> *The Gathering Ireland, Final Report (2013), Op. Cit.*

<sup>46</sup> UNWTO (2007). *A Practical Guide to Tourism Destination Management*. Madrid



<b>PRIMARY ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Product development</b>	<b>Destination and product packaging</b>	<b>Promotion</b>	<b>Distribution and sales</b>	<b>In and outbound logistics</b>	<b>Destination operations and services</b>	<b>Aftercare</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New airline alliances and destinations</li> <li>Development of environmental and cultural resources</li> <li>Upgrading and development of visitor services and facilities</li> <li>Exploiting new markets and market segments</li> <li>New routes, themes, hub/spokes and itineraries</li> <li>-Quality (standards) management and assurance systems</li> <li>Improved service delivery and visitor management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Producing marketing materials</li> <li>Collectively packaging attractions of cities, areas and regions</li> <li>Negotiating commission and pricing contracts with suppliers</li> <li>Wholesale packaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumer advertising, PR and promotions</li> <li>Trade exhibitions, workshops, sales visit</li> <li>Marketplace representation</li> <li>Familiarisation trips</li> <li>Media liaison/educational</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enquiry and info mail service</li> <li>Distributing destination information</li> <li>Brochure display</li> <li>Tour operators alliances</li> <li>Retail (travel agency) sales</li> <li>E-business</li> <li>Reservations</li> <li>Payment and ticketing</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Seat pricing and scheduling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visa and passport provision</li> <li>Airport facilities and services</li> <li>VAT reclaim</li> <li>Emigration services</li> <li>Check in and gate operation</li> <li>Baggage handling</li> <li>In-flight services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airport transfers</li> <li>Taxi services</li> <li>Public transport</li> <li>Visitor centres</li> <li>Accommodation</li> <li>Catering</li> <li>Tours</li> <li>Attractions</li> <li>Car rentals</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Health and beauty</li> <li>Sport and recreation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database management</li> <li>Consumer and client tracking and feedback</li> <li>Industry feedback and follow-up</li> </ul>

<b>FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Destination planning and infrastructure</b>	Public transport systems, roads, airports, rail, ports, public toilets, etc.	Bulk infrastructure telecoms, water, electricity, recreation, etc.	Destination planning, design, layout and land-usage	Energy, water and resource management	Aesthetic, environmental and social quality enhancement	Safety and security management	Road signage, information networks and other navigation	Public/private partnerships, strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions	Institutional coordination and business deregulation
	<b>Training and skills development</b>	Community tourism awareness and acceptance	Skills training and education.	Personnel management – recruitment, motivation, incentives, etc.	Customer care, hospitality culture	Career pathing, staff development, staff stability	Labour relations and negotiations	Job creation and intensifying projects		
	<b>Technology and systems development</b>	Computerised reservation systems	Market research and intelligence	Management systems and procedures	Security systems	Information systems and communication				
	<b>Related industries and procurement</b>	Equipment and component supplies	Fuel, food and beverages	Contracted services	Professional services	Other services	Real estate/buildings			

Figure 7: Components of the tourism product

## 2.3.2. The MICE Tourism value chain

### 2.3.2.1. Primary Activities for MICE Tourism

Primary activities are the core business of public and private tourism actors and involve the packaging, promotion and delivery of the tourism experience to the visitor. They include:

- **Product development.** It ensures constant rejuvenation of the destination supply.
- ▶ In case of MICE tourism, the product includes structures and plants such accommodation, catering and transportation which are developed in support of the conference centers and other venues. It is of utmost importance that they are constantly improved in accordance with new trends and developments in the business travel marketplace.
- **Destination and product packaging.** The intangible tourism product should be packaged as conveniently, attractively and accessibly as possible.
- ▶ In case of MICE tourism, packages consist of a range of business products and services which are usually packaged by specialized operators, such as **professional event or congress organizers (PCOs), which are assisted by local Convention Bureau (CB)**. Not only the CB supplies the individual event planner all the information and support needed in the various stages of organizing and managing an event, but also gives general information on the conference and accommodation capacity, on the services available, on the peculiarities of the territory. It also provides contacts with suppliers in the supply chain. Services provided by CBs are usually free and this encourages those who are interested in organizing events in the area, to contact them and to collaborate with them.
- **Promotion, distribution and sales.** The destination is promoted to the marketplace by CBs using direct communication methods. Distribution and sales are also managed by using the most appropriate B-to-B channels, including participation to fairs.



- **In and outbound logistics.** Ease and speed of access is essential for business travelers. Choices to attend an event can indeed be influenced by convenience factors such as availability and cost of flights, visa and passport provision, airport facilities and services, VAT reclaim facilities, emigration services, check in and gate operation, baggage handling, in-flight services, seat pricing and scheduling, etc.

▶ All these services are usually managed by **professional travel agents** that differ from those operating in leisure travel.

- **Destination operations and services.** These include all aspects of the tourists visit including transfers, taxis and public transportation, visitor services and centers; accommodation, food/catering, tours, car rentals and also leisure services such as entertainment, health and beauty services, etc.

▶ In case of MICE tourism, such services are managed by **professional event or congress organizers (PCOs)**.

- **Aftercare.** Client care and follow-up is essential to establish loyalty and positive attitudes among clients. Aftercare services include establishing, managing and maintaining client databases, tracking business operators' attitudes and profiles and conducting feedback and follow-up programme.

### 2.3.2.2. *Foundation Activities for MICE Tourism*

Foundation Activities include support activities (destination planning and infrastructure, training and skills development, technological and systems development, related industries and procurement), which help increasing the efficiency of the primary value chain and/or increasing the economic and social impacts of tourism development. These activities are those where the value delivery is indirect and supports the visitor experience e.g. infrastructure, planning, human resources development, technology and related industries such as construction, retail, etc. Their provision is challenging, since they are delivered by public and private agencies that do not have MICE tourism as their core businesses.

The efficient delivery of these activities and their performance are however a fundamental foundation for building a tourism destination and as such are vital to the destination's success. The destination must live up to its brand promise, otherwise there will be high levels of dissatisfaction. Ensuring these foundation activities are in place requires strong leadership from the CB and usually occurs within the framework of public/private partnerships, strategic alliances and effective institutional coordination among the various players in the value chain.

These activities include:

- **Destination planning and infrastructure.** The physical image, environment integrity and infrastructure of the destination are key determinants of the quality of the visitor's experience. The industry is not able to function without an appropriate and operational transportation network (e.g. public transport, roads, airports) as well as bulk infrastructure (telecommunications, water, electricity, recreation and access to communication channels). The threat of diseases such as COVID-19, etc. puts also pressures on destinations to provide high quality basic infrastructures and services.
- **Training and skills development.** Tourism is a service industry and the quality of the visitor experience is largely determined by the quality of service and personal interaction experienced at the destination.

▶ This is particularly important for MICE tourism, as it requires professional services expertise related both to event organization and management, and to provision of business services meeting international standards.

- **Technology and systems development.** Technology has become a driving force in support of the tourism value chain. Internet based reservation services revolutionized the concept of online reservations by providing access to a far greater number of destination product. Operational and management information systems are also of major importance and are particularly as MICE travelers are usually more demanding than common leisure travelers.
- **Related industries and buying local produce.** Primary tourism industry activities such as accommodation, transportation, catering, entertainment and recreation are underpinned by a wide range of related enterprises that supply services to primary tourism sectors. These are an integral part of the tourism "cluster" and the success of the value chain is highly dependent upon the effective provision of these services and products, which also help to spread economic and social impacts. These include equipment and component supplies, fuel, food and drink, contracted services, professional services, real estate/buildings, etc.



► Based on previous assumptions, we can assume that **MICE tourism is a niche that is better provided by destinations that have already reached the maturity stage of their life cycle**. Its success indeed relies on a complex web of relationships, agreements and business transactions between different figures who, with different roles and purposes, make up its supply chain<sup>47</sup>.

### 2.3.3. The Leisure Event Tourism value chain

Event organization is based on a value chain which is quite different from the one that drives other products. It can be grasped from the following figure which highlights<sup>48</sup>:

- a) That events are based on the management of four basic activities (infrastructural development, portfolio product development, destination and event marketing, visitor management);
- b) Their organization, as already stated, must be conducive to achieve broader tourism development strategic objectives.

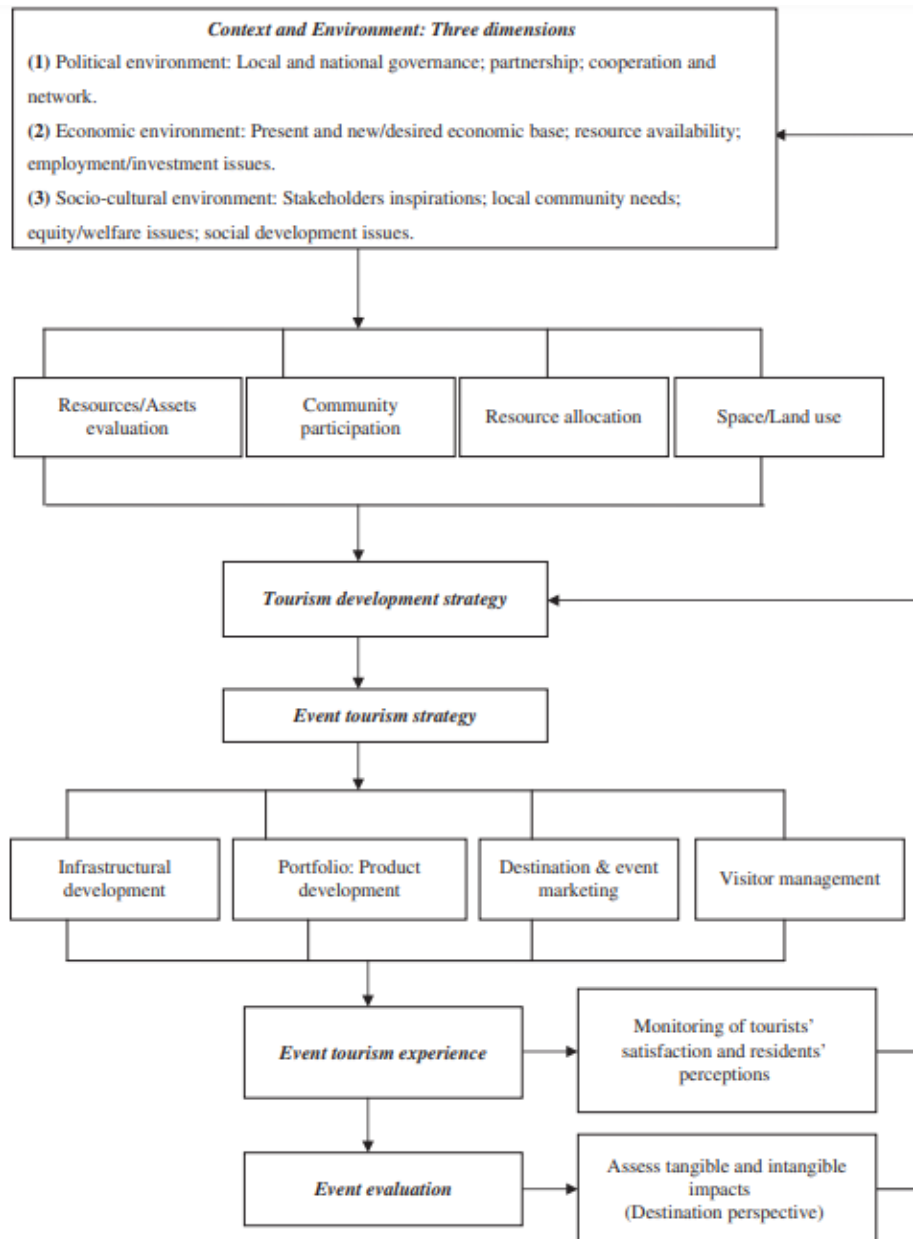


Figure 8: Conceptual framework for leisure event tourism management

<sup>47</sup> Stabile G. (2017). *MICE tourism: Analysis and prospects of the sector as an element of territorial competitiveness*, Master Thesis LUISS University, supervised by Prof. Matteo Giuliano Caroli

<sup>48</sup> Soteriades, M. D., & Dimou, I. (2011). Special events: A framework for efficient management. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 20(3-4), 329-346.



Key aspects relate to the following aspects:

1. **Planning.** Events organization requires the devise of an overall strategy (pre-event, during and post-event) necessary to reach objectives, including the identification of sources of financing (e.g., grants, sponsorship, sponsor, sales, etc.) and build up partnership schemes;
2. **Product/event development.** It includes building and managing a portfolio of events so as to generate social and economic benefits. Each event must be branded and themed strategy, providing a bundle of consistent experiences;
3. **Event management.** It is a complex and professional activity, which includes the definition of the organizing body and management partnerships, with clear actors involved with respective roles. Legal and risk management issues must be managed (insurance, security and safety, health, etc.) along with services management strategies, with particular regard to access, information provision, catering, visitor management and event logistics (ticketing, queuing, transportation, waste management, etc.).
4. **Promotion, distribution and sales,** including sponsorships and marketing partnership schemes.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation,** including the formulation of impact studies to assess the attainment of goals/output achieved to inform future events.

A relevant issue, which has been identified by several studies, refer to **community participation and consultation**. It is vital that local inhabitants participate in large-scale events to secure broad-based support, and to simultaneously identify public concerns early on and take action to address these concerns. Simultaneously, local business and tourism enterprises should be involved, while encouraging the use of local gastro & wine products to enhance positive economic impacts

## 3. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF EVENT-BASED TOURISM IN ARMENIA

### 3.1. MICE Tourism in Armenia

#### 3.1.1. MICE Tourism Supply

The **MICE travel segment is the highest revenue contributor to the tourism industry**. Globally its value accounted for \$916 billion in 2019 and it is projected to reach \$1,439 billion in 2025 and \$1,780 billion in 2030. Despite such important figures, MICE tourism has often found insufficient attention from operators and institutions in its organization and management<sup>49</sup>: planning of MICE events indeed requires a long time, even several years sometimes; therefore, investments to develop this niche have to be planned in the long-term and usually entrusted to a **Convention Bureau**<sup>50</sup>.

According to the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), 57% of the congress meetings are held in Europe, 21% in the region of Asia, Australasia/Pacific, while only 11% are held in the USA and Canada. **Average length of the congress is 3.9 days, average expenditure per participant about 2,000 USD.**

Currently, in Armenia MICE occurs **mainly in Yerevan, as it requires support services**, starting from high standard accommodation, which are only offered in the Capital city. Other poles around the Regions might find a role in the incentive travels, fairs and smaller conferences market but would require an upgrade of support services to become attractive on the international market.

The main Exhibition halls in Armenia are Sport/Concert Hall after Karen Demirchyan, Yerevan Expo Center and Meridian Exhibition Center. Further venues, their location and number of seats is to be found in **Annex 2 – Venue/Conference Halls in Armenia**, whereas a complete list of important mayor business events is listed in **Annex 3 – List of fairs and business events in Armenia**.

Armenia can also count on a plethora of NGOs, educational, scientific and research institutions very active in different fields and on experienced businesses able to organize successful conferences and other business events. Many international businesses have a branch in Armenia too or do detain a quote in Armenian businesses. This also fosters international mobility, exchange between profession and, ultimately, MICE tourism.

<sup>49</sup>"The development of conference tourism in the Veneto Region, towards forms of organisation and management", April 2006.

<sup>50</sup> CBI (2021), Op. cit.

### 3.1.2. MICE Tourism Demand

At international level, MICE tourism was hardly beaten by the pandemics, but is forecasted to recover until it reaches pre-Covid levels in 2026<sup>51</sup>.



Figure 9: MICE market size outlook

For what concerns Armenia specifically, **there are no specific statistics on MICE tourism**, therefore the consultant has selected the macro-category for business tourism as proxy. Currently, the main originating markets are Russia, Iran, Georgia, Europe, USA while Canada, GULF countries, Japan, China, India are emerging<sup>52</sup>.

#### 3.1.2.1. International demand

According to official data<sup>53</sup>, the numbers of inbound business tourists among tourists staying in accommodation establishments in Armenia was around 15.9% in 2019, although in the first period of 2022 it was reported up to 28,3%. This might partly be due to Russian businesses having international clientele that relocated to Yerevan and other locations in Armenia due to the war in Ukraine.

In 2019 almost 90% of the total 550,289 Armenia incoming tourists stayed in Yerevan, and therefore the previous percentage can be considered a proxy of business tourism in the Capital. It is however much lower than the rate enjoyed by other Capital cities around the world, where business tourism arrivals usually account for over 50% of total arrivals. This is not surprising, as business travel is correlated to level of economic development.

#### 3.1.2.2. Domestic demand

According to the RA Statistical Committee, domestic business tourists accounted for 18.2% of total domestic arrivals in 2019. In the first period of 2022, this data was however up to 43%.

### 3.1.3. Current and perspective potential for MICE tourism growth

According to Getz' classification presented in §2.1.2 (Fig. 2: portfolio approach to event strategy and evaluation) it is possible to classify events according to their current and potential catchment area. We therefore used a 1-4 Likert scale to classify MICE tourism events, where 1 point is assigned to local events and 4 to Occasional Mega-events (see Annex 3).

We later used a portfolio matrix, positioning events according to their competitive position (which is derived from Getz' classification) and to the attractiveness of the industry<sup>54</sup>.

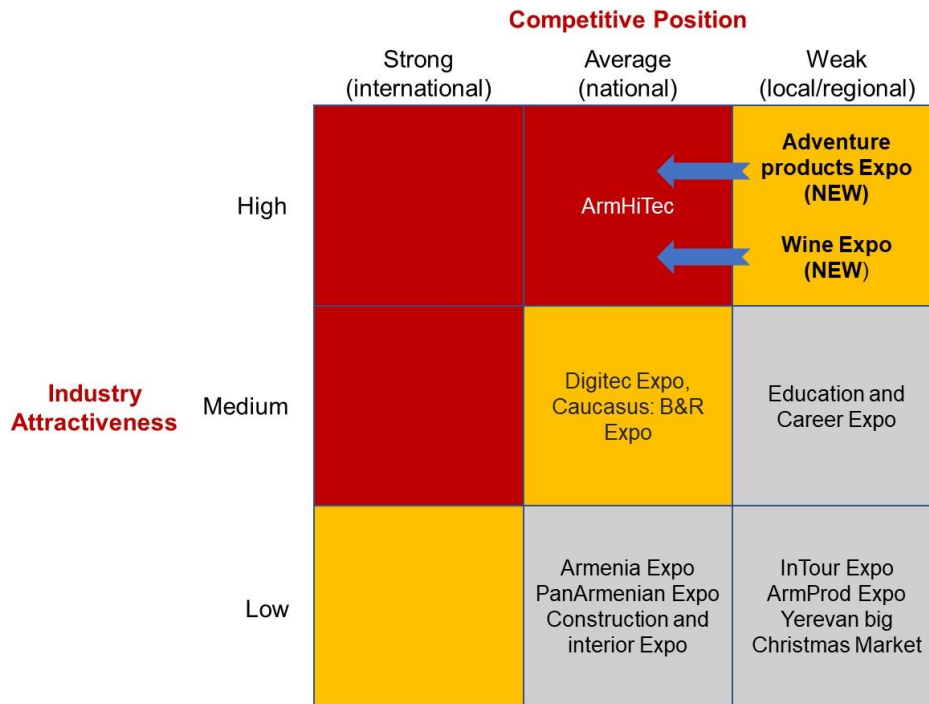
<sup>51</sup> CBI (2021). Op. cit.:

<sup>52</sup> armstat.am – Publications- for the year 2021 see Socio Economic Situation in RA in January 2022, paragraphs 4.2.1 (International Tourism) and 4.2.2 (Domestic Tourism). For January-September 2022 see Socio Economic Situation in RA in October 2022

<sup>53</sup> armstat.am – Op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Wernerfelt, B., 1984. A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic management journal*, 5(2), pp.171-180.





**Figure 10:** Current and perspective portfolio of Armenia MICE tourism products

As we see, according to Consultant’s personal judgement, based on experience gained in several international contexts, current MICE tourism products have both a weak competitive position and operate in not very attractive market, with maybe the exception of *ArmHiTec*. Although such products can hardly become great tourist attractors, as affluence is focused and limited, there might be a market space for new MICE tourism events based on peculiar niches such as the broad value chains related to Adventure Tourism products and Wine Tourism. These would involve a broad range of supplier, from outdoor and adventure clothes and equipment to tourism offers. The same concept would apply to wine tourism.

In any case, it should not be overlooked some major weaknesses that hinder MICE tourism growth in Armenia, particularly the on-going geo-political situation, which reduce the perception of safety, which is a relevant pre-condition for organizing events of international appeal. This adds to the lack of further basic conditions such as the availability of effective flight connections to major international airports and hubs.

Despite complications that professional MICE organizers take seriously into considerations, such as event cancellation and subsequent insurance and reimbursement issues, it must be noticed that in previous years, the Country was chosen for conferences of a certain prestige (Type 3 : Hallmark events). For instance, UNWTO selected Yerevan as location for the “UNWTO International Conference on Universal Values and Cultural Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: How Can Tourism Make a Difference” (2012) and for its 38<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session of UNWTO Affiliate Members (2014), while recently it organized the 67<sup>th</sup> Meeting of UNWTO Commission for Europe (2022)<sup>55</sup>.

► The previous are hallmark events of the business type, which can be conveniently organized and help to forge the image of Armenia among international tourism institutions and the business community. **Much different is the case of mega events, which foresee the participation of a much broader audience and have a large opportunity cost for participants and organizers**<sup>56</sup>. Such events require high security standards and safety perception as a basic condition. It is more advisable to channel efforts to start-up new and focused events such and strengthen those highlighted in the portfolio matrix.

<sup>55</sup> Other conferences worthy to mention are: International Conference of Young Scientists (ICYS),2014; International Conference on Collaboration And Technology (CRIWG), 2015; Thunderstorms and Elementary Particle Acceleration Conference (TEPA), 2016; International Association of Byron Societies Conference (IABSC), 2017; Tedx YSMU Salon Conference, 2018; World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT), 2019; Annual Horasis China Meeting, 2017.

<sup>56</sup> We mean events such as the [World Travel Market](#) in London, the [ITB](#) in Berlin, the [BIT](#) in Milano or even the more specialized [TTG](#) in Rimini, Italy. Not to talk about mega-events such as those organized by international organization such as the [World Economic Forum](#) in Davos.



We highlight that mega event are: “*ambulatory occasions with a fixed duration that attracts a large number of business visitors, have a big mediatic reach, come with large costs and have a big impact on the environment and the population*”<sup>57</sup>.

Therefore, events such as the above mentioned UNWTO meeting can be defined as hallmark, not mega-event.

► **If perceived peace conditions are not restored, mega-events in Armenia come, for participants and organizers, with great opportunity cost**, i.e. costs that do not happen in other alternative international locations (e.g. insurances that have to repay tickets to participants in case the event cannot be held)<sup>58</sup>.

It is not wise, due to the ongoing conflict with Azerbaijan, to invest in such type of events, but to focus on smaller sized events such as local festivals or business gatherings such as UNWTO’s Meeting.

For instance, the figure shows a current warning of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which recommends to avoid travelling to Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Gegharkunuk and all regions bordering Azerbaijan due to safety issues. The planning of organization of mega events also elsewhere in Armenia in such situation appears at least grotesque.

10.01.2023  
**ARMENIA: RISCHIO PER LA SICUREZZA NELLE ZONE DI CONFINE CON L’AZERBAIGIAN.**  
 Vista la situazione di instabilità con l’Azerbaijan, **si sconsigliano viaggi a qualsiasi titolo in Nagorno-Karabakh, nei pressi dell’exclave azera di Nakhchivan e - in generale - lungo le frontiere con l’Azerbaijan.**  
 In particolare, alla luce degli ultimi avvenimenti, **si sconsigliano i viaggi nelle regioni di Syunik e Vayots Dzor e nelle parti sud ed est della Regione di Gegharkunik.**

Figure 11: Warning of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about travelling in Armenia. January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### 3.1.4. Key Stakeholders

#### 3.1.4.1. Government

Currently, MICE events organization is supported by TC but without relying on committed structure such as the **Convention Bureau** we saw in place in other destinations

Following international practice, the establishment of such organization, promoted by the TC and gathering mayor players (convention venues, hotels suitable for MICE tourists, PCOs....) through an ad-hoc agreement might sustain the growth of the niche.

► Convention bureaus play a pivotal role in bidding for destination events such as international congresses and conventions. They are an example of a DMO and function to promote a particular destination in order to attract business events and therefore business tourists<sup>59</sup>. Historically, most established destinations have had a national as well as several regional and city convention bureaus, all funded through central and/or local government<sup>60</sup>.

#### 3.1.4.2. Private actors

At Armenian level, there is still a limited number in specialized operators in this niche. Currently, the most important players are:

- **Urban Travel Company:** The tour operator is one of the market leaders in the field of active tourism in Armenia and offers specific experiences of any difficulty level also to corporate groups, among which scenario adventures (games in alternative reality, theme-based events, games in a unique scenario in any genre), sport and war games, quest tours in Yerevan and the Regions (e.g. photo quest, intellectual games, geocaching etc.)<sup>61</sup>
- **Jan Armenia:** Founded in 2015 targeting the leisure market especially in Yerevan, the Tour operator has been operating in MICE tourism for more than 4 years, managing 20+ groups of different sizes

<sup>57</sup> Source: Müller, M., 2018. What makes an event a mega-event? Definitions and sizes. In *Leveraging Mega-Event Legacies* (pp. 13-28). Routledge

<sup>58</sup> For instance, 2022 edition of Areni Festival was cancelled due to safety issues. Should international operators had planned to participate this would have caused opportunity costs.

<sup>59</sup> For an analysis of Convention Bureau contribution to MICE competitiveness see, for instance, Delaney, E., 2021. Towards a Model of Convention Bureau Competitiveness. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*.

<sup>60</sup> Reinhold, S., Beritelli, P. and Grünig, R., 2018. A business model typology for destination management organizations *Tourism Review*

<sup>61</sup> [Urban Travel webpage](#)



mainly from Europe and Asia (Russia Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Poland, Latvia, Egypt). They organize all types of MICE events entirely or single components (e.g. venue hiring, catering and coffee breaks, etc.)

**Caucasus Holiday:** It is one of the best-known names in leisure travel since 2010. The Tour operator has a page dedicated to MICE Travels (landing page with more information to be requested to staff).

### 3.1.4.3. NGOs

The role of NGOs in general in the organization of MICE events in Armenia is important, as they organize events in all fields that recall international participation. Relations with MICE tourism area however still weak.

► NGOs might be involved in **providing/giving advice on experiences to discover the destination** so as to entertain MICE guests (e.g. FestivAR could advise Convention Bureau/organizers about cultural festivals in place during the incentive trip; ARPA Environmental foundation could offer to MICE tourists a tour in their protected area etc.).

## 3.1.5. SWOT analysis of MICE Tourism

### 3.1.5.1. Strengths

- Many international business groups and international organizations have a local branch in Armenia.
- Thanks to its strategic geographical location between Europe and Asia, Armenia is a convenient meeting point.
- There are some specialized event organizers/MICE event organizations already active at national level.

### 3.1.5.2. Weaknesses

- Lack of adequate infrastructure to host big-sized meetings and conventions, especially in the regions.
- Poor commercialization and promotion of MICE opportunities.
- Lack of committed management organizations such as Convention Bureaus.
- Lack of involvement of NGOs around the country in entertainment services for MICE tourists.
- Inadequate connection means between the business center (Yerevan) and the regions.

### 3.1.5.3. Opportunities

- Many MICE events have been postponed due to COVID and are to be organized in the next months/years.
- Many Russian businesses having international clientele are relocating to Yerevan due to the war in Ukraine.
- Domestic and diaspora market have still room for growth.
- Armenia is member state of several International Organizations (WTO, UNWTO, Eurasian Economic Union etc.) and could propose to host some meetings and conventions in Yerevan (and eventually in the Regions).

### 3.1.5.4. Threats

- Geopolitical instability and unsafe image of Armenia as destination.
- Recrudescence of pandemics that hinder/impede the organization of large-scale business events and limit participation of international guests.
- Trends to limit business travel in favor of remote on-line meetings as a habitus following pandemics
- Inflation, higher energy costs are impacting on travel costs to be bore by the private sector, limiting the available budget for MICE initiatives.
- Very competitive destinations worldwide and in the Region, establishing as poles for MICE (e.g. Baku, Azerbaijan).

## 3.1.6. Key gaps to be filled for MICE Tourism development

Key gaps for MICE event tourism were already identified in §3.1.3.5. Further key gaps specific for this sub-niche development are:

- Lack of coordination of MICE tourism initiatives;
- Lack of suitable infrastructure for hosting large meetings and conventions, especially in the Regions.



- Accommodations below international standards, especially in the Regions.

## 3.2. Leisure Events Tourism in Armenia

### 3.2.1. Leisure Events Tourism Supply

#### 3.2.1.1. Festivals

As introduced before, events can be of any type, size and related to any type of interest. Events, festivals in particular, are quite popular among tourists, as they give them the possibility to take part in Armenian culture and experience the hospitality and the warmth of local people<sup>62</sup>.

Particularly, cultural events are conducive to tourism development when they contribute to promote the identity of the destination. In 2001, Armenia hosted the Celebration of 1700 Anniversary of Christianity in the world, which had a prominent effect on tourism arrivals (+45%). Thanks to the positive outcome of this big international event, festivals received increased attention as development drivers. In 2004, the first national festival, the **Golden Apricot Film Festival** was organized. Nowadays it accounts as an international, traditional and well-known festival, taking place every year in July in Yerevan.

In the Regions and rural areas of Armenia, the festival industry was kick started by the **Areni Wine Festival** in Vayots Dzor region in 2009, followed the year after by the **Barbeque Festival** in the town of Akhtala in Lori region. Due to the success of those festivals, other Armenian regions organized similar initiatives. In 2017, **FestivAr Association of Armenian Festivals** was founded by festival organizers to coordinate, promote, and support the sustainable development of festivals in Armenia, with the support of the My Armenia Program, funded by USAID and implemented by the Smithsonian Institution. FestivAr's has nowadays 19 members and coordinates 26 festivals across the country<sup>63</sup>.

Through the years, several initiatives bounded to local culture, handicraft and culinary specialties, which celebrate the “best that the country has”, are organized on a cyclic base. A thorough list of Armenian local festivals is presented in **Annex 4 – List of local Festivals in Armenia**.

Nevertheless, it has been acknowledged that the event-based niche is suffering of three main impediments:

- **Underfunding:** most festivals are not state-funded or receive very little funding, therefore guaranteeing yearly editions is not always possible. Festivals apply for grants, but mostly initiatives are based on individual, corporate or in-kind donations.
- **High dependency on public funding:** As declared by FestivAr<sup>64</sup>, most festivals, especially in Armenia, are not state funded (or very minimally funded), which by no means can ensure that the event can be constantly planned every year. There are grants for which several festivals apply to, but mostly these are based on individual, corporate or in-kind donations.
- **Lack of adequate venues/local infrastructure:** dire road settings, absence or minimal public transportation and insufficient infrastructure conditions are affecting negatively festival, especially in rural settings.

#### 3.2.1.2. Other entertainment events

Entertainment tourism is developing dynamically in Armenia, but is still **mostly concentrated in Yerevan** and to a much lesser extent in few other major cities. Most of the cultural establishments, such as the opera house, theaters, cinemas and big venues to host concerts are indeed found in the Capital city.

▶ However, there is **potential to organize entertainment events also in the regions, especially by connecting them to local features and specialties and by exploiting open air contexts and “natural” arenas** (e.g. Areni crag could become a natural setting for a light-performance; smaller villages could be transformed in open air setting for scattered music concerts; Jermuk could host cultural talks related to the role of thermal water in city culture development, etc.). Opportunities in this sense are yet to be explored, representing a tremendous potential for enhancing destination attractiveness in marginalized destinations.

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.enterprise.am/interesting-festivals-and-events-in-armenia-2020>

<sup>63</sup> <https://regionalpost.org/en/articles/armenias-festivals-have-a-lot-to-offer-both-to-locals-and-tourists.html>

<sup>64</sup> Regional Post: “Armenian’s festivals have a lot to offer both to locals and tourists”, Op. cit.



### 3.2.1.3. Sport events

**Annex 5** reports a list of mayor Sport Events recently organized in Yerevan. The major at national level are **Pan Armenian Games**. These are a multi-sport event, held between competitors from the Armenian diaspora and Armenia. Competitions are mostly held in Yerevan. However, there are some examples of displacement. For instance, the 2007 edition was hosted in Stepanakert, capital of the Republic of Artsakh. In 2015 edition, the Pan-Armenia Games scored their widest participation: 6,352 athletes from 175 cities of 35 countries. In August 2023, the 8<sup>th</sup> edition will be held in Gyumri and a number of nearby cities in the Shirak and Aragatsotn marzes. Unfortunately, data on tourism impact of above-mentioned events is not available.

It has to be noted that at local level, there are several championships and cups organized by the **35 Armenian Sport federations**, such as Armenian Football Prime League, Armenian Football Cup. In 2022, Armenia held 85 Championships in different sports, 14 of which in its regions.

## 3.2.2. Leisure Events Tourism Demand

### 3.2.2.1. International demand

#### a) Festivals

As mentioned before, in 2001 Armenia hosted the Celebration of 1700 Anniversary of Christianity in the world<sup>65</sup>, which significantly contributed to the promotion of the image of Armenia as a safe and attractive tourism destination. Positive outcomes of this first, big hallmark event shed light on the huge potentials of event-based tourism. **Festivals have indeed become increasingly prominent in the country** with various events celebrating Armenian points of national pride such as wine, barbecue, and other dishes<sup>66</sup>.

According to official statistics<sup>67</sup>, the plethora of festivals mentioned in § 3.1 hosts **over 10,000 visitors yearly with at least 30% share of international tourists**. Festivals do indeed play a pivotal role in bringing together local and visiting audiences, creating opportunities for cultural exchange. Despite that some Armenian festivals are drivers for international tourism (Areni Wine festival, Tolma Fest, Yerevan colour run) most of them **are however still largely a local affair**<sup>68</sup>.

According to the 2013 Visitor Survey, average expenditure of incoming cultural (therefore also festival) tourist was on average 1,200 USD. This means that Festivals provide yearly revenue:

1. 120 Millions USD total for Armenia, if we consider that the main purpose of 100.000 tourist visits to Armenia is participating in Festivals;
2. 20 Millions USD of which for hosting communities, if we consider that they spend on average 200 USD at each festival.

It has to be noted that in 2020, as result of Covid-19 and Azerbaijani aggression, the number of international visitors however dropped to 375,216 arrivals (-80,2% from 2019). One of the most affected niches was event-based tourism: festivals were cancelled or delayed due to security measures and the sector received a negative shock.

#### b) Other entertainment events

As mentioned above, most of the offer in event-based tourism is composed by local (thematic) festivals. The hosting of international big hallmark events is still limited, although some experiences have been and are to be organized. The **main location for such types of events is the Demircian Arena in Yerevan**.



For instance, in December 2022, the location hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the Junior EuroVision song context, which had a big mediatic echo (13 million viewers across 13 measured markets)<sup>69</sup>. The competition was hosted also in 2011 and in this occasion counted on 7,000 participants<sup>70</sup>.

**Figure 12:** Junior Eurovision song context – 2022 edition

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.wrmea.org/001-july/the-armenian-church-celebrates-its-1700-year-anniversary.html>

<sup>66</sup> Armenia - Country Commercial Guide - Travel and Tourism, International Trade and administration

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.armstat.am/en/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://regionalpost.org/en/articles/armenias-festivals-have-a-lot-to-offer-both-to-locals-and-tourists.html>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.ebu.ch/news/2022/12/33-million-celebrate-junior-eurovision-song-contests-20th-anniversary>

<sup>70</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junior\\_Eurovision\\_Song\\_Contest\\_2022](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Junior_Eurovision_Song_Contest_2022)



In 2021, the arena hosted the biggest Christmas market in the Country, with the participation of 300+ local artisans and offering an entertainment area for children and adults with Santa's House, photoshoot booths, movie viewing platforms, shows and live concerts. A similar event was also hosted for the first time in the Regions, in Tsaghkadzor, the largest ski resort in Armenia.

It has also to be noted that in 2017 a new project for a **Triennial of Contemporary Art has been launched: Standart**. The festival is held in July in Yerevan and Gyumri, with some talks and events in Yerevan and lake Sevan. It is promoted by the Armenia Art Foundation with the financing of national and international donors and involving also some of the most promising Armenian artists<sup>71,72</sup>. A second edition, due in 2020, was however not implemented.

▶ According to expert estimates, the average expenditure of an inbound entertainment tourist is around **1,200 USD per visit**. In case of development of necessary infrastructures, especially in the regions of Armenia this index can quickly increase to 1500 USD<sup>73</sup>.

### c) Sport events

According to expert evaluations average expenditure of incoming sport event tourist is **minimum 1,500 USD**. It means, that - following a similar methodology as presented in §3.1.2.1.2 - sport event tourist visits generate about 15 Millions USD revenue per year, if we consider that the main purpose of 10,000 tourist visits to Armenia per year is participating in sport events.

▶ As Sport event is a large growing market, we can assume that there might be significant new opportunities for Armenia too, particularly related to sports related to Armenia image, such as **winter or adventure sports** (e.g. festivals of snowman, Christmas markets at ski resorts or further festivals connected to adventure and extreme sports<sup>74</sup>).

## 3.2.2.2. Domestic demand

### a) Festivals

According to National statistical data<sup>75</sup>, domestic tourism in Armenia has also increased dynamically, with tourist visits reaching 1.544.600 in 2019, 41,4% more than in 2018 and 13 times more than in 2001.

Covid obviously had a negative impact on domestic tourism as well. However, domestic demand decreased less the international. In 2021, the index of domestic tourism exceeded not only the index of 2020 (52.6%), but also the index of 2019 (3.3%), reaching 1,595,826. In the first half of 2022 domestic tourist visits in Armenia were 29.1% more than in the same period of 2021. Festivals are believed to have contributed to such growth, even if there is no specific data to prove it.

▶ According to direct observations, the Consultant estimated the domestic revenue generated from the Festivals per year in 10 Millions USD. This result is calculated considering that the number of domestic festival tourists is about 200,000 and the average expenditure of a domestic tourist for a festival is about 50 USD.

### b) Other entertainment events

According to expert estimates, the average expenditure of a domestic entertainment tourist is around 60 USD per day. In case of development of necessary infrastructures, especially in the regions of Armenia this index can quickly increase to 100.

### c) Sport events

**Growth in attendance to sport events is expected also at domestic level.** Indeed, many attendants to sport competitions come from the same country. Domestic tourism could support the development of this sub-

<sup>71</sup> The art event was financed by Swiss Embassy, Armenian Artes Council, Art for the World, Ministry of Culture. The most important national artists who took part in it are Artlabyerevan collective, Ayreen Anastas & Rene Gabri, Arman Grigoryan, Piruza Khalapyan, Gohar Smoyan e Mika Vatinyan.

<sup>72</sup> <https://www.artribune.com/arti-visive/arte-contemporanea/2017/08/standart-reportage-triennale-armenia-yerevan/>

<sup>73</sup> Such evaluations are presented taking into account the results of the Visitor Survey conducted in 2013 by the RA Ministry of Economy, the RA National Statistical Service, USAID and GIZ, the developments that have taken place in tourism sphere to date, as well as the distinctive features of entertainment tourism.

<sup>74</sup> In report 2.6 – Winter Tourism, the Consultant proposed: "Action 1.2.2 - Formulate and promote a national agenda of winter festivals" which is coherent and connected to leisure event development in Armenia. In report 2.2 – Adventure tourism, "Action 1.1.1. - Formulate of a complete Adventure and Nature Based Tourism Strategy including specific sub-niches" the consultant recommended to involve existing festivals in the development of new products.

<sup>75</sup> ArmStat



niche in its early stages and provide liquidity for the building of necessary infrastructures needed to host more relevant mega/hallmark events as well as attracting government attention (and funding).

- ▶ With regard to the domestic revenues generated from sport events per year, we can expect it to reach 5 Millions USD per year in upcoming 3 years, based on an assumption of 100.000 domestic sport event tourist visiting the regions, starting with Armenian Football and other Championships.

### 3.2.3. Current and perspective potential for Leisure events tourism growth

As already made for MICE tourism, we classified Leisure event tourism products using Getz' segmentation model and later draft a portfolio matrix to highlight current and perspective competitive positioning according to market attractiveness too.

Again, according to Consultant's personal judgement, current Leisure events tourism products can be considered to be featured with weak competitive position. Some of them however take place in attractive market, particularly those which refer to authentic products and tradition.

For instance, *Areni Wine Festival*, due the allure of the close-by Areni-1 Cave and to the quality of the production, might aim to become an international event. As well, potentialities can be associated to other Festivals which are highlighted in the matrix following classification reported in Annex 2.

For Leisure Events, the same safety considerations made for MICE tourism do apply, although the tourism leisure demand include also adventurous and explored travelers which might be targeted until safety conditions are restored.

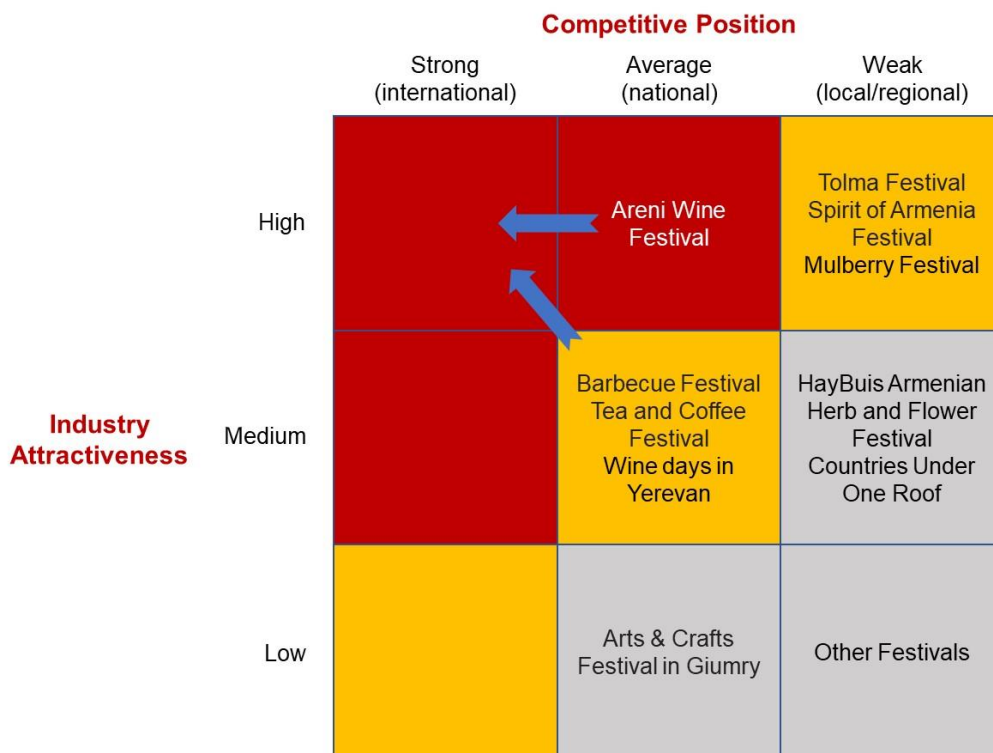


Figure 13: Current and perspective portfolio of Armenia Leisure events tourism products

### 3.2.4. Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders should be engaged in a similar way for the development of both festivals and other entertainment events.



### 3.2.4.1. Government

In general, in Armenia main leisure events are organized and supported by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports and the TC. According to the type and scope of the event, government provides some financial, technical and political assistance to the events, supports their promotion and ensures decent working condition at event sites. **The TC has been providing financial support to festivals for years to foster their development in the regions.**

► It is auspicious that the government might contribute to the **upgrading of infrastructure** at event site and in **providing transport links** to enhance accessibility of events held in the regions.

Other public actors accounting as key stakeholders are state administration bodies, territorial administration bodies and local self-government bodies. Such bodies are called to provide technical and financial support in the community, safety and security.

### 3.2.4.2. Private actors

Along with specialized Tour Operators listed in §2.2.1., some event organization companies are starting to operate. Among those, a key player is **EventToura**, a festival organizing company, based in Armenia, that accounts as one of the leading companies in this field.<sup>76</sup> Among its most successful products one can cite the Yerevan Wine Days. Further starting to offer event-related tour packages are Festival Tours organized by Sputnik Armenia Tour Operator<sup>77</sup>, Armenia In Fiesta! by Adventure Tour Company "Avarayr"<sup>78</sup>, Gevorgyan Concern<sup>79</sup>, AM Travel Agency<sup>80</sup>, Best Tour Armenia travel agency<sup>81</sup>, "ACTI GROUP" LLC specialized in event organization and incoming tourism services<sup>82</sup>, Bucket List Travel Tours<sup>83</sup>.

In general, in developing event tourism the private sector should be proactive in grasping new opportunities for events organization and receptive in creating new experiences and tours connected to main events. Despite generation of revenue is important, they should respect and promote local heritage and traditions, proposing fair events that respect and promote the rights of local communities.

► It would be beneficial to incentivize the private sector to co-invest, by PPP schemes, in leisure events infrastructure building and management (e.g. arenas, stadiums, etc.) as well as in sponsorships/donations.

### 3.2.4.3. NGOs

The event-based tourism panorama in Armenia counts on several NGOs:

- **Areni" Festival" Foundation**, which is in charge of organizing the Wine festival in Areni Village (one of the most successful in the Armenian panorama), Gata festival in Khachik village, Mulberry festival in Goris community<sup>84</sup>.
- **NGO of Development and Preservation of Armenian Culinary Traditions** – Tolma festival in Zvartnots of Armavir Province, Barbeque festival in Akhtala of Lori Province, and other culinary festivals.

Other important associations are:

- **Armenian Tourism Federation** which participates in the implementation of "Navasard" Armenian-Iranian Cultural Culinary Festival in Sisian of Syunik Province and "Mimino" Armenian-Georgian Culinary Festival in Dilijan of Tavush Province
- **FestivAR network** that reunites all local festival organizers (e.g. Areni festival foundation)
- **35 Sport Federations**, which organize sports' Championships in Armenia. Also they represent and lobby the rights and interests of relevant sports' representatives

<sup>76</sup> <https://staff.am/en/company/eventtura>; <https://www.civilnet.am/en/news/667725/eventtura-putting-armenia-on-the-map-and-promoting-small-businesses-active-in-the-tourism-sector/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://sputniktravel.am/incoming>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.avarayr.am/home.html>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GevorgianConcern/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/AMLuxuryTravel/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.besttour.am/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.spyur.am/en/companies/acti-group/6018>

<sup>83</sup> <https://bucketlisttraveltours.com/>

<sup>84</sup> Mulberry festival was also organized in Amaras, but due to the land occupation by the Azerbaijani forces Areni Festival Foundation has informed the consultant that this initiative has been cancelled.





### 3.2.5. SWOT analysis of Leisure Events Tourism

#### 3.2.5.1. Strengths

- Rich cultural heritage and traditions.
- Developed facilities to host leisure events in Yerevan.
- Legendary hospitable people, proud of their tangible and intangible heritage and willing to showcase it.
- Hard working, skillful event organizers.
- Population interested in participating in leisure events and aware of benefits such events could bring.
- Established festival traditions.
- 35 active sports federation organizing competitions at local/national level.
- Already established sport events.

#### 3.2.5.2. Weaknesses

- Lack of coordination in the development and implementation of leisure events.
- Lack of infrastructures able to host mega and hallmark events.
- Poor infrastructure to host local/regional events across Armenia.
- Poor transport infrastructure, which hinders mobility to participate to leisure events outside Yerevan.
- Lack of government funds to finance event organization and support upgrading of infrastructure to host them.
- Lack of statistical data to measure the impact events currently generate on the local and national Armenian economy.
- Lack of promotion of leisure events at domestic and international level.
- Low number of direct flights to Armenia and high level of air ticket prices.

#### 3.2.5.3. Opportunities

- Diaspora tourism as a potential source for incoming tourists.
- Growing number of international tourists interested to long-distance religious and cultural festivals.
- Presence of proactive local NGOs.

#### 3.2.5.4. Threats

- Geopolitical instability and unsafe image of Armenia as destination.
- Recrudescence of pandemics that hinder/impede the organization of large-scale business events and limit participation of international guests.
- Harsh competition from more developed and institutionalized international leisure events.
- Environmental pollution and possible degradation of green areas in the case of open-air festivals.
- Loss of authenticity and trivialization of intangible heritage and traditions.

### 3.2.6. Key gaps to be filled for Leisure Events tourism development

Based on the Value Chain and SWOT analysis the following strategic gaps can be highlighted in order to ensure development of Winter Tourism in Armenia:

1. Absence of a leisure events coordination system.
2. Lack of a consolidated calendar of festivals, sports and other leisure events clearly distinguishing between initiatives at local level and events of national interest.
3. Some events cannot be cyclical due to the lack of funding.
4. No basic institutional tools for Leisure Event Tourism development in place (legislation, financial incentives, statistics, etc.).
5. Underdevelopment/lack of infrastructures for hosting events and difficulty to reach event location due to poor transportation network, especially in the Regions.
6. Despite an awareness of importance of events for destination development, event organizers and local inhabitants need to develop some skills in event organization and implementation, especially outside Yerevan.

The detailed actions for above-mentioned directions will be presented in the next chapter.



## 4. RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

### 4.1. MICE Tourism Development Strategy

#### 4.1.1. Strategic objectives

The main goal of the strategy is to promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia, also in support of valorization of key tourism niches.

#### 4.1.2. Specific objectives and key actions

The pillars of the strategy, which correspond to its specific objectives are described hereafter along with actions necessary for their achievement.

##### 1.1. Establishment of an Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)

- 1.1.1. Creation of a Steering Committee involving key public and private actors
- 1.1.2. Formulation of a business plan
- 1.1.3. Establishment of the ACB

##### 1.2. Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operator capacity

- 1.2.1. Audit of current meeting and conference facilities
- 1.2.2. Audit of current fair locations
- 1.2.3. Provision of financial incentives for facilities upgrading
- 1.2.4. Increase capacity of MICE operators

##### 1.3. Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives

- 1.3.1. Promotion of the assets by ACB
- 1.3.2. Identification of fair venues related to key niches
- 1.3.3. Organization of exhibition fairs related to key niches

##### 1.4. Update of the institutional and legislative framework for Leisure Event Tourism development

- 1.4.1. Regulation of MICE tourism professions and operators
- 1.4.2. Regulation of MICE tourism statistics collection

Key actions are furtherly analyzed in **ANNEX 6 – Detail of actions MICE Tourism**

### 4.2. Leisure Event Tourism Development Strategy

#### 4.2.1. Strategic objectives

The main goal of the strategy is to establish and promote a network (Agenda) of sustainable Leisure Events conducive to the development of key tourism niches.

#### 4.2.2. Specific objectives and key actions

The pillars of the strategy, which correspond to its specific objectives are described hereafter along with actions necessary for their achievement.

##### 2.1. Formulation of the Agenda of hallmark events

- 2.1.1. Establishment of a National Committee for hallmark events
- 2.1.2. Identification of key festival and events for each tourism niche
- 2.1.3. Organization of a Hallmark event for reuniting Armenian Diaspora population in Armenia

##### 2.2. Implementation and promotion of the agenda

- 2.2.1. Upgrading of key location for niche events
- 2.2.2. Increase capacity of leisure event organizer and implementers
- 2.2.3. Organization of Festival and Events



2.2.4. Adoption of effective marketing strategies

**2.3. Increase of the economic impact from festival and events**

2.3.1. Promotion of circular economy in festival and event organization

2.3.2. Provision of financial incentives to SMES and creative industries

2.3.3. Adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes for event organization

2.3.4. Promotion of fundraising, patronage and sponsorships for key events

**2.4. Update of the institutional and legislative framework for Leisure Event Tourism development**

2.4.1. Regulation of event tourism professions and operators

2.4.2. Regulation of events statistics collection

2.4.3. Regulation of green procurement at events

Key actions are furtherly analyzed in **ANNEX 7 – Detail of actions Leisure Events Tourism**.



Strategic objective	Specific objective	Key action	
<b>1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia</b>	1.1 Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)	1.1.1 Creation of a steering committee involving key public and private actors	
		1.1.2 Formulation of a business plan	
		1.1.3 Establishment of the ACB	
	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators' capacities	1.2.1 Audit of the current meeting and conference facilities	
		1.2.2 Audit of current fair locations	
		1.2.3 Provision of financial incentives for facilities upgrading	
		1.2.4 Increase capacity of MICE operators	
	1.3 Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives	1.3.1 Promotion of the assets by ACB	
		1.3.2 Identification of fair venues related to key niches	
		1.3.3 Organization of exhibition fairs related to key niches	
	1.4 Update of the institutional and legislative framework for MICE tourism development	1.4.1 Regulation of MICE tourism professions and operators	
		1.4.2 Regulation of tourism statistics collection	
	<b>2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones</b>	2.1 Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events	2.1.1 Establishment of a National Committee for hallmark events
			2.1.2. Identification of key festivals and events for each tourism niche
			2.1.3 Organization of a Hallmark event for reuniting Armenian Diaspora population in Armenia
		2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda	2.2.1 Upgrading of key locations for niche events
2.2.2 Increase capacity of leisure event organizers and implementers			
2.2.3. Organization of festivals and events			
2.2.4 Adoption of effective marketing strategies			
2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events		2.3.1. Promotion of circular economy in festival and event organization	
		2.3.2. Provision of financial incentives to SMEs and creative industries	
		2.3.3. Adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes for event organization	
		2.3.4. Promotion of fundraising, patronage and sponsorship for key events	
2.4 Update the institutional and legislative framework for leisure event tourism development		2.4.1 Regulation of event tourism professions and operators	
		2.4.2 Regulation of event tourism statistics collection	
		2.4.3 Regulation of green procurement at events	

**Table 4:** Synoptical scheme for Event-based tourism



## 5. SUSTAINABILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Enhancing economic benefits

MICE and Leisure Events Tourism are featured with potential very relevant socio-economic effects, as they are associated to complex value chain with indirect and induced effects in economic sectors different from tourism (e.g. Hi-Tech and business services for MICE tourism; gastro and wine for Leisure Events, etc.).

In order to enhance the economic benefits arising from event-based and MICE tourism at the community, regional and national level, the following steps should however be considered:

- Introduction and/or enhancement of critical infrastructure (e.g. conference rooms, fair grounds, venues and arenas, etc.) especially in the rural zones.
- Upgrade the organization by both professionalizing the operators and set-up specific rules, particularly regarding the use of local products, which should be sustained.
- Coordination of both MICE and leisure events, so as to planning them in low season and contributing to balance the economic entrances of both operators and residents throughout the year.

► The action plan foresees several actions that regard the above-mentioned recommendations. This includes a **central coordination body** (ACB for MICE and National Committee for Hallmark events for leisure), the creation of **national agendas** for events, the **update of the legislation** and the promotion of **circular economy** in festival and event organization. All proposed activities are aiming to a greater contribution of event-based tourism to the national economy.

### 5.2. Preventing socio-cultural problems and encouraging community involvement

There is a profound bond between event tourism, especially festivals, and the living culture. In order to enhance socio-cultural benefits at the community level the following steps should be considered:

- Tourism shall contribute to the preservation and protection of rural communities and not banalize or trivialize local culture for commercial reasons;
- Community members (service providers, NGOs and event agencies, accommodation providers, restaurants, etc.) should be engaged in decision making processes in their communities regarding the planning of events in their destinations.

► The action plan foresees several actions that regard the above mentions recommendations. This includes **the creation of the National Committee on Hallmarks events and the organization of new events, in particular festivals, which are rooted in the destination culture**. Such initiatives will be carried out in collaboration with the relevant municipalities and regional government.

### 5.3. Preventing negative environmental impacts

The organization of mass outdoor events, such as festivals, exhibitions can have a significant negative impact on the environment. In particular, sewerage pollution, extensive littering of the event area and surroundings as well as unsustainable waste management, human disturbance to wildlife, air pollution caused by large-scale transportation to the event area are among major environmental issues facing during an event management. Therefore, the following preventive measures can be applied:

- Carry out waste reduction, sorting and recycling activities during the large-scale outdoor events
- Application of event noise management for the activities planned near the protected areas, forestry and important habitats for wildlife.
- Organization of carpooling and shuttle transportation to avoid wide use of private vehicles.
- Calculation and compensation of a carbon footprint as a part of CSR performance for conferences and other indoor events.
- In case of possibility generate electricity from renewable sources.

► The action plan foresees specific actions that regard the above mentions recommendations. This includes the regulation of **green procurement** at events, as well as the adoption of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes** for event organization.



#### 5.4. Manpower planning

The plan assumes the qualification of relevant tourism operators a pre-requisite for achieving above described social and economic benefits.

- ▶ The action plan therefore dedicates broad attention to the **support and creation of unified certification and training system for PCOs and other event professionals, as well as vocational school system and TVET and further capacity building activities.**

#### 5.5. Adoption of consistent legislation

The valorization of the event tourism might be favored by the adoption of proper legislation, for both MICE and Leisure-event based tourism, which is considered in the present report.

- ▶ The action plan foresees the **review of current laws** on events, certification of skills (e.g. PCOs), definition of quality standards, upgrade of the tourism law to integrate proper tourism visitor data collection and statistics system and **green procurement** at events. Ad-hoc laws will also determine the functioning of the **National Committee on Hallmarks events and ACB.**

#### 5.6. Investment policies and incentives

Building on the experience of other international destinations, the development of event-based tourism niche might benefit from the provision of dedicated micro-grants.

- ▶ The action plan foresees financial aids to stimulate private sector and resident. For MICE, the strategy foresees the provision of **financial incentives for facilities upgrading of infrastructures** in which events are hosted. For leisure, it is advised the provision of **financial incentives to SMEs and creative industries.**



## **6. CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS-PROJECTS FOR THE DESTINATION**

Armenia is one of the vulnerable countries facing various impacts of climate change. According to the Fourth National Communication on Climate Change, it is projected to raise the temperature in the country up to 4.7°C by 2100 and reduction of annual precipitation (8.3%). Tourism is significantly affected by heavy precipitation, floods, droughts and heat waves. In Armenia these phenomena increased during the recent decades.

On May 13, 2021, the Government of Armenia adopted Resolution 749-L "On Approving National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan (NAP) and List of Measures for 2021-2025". The list of measures incorporates the development of RA draft Government Decree "On Approving Climate Change Adaptation Program in Sector of Tourism". The document has been developed and discussed with general public. It incorporates adaptation measures for the tourism sector, including winter tourism. The document guides the implementation of climate change adaptation measures in the tourism sector, enabling the identification, addressing and review of adaptation needs, issues, priorities and necessary resources.

According to the draft Governmental Decree "On Approving Climate Change Adaptation Program in Sector of Tourism", touristic destinations such as Jermuk and Ashotsk are the most vulnerable locations in relation to heat waves, whereas Syunik and Shirak provinces for cold waves. Increasing temperature and low level of precipitation results in droughts, which affect different tourism products, such as kayaking, rafting etc. Floods are also periodically registered in the major touristic destinations including Garni, Geghard, Jermuk. The snowstorms are another important phenomenon influencing winter tourism. In addition, significant decrease of snowfall negatively affects snow reliability and cover the depth of ski resorts both locally and globally. According to the above-mentioned National Communication, lack of data on tourism sector and on snow cover in high altitudes in Armenia is a major barrier to assess the vulnerability of the winter tourism sector to climate change impacts. The list of adaptation measures for the period of 2023-2027 are proposed by the draft Government Decree "On Approving Climate Change Adaptation Program in Sector of Tourism". The measures include various activities such as capacity building or needs assessments for different stakeholders, infrastructure development for key touristic destinations, etc. Installation of hydro-meteorological stations in selected tourist active locations to improve data and fill gaps, for more accurate assessment of the sector's vulnerability and for planning business activities based on reliable data, which will help to plan open –air event and not only for a long term.



## 7. TIME SCHEDULE

Strategic objective	Specific objective	Key action	Years												
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
1. Promote the development of MICE Industry in Armenia	1.1 Create a competitive supply for MICE Tourism Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)	1.1.1 Creation of a steering committee involving key public and private actors	●												
		1.1.2 Formulation of a business plan	●												
		1.1.3 Establishment of the ACB	●												
	1.2 Assurance of the market visibility and accessibility of MICE supply Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities	1.2.1 Audit of the current meeting and conference facilities		●											
		1.2.2 Audit of current fair locations		●											
		1.2.3 Provision of financial incentives for facilities upgrading			●										
		1.2.4 Increase capacity of MICE operators			●										
	1.3 Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives	1.3.1 Promotion of assets by ACB		●											
		1.3.2 Identification of fair venues related to key niches		●											
		1.3.3 Organization of exhibitions and fairs related to key niches			●										
	1.4 Update of the institutional and legislative framework for Leisure Event tourism development	1.4.1 Regulation of MICE tourism professions			●										
		1.4.2 Regulation of tourism statistics collection			●										
	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones	2.1 Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events	2.1.1 Establishment of a national committee for hallmark events	●											
			2.1.2 Identification of key festivals for each key niche	●											
2.1.3 Organization of a Hallmark event for reuniting Armenian Diaspora population in Armenia							●								
2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda		2.2.1 Upgrading of key locations for niche events		●											
		2.2.2 Increase capacity of leisure event organizers and implementers			●										
		2.2.3 Organization of festivals and events		●											
		2.2.4 Adoption of effective marketing strategies		●											
2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events		2.3.1 Promotion of circular economy in festival and event organization		●											
		2.3.2. Provision of financial incentives to SMEs and creative industries		●											
		2.3.3. Adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes for event organization			●										
		2.3.4. Promotion of fundraising, patronage and sponsorship for key events			●										
2.4 Update the institutional and legislative framework for leisure		2.4.1 Regulation of event tourism professions and operators			●										

Figure 14: Time schedule for development plan implementation





## ANNEX 1: International well-known/exemplary events organized at worldwide level

### Best practices in Cultural festivals

- **CARNIVAL (Rio De Janeiro, Brazil)**

Arguably the biggest festival in the world (not to mention its wildest party), Brazil's Carnival is widely considered "the greatest show on Earth."  
The event attracts nearly 5 million people each year, with a half-million or so being visitors traveling to see the spectacle. The Brazil festival takes place in February or March, over the 5 days preceding the Catholic season of Lent, which starts 40 days before Easter. It also coincides with the end of the long, brutally hot Brazilian summer.
- **HARBIN INTERNATIONAL ICE & SNOW SCULPTURE FESTIVAL (HARBIN, CHINA)**

Where Carnival celebrates the end of Brazil's oppressive heat, the International Ice & Snow Sculpture Festival makes the most of the bitter winter weather you'll find in Harbin, China.  
This month-long Chinese festival officially starts on January 5. Because it's home to the largest ice sculptures in the world, and the celebration takes over the entire city.  
There are two main exhibition areas:  
Sun Island is a recreation area along the Songhua River, where you'll find most of the giant sculptures. Ice and Snow World opens at night, with colorful lights illuminating full-sized buildings made of 2- to 3-foot ice blocks taken from the river.  
Other activities in the area during the festival include alpine skiing, touring ice lantern exhibitions in various local parks, and— for the truly insane—swimming in the river's frigid waters.
- **LA TOMATINA (VALENCIA, SPAIN)**

Launched way back in 1945, La Tomatina is easily the messiest, coming off like the world's biggest food fight.  
Legend has it that the whole thing started when some local boys joined a parade alongside musicians, "Giants" on stilts, and "Big Head" figures. The unruly boys knocked one of the performers off his stilts, he became enraged and started lashing out, and a vendor's vegetable stand fell victim to the mayhem until the police arrived to break it up.
- **OKTOBERFEST (MUNICH, BAVARIA, GERMANY)**

The Oktoberfest is the world's largest Volksfest, featuring a beer festival and a travelling carnival. It is held annually in Munich, Bavaria, Germany. It is a 16- to 18-day folk festival running from mid- or Late-September to around the first Sunday in October, with more than six million international and national visitors attending the event. Locally, it is called d'Wiesn, after the colloquial name for the fairgrounds, Theresienwiese. The Oktoberfest is an important part of Bavarian culture, having been held since the year 1810. Other cities across the world also hold Oktoberfest celebrations that are modeled after the original Munich event. During the event, large quantities of Oktoberfest Beer are consumed. For example, during the 16-day festival in 2014, 7.7 million litres (66,000 US bbl; 1,700,000 imp gal) were served, [1] making it the year where the most beer was consumed at the Oktoberfest. Visitors also enjoy numerous attractions, such as amusement rides, sidestalls, and games. There is also a wide variety of traditional foods available.
- **MARDI GRAS (NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, USA)**

Also known as Fat Tuesday, this celebration marks the last day before Lent, when traditionally people would eat rich, fatty foods before fasting. While it's celebrated by Christians worldwide, New Orleans has become almost synonymous with the festival, recording its first parade in 1857.  
Visit the city today and you'll still see these lively parades of floats and masked, costumed participants dressed in purple, green, and gold (standing for justice, faith, and power, respectively). Long beads and other trinkets are thrown into the crowd, and each year a King of the Carnival is chosen and revealed the day before the parade.

### Best practices in Holiday Festivals

- **KING'S DAY (NETHERLANDS)**

The rest of the world could learn a thing or two from The Netherlands about properly celebrating a national dignitary's birthday.  
Queen's Day was a national holiday (celebrated on April 30 until 2013) commemorating Queen Beatrix's birth. So what if her Royal Highness was actually born in late January?!



By having the festivities in pleasant April, the proud Dutch were able to throw on their loud orange attire and toss back a few drinks without having to worry about weather.

With the crowning of her son, Willem-Alexander, the holiday became known as King's Day, or Koningsdag.

It is now officially celebrated on April 27 (the King's birthday) and includes an official government ceremony followed by sporting competitions and fun, family-friendly celebrations.

- **DIA DE LOS MUERTOS (MEXICO)**

This is arguably Mexico's most important and widely celebrated holiday.

In fact, it's important enough that it was added to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008.

More commonly known in English-speaking countries as the Day of the Dead, the festivities begin on October 31 and last through November 2.

As depicted in the 2017 Pixar film *Coco*, the holiday is all about getting together with friends and family to remember and celebrate ancestors who have died in order to help them on their spiritual journey.

To honor those that came before, Mexican families build private altars in their homes, known as ofrendas. On top of them they'll put photos of the dead, calaveras (a.k.a. sugar skulls), Aztec Marigolds, and the traditional foods and beverages of their ancestors.

- **KRAMPUSNACHT (CENTRAL EUROPE)**

Krampusnacht is easily the weirdest, creepiest Christmas tradition in the world.

You know the line in "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" that warns, "You better watch out"? Well, kids have a lot more to fear from Krampus, a hellish demon who haunts Central Europe around the holidays.

Picture an insane devil in chains, with matted fur, stag horns, and flaming coals for eyes, known for kidnapping children in a big sack so he can eat them later.

Krampusnacht (Krampus Night) occurs on December 5, the night before the Feast of St. Nicholas.

While Santa appears in the vestments of a Bishop and doles out gifts for good little girls and boys, the horny (literally and figuratively) devil presents the bad ones with coal and/or swats them with bundles of birch branches.

Nobody seems to know where Krampus came from. But some historians suggest he may be a holdover from the region's pagan past, demonized by the Catholic Church.

Regardless, it's customary to offer a Krampus some schnapps. It might not make him leave you alone, but hopefully it'll keep him out of your dreams.

- **SONGKRAN (THAILAND)**

The celebration of the Thai New Year takes place in mid-April and features the most epic water fights you've ever seen. People fill the streets to literally shower one another with buckets of water and take aim at their fun-loving pals.

## Best practices in Music Festivals

- **BONNAROO MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL (MANCHESTER, TENNESSEE)**

"Thousands of happy campers. Hundreds of acres of Tennessee nature. 150 epic performances. 10+ Stages of Four of the best days ever."

Bonnaroo's sustainability initiatives include Planet Roo (a haven for environmental consciousness), Clean Vibes Trading Post, annual sustainability reports, and \$1 from every ticket goes to eco-friendly efforts.

Launched in 2002, the music festival is held every June on a 700-acre farm just south of Nashville.

With diverse headliners that have ranged from the Beastie Boys and Eminem to the Beach Boys and Paul, from Willie Nelson and Widespread Panic to Radiohead and Tool, it's modeled after iconic music festivals like Monterey Pop and Woodstock. In additions to the music, you can also find arts and crafts, food and drinks, a comedy tent, cinema tent, Ferris wheel, silent disco, parades, and yoga.

- **FES FESTIVAL OF WORLD SACRED MUSIC (FES, MOROCCO)**

Originally launched in 1994 in Fes (with King Mohammed VI as its royal patron), this world music festival is a celebration of the ancient Moroccan city's rich traditions in the arts, knowledge, and spirituality.

Held in June, the event has grown considerably over the last 24 years, annually attracting some 100,000+ attendees.



It was even recognized by the UN as one of the world's most significant events in terms of contributing to the dialogue between disparate cultures around the world.

Every year the Fes Festival offers around 60 different shows and concerts, featuring poets and both world and Morocco musicians ranging from up-and-coming "Next Big Things" to international icons such as Joan Baez, Björk, Patti Smith, Salif Keita, and Ravi Shankar.

There are also multimedia performances, and Sufi Nights featuring sacred music rich with mysticism.

- **MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL (MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND)**

Founded back in 1967 (with considerable help from Atlantic Records honchos Ahmet and Nesuhi Ertegün), Montreux is one of the oldest music festivals in the world. It's also the second largest jazz festival, after the Montreal International Jazz Festival.

That Canadian concert may attract more visitors— around 2 million annually. But Montreux benefits from its picturesque location on the stunning shores of Lake Geneva. The area is particularly beautiful in late June/early July, when the festival is held.

Though the festival was jazz-only in its early years, by the 1970s legendary rock artists such as Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, and Van Morrison were topping the bill.

It was originally held at the Montreux Casino, until it burned down during Frank Zappa's 1971 performance there.

The event was immortalized in "Smoke On The Water," the Deep Purple classic: "We all came out to Montreux, on the Lake Geneva shoreline. To make records with a mobile, we didn't have much time."

In recent years the lineup has only gotten more eclectic. It still attracts top-notch jazz musicians such as Herbie Hancock, John Scofield, George Benson, and Fourplay.

But it also hosts iconic artists offering an array of other styles, such as Usher & The Roots, Fleet Foxes, Erykah Badu, Youssou N'Dour, Ms. Lauryn Hill, and Brian Wilson. Best of all, more than half the concerts are free!

- **WOMAD (WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND)**

WOMAD (World Of Music, Arts & Dance) was founded in 1980 by Peter Gabriel and a team that included Artistic Director Thomas Brooman and influential concert promoter Martin Elbourne (who also books the Glastonbury Festival).

From the beginning, the festival focused on the enthusiastic embracing of the world's disparate cultures, encouraging the breaking down of boundaries through art, music, and movement.

This has led to some extraordinary collaborations, such as when Echo & the Bunnymen played with the Drummers of Burundi in 1982, and when Mali's Tinariwen played with two members of TV On The Radio in 2010.

More than any other music festival, WOMAD has always been a celebration of global culture first and foremost.

They offer workshops for both children (including circus skills, painting, and storytelling) and adults (such as dance, exotic musical instruments, and discussions of global concerns).

They also feature an array of international cuisines, including traditional dishes cooked by the musicians themselves.

- **WORLD SACRED SPIRIT FESTIVAL (JODHPUR, INDIA)**

Built around 1460 and located on a hill 410 feet above the city, the massive fort (one of India's largest) includes an impressive museum and several palaces renowned for their intricate carvings and expansive courtyards.

At the base of this extraordinary monument is where you'll find the World Sacred Spirit Festival, which takes place over three days in mid-February. Founded in 2007, the event was formerly known as the World Sufi Festival.

But it has since expanded its horizons to include a broad variety of sacred, spiritual music from different parts of the world.

From melodious Lithuanian harp music and the traditional Italian folk songs of Sardinia to Andalusian Sufi songs of Morocco and Duduk (a type of clarinet) music from Armenia, music from North Africa, Europe, and Asia will be featured.

And of course, the local sounds of Rajasthan, India will be given their due time in the spotlight, from Qawwali devotional music to the droning double flute known as the Satara.

## Best practices in Religious Festivals

- **OUIDAH INTERNATIONAL VODOO FESTIVAL (OUIDAH, BENIN)**

The Voodoo (a.k.a. Vodun) religion has been demonized by puritanical cultures for centuries.



But in western Africa— including Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo— this ancient practice is integral to the morality, politics, and social order of many villages. So efforts to eradicate it have been largely unsuccessful.

In reality, Voodoo is not all that different from Catholicism, though it is matriarchal as opposed to patriarchal.

Adherents believe that the vodun spirits are deities governing both man and nature. They are in the trees, rivers, and rocks, with lesser vodun devoted to specific nations, tribes, and clans.

The Ouidah International Voodoo Festival, held every January in Ouidah, Benin, is the world's largest gathering of Vodun practitioners and devotees.

It attracts thousands from all around the world each year. And though certain aspects of it may not be for the faint of heart, it is an enlightening look at one of the world's most misunderstood religions.

You may see the ritualistic animal sacrifices that have made Voodoo controversial in the west (despite the fact that factory farming practices are more gruesome).

There are also markets filled with fetishes, wood carvings, and masks, and women dressed in all the vivid colors of the rainbow. Green Events and Green Tourism.

- **HOLI FESTIVAL (INDIA, NEPAL, AND PAKISTAN)**

This ancient Hindu festival, also known as “the festival of colours” or “the festival of love,” celebrates the end of winter and the victory of good over evil.

It takes place between late February and mid-March and lasts for one night (known as Holika Dahan or Chhoti Holi) and the following day (Holi).

There are various legends associated with the Indian Festival. One suggests it pays tribute to the Hindu god Vishnu and his follower, Prahlada, and their defeat of Prahlada's power-hungry father, the demon King Hiranyakashipu.

People fill water balloons and water guns, drench each other, then cover each other in powder in an array of dazzling colors.

There's also marching bands, dancing, food and drinks, and lots of laughter. Everyone is welcome, everyone is fair game, and the playful, childlike vibe is incredibly infectious.

- **SEMANA SANTA (SPAIN)**

Holy Week— the week between Palm Sunday and Easter— is celebrated throughout much of the Christian world. It commemorates the last week in the life of Christ, including the entry of Jesus and his disciples into Jerusalem, the crucifixion, and resurrection.

But Semana Santa, as the holiday is known in Spain and much of Latin America, offers a much more elaborate approach to the celebration.

It largely centers on the parade-like processions of Catholic brotherhoods (or fraternities), many of which date back to the Middle Ages or Baroque period.

The celebrations vary by region: Those held in Málaga and Seville are among the most extravagant, while those in Valladolid and Zamora tend to be more somber. But the central features are generally similar.

Penitents, known as nazarenos, march in colorful robes that hide their faces. They carry processional candles or crosses, and many walk barefoot, bound by chuckles and chains.

But the thing that attracts travelers around the world is the fantastic floats (a.k.a. Pasos) they carry. These are elaborately decorated with artful sculptures depicting scenes from the Passion of Christ or the Sorrows of Virgin Mary. Some are created by famous Spanish artists and have been used by brotherhoods for centuries. With marching bands providing musical accompaniment, it's quite the spectacle.

## **Best practices in Sports Events**

- **THE OLYMPICS**

With all the travel logistics, you usually take for granted being ratcheted up to an Olympic level, attending the Olympics can be both a thrill and a challenge. Even before the games begin, host cities usually put on a massive display for sponsors and exhibitors to display their products. These displays usually happen close to the main Olympic stadium, with mascots running around, live events from international stars, and interactive games and exhibits.

Olympics teams often travel with massive entourages of officials, supporting staff, and administrators. The show organisers and broadcasting teams also travel with teams and equipment. Such a massive influx of people requires transport, venues, hotels, food, and other resources that can boost the local hospitality, travel, and logistics sectors. Most host cities are exceptional travel destinations in their own right, and a lot of sports fans get a feel for the host city and country while they are there.



- **FIFA World Cup**

The FIFA World Cup comes around once every four years, but to most football fans, the action is always over far too soon. The tournament is the same every time, with 32 national football teams heading to a host country to compete in the beautiful game's greatest spectacle. Like most other global sports events on this list, the FIFA World Cup brings together a mixed dish of people and cultures that would, otherwise, rarely mix.

The festival atmosphere also always manages to drag other industries into the mix. Fans are always on the lookout for the best free football betting tips before they head to their favorite online sports betting sites. A variety of sponsors from every part of the world, including an official beer partner, are also keen to be part of the action.

- **INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE**

Cricket is undeniably India's most popular sport. With each edition of the Indian Premier League, the influx of travelers to the host cities surges significantly. With an average attendance of over 50 000 fans per match, the IPL only comes second to the NFL. The rise in travel is also fueled by attractions like the Taj Mahal, as a lot of tourists combine their holidays with the IPL league. While most matches are hosted in cities like Bangalore and Chennai, Pondicherry and Mysore also record a corresponding boost in hotel occupancy rates.

- **GOLF TOURNAMENTS**

An old golf industry saying jokes that all games are local. While the saying is mostly true-most golfers play within an hour of their homes-golf travel is a significant part of the industry. However, in 2018, the National Golf Foundation reported that over 8.2 million golfers played while they were travelling for leisure or business. Plenty more aspire to enjoy that special golf adventure every couple of years. Whether it's a solo journey, family vacations, buddies' trips, or couples getaways, golfers seem to enjoy travel and overnight stays. The golf travel industry earns from accommodation, playing fees, food and beverage, as well as entertainment expenses.

- **ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP**

Whenever the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and other Mixed Martial Arts tournaments are held, a city gets international exposure and attracts visitors who'd have otherwise not have travelled to it. UFC tournaments are typically expected to lure over ten thousand fans and spectators. When fights are held in cities like Las Vegas, even some gambling activity comes to a standstill. Hundreds of hotel rooms are occupied by competitors alone. Sponsors, technical teams, and families also add extras to the bonanza for restaurants, hotels, retailers, and casinos.



## ANNEX 2: Venues/conference halls in Armenia

Venue name/type	Nr. of seats	Location
<b>Gyumri Technology Center</b>	Conference hall 180 people Outdoor space 300 people	Gyumri
<b>TUMO center</b>	Conference room-100 Hall-100+	Gyumri
<b>Youth Palace</b>	150	Gyumri
<b>COAF Center</b>	Conference room-100-150	Debed
<b>Vanadzor Technology Center</b>	250	Vanadzor
<b>Amphitheater</b>	1080	Yeghegnadzor
<b>Cultural House</b>	464	Yeghegnadzor
<b>Grand Resort Jermuk</b>	170	Jermuk
<b>Armenia Hotel</b>	50-60	Jermuk
<b>Vagharsh Vagharshyan Drama Theater</b>	Hall-400 Foe-400	Goris
<b>Sisian Cultural House named after Hamo Sahyan</b>	Hall-327 Foe-300	Sisian
<b>Sisian Art Gallery</b>	500	Sisian
<b>Sisian Art School</b>	300	Sisian
<b>Composers' Union Resort</b>	300	Dilijan
<b>Regional Administration of Ararat</b>	Hall-80	Ararat
<b>Cultural House of Artashat</b>	600-700	Artashat
<b>Tigran Mets hall (Armenia Marriott hotel)</b>	Theatre-500 Classroom-160 Square-70	Yerevan
<b>Grand ballroom (Elite Plaza business center)</b>	Theatre-450 Classroom-110 Square-92	Yerevan
<b>Green Expo hall (Elite Plaza business center)</b>	Theatre-300 Classroom-150 Square-70	Yerevan
<b>Mantashev ballroom (Elite Plaza business center)</b>	Theatre-300 Classroom-120 Square-78	Yerevan
<b>Grand hall (Ani Grand hotel)</b>	Theatre-210 Classroom-110 Square-70	Yerevan
<b>Artashat combined hall (Holiday Inn Yerevan)</b>	Theatre-250 Classroom-80 Square-60	Yerevan
<b>Ballroom (Best Western Plus Congress hotel)</b>	Theatre-280 Classroom-80 Square-70	Yerevan
<b>Panoramic hall (Ani Grand hotel)</b>	Theatre-200 Classroom-110 Square-60	Yerevan
<b>Yerevan hall (DoubleTree by Hilton Yerevan)</b>	Theatre-200 Classroom-110 Square-60	Yerevan
<b>Ani hall (Ani Plaza hotel)</b>	Theatre-250 Square-70	Yerevan
<b>Paruyr Sevak hall (President hotel)</b>	Theatre-250 Classroom-75 Square-85	Yerevan
<b>Ararat combined hall (Armenia Marriott hotel)</b>	Theatre-200 Classroom-100 Square-55	Yerevan
<b>Combined hall (The Alexander, a Luxury Collection Hotel)</b>	Theatre-170 Classroom-80	Yerevan



	Square-62	
<b>Pomegranate combined hall (Ramada Hotel and Suites)</b>	Theatre-200 Classroom-130 Square-46	Yerevan
<b>Red Expo hall (Elite Plaza business center)</b>	Theatre-110 Classroom-70 Square-42	Yerevan
<b>Areni hall (Ani Grand hotel)</b>	Theatre-120 Classroom-60 Square-40	Yerevan
<b>Erebuni hall (Erebuni Plaza business center)</b>	Theatre-200 Classroom-54 Square-50	Yerevan
<b>Picasso hall (Best Western Plus Congress hotel)</b>	Theatre-100 Classroom-40 Square-38	Yerevan
<b>Hall 1 (Yerevan Place hotel)</b>	Theatre-120 Classroom-36 Square-40	Yerevan
<b>Ararat 1 hall (Armenia Marriott hotel)</b>	Theatre-100 Classroom-50 Square-40	Yerevan
<b>Masis hall (Holiday Inn Express Yerevan hotel)</b>	Theatre-100 Classroom-40 Square-45	Yerevan
<b>Ararat combined hall (Ibis Yerevan Center hotel)</b>	Theatre-135 Classroom-60 Square-50	Yerevan



## ANNEX 3: List of fairs/major business events in Armenia

Fair/business event	Period	Target Group	Nr. of attendants/ticket sold	Getz' ranking <sup>85</sup>
<b>InTourExpo International Tourism Exhibition</b>	End of April-beginning of May, since 2013	Domestic ad outbound tourism	80+ companies	2
<b>ArmHiTec / International Exhibition of Weapons and Defense Technologies</b>	Once every two years, end of March-beginning of April	Engineering companies International delegates, security industry, innovative hi-tech products and solutions of military and defense field	Over 50 companies from Poland, Bulgaria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Khazakhstan, USA, Russia	3
<b>Digitec Expo</b>	March	Armenian high-tech industry	More than 100 exhibiting companies, more than 60,000 visitors	2
<b>Education and Career Expo</b>	April	Domestic and foreign education institutes	60-80 companies	1
<b>Caucasus: Building and Reconstruction Expo</b>	March	Domestic and foreign manufacturers	80 companies	1
<b>Construction and interior Expo</b>	May	Local and foreign companies from Armenia, Russia, Iran, Germany, Italy and other	150 companies	1
<b>Armenia Expo</b>	September	National and foreign manufacturers	100 companies	1
<b>ArmProd Expo</b>	October	Food processing technologies Agricultural machinery and equipment Agricultural technologies Containers and packaging Seeds and saplings Bakery and pastry products Meat products. Poultry. Sausage products Fish and seafood Dairy products. Cheese Grocery. Pasta. Spices Sunflower and vegetable oils Snacks. Nuts. Dried fruits Tea. Coffee. Coffee machines Vegetables. Fruit. Canned vegetables and fruit Canned food. Sauces. Ketchup. Salads Gastronomy. Products for restaurants Frozen food. Convenience food Juice. Water. Soft drinks Alcoholic beverages Healthy food. Natural and organic products	50 companies	1
<b>PanArmenian Expo</b>	End of September-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food industry</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> </ul>	100-150 companies	2

<sup>85</sup> According to Getz portfolio approach: 4- Mega event; 3 – Hallmark event; 2 - Regional event; 1 – Local event)





	beginning of October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industry</li><li>• Cargo transportation</li><li>• Care products</li><li>• Leather industry</li><li>• Construction and Furniture</li><li>• Textile, Toys</li><li>• Organizations from Armenia, Artsakh, Russia, Germany, Spain, Iran etc.</li></ul>	Over 1500-12000 attendants	
<b>Yerevan big Christmas Market</b>	December	National companies and producers	Over 200 companies	1



## ANNEX 4: List of Local festivals in Armenia

Region	Festival	Period	Getz' ranking <sup>86</sup>	Potential
Armavir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolma Festival in the territory of «Zvartnots» Historical-Cultural Museum-Reservation</li> <li>Kololak Festival in Ejmiatsin City</li> </ul>	June 19	2	International
		May 22 (2021)	1	Domestic
Shirak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts and Crafts Festival in Gyumri (Shirak Province)</li> <li>Beer day in Gyumri</li> </ul>	August 20	2	International
			1	Domestic
Syunik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mulberry Festival in Goris and Karahunj</li> <li>Sheep Shearing Festival in Khot village</li> <li>Vardavar on the Border in Kornidzor village (Syunik Province)</li> <li>Navasard Iranian Armenian cultural culinary Festival</li> </ul>	July 06	2	International
		June 11	2	International
		July 23- 24	1	Domestic
		End of July	2	International
Vayots Dzor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gata Festival in Khachik village</li> <li><b>Areni Wine Festival</b></li> <li>Ecotourism Festival</li> </ul>	September 17	1	Domestic
		<b>October 01</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>International</b>
		June 04 - 05	1	Domestic
Tavush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HayBuis Armenian Herb and Flower Festival in Yenokavan village</li> <li>Yell Extreme Birthday in Yenokavan village</li> <li>Honey and Berry Festival in the town of Berd</li> <li>DiliTon Festival in Dilijan</li> <li>Pumpkin Festival in Hovk village</li> <li>Arts and Crafts Festival in Dilijan</li> </ul>	June 25	2	International
		July 30 - 31	1	Domestic
		September 30-	1	Domestic
		October 01	1	Domestic
		October 22- 23	1	Domestic
		September 03	1	Domestic
Aragatsothn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1000 Years of Village Life in Oshakan village</li> </ul>	September 25	1	Domestic
Gegharkunik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sevan International Music Fest in Sevan</li> <li>Aveluk Festival in Vardenik village</li> </ul>	August 06 - 07	1	Domestic
		June 18	1	Domestic
Lori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edible Plants Festival in Dsegh village</li> <li>Armenia Rafting Fest in Tumanyan town</li> <li>Barbecue festival in Akhtala</li> </ul>	June 11	1	Domestic
		August 06 – 07	1	Domestic
		??	2	International
Kotayk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harvest Festival Rural life and Traditions in Dzoraghbyur</li> </ul>	September 16 - 18	1	Domestic
Yerevan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yerevan Wine Days</li> <li>Music Night</li> <li>Armenian Celebratory Food Festival</li> <li>Gutan Armenian National Traditional Song and Dance Annual festival</li> <li>Countries Under One Roof</li> <li>Beer Festival</li> <li>Water Melon Festival</li> <li>Spirit of Armenia festival</li> <li>Tea and Coffee Festival</li> <li>SkyBall Festival in Yerevan and Regions</li> <li>Fresco International Festival of Modern Art and Spiritual Films Shakespear Festival</li> <li>Yerevan color Festival</li> </ul>	June 03 - 05	2	International
		September 10	1	Domestic
		August 26	1	Domestic
		September 09- 11	1	Domestic
		October 01		
		June 18	2	International
			1	Domestic
			1	Domestic
			2	Domestic
			2	International
			2	International
			1	International
			1	Domestic
			1	Domestic

<sup>86</sup> According to Getz portfolio approach: 4- Mega event; 3 – Hallmark event; 2 - Regional event; 1 – Local event)



## ANNEX 5: Recent mayor Sport Events organized in Yerevan (2022)

International Sport Event	Figures
European Boxing Championship, May 2022	412 boxers from 39 countries
World Youth, Junior and Cadets Sambo Championships, mid-October 2022	550 sambists from 24 countries
Tennis International Championship, 5 events all year round	700 participants from 19 countries
Karate International Championship	385 participants from 4 countries
Freestyle Wrestling International Championship	85 participants from 2 countries
Handball and Volleyball International Championships in the regions of Armenia	98 participants from 5 countries
European Weightlifting Championship	285 participants from 39 nations



## ANNEX 6: Detail of actions

### 1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia

#### 1.1. Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)

##### 1.1.1. Creation of a Steering Committee involving key public and private actors

Action	1.1.1 Creation of a steering committee involving key public and private actors
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.1 Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	Set-up of steering committee which decides about the future of leisure event tourism in Armenia
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization of a round-table discussion with NGOs, businesses, key tourism stakeholders etc. involved in festival organization</li> <li>- Preparation of an action plan of the committee for the first and second year of operation</li> <li>- Setting of goals to achieve for the first two years of operation</li> </ul> <p>Awareness raising work among the industry</p>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	10 different participating groups within the first years
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• FestivAR</li> <li>• Private businesses organizing festivals (e.g. Eventoura)</li> <li>• Service providers</li> <li>• Business associations</li> <li>• Ministries</li> <li>• Regional Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	No funds needed
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members should be representative from all regions of Armenia in which festivals are organized</li> </ul>



### 1.1.2. Formulation of a business plan

Action	1.1.2 Formulation of a business plan
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.1 Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	Formulate a business plan for establishment of the ACB outlining business description and structure, market research and strategies, management structure and required personnel, costs involved and financial projections
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• market research</li><li>• definition of objectives and scope of work</li><li>• strategy development</li><li>• management and personnel definition</li><li>• financial assessment</li></ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	-
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tourism Committee</li><li>• Prospective members (hospitality sector, PCOs, business associations, etc.)</li></ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	Public and private sector
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The business plan should outline realistic goals and feasible objectives</li><li>• The business plan development should be guided by TC, but discussed with prospective members in order to ensure its full adoption</li></ul>



### 1.1.3. Establishment of the ACB

Action	1.1.3 Establishment of the ACB
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.1 Establishment of Armenian Convention Bureau (ACB)
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	<p>The Convention Bureau main purpose is to increase the number of events, conferences and meetings held in the destination – in this case Armenia as a country. It should become the 'one-stop-shop' for independent information and assistance and give an event planner unbiased and neutral advice on all aspects of hosting and organizing conventions and business events within Armenia.</p> <p>The bureau will be funded on a PPP base: partially by its members (travel and meeting industry operators) and for the rest by the government (e.g. in US Convention bureau are funded by city bed-taxes).</p>
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility study for setting up a convention bureau for Armenia</li> <li>• Develop guidelines for governance, management, financing</li> <li>• Select and train prospective staff</li> <li>• Technical assistance for its implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of MICE events supported yearly</li> <li>• Nr. of information provided to potential buyers</li> <li>• Nr. of partners involved in operation</li> <li>• % of increase of business tourism arrivals</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• Ministry of Economy</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MICE private operators (including hospitality establishments with suitable meeting rooms)</li> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Local and Regional Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	PPP
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only involve relevant members, ready to invest in the network</li> <li>• Allocate some funds for conducting marketing activities to promote the ACB at international sectorial fairs and events.</li> </ul>



## 1.2. Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities

### 1.2.1. Audit of the current meeting and conference facilities

Action	1.2.1. Audit of the current meeting and conference facilities
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE tourism in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	Mapping and appraisal of the current condition of MICE infrastructure is vital to understand future actions needed to support the sector. In this phase, a set of key locations will be identified as well as needs for their upgrading.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the current situation of meeting and conference facilities in Yerevan and in the regions.</li> <li>Formulation of plans for upgrading the infrastructures, by considering technical, financial and administrative feasibility</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of infrastructures assessed</li> <li>No. of key locations for meetings and conventions identified</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism Committee</li> <li>ACB</li> <li>Consultant for audit</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local government bodies</li> <li>Service providers</li> <li>Other State organs</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Year 2
<b>Time frame</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a PPP framework to involve private stakeholders in the investment and management of the investments</li> <li>Ensure compliancy with other programmes (e.g. city masterplans)</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include also key locations in the Regions for smaller meetings</li> <li>Select key locations according to ACB development strategy</li> </ul>



### 1.2.2. Audit of the current fair locations

Action	1.2.2 Audit of the current fair locations
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators' capacities
<b>Specific objective</b>	2. Promote the development of MICE tourism in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	Mapping and appraisal of the current condition of fairgrounds is vital to understand future actions needed for their upgrading. In this phase, a set of key locations will be identified as well as needs for their upgrading.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment of the current situation of infrastructures at Yerevan fairground and at regional fairgrounds in other Armenian cities.</li><li>• Formulation of plans for upgrading the infrastructures, by considering technical, financial and administrative feasibility.</li></ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No. interventions for site upgrading identified</li></ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tourism Committee</li><li>• ACB</li><li>• Regions</li><li>• Local government bodies</li><li>• Service providers</li><li>• Other State organs</li></ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fairground management staff</li><li>• Tourism committee</li><li>• ACB</li></ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt a PPP framework to involve private stakeholders in the investment and management of the investments</li><li>• Ensure compliancy with other programmes (e.g. city masterplans)</li></ul>





1.2.3. Provision of financial incentives for facilities upgrading

Action	1.2.3 Provision of financial incentives for facilities upgrading
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE tourism in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	Tourism is an industry with a long value-chain, covering many different service sectors. It is important to provide financial incentives to owners of facilities in which meetings and conventions are and can be hosted, but also to hotels that want to upgrade their rooms to fit MICE tourists quality standards.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create incentives for private investment</li> <li>• Survey about all potential persons, businesses, regions, that would benefit from rural tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Economic impact analysis of potential beneficiaries</li> <li>- Elaboration of an estimation analysis of how much investment would be needed to achieve a well-working rural tourism sector</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create indicators for a successful and sustainable rural tourism concept</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of meeting and conventions establishments which received financial incentives</li> <li>• Budget spent/budget available</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACB</li> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries</li> <li>• Owners of meetings and conventions establishments</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public sector
<b>Time frame</b>	Years 2-6
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investments for upgrading of meeting and conventions establishment location and overall accessibility</li> <li>• Such investments should also incentivize MICE tourism at key tourism destinations, as bleisure is increasingly important for this niche</li> </ul>



*1.2.4. Increase capacity of MICE operators*

• <b>Action</b>	<i>1.2.4 Increase capacity of MICE operators</i>
• <b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities
• <b>Specific objective</b>	2. Promote the development of MICE tourism in Armenia
• <b>Description</b>	Identification and implementation of capacity building for private operators in MICE tourism management, especially with regard to educate PCOs.
• <b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the training needs of event organizers and implementers</li> <li>• Organization of educational and training programs together with universities, colleges and training centers on event organization and implementation, foreign language</li> <li>• Training Provision</li> </ul>
• <b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of trained staff</li> <li>• Level of service by the staff as assessed by visitors' satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Launch of at least 1 short training for MICE tourism operators per year</li> </ul>
• <b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
• <b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport</li> <li>• State organs</li> <li>• Event organizers and implementers (private sector), especially PCOs</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Training centers</li> <li>• Colleges</li> </ul>
• <b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private sector
• <b>Time frame</b>	From year 2
• <b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trainings should be done based on international best practice</li> <li>• The TC should decide the main program, based on priorities and train experts to deliver the programme accordingly</li> </ul>



### 1.3. Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives

#### 1.3.1. Promotion of the assets of ACB

Action	1.3.1 Promotion of the assets of ACB
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Specific objective</b>	1.3 Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives
<b>Description</b>	The action intends to promote the newly established convention bureau through online (e.g. newsletters, social media etc.) and offline means (e.g. participation to sectorial fairs, promotional events) and familiarization tours.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of a promotional plan with tangible objectives</li> <li>• Identification of most relevant fair and promotion in their reference sector</li> <li>• Organization of promotional events in Armenia and outside</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of promotional initiatives</li> <li>• No. of person reached</li> <li>• No. of events participated</li> <li>• % of growth in participants to most relevant fairs</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convention Bureau members</li> <li>• Tourism Committee and further involved government bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MICE private operators (including hospitality establishments with suitable meeting rooms)</li> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Local and Regional Authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convention bureau budget</li> <li>• Eventual additional government and/or donor funds</li> </ul>
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The promotion initiatives should start in a short timeframe from establishment as MICE market is still in its infancy in Armenia.</li> <li>• Promotion initiatives should be funded both with internal budget and with eventual additional IOs and government funds.</li> </ul>



### 1.3.2. Identification of fair venues related to key niches

Action	1.3.2 Identification of fair venues related to key niches
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Specific objective</b>	1.3 Formulation and promotion of MICE initiatives
<b>Description</b>	In Task 4 of this WB project key niches for Armenia tourism development have been identified. Among these, the wine and gastro, and the agri-tourism value chain can be relevant for MICE tourism development. The creation of a fairground in Areni and Meghri, hosting a wine fair (Areni) and an agricultural fair connected to local productions (Meghri) could support regional economy and ensure occupancy in low season.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the current situation of the fair ground in Yerevan and identification of upgrading</li> <li>• Evaluate the establishment of new fairgrounds in secondary cities (e.g. Areni could host a wine fair in which a B to B event “Buy Armenia” with national wines can be hosted; Meghri an agricultural fair connected to local productions).</li> <li>• Set standards and categorize locations accordingly</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of developed infrastructures</li> <li>• No. of new fairs established</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• ACB</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• ACB</li> <li>• Regional and local governments</li> <li>• Service providers</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a PPP framework to involve private stakeholders in the investment</li> <li>• Ensure compliancy with other programmes (e.g. city masterplans)</li> </ul>



### 1.3.3. Organization of exhibition fairs related to key niches

Action	1.3.3 Organization of exhibition fairs related to key niches
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.2 Upgrading of MICE facilities and MICE operators capacities
<b>Specific objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE tourism in Armenia
<b>Description</b>	As mentioned in action 1.3.2, new fairs could promote the development of key economic sectors in destination and ensure de-seasonalization of tourism demand. Moreover, to support also the demand for leisure event tourisms fairgrounds can be used for further events (e.g. Yerevan Christmas market) and other activities (e.g. big training courses, state venues etc.) to enhance financial sustainability of the infrastructure and to be recognized as community space.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up fair calendars, including new fairs rooted to local business sectors</li> <li>• Identify other type of events to organize when the fair ground is not in use and inform leisure event planners and NGOs</li> <li>• Promote new fairs and multi-uses in ACB promotional plan</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of new fairs organized</li> <li>• Nr. of events (other than fairs)</li> <li>• Nr. of days in which fair ground is in use</li> <li>• Nr. of additional revenues from events (other than fairs)</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairground management</li> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fairground management</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Communities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private, Tourism Committee
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fairground could host both public and private big-sized events</li> <li>• More events can be hosted at the same time, further increasing the revenue stream</li> </ul>



## 1.4. Update of the institutional and legislative framework for event tourism development

### 1.4.1. Regulation of MICE tourism professions and operators

Action	1.4.2 Regulation of MICE tourism professions and operators
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Specific objective</b>	1.4 Update of the institutional and legislative framework for MICE tourism development
<b>Description</b>	The action foreseen the regulation of MICE tourism professions so as to increase the quality of tourism service provided and to accrue value generated by tourism activities
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulate event-based tourism professions (e.g. PCOs) by fixing the main knowledge and skills needed in educational programs</li> <li>Introduce coherent high level of education in event organization and event-based tourism in universities and colleges based on practical skills</li> <li>Use certification and licensing systems for recognizing PCOs and other event-based tourism professionals</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of legislation about certification and licensing systems for professionals in event tourism in 3 years</li> <li>No. of specialized training courses offered at universities and colleges</li> <li>No. of certified event tourism professionals in 5 years</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport</li> <li>State organs</li> <li>Universities</li> <li>Training centers</li> <li>College</li> <li>Local government bodies</li> <li>Private sector</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public sector
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 3-4
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event tourism professions should be particularly targeted to youths and women</li> </ul>



#### 1.4.2. Regulation of tourism statistics collection

Action	1.4.2 Regulation of tourism statistics collection
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1. Promote the development of MICE industry in Armenia
<b>Specific objective</b>	1.4 Update of the institutional and legislative framework for MICE tourism development
<b>Description</b>	Implementation of a system for collecting visitor statistics at MICE tourism sites
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulation of the visitors' statistics collection plan, considering the various sources</li> <li>• Implementation of a visitors' statistics unit at the TC</li> <li>• Starting the collection of data by considering that broader statistical recording is needed based on main tourism types: cultural-heritage, pilgrimage, MICE, gastro and wine, winter sports, etc.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define a system of data which should be collected (number of tourists by origin, age, gender, number of stays, purchased services)</li> <li>- Organize data collection via hotel facilities at winter tourism sites</li> <li>- Organize data collection via tourism info centers</li> <li>- Organize data collection via ticket sell service if there are places which need ticket for entrance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collect statistical data periodically</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of a system of data collection techniques in 3 years</li> <li>• Production of yearly MICE tourism statistics</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport</li> <li>• Regions</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Tourism info-centers</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Universities and research centers</li> <li>• Hotel facilities</li> <li>• Cultural sites</li> <li>• Armenian church</li> <li>• Other State organs</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public sector
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 4
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the international experience of gathering statistical data on MICE tourism</li> <li>• Pay attention to engage all stakeholders in the process of gathering statistical data</li> <li>• Collaborate with communities, regions on data collection process</li> <li>• Collaborate with universities, research centers on data collection process</li> <li>• Consider the broad sources of statistical data, that can be obtained through hotel facilities, tourism info centers, tourism destinations, ski resorts, etc., as they start to record the number of visitors based on origin, gender, age, etc.</li> <li>• Specify the purpose of visit, as event-based tourism is very broad and it may include many types of MICE tourism.</li> </ul>



## 2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones

### 2.1. Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events

#### 2.1.1. Establishment of the national committee for hallmark events

Action	2.1.1 Establishment of the national committee for hallmark events
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festivals and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.1 Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events
<b>Description</b>	The national committee for hallmark events should include all relevant stakeholders engaged in the organization of major (i.e. hallmark) events in Armenia. The Committee should formulate a national agenda of hallmark events to be marketed on the international markets, also considering new events to be organized. Ideally, there should be a major event for each Armenian region, differentiated throughout the year.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of a national promotion committee by involving key stakeholders</li> <li>• Identify the agenda by considering already existing leisure events for each category (festivals, entertainment, sport).</li> <li>• Formulate a sound business plan for each leisure event, so as to structure costs and revenues and foresee the potential contribution of donors and sponsor</li> <li>• Market the festival through a joint national agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of the national leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• Approval of the national agenda by the Tourism Committee</li> <li>• Implementation of new events (at least 2 new events/year)</li> <li>• Level of cultural value appreciation by Armenians and tourists, to be assessed by surveys</li> <li>• Number of incoming and domestic tourists participating in events (each year more than 20 % growth of tourists)</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs and private festival organizers</li> <li>• Tour operators</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Regions</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Communities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private sector, Tourism Committee
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 1
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Festivals should be based on authentic traditions. Particularly, Armenian food and cuisine experiences should be valorized</li> <li>• Sport events should focus mainly on the domestic market</li> <li>• Benchmark best international experience</li> </ul>





2.1.2. Identification of key festivals and events for each tourism niche

Action	2.1.2 Identification of key festivals and events for each tourism niche
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.1 Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events
<b>Description</b>	Assignment 2 of this project identified key niches for Armenia tourism development. Leisure event based tourism should support their development with particular attention to cultural (e.g. Armenia's capital cultural for year 20XX), adventure (e.g. trail running competition in the mountains of Lori), winter tourism (e.g. snowman festival).
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess potentials and identify new events to promote niche development</li> <li>• Organization of events deeply rooted in local culture, but also considering other destinations success stories and best practices</li> <li>• Implementation of events</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of events organized</li> <li>• % growth in destination arrivals during events</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• FestivAR and other NGOs</li> <li>• Regional and local governments</li> <li>• Service providers</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 1 - 4
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a PPP framework to involve private stakeholders in the investment</li> <li>• Ensure compliancy with other programmes (e.g. city masterplans)</li> </ul>



2.1.3. *Organization of a Hallmark event for reuniting Armenian Diaspora population in Armenia*

<b>Action</b>	<b>2.1.3 Organization of a Hallmark event for reuniting Armenian Diaspora population in Armenia (Gathering Armenia 20XX)</b>
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.1 Formulation of the agenda for hallmark events
<b>Description</b>	Starting from the successful experience of the Gathering Ireland 2013 (described in §2.2.2.5 of this report), the national committee on Hallmark events should encourage and ensure funding for the organization of a similar Hallmark event, reuniting the Armenian diaspora population to celebrate common roots, rebound to their homeland and culture, become “ambassadors” of Armenia in their countries.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility study on Gathering Armenia hallmark event organization, including economic and funding aspects</li> <li>• Develop objectives, strategy, implementation plan and monitoring system</li> <li>• Establish international partnerships and draft a stakeholders’ involvement strategy</li> <li>• Ensure marketing and international media coverage</li> <li>• Support event organizers in implementation</li> <li>• Organization of the events</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of events organized in the framework of the Gathering Armenia 20XX)</li> <li>• Nr. of participants to events</li> <li>• % of increase in international arrivals over the previous year</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• FestivAR and other NGOs</li> <li>• Regional and local governments</li> <li>• Service providers</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 3- 5
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build the event by considering lessons learned by Gathering Ireland and similar events</li> <li>• Involve international donors and stakeholders</li> <li>• Develop a set of KPIs informing national statistics on niche development</li> </ul>



## 2.2. Implementation and promotion of the agenda

### 2.2.1. Upgrading of key locations for niche events

Action	2.2.1 Upgrading of key locations for niche events
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda
<b>Description</b>	Upgrading of key locations for niche events
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the current situation of the locations in Yerevan and other cities</li> <li>• Identify upgrading interventions</li> <li>• Conduct pre-feasibility studies including administrative, financial and technical documentation</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of developed infrastructures</li> <li>• No. of new fairs established</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• FestivAR and other NGOs</li> <li>• Regional and local government</li> <li>• Service providers</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Adopt a PPP framework to involve private stakeholders in the investment
<b>Time frame</b>	Year 2 – 5
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure compliance with further development plans adopted at destination (e.g. tourism masterplan).</li> </ul>



2.2.2. Increase capacity of leisure event organizers and implementers

Action	2.2.2 Increase capacity of leisure event organizers and implementers
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda
<b>Description</b>	Identification and implementation of capacity building for private operators engaged in event management
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the training needs of private sector</li> <li>• Organize educational and training programs together with universities, colleges and training centers including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training of specialized staff with multiple language skills</li> <li>- Training of hospitality sector operators hosting event tourists</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Raising the overall level of services provided at destination</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of trained staff</li> <li>• No. of specialized staff with multiple language skills</li> <li>• No. of hospitality sector operators trained</li> <li>• Level of service by the staff as assessed by visitors' satisfaction surveys</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Training centers</li> <li>• Colleges</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Other State organs</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning curricula should be developed according to real needs indicated by the sector representatives</li> <li>• Staff involved should have the possibility to attend hallmark events considered as best practice and liaise with its staff</li> </ul>



### 2.2.3. Organization of festivals and events

Action	2.2.3 Organization of festivals and events
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda
<b>Description</b>	Once identified key hallmark events, it is vital to support organizers in their organization.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Round tables and one-to-one interviews for needs assessment</li> <li>• Respond to needs with concrete actions (e.g. easier administrative procedures for organizing events in public spaces, support in promotion in international markets, greater security at location etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of interviews and round tables held</li> <li>• Nr. of action supporting events organization implemented</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State organs</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Armenian church</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private sector
<b>Time frame</b>	From year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not limit the support asked to public sector just to the financial sphere, but scout concrete (often cost-limited) solutions for easing festival organization</li> </ul>



2.2.4. Adoption of effective marketing strategies

Action	2.2.4 Adoption of effective marketing strategies
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda
<b>Description</b>	Implementation of online and offline marketing activities to promote the national agenda of festivals and events and guarantee their market visibility and accessibility.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulation of marketing plan</li> <li>• Implementation of the plan, which could include for instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fam-trips and press tours to local festivals targeting key international markets for cultural tourism</li> <li>- Couple fam trips ad press tours with roadshow at origin markets</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Present the national agenda in international exhibitions</li> <li>• Adopt effective marketing activities</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each year 2 fam-trips and press tours organized to main events</li> <li>• Each year 2 roadshow organized in origin countries</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State organs</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Armenian church</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trade and press marketing should be used widely towards main target market.</li> <li>• Mix trade and consumer marketing.</li> <li>• Involve private operators in the organization to obtain free accommodation services and transfers</li> </ul>



## 2.3. Increase of economic impact from festivals and events

### 2.3.1. Promote circular economy in festival and event organization

Action	3.2. Promote circular economy in festival and event organization
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	When organizing sport, leisure and festivals events it is important to adopt a sustainable approach, which on the one hand prevents waste increase (e.g. provide tourists with one branded wine glass for wine tasting instead of one each stand), but also to re-use waste produced at event ground (e.g. compost toilets, ...).
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify best practices for circular economy in festival and event organization and adapt to the Armenian context</li> <li>• Discuss and ensure adoption by festival organizers</li> <li>• Sign a MoU between all actors involved</li> <li>• Organize an annual meeting to share experiences (best and worst practices) and identify future action to increase events environmental sustainability</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of events adopting circular economy interventions</li> <li>• Nr. of signature parties in the MoM</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State organs</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Armenian church</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve as many as possible event organizers</li> <li>• Sensitize hosting community on the importance of adopting such an approach during events.</li> </ul>



2.3.2. Provision of financial incentives to SMEs and creative industries

Action	2.3.2 Provision of financial incentives to SMEs and creative industries
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	The financial incentives should be established to provide financial support to the SMEs and creative industry operators, which apply to obtain them.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify amount of funding available to finance local events</li> <li>• Establish the financial scheme and define procedure for bidders to apply for them</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of events financed</li> <li>• Tot. USD available</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Finance</li> <li>• Other public bodies</li> <li>• NGOs</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Local communities</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount should be sufficient to provide financial aid to already established events, but also sponsor new ideas</li> <li>• The fund should provide financial help especially to events to be organized in the regions</li> </ul>





### 2.3.3. Adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes for events organization

Action	2.3.3 Adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes for events organization
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	The concept of CSR is quite developed in sport events <sup>87</sup> , but such schemes can be adopted for leisure events in general. CSR accounts indeed as one of the drivers for private companies to activate a sponsorship <sup>88</sup> . Companies can contribute to finance events which are relevant for their brand (e.g. a winery could become major sponsor of Yerevan Wine Days to grant itself visibility among wine lovers), impacting on their own community (e.g. finance and name after itself a community hall for events) or, in case of foreign companies, on their employees community (e.g. employees from HQ and employees at destinations working together as volunteers at a local festival). .
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform companies willing to adopt CSR schemes of the needs of community implementing leisure events</li> <li>• Adopt a mediation role between private sector and community</li> <li>• Support the implementation of CSR schemes at events</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of companies contacted to promote CSR scheme at leisure based events</li> <li>• Nr. of CSR schemes activated</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• Foundation, private companies, donors</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Private and public
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	-

<sup>87</sup> Article: Corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship: drivers of sports sponsorship policy, Dina A. M. Miragaia et al., International Journal of sport policy, Vol. 9, 2017

<sup>88</sup> dina A.M. Miragaia et al, op. Cit.



2.3.4. Promotion of fundraising, patronage and sponsorship for key events

Action	2.3.4 Promotion of fundraising, patronage and sponsorship for key events
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.3 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	In order to increase the funds available and make events sustainable (if not profitable) it is important to promote fundraising, patronage and sponsorship for events.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify hallmark events needs and shortages in their budget for organization</li> <li>• Set up a plan for fund raising and estimate return on investment for donors/sponsors</li> <li>• Promote and circulate the plan to potential sponsors/donors</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nr. of events sponsors</li> <li>• \$ raised through fundraising initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• Foundation, private companies, donors</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Private and public
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible, such funds have to be considered additional and not structural to events organization.</li> </ul>



## 2.4. Update of the institutional and legislative framework for Leisure Event Tourism Development

### 2.4.1. Regulation of event tourism professions and operators

Action	2.4.1 Regulation of event tourism professions and operators
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.4 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	Identification and implementation of capacity building for private operators in leisure event tourism management
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the training needs of event organizers and implementers</li> <li>• Organization of educational and training programs together with universities, colleges and training centers on event organization and implementation, foreign language</li> <li>• Provision of training</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. of trained staff</li> <li>• Level of service by the staff as assessed by visitors' satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Launch of at least 1 short training for festival and other leisure-based events tourism operators per year</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism Committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport</li> <li>• State organs</li> <li>• Event organizers and implementers (private sector)</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Training centers</li> <li>• Colleges</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public and private sector
<b>Time frame</b>	From year 4
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The trainings should be done based on international best practice</li> <li>• The TC should decide the main program, based on priorities and train experts to deliver the programme accordingly.</li> </ul>



### 2.4.2. Regulation of event tourism statistics collection

Action	2.4.2 Regulation of event tourism statistics collection
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.4 Increase of economic impact from festivals and events
<b>Description</b>	Implementation of a system for collecting visitor statistics at leisure event sites
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulation of the visitors' statistics collection plan, considering the various sources</li> <li>• Implementation of a visitors' statistics unit at the TC</li> <li>• Starting the collection of data:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define a system of data which should be collected (number of tourists by origin, age, gender, number of stays, purchased services)</li> <li>- Organize data collection via hotel facilities at event tourism sites</li> <li>- Organize data collection via tourism info centers</li> <li>- Organize data collection via ticket sell service if the event is on ticket admittance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Collect statistical at main events inscribed in the national agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of a system of data collection techniques in 3 years</li> <li>• Production of yearly leisure-based events tourism statistics</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regions</li> <li>• Local government bodies</li> <li>• Tourism info-centers</li> <li>• Private sector</li> <li>• Universities and research centers</li> <li>• Hotel facilities</li> <li>• Cultural sites</li> <li>• Armenian church</li> <li>• Other State organs</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	Public sector
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 2
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the international experience of gathering statistical data at events</li> <li>• Pay attention to engage all stakeholders in the process of gathering statistical data</li> <li>• Collaborate with communities, regions on data collection process</li> <li>• Collaborate with universities, research centers on data collection process</li> <li>• Consider the broad sources of statistical data, that can be obtained through hotel facilities, tourism info centers, tourism destinations, ski resorts, etc., as they start to record the number of visitors based on origin, gender, age, etc.</li> <li>• Specify the purpose of visit, as event-based tourism is very broad and it may include many types of tourists (i.e. those who came on purpose and those who decided to attend the event once at destination).</li> </ul>



2.4.3. Regulation of green procurement at events

Action	2.4.3 Regulation of green procurement at events
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	2. Promote a national portfolio on main cultural festival and events and sustain the growth of local-based ones
<b>Specific objective</b>	2.2 Implementation and promotion of the agenda
<b>Description</b>	Adopt procurement schemes incentivizing the reduction of carbon footprint (e.g. scoring extra points for companies based on their environmental impact). Moreover, soft application packages (PDF) will be favoured to hard copies when applying for funds.
<b>Key activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a green procurement scheme for event suppliers</li> <li>• Disseminate new scheme with suppliers to incentivize adoption</li> </ul>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green procurement scheme in place in all hallmark events of national agenda by Year 7</li> </ul>
<b>Subject responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> </ul>
<b>Key stakeholders involved</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism committee</li> <li>• National leisure-based events Committee</li> <li>• Local suppliers</li> </ul>
<b>Source of funding</b>	No particular funds needed
<b>Time frame</b>	From Year 3
<b>Recommendations</b>	-