



BELIZE SPORTS TOURISM

STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

2023



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UNDERSTANDING SPORTS TOURISM

Sports tourism, a rapidly expanding segment of the global travel industry, refers to the pursuit of either observing or participating in sporting events while away from one's usual environment. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has described sports tourism as "one of the fastest-growing sectors" in the travel industry, with an estimated worth of \$800 billion. As more and more tourists seek out sports-related activities during their trips, events of all types and sizes are becoming increasingly popular among both participants and spectators alike.

Active sports tourism, in which individuals travel to a specific location to participate in competitive or non-competitive sporting events, engage in recreational sports, or try out a new discipline, can lead to significant economic growth and help to balance out tourism fluctuations during different seasons. Given the diversity and composition of sports tourism, it is considered a collection of services, and its demand can be segmented based on the attributes that make up the product, ultimately influencing the positioning of products and brands.

In Belize, the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) plays a crucial role in developing the sports tourism industry by identifying the attributes that contribute to tourists' positive or negative attitudes toward choosing Belize as a destination.

The following strategy will delve deeper into the intricacies and advantages of sports tourism, providing a comprehensive examination of the following key concepts and benefits.

- Sports tourism can be a strategic resource for Belize's Tourism product development by providing a unique and diverse range of activities and experiences for tourists, thereby differentiating Belize from other destinations. Additionally, sports tourism can also attract a specific niche market of active and adventure-seeking travelers, which can help to diversify and grow Belize's tourism industry.
- The socio-economic and cultural opportunities that sports tourism can generate in a post-pandemic economic recovery include the creation of new jobs and business opportunities in the sports and tourism sectors, as well as the potential for increased cultural exchange and understanding between tourists and locals.
- Innovative economic solutions that can be fostered through sports tourism include the development of new and unique sports-related products and services, as well as the potential for increased collaboration and partnerships between sports, tourism, and local business communities.
- Sustainability is a crucial aspect of the development of sports tourism in Belize, as it helps to ensure that the growth of the industry is balanced with the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of the country.
- Marketing and communication are important tools that can help affirm the identity of sports tourism in Belize by highlighting the unique and diverse range of sports-related activities and experiences available in the country and promoting Belize as a destination for active and adventure-seeking travelers.
- Sports tourism can optimize relations between key stakeholders in tourism, sports, and the local business community by fostering collaboration and partnerships between these groups, as well as by promoting the participation of locals in sports tourism activities, which can help to strengthen the relationships between tourists and locals.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS TOURISM

Sports tourism is a rapidly expanding aspect of the global tourism industry, becoming a highly sought-after niche within the sector. As interest and participation in sports continue to flourish within the leisure industry, so too does the desire for individuals to travel for the purpose of competing or spectating. However, sports tourism encompasses far more than simply hosting exceptional sporting events. It presents the potential for something truly profound, such as elevating Belize's identity as a premier sports destination, generating a new tourism business, and achieving widespread international recognition for its culture and diverse tourism offerings. It is a one-of-a-kind tourism product that encompasses a vast array of sporting opportunities. Sports tourism not only offers the potential for raising Belize's identity as a sports destination and generating new tourism business, but it also serves as a catalyst for various forms of development.

- ▶ **Sports Development:** By increasing the infrastructure of sports facilities and developing the skills of officials and coaches, sports tourism can help to increase the capacity of athletes to reach their full potential.
- ▶ **Economic Development:** The value of sports as a tourism generator can also lead to other business and economic opportunities, such as the development of new sports-related products and services, and increased collaboration and partnerships between the sports, tourism, and local business communities.
- ▶ **Social and Community Development:** Sports tourism can serve as a conduit for youth development, promoting increased fitness levels and overall health, as well as fostering a sense of community and cultural pride.

Sports tourism can be broadly categorized into four types: mega-sports-events, small-scale events, created events, and nostalgia-sports-tourism. The last category, nostalgia-sports-tourism, refers to places related to sports and vacation spots frequented by famous athletes.

Although not as organized or structured as other tourism products, sports tourism is not a new concept in Belize. There have been small but noteworthy pockets of sports tourism activities and events in Belize over the past several years. Sports Tourism can be defined as the act of traveling from one location to another with the intention of being involved in some form of sportsing activity. The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) aims to develop a National Sports Tourism Policy for Belize and an associated results framework that enhances the contribution of sports tourism to prioritized national development outcomes. To accomplish this, the National Sports Tourism Policy should be fully aligned with the BTB's National Tourism Policy, the Government of Belize's Development Plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified and supported by the United Nations for Belize. By mainstreaming sports tourism as a viable tourism product in national development plans and aligning national sports tourism policy with the SDGs, Belize can maximize the impact and contribution of sports tourism to its national development objectives, including but not limited to good health and wellbeing, industry innovation and infrastructure, gender equality, education, and social cohesion.

WHO ARE SPORTS TOURISTS

Sports tourism is a diverse industry that caters to a variety of individuals with different interests and motivations. These individuals can be grouped into different categories based on their level of participation and engagement with the sports.

Participants are individuals who travel to a location to actively participate in a sporting event or activity, such as a marathon or a triathlon. These individuals may be amateur or professional athletes, and they may be traveling alone or as part of a team. They may also be traveling to compete or to train.

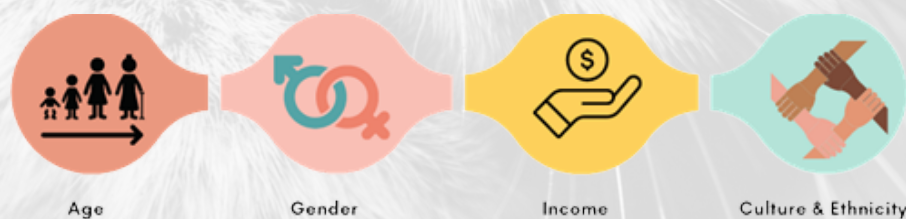
Spectators are individuals who travel to a location to observe a sporting event or activity, such as a football match or a golf tournament. They may be fans of a particular team or athlete, or they may be interested in the event for the experience or the atmosphere. Spectators may also be traveling alone or as part of a group.

In addition to these two main categories, sports tourists can also be grouped by their demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, income level, and education level. For example, younger generations may be more likely to participate in adventure sports, while older generations may be more interested in spectator sports. Additionally, sports tourists can also be grouped based on the characteristics of the sports they participate in or observe, such as individual vs. team sports, indoor vs outdoor sports, and traditional vs. extreme sports.

Another way of grouping sports tourists is by their performance level, such as amateur or professional athletes. Amateur athletes may travel to a location to participate in a recreational or leisure event, while professional athletes may travel to compete in a high-level event. The level of performance can also impact the duration of the trip, for example, amateur athletes may only travel for a weekend, while professional athletes may travel for several weeks for training or competitions.

It's also important to note that the demographics and characteristics of sports tourists can vary greatly depending on the specific event or activity. For example, a high-profile international football match would likely attract a diverse range of spectators, including both local and international fans, while a niche adventure sports event may attract a more specific demographic, such as young, adventurous individuals.

Understanding the different groups of sports tourists and their characteristics can aid in developing targeted marketing strategies, creating tailored products and services, and ultimately providing a better overall experience for sports tourists. This will help to enhance the contribution of sports tourism to the national development outcomes of Belize.



Age: While adult-oriented sports events are common, many sports participants are children and youth.

- These events often attract parents as well, as they are there to support their children. For many parents of young athletes, following the team around becomes a year-round travel and tourism activity.

Gender: Many sports have competitions and tournaments for both men and women (boys and girls), and the fastest-growing segment of some traditional male-dominated sports such as football, basketball, and volleyball, are for women. It is also notable that parents often travel with their teenage girls to tournaments more than they would with their teenage boys.

- **Income:** The relative value of different events to a community and the income levels of participants are important. Additionally, age influences spending patterns, with sports tourists in their 20s and 30s likely to spend more than those in their teens, for example.

- **Culture and ethnicity:** Sports is a universal activity that transcends cultural boundaries. The nature of the sports itself will influence and determine the number and characteristics of its sports tourists. Understanding the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of sports tourists can help in developing targeted marketing strategies and providing a more personalized experience for them.

ORGANIZING SPORTS AND TOURISM

Sports and tourism are two distinct sectors of society and economy, each with their own unique characteristics and objectives. However, despite these differences, these two sectors possess a remarkable potential for collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships.

►Sports, as a community activity, is primarily driven by passion and the pursuit of excellence. It serves as a social activity, often run by volunteers, and aims to promote physical activity, personal development, and community cohesion. At its highest level of performance, sports transforms into a multi-billion-dollar industry, driven by competitive excellence and the desire to entertain audiences.

►Tourism, on the other hand, is a commercial activity that seeks to provide experiences, accommodation, and services to visitors. Its primary objective is to generate revenue and economic growth for the destination.

Despite these divergent characteristics, sports and tourism can collaborate to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Sports events can attract tourists to a destination, thereby generating revenue for local businesses, while tourism can provide funding and infrastructure for sports development. By aligning their goals and working together, sports and tourism can contribute to economic growth, social and community development, and enhance the overall experience for both visitors and locals alike.

In order to effectively leverage the potential of sports tourism, a comprehensive understanding of the objectives and operational methods of all stakeholders involved is crucial. The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) and the Ministry of Tourism have an essential role to play in bringing these groups together and fostering cross-sector partnerships. By focusing on sports events as a primary area of interest, the greatest opportunities for synergy can be realized.

However, it is important to note that the sports tourism industry encompasses a diverse range of stakeholders beyond sports groups and tourism operators, such as municipalities, facility operators, schools, and local business groups. These groups must be included as partners as the sports tourism strategy evolves in order to ensure its success.

In developing and executing a sports tourism strategy, three main stakeholder pillars must be engaged: Government, BTB, and Local Sportsing Organizations. The formation of a local sports tourism body within Belize cannot operate effectively without the active and ongoing engagement

of all three pillars. This collective effort will help to ensure that the strategy is aligned with the priorities and objectives of all stakeholders and that the potential of sports tourism is fully realized for the benefit of the community and the country as a whole.



DEFINING SPORTS TOURISM FOR BELIZE

For the purpose of this Plan, Sports Tourism is defined as individuals who travel from their place of residence and/or stay overnight, with the primary purpose or reason for their travel being to participate in organized sports-related events or activities. This includes both domestic and international travelers.

► **Domestic Sports Tourism:** Any sports-related trip that involves a distance of over 50 miles and a stay of at least one night away from home.

► **International Sports Tourism:** Any trip to Belize whose primary purpose is to participate in a sporting activity, whether as a spectator, participant, or official.

► An Organized Sports-related event or activity refers to organized competitive events, trials, tryouts, training camps, sports clinics, exhibitions, and sports-related meetings.

Participants can be defined as persons or individuals who actively engage in sports, whether for the purposes of competition with others, personal performance improvement, observation, or volunteering. This includes:

► Persons or Individuals who actively participate in sports for the purposes of competition with others, under a set of rules or to improve their personal sporting performance. This includes athletes, players, and competitors who engage in sports at all levels, from amateur to professional.

► Individuals who attend sporting games or events to observe. This includes spectators, fans, and viewers who go to live sporting events, matches, or games to watch the action and support their favorite teams or players.

► Individuals who volunteer their time and expertise in sports (as a coach, official, etc.). This includes volunteers who give their time, energy, and skills to support sports at all levels, including coaching, officiating, organizing events, and providing medical or administrative support.

Sports tourists have been found to have a higher yield than other types of tourists, meaning that they tend to spend more money on average per day during their travels. According to research conducted by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science and Resources in 2022, sports tourists are estimated to spend at least 16% more per day compared to other types of tourists. This could be due to the fact that sports tourism often includes the purchase of tickets for live events, as well as the cost of transportation, lodging, and meals associated with attending these events. Additionally, sports tourists may also spend money on equipment, souvenirs, and other related expenses.

It should be noted that the statistic provided is from research done in 2022, which could be affected by the current global situation and its data may not be accurate anymore.

Sporting events can be classified and grouped based on several factors, including:

- Whether or not the nature of the sports is singular or multi-sports contest.
- Does the event have a local, national, regional, or international focus?
- Does the event include professional athletes or professional sports teams?

DEFINING SPORTS TOURISM FOR BELIZE

Championships are single-sport events where the rights are held by national or international sports organizations. These events can be held at a specific venue or rotated between different locations. Examples of championships include the World Series in baseball and the Super Bowl in American football. These events are considered the pinnacle of competition within the sport, with the winner being crowned the champion of that particular sport or league.

Tournaments, on the other hand, are non-championship events that are primarily organized by local sports organizations. These events are generally held at the same venues and at the same times annually and are more likely to become a staple within the local community. Examples of tournaments include local golf tournaments or tennis tournaments. These events provide an opportunity for local athletes to compete against one another and often serve as a stepping stone for those looking to compete in more high-profile events.

Games, meanwhile, refer to multi-sport events that feature a number of sports disciplines at the same time. A prime example of this would be the Belize Games, which was once hosted in Belize City in the 1980s and 1990s. These events provide a platform for athletes to showcase their skills in a variety of different sports and can serve as a stepping stone for those looking to compete in more high-profile events.

In addition to these events, there are also camps, clinics, courses, and conferences that are organized to improve the skills and knowledge of athletes, coaches, and officials. These training programs, meetings, and conferences are designed to provide participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in their respective sports.

Lastly, there are **manufactured events**, which are created primarily for commercial or tourism purposes. These events may not be part of a competitive league or tournament but are still organized and structured for the purpose of sports or physical activities. Examples of these events include charity games or corporate sports days. These events are designed to promote sports and physical activity within a community or organization, and often serve as a way to raise funds or awareness for a particular cause.

The world of sports offers a wide variety of events for athletes, fans, and organizers. From high-profile championships to local tournaments and multi-sport games, there is something for everyone. Additionally, the training camps, clinics, courses, and conferences help to improve the skills and knowledge of the participants. And the manufactured events provide a platform for promoting sports and physical activities, which can bring benefits to society.



THE BENEFITS OF SPORTS TOURISM FOR BELIZE

The examination of sports tourism and sports events as a means to generate economic growth, social development, and civic pride in Belize is a crucial area of study. The benefits of sports tourism and events are multifaceted, with both immediate and long-term impacts. The economic benefits of sports tourism and events include increased revenue from tourism and related industries, as well as job creation and economic stimulation in the host community. Additionally, sports events can also provide social benefits, such as the promotion of healthy lifestyles and physical activity, the development of community and civic pride, and the fostering of cultural exchange and understanding. Furthermore, the hosting of sports events can also serve as a catalyst for urban regeneration and infrastructure development. However, it is important to note that these benefits are not limited to the time of the event, but can continue to provide value to the country over the course of many years. Overall, the strategic development and promotion of sports tourism and events can serve as a powerful tool for economic and social development in Belize.

Economic value can be generated and enhanced through a variety of means, including:

- ▶ Conducting thorough analysis and assessment of the economic impact of previous sports tourism events held in Belize.
- ▶ Identifying the country's strengths in sports and expanding the scope and scale of existing events to capitalize on these strengths.
- ▶ Focusing on events that have been identified as having the greatest potential for generating economic value.
- ▶ Offering a range of leisure activities to encourage family members to accompany participants and to incentivize longer stays in the country.
- ▶ Recognizing the valuable contributions of volunteers and exploring opportunities to convert volunteer positions into paid employment where feasible.
- ▶ Building strategic partnerships with businesses and corporations that are interested in the demographics of the sports event, to leverage their resources and expertise.

Tourism-related revenue is often considered the primary contributor to the economic impact of sports tourism events. This can include expenditures on accommodation, food and beverage, and other related expenses. Direct event revenues, such as admission fees, sponsorships, and on-site sales, as well as larger events, television, and broadcasting rights, also play a significant role. Additionally, sports tourism events can also lead to indirect and induced economic activity, as people and businesses re-spend revenue generated from the event back into the community.

Moreover, sports events also offer the potential for repeat visitation as participants and their families

THE BENEFITS OF SPORTS TOURISM FOR BELIZE

The social benefits of sports tourism are closely tied to the broader benefits of recreation and sports. These can include:

- ▶ Volunteering in sports events can keep individuals engaged and connected to their communities.
- ▶ Focusing on sports events can encourage participation among young people and adults, promoting physical activity and well-being.
- ▶ Sporting events can serve as a unifying force, bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and fostering a sense of community.
- ▶ Sports events can also serve as a catalyst for revitalizing depressed areas of the country, driving economic development and job creation.
- ▶ Revenues generated by sports events can be reinvested in social and community-based programs, benefiting the wider population.

Sports tourism can also contribute to civic pride and a stronger sense of identity, by:

- ▶ Athletes participating in events can serve as ambassadors for the country, promoting its culture, history, and attractions to a global audience.
- ▶ Media coverage from local and international outlets can provide invaluable exposure for the country, increasing its visibility and attractiveness to potential visitors.
- ▶ Branding is a critical component of civic marketing and economic development, and sports events can provide an opportunity to showcase the country's unique identity and strengths.

Social and Community Long term value:

Hosting international sports tournaments and events can provide a range of benefits beyond tourism, including:

- ▶ The facilities built to host these events can serve the country for many years to come, fostering community engagement and physical activity.
- ▶ Volunteering at these events can help individuals develop skills and gain a greater interest in serving their communities.
- ▶ International sports events can also increase the country's visibility in the sports and tourism industries, attracting potential visitors and investors.
- ▶ Furthermore, such events can promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging increased fitness levels and participation in community and cultural celebrations.
- ▶ Additionally, designing these events to be environmentally and socially sustainable can further impact positively in the communities.

ALIGNING THE GOALS OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS, TOURISM BUSINESSES AND OTHER RELEVANT PARTNERS

The connection between sports and tourism is undeniable, with sports events having the potential to play a significant role in generating tourism activity and bringing about positive economic and social benefits for countries like Belize. Sports tourism is increasingly being recognized as a productive focus for tourism and economic development.

However, in Belize, traditional sporting events have often been organized by sports organizations with little consideration given to maximizing the tourism benefits they can bring. This is due in part to a lack of understanding of the linkage between the sports and tourism sectors.

Similarly, many tourism stakeholders, such as accommodation providers, transports operators, retail outlets, and restaurants, are often unaware of the potential benefits they can gain from sports event activity. It is critical that sports and tourism organizations are educated about the benefits that can be attained through sports tourism, and that alliances, information sharing, and opportunities for partnership are established.

To effectively host sporting events and build sports tourism, it is necessary to bring together a diverse group of key stakeholders, each with its own goals and objectives. Aligning these differing perspectives is crucial for success.

The Tourism Industry Stakeholders are primarily focused on the generation of business and revenue. They are inclined to support ventures that will bring increased economic activity and the development of new tourism markets.

The Sports Stakeholders, largely composed of volunteers, are invested in the development and promotion of their respective sports. They are interested in the organization of high-quality tournaments and the advancement of sports, particularly for youth and women. They aim to improve facilities, training, and equipment, as well as promote the image and profile of their sports. In many cases, the sports sector bears the majority of expenses and the tourism sector reaps the benefits. However, sports stakeholders do not typically consider themselves to be a part of the tourism industry and may not have a clear understanding of how to share in the revenue generated.

The Business Stakeholders have a vested interest in drawing as many individuals as possible to the market, and in enhancing their brand and image in order to host more sporting events. Businesses benefit from sports tourism through increased demand for their products and services.

The Local and other Government Stakeholders strive to achieve a balance between the recreational needs and health benefits of their citizens and the social and economic benefits of sports tourism. They seek to provide a harmonious environment for sports tourism to flourish.



THE CONTEXT FOR SPORTS TOURISM IN BELIZE

The travel and tourism industry is a vital contributor to the global economy, with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) reporting that the sector experienced an average annual growth rate of 4% between 2010 and 2019 and generated over \$1.5 trillion dollars in annual revenue worldwide in 2019. Developing a sports tourism sector in Belize can play a significant role in boosting the country's economy by increasing overnight international visitations. Sports tourism is a rapidly growing sub-sector of the tourism industry, with the UNWTO reporting that in 2018, sports events and activities attracted over 258 million international tourists worldwide. Sports tourism includes a wide range of activities, such as participating in organized sports events, watching live sporting events, and visiting sports-related tourist attractions. This type of tourism is becoming increasingly popular as people are looking for new and exciting ways to travel, and sports events and activities provide a unique and engaging experience for visitors. In Belize, sports tourism is already present in the form of local and regional tournaments hosted by national sporting organizations such as volleyball, football, and basketball. These events attract both local and international participants and spectators, generating economic benefits for the country. Other examples of sports tourism activities in Belize include the annual cross-country cycling classic, deep sea fishing tournaments, and golfing tournaments, among others. These events also bring in a significant number of visitors, providing a boost to the local economy through spending on accommodation, food, and transportation. However, there is significant potential for further growth in the sports tourism sector in Belize. The country's unique terrain and natural resources, such as its diverse ecosystems, tropical climate, and abundant marine life, provide opportunities to create new and exciting sporting destination products, such as eco-adventure sports and water sports. For example, Belize's vast coastal areas and numerous coral reefs provide ideal conditions for scuba diving and snorkeling, while its jungle and rainforest regions offer opportunities for eco-adventure sports such as hiking, rock climbing, and zip-lining. Additionally, investing in the development and improvement of sports facilities and infrastructure can attract larger and more high-profile sporting events, which in turn can bring in more international visitors and generate economic benefits across various sectors. For example, the construction of new sports stadiums and arenas, or the renovation of existing facilities, would make Belize a more attractive destination for major sporting events, such as international soccer or basketball tournaments. This would not only attract more international visitors to the country, but it would also create jobs and stimulate economic growth in the construction and hospitality sectors. According to the Belize Tourism Board, in 2019 the tourism industry generated \$1.2 billion in foreign exchange earnings, representing approximately 15% of the country's GDP. The development of sports tourism as a major tourism product has the potential to further increase foreign exchange earnings and contribute to the overall economic development of Belize. By attracting more international visitors to the country, sports tourism can boost the local economy through increased spending on accommodation, food, transportation, and other services.

Sports tourism is not only beneficial for the economy but also for society, as it can promote healthy living, physical activity, and social cohesion among the population. By participating in sports activities or watching live sporting events, people can improve their physical and mental health, and also foster a sense of community and belonging. It can also contribute to the development of youth and women in sports. By investing in sports facilities and infrastructure, and by promoting sports tourism, the government can encourage more people to become involved in sports and to develop their skills and talents in this area. Another important aspect of sports tourism is the potential for cultural exchange and education. By hosting international sporting events and activities, Belize can showcase its unique culture and history to a global audience. This can also provide an opportunity for visitors to learn more about the country, its people, and its customs, promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the country. Furthermore, through sports, people from different backgrounds can interact and learn from each other, fostering greater cultural understanding and harmony.

Sports tourism has the potential to be a major contributor to the growth of the tourism industry in Belize. By analyzing what already exists, identifying opportunities for new and exciting sporting destination products, and investing in the development and improvement of sports facilities and infrastructure, the country can attract more international visitors and generate significant economic benefits. Additionally, it can promote a healthy and active society, create new career opportunities, and foster cultural exchange and understanding. The government of Belize and the private sector should take advantage of the opportunities presented by sports tourism, to further develop and grow the country's tourism industry and economy.

SPORTS TOURISM IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Sports tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico, with countries such as Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic leading the way in developing and promoting sports tourism offerings. However, other countries in the region also have a lot to offer in terms of sports tourism, and are worth exploring. This article will focus on the context of sports tourism in Central America, Caribbean and Mexico, with a focus on Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Trinidad, and Jamaica, all of which are popular destinations for sports tourism.

Costa Rica is a prime destination for sports tourism, with a diverse range of activities available for tourists to enjoy. The country boasts some of the best surfing spots in the world, as well as excellent opportunities for sports fishing, diving, and snorkeling. Additionally, Costa Rica is home to a number of professional football teams and a professional baseball league. The country has also been successful in hosting international events, such as the CONCACAF Gold Cup and Copa America. Costa Rica is also known for its eco-tourism and adventure tourism, which include activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and zip-lining.

Panama, like Costa Rica, is also a popular destination for sports tourism, offering a wide variety of activities for visitors to enjoy. The country is known for its excellent fishing, with opportunities to catch a variety of species such as marlin, sailfish, and tuna. Panama is also home to a number of professional football teams, and baseball teams. The country has also been successful in hosting international events, such as the CONCACAF Gold Cup and Copa America. Panama also offers a range of adventure tourism activities, such as white-water rafting, kayaking, and rock climbing.

The Dominican Republic is another popular destination for sports tourism in the region. The country is known for its excellent golf courses and is home to a number of professional golfers. The Dominican Republic is also home to a number of professional baseball teams, and the country has been successful in hosting international events such as the World Baseball Classic. Additionally, the country has a growing surf scene, with many surf schools and surf camps. The country is also known for its eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding.

Honduras, although not as well known for sports tourism as the previously mentioned countries, it still has a lot to offer in terms of sports tourism. The country is home to a number of professional football teams, and also offers excellent opportunities for sports fishing, diving, and snorkeling. Honduras is also known for its eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding.

Nicaragua, a country that is growing in popularity as a sports tourism destination, offers a range of activities for sports tourists to enjoy. The country is known for its excellent surf spots, as well as opportunities for sports fishing, diving, and snorkeling. Nicaragua also offers a range of adventure tourism activities, such as white-water rafting, kayaking, and rock climbing.

El Salvador, like Honduras, is not as well known as a sports tourism destination, but it still has a lot to offer. The country is home to a number of professional football teams, and also offers excellent opportunities for sports fishing, diving, and snorkeling. El Salvador is also known for its eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding.

Mexico is a renowned sports tourism destination, renowned for its football teams, and also offers a wide range of activities for sports tourists to enjoy. The country is home to some of the most popular football teams in the world and has a strong football culture. Football matches and stadiums across the country attract thousands of tourists each year. Additionally, Mexico is known for its excellent surf spots, as well as opportunities for sports fishing, diving, and snorkeling. Mexico also offers a range of adventure tourism activities, such as white-water rafting, kayaking, and rock climbing. The country is also known for its eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding.

Trinidad is a small island nation in the Caribbean that is also gaining popularity as a sports tourism destination. The country is known for its excellent cricket and football teams, and also offers a wide range of activities for sports tourists to enjoy.

SPORTS TOURISM IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

Trinidad is also known for its eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding. Additionally, Trinidad is known for its excellent diving and snorkeling spots, as well as opportunities for sports fishing.

Jamaica, like Trinidad, is a small island nation in the Caribbean that is also gaining popularity as a sports tourism destination. The country is known for its excellent cricket and football teams, as well as its strong track and field culture. Jamaica also offers a wide range of activities for sports tourists to enjoy, including eco-tourism, which includes activities such as hiking, bird watching, and horseback riding. Additionally, Jamaica is known for its excellent diving and snorkeling spots, as well as opportunities for sports fishing.

All these countries, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Trinidad, and Jamaica, have been successful in developing and promoting sports tourism offerings, and have been able to attract a significant number of sports tourists to their countries. This has helped to boost their economies, and has also helped to promote the countries as popular tourist destinations. However, it is important to note that while sports tourism is a growing industry in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, it is not without its challenges. One of the main challenges faced by these countries is the lack of infrastructure and facilities to support sports tourism. For example, many of the countries lack adequate facilities for sports such as football and baseball. Additionally, many of the countries lack the necessary infrastructure to support large international events, such as hotels and transportation.

Another challenge faced by these countries is the lack of marketing and promotion of sports tourism offerings. Many of the countries lack the resources and expertise to effectively market and promote their sports tourism offerings, which can make it difficult for them to attract sports tourists. Despite these challenges, sports tourism is a growing industry in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, and countries such as Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mexico, Trinidad, and Jamaica have been successful in developing and promoting sports tourism offerings. With the right infrastructure, facilities and resources, these countries have the potential to attract even more sports tourists and boost their economies.

To summarize, sports tourism is a growing industry in Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico, with countries such as Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic leading the way in developing and promoting sports tourism offerings. These countries have a diverse range of activities available for tourists to enjoy and have been successful in hosting international events. However, the industry is not without its challenges such as lack of infrastructure, facilities and marketing and promotion of sports tourism offerings. With the right resources and infrastructure, these countries have the potential to attract even more sports tourists and boost their economies.

SPORTS TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

Building a strong sports tourism sector is a priority for our regional counterparts in Central America. While motivations and experiences are varied across these municipalities, there are a number of best practices that are used in creating a successful sports tourism sector. These best practices incorporate several key elements such as developing strong support from municipal/national leadership, developing a multi-partner approach to encourage lasting sports tourism capacity, creating the financial incentives for sports events to be brought to the country, understanding and communicating sports hosting legacies, creating a brand to promote the community, commitment to excellence and high-quality events and building strong, trusting relationships with the sports event rights holders.

1. Develop Strong Support from Municipal/National Leadership

Strong support for sports tourism from municipal/national leadership can help boost the impact of events and the attractiveness of a community to host events. The Government (local and national) can play a large role in helping to align its goals and deliverables to develop and implement event-friendly policies, planning procedures, and promotional programs. By clearly stating sports tourism objectives and strategies, an economic development strategy and/or a recreational master plan will help to communicate to all stakeholders (especially taxpayers) how the benefits of sports tourism can be incorporated into the Government's/municipality's objectives. The inclusion of sports tourism in a strategy document helps provide a strong foundation for sports tourism actions and objectives in the community and helps to provide additional rationale for resources being allocated in the development of the sector.

2. Develop a Multi-Partner Approach to Encourage Lasting Sports Tourism Capacity

Countries across the region have made conscious efforts to build the sports tourism leadership capacity within their territories by involving cross-sector stakeholders in the planning and implementation process for sports tourism-related activities. Many examples exist where a range of community partners and cross-sector stakeholders within the business community and other community-based organizations and sporting groups worked together as a unilateral committee or through an established sports tourism organization to facilitate stakeholder engagement and build on the existing capacity of the community to deliver well-managed and sustainable sports tourism events. A multi-partner approach not only helps to ensure sustainable event delivery but also helps to build local ownership and long-term capacity for event delivery in the community. Additionally, involving local partners also helps to ensure that local needs and priorities are taken into consideration when planning and hosting events.

3. Create Financial Incentives for Sports Tourism Events

Creating the right financial incentives for sports events to come to a particular destination is one of the most important elements of hosting a successful event. Sporting events, both large and small, have considerable costs attached to them, which are often great barriers for event organizers. Best practices cases from around the region value providing some form of ongoing financial support to attract selected events. In some cases, that financial support is through municipal or government budgeting and waiving of fees, charges, and in some cases taxes, while other territories focus on a yearly grant program which has become an important component of the business model of event organizers. Such incentives can include funding for event infrastructure, marketing and promotional support, and financial assistance for event organizers.

SPORTS TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

4. Understand and Communicate Sports Hosting Legacies

Calculating the legacy of sporting events hosted by a country is a fundamental approach that leaders in sports tourism across the region use to build support for their sports tourism endeavors. The focus for these legacy calculations is often on the economic impacts of events on the country. The potential of the event to leverage investments that will have a lasting impact is referred to as its legacy value. Whether it is facilities that are built for the event which will provide long-term public service, volunteer training, or funds for scholarships for aspiring athletes, they all provide long-term value to the country. Other important legacy values from sports tourism to consider are community visibility and spirit, leadership development, and new partnership development between sporting organizations, the tourism sector, and the business community. Once the legacies of an event are understood, successes should be communicated widely to garner support for future events. Communicating the legacy of sports tourism to the community, government leaders, and the public at large, helps to build support for future events and attract new investment in the sector.

Revenues Flows of money into the country	Expenditures Flows of money out of the city or region
<p>Participant expenditures are an important aspect of sports tourism that should be considered when planning and hosting events. Participants, whether they are athletes, fans, or officials, will typically spend money on a variety of items while they are in the host city. These expenditures can include things such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, souvenirs, and entertainment. Depending on the demographics of the event, participant expenditure can vary widely. For example, a youth sports tournament may have lower participant expenditure than a professional event, with athletes and their families spending an average of \$75 per day, while attendees at a major professional event may spend up to \$500 per day. Understanding the expected participant expenditure can help event organizers and host communities plan for and accommodate the needs of visitors and can also be used to calculate the economic impact of the event.</p>	<p>Bidding Costs Bidding costs refer to the expenses associated with submitting a bid to host an event. Some hallmark events are highly sought after, and a bidding fee is required, while other events are available for the asking. Understanding the potential bidding costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and prepare for the potential costs associated with submitting a bid to host an event.</p>
<p>Spectator and other visitor expenditures - In addition to participant expenditures, it is also important to consider the expenses of spectators and other visitors who come to the event. These individuals may include local residents who attend the event for a day, or fans who travel from across the globe to see their favorite team or athlete compete. Spectator and other visitor expenditures can include a wide range of items such as accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, souvenirs, and entertainment. Like participant expenditures, these expenses can vary depending on the demographics of the event and the distance that the visitors have traveled. Understanding the expected spectator and visitor expenditures can help event organizers and host communities plan</p>	<p>Capital Construction Costs Capital construction costs refer to the expenses associated with upgrading local venues and other civic amenities for the event. These costs may include renovations to facilities such as stadiums, arenas, and hotels, as well as the construction of new facilities. While these costs may be significant for one event, they may have lasting benefits either for other events or for the country's infrastructure. Understanding the potential capital construction costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and plan for the potential expenses associated with upgrading facilities for an event.</p>
	<p>Understand Event Hosting Direct Costs Event hosting direct costs refer to the expenses associated with the day-to-day operations of the event. These costs may include staff salaries, venue rental and operation costs, officials' reimbursement, hospitality, and ticket printing. Understanding the potential event hosting direct costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and plan for the expenses associated with hosting an event.</p>
	<p>Event Hosting Indirect Costs Event hosting indirect costs refer to the expenses associated with the event that are not directly related to the day-to-day operations of the event. These costs may include extra police</p>

for and accommodate the needs of visitors and can also be used to calculate the economic impact of the event. Additionally, it is important to understand the impact of the spectators and other visitors on the host community, such as the impact on local businesses, infrastructure and services, and how to manage and mitigate any negative impacts.

Direct event revenues - refer to the money generated directly from the event itself. These revenues can include admission fees, television rights, corporate sponsorships, concession fees, and licensing logos. These revenues are a key component of the financial success of an event and can help offset the costs of hosting the event. It's important for event organizers to understand the potential sources of direct event revenue and to develop strategies to maximize these revenues. This can include identifying potential corporate sponsors, negotiating television rights and licensing agreements, and setting admission prices that are competitive with similar events..

Local multipliers refer to the economic impact of the money spent for the event as it circulates around the local economy. When participants, spectators, and other visitors spend money in the host community, it creates a ripple effect as the money is re-spent by local businesses and individuals. This can lead to increased economic activity and job creation in the local community. Understanding the potential local multipliers can help event organizers and host communities understand the potential economic impact of the event beyond the direct event revenues and expenditures.

Return visitor expenditures refer to the money spent by individuals who return to the host city or region for further travel and tourism experiences after attending an event. People who enjoy themselves at events, often seeing a city or region for the first time, may be more likely to return in the future. Understanding the potential for return visitor expenditures can help event organizers and host communities understand the potential economic impact of the event beyond the direct event revenues and expenditures. By promoting the host city or region as a destination for tourism and travel, event organizers and host communities can capitalize

on the potential for return visitor expenditures. Additionally, it's important for event organizers and host communities to understand the impact of the return visitors on the host community and how to manage and mitigate any negative impacts.

and security costs, which fall on the community and not the event organizers. Although sometimes billing by the police authority turns these into direct costs. Understanding the potential event hosting indirect costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and plan for the expenses associated with hosting an event.

Understand Post-Event Costs

Post-event costs refer to the expenses associated with returning facilities to their pre-event condition and closing the books on the event. These costs may include cleaning and restoring facilities, storing records, and completing final evaluation reports. Understanding the potential post-event costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and plan for the expenses associated with hosting an event, even after it has ended.

Event Hosting Indirect Costs

Event hosting indirect costs refer to the expenses associated with the event that are not directly related to the day-to-day operations of the event. These costs may include extra police and security costs, which fall on the community and not the event organizers. Although sometimes billing by the police authority turns these into direct costs. Understanding the potential event hosting indirect costs can help event organizers and host communities budget for and plan for the expenses associated with hosting an event.

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SPORTS TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

<p>Regional Identity Enhancement</p> <p>Events, especially hallmark events, can help to put countries on the map and establish their identity in regional and global terms. Hosting major events can raise the profile of a country and can help to attract tourists, investment, and other economic development opportunities. Additionally, hosting events can help to promote the culture and history of a country, and can help to create a sense of pride and community among residents.</p> <p>Youth Development</p> <p>Sports events can serve as an inspiration for young people, showing them what the potential is, and indirectly challenging them to aspire to that peak of performance. By exposing young people to high-level sports, events can help to promote healthy living and physical activity, and can also help to develop leadership and teamwork skills.</p> <p>Enhancement of Cultural, Ethnic or Minority Groups</p> <p>Many events are focused on or within cultural groups and serve as a mechanism for cultural expression. These events can help to promote the culture and heritage of a particular group, and can help to build a sense of community and belonging among members of that group.</p> <p>Volunteer Development</p> <p>Events are often run by volunteers and event-specific volunteer training can have longer-term community benefits. By providing training and opportunities for volunteers to be involved in events, communities can help to develop the skills and experience of their residents, which can be beneficial for future events and other community initiatives.</p> <p>Understand Cultural Development</p> <p>Events often have cultural components which encourage and allow local cultural expression and development. These cultural elements can include music, dance, art, and other forms of</p>	<p>Congestion</p> <p>Events often bring many visitors, which can lead to congestion on the streets, hotels, and restaurants for residents and other visitors. This can lead to traffic delays, parking difficulties, and overcrowding in public spaces. It's important for event organizers and host communities to understand the potential for congestion and to plan accordingly to minimize any negative impacts on the host community.</p> <p>Dislocation</p> <p>Events often reduce access by community users to recreation facilities. With major events in particular, low-income downtown populations may get displaced by those willing to pay more for their rental accommodation. This can lead to a loss of community cohesion and can be a source of tension between event organizers and host communities. It's important for event organizers and host communities to understand the potential for dislocation and to plan accordingly to minimize any negative impacts on the host community.</p> <p>Competition for Funds</p> <p>Non-sports groups often note that major events draw all available funding, causing a shortage of funding for other, often social, causes. This can lead to a lack of resources for non-sports organizations and can be a source of tension between event organizers and host communities. It's important for event organizers and host communities to understand the potential for competition for funds and to plan accordingly to minimize any negative impacts on the host community.</p> <p>Competition for Volunteers</p> <p>The same theory applies to volunteers when major events are involved. Events can be a significant drain on the available pool of volunteers, leaving other organizations</p>
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cultural expression. By promoting and showcasing local culture, events can help to build a sense of community and pride among residents, and can also help to promote the culture of the host community to visitors.

Catalytic Development

In many ways, events and all their related activities serve as catalysts for change. This can be a cost or a benefit, depending on the change. Events can lead to the development of new infrastructure, the creation of new jobs, and the revitalization of communities. However, it's important for event organizers and host communities to consider the potential impact of the event on the host community, and to plan accordingly to minimize any negative impacts and maximize any positive impacts.

without enough volunteers to carry out their own activities. This can lead to a lack of resources for non-sports organizations and can be a source of tension between event organizers and host communities. It's important for event organizers and host communities to understand the potential for competition for volunteers and to plan accordingly to minimize any negative impacts on the host community.

5. Create a Brand to Promote the Country

Creating a strong and distinct brand to promote a country's sports tourism sector can be an effective way to build the country's profile and attract visitors. A well-crafted brand allows for consistent and creative messaging that highlights the desirable traits of the country and its sports tourism offerings. This messaging is more likely to stick in the minds of the public and can be reinforced by attaching it to special sports tourism events and sporting successes. Additionally, the media, both local and international, is more likely to cover and promote a country with a strong brand, which can further raise awareness and interest in the country's sports tourism sector.

Promoting a country's sports tourism sector through a brand can also help to differentiate it from other destinations in a creative and memorable way, and can also help to rally the country's citizens to support sports tourism efforts. A robust brand should be authentic to the country and not be used for any other purposes other than promoting the country and its sports tourism sector. An authentic brand is one that aligns with the perception that the country wants to create for itself and delivers on the promises it makes.

The goal of creating a brand to promote a country's sports tourism sector is to make the brand synonymous with the country and use sports as a medium to achieve this. The brand should be unique to Belize and reflect the country's authentic identity and its sports tourism offerings.

6. Commitment to Excellence and High-Quality Events

Commitment to excellence and providing high-quality sporting events is crucial for building confidence in Belize's ability to deliver and help build the individual event brand, which can encourage repeat events. In the highly competitive sports tourism sector, having a reputation for delivering events of the highest standard is essential. As competition to host events increases and becomes more sophisticated, Belize must be prepared to offer the best and meet the challenge.

SPORTS TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

This commitment to excellence should be evident in various areas, including the level of customer service provided, the technical expertise and proficiency in event management, a focus on meeting the needs of athletes, and a dedication to taking great care of the event brand. This can be achieved by ensuring that all aspects of the event are well-organized and run smoothly, from transportation and accommodation to catering and medical services. Additionally, a clear and effective communication plan should be in place to ensure that all stakeholders, including event rights holders, athletes, and media are well-informed and satisfied throughout the event.

Furthermore, Belize should strive to be at the forefront of sustainable event management, by implementing green initiatives and promoting environmentally friendly practices during the events. By consistently providing event rights holders with a high standard of events and meeting their expectations, Belize can establish itself as a destination of choice for sports tourism and attract more events in the future.

7. Build Strong, Trusting Relationships with Sports Event Right Holders

In order to establish Belize as a premier destination for sports tourism, it is essential to build strong and trusting relationships with sports event rights holders. This can be achieved by appointing a dedicated staff member within the Ministry of Tourism who is specifically focused on sports tourism. This individual would be responsible for networking and relationship-building with event rights holders, organizers, and national sporting associations in Belize, as well as identifying potential events and opportunities for sports tourism in the country.

The dedicated staff member would serve as the main point of contact for event rights holders and organizers and would be responsible for understanding their needs, addressing any concerns, and working with them to ensure that their events are successful. They would also be responsible for building relationships with national sporting associations and working with them to identify potential events and opportunities for sports tourism in Belize, as well as promoting the country as a sports tourism destination to the international community.

To build trust and confidence in Belize's ability to deliver high-quality sporting events, the staff member would maintain regular communication with event rights holders and organizers, providing updates on the status of events and gathering feedback to improve future events. They would also work closely with other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Sports, to ensure that all necessary infrastructure and resources are in place to support the successful delivery of events.

Furthermore, the staff member would also be responsible for promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices during events, as well as implementing green initiatives to reduce the event's carbon footprint. This approach would help to establish Belize as a responsible and forward-thinking destination for sports tourism, making it more attractive to event rights holders and organizers.

In summary, by appointing a dedicated staff member within the Ministry of Tourism who is focused on sports tourism, Belize can build strong and trusting relationships with event rights holders, organizers, and national sporting associations, as well as identify potential events and opportunities for sports tourism in the country. This approach will help to establish Belize as a premier destination for sports tourism and attract more events in the future.

SPORTS TOURISM BEST PRACTICES

Assessing the sports tourism requirements versus Belize's capacity is crucial for understanding the country's readiness to host and promote sports tourism events. A thorough assessment should consider the following factors:

- ▶ **Market base for sales, advertising, and sponsorships:** This includes understanding the target market for sports tourism in Belize and identifying potential sources of revenue from ticket sales, advertising, and sponsorships.
- ▶ **Event hosting experiences:** This includes evaluating Belize's past experiences in hosting sports tourism events, including the types of events, the number of participants, and the level of success.
- ▶ **Organizational capacity:** This includes assessing the availability and capabilities of personnel and organizations responsible for planning, organizing, and running sports tourism events, including the Ministry of Tourism, local authorities, and event organizers.
- ▶ **Event hosting infrastructure:** This includes evaluating the availability and quality of the infrastructure necessary to host sports tourism events, including venues, transportation, accommodation, and other services.

By conducting this assessment, Belize can identify its strengths and weaknesses in the sports tourism market and make strategic decisions on how to improve its capacity to meet the demands of the sports tourism marketplace. This assessment can also serve as a "sports tourism resume" that highlights Belize's capabilities and experiences in hosting sports tourism events and can be used as a tool to attract event rights holders and organizers.

Overall, the assessment will provide a clear picture of Belize's readiness to host sports tourism events and what needs to be done to improve its sports tourism sector. This will help to determine Belize's sports tourism offerings and how the country can improve its capacity to host and promote sports tourism events.

Who's involved

Sports tourism is a unique form of tourism that combines the sports industry and the tourism industry. The success of sports tourism relies on the alignment and cooperation of various stakeholders, including event rights holders and organizers, sports facilities, sports equipment and services providers, sports media, local businesses, athletes and teams, and visitors and tourists. Each of these stakeholders has different interests and mandates, and it is important to align and balance these interests to ensure the success of sports tourism.

Effective communication and collaboration among these stakeholders are essential for creating a favorable environment for sports tourism development. This includes creating a conducive policy environment, providing appropriate infrastructure and services, and marketing the destination effectively to attract sports events and visitors. By merging the synergies of the stakeholders, sports tourism can be a powerful tool for economic development, community building, and cultural exchange

ASSESSING SPORTS TOURISM REQUIREMENTS VS BELIZE'S CAPACITY

The Various stakeholders and their mandate and interests in sports tourism are as follows:

BTB - Destination Marketing

The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) plays a crucial role in the development and promotion of sports tourism in Belize. As the main destination marketing organization for the country, the BTB should adopt an arm's length and business-oriented approach to service delivery, and see sports event hosting as one of its key priorities.

This means that the BTB should work closely with event rights holders and organizers, sports facilities, and other stakeholders to attract and host high-quality sports tourism events in Belize. This can include providing information and resources on available venues and services, promoting the destination to potential event organizers, and working with other government agencies to provide support and resources for events.

The BTB can also play a key role in the marketing and promotion of sports tourism events, by creating and executing a comprehensive marketing strategy that targets both domestic and international audiences. This can include creating event-specific websites and social media campaigns, leveraging media partnerships, and producing promotional materials such as brochures and videos.

In addition to these efforts, the BTB should also work closely with other stakeholders to ensure that sports tourism events are sustainable, inclusive, and accessible to all. This can include promoting sustainable practices during events, creating opportunities for local communities to participate and benefit from the events, and ensuring that the events are accessible for all visitors, including those with disabilities.

Overall, the BTB plays a key role in the development and promotion of sports tourism in Belize and should see sports event hosting as one of its key priorities, with a business-oriented approach, and work closely with other stakeholders to create and promote sustainable, inclusive, and accessible sports tourism events.

City Councils/Municipal Bodies

City councils and municipal bodies in Belize play a vital role in the development and promotion of sports tourism within the country. As the primary governing bodies responsible for economic development and tourism, as well as sports and recreation within their respective jurisdictions, they hold a vested interest in the economic, social, and community vitality of the cities they govern. Sports tourism, being a significant source of revenue and a driver for economic growth, can greatly contribute to this.

In order to effectively promote sports tourism in Belize, city councils and municipal bodies should work closely with the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), event rights holders and organizers, sports facilities, and other relevant stakeholders. This includes providing information and resources on available venues and services, promoting the destination to potential event organizers, and working with other government agencies to provide support and resources for events.

Furthermore, city councils and municipal bodies should also prioritize sustainable, inclusive, and accessible events. This can be achieved by promoting sustainable practices during events, creating opportunities for local communities to participate and benefit from the events, and ensuring that the events are accessible for all visitors, including those with disabilities.

Additionally, City councils and municipal bodies can play a key role in leveraging sports tourism events to drive economic development and promote the community. This can include working with local businesses to capitalize on the influx of visitors during events and promoting the event to attract more tourists to the area, thereby boosting the economy and promoting community growth.

In conclusion, city councils and municipal bodies in Belize have a vital role to play in the development and promotion of sports tourism, by working closely with other stakeholders, prioritizing sustainable and inclusive events, and leveraging sports tourism events to drive economic development and promote community vitality.

ASSESSING SPORTS TOURISM REQUIREMENTS VS BELIZE'S CAPACITY

Municipality Parks, Recreation, and Culture Departments

The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Departments of municipalities in Belize play a significant role in the development and promotion of sports tourism within the country. Their focus is often on recreation programming for the community, sports development, and the provision of sports and tourism services. They also often play a key role in special events planning and provide a linkage with cultural programs and events. This allows them to promote sports tourism in a holistic and inclusive manner, incorporating the unique cultural aspects of the country.

These departments often work closely with other municipal departments such as city councils, economic development, and tourism departments to provide support and resources for sports tourism events. They also coordinate with event rights holders and organizers, sports facilities, and other relevant stakeholders to attract and host high-quality sports tourism events in their jurisdictions.

Additionally, many municipalities have a committee that coordinates all departments, including Parks, Recreation, and Culture departments to ensure that all efforts are aligned and that all stakeholders are working together towards the common goal of promoting sports tourism. This approach helps to ensure that events are sustainable, inclusive, and accessible to all.

National Sports Council

The National Sports Council (NSC) in Belize plays a crucial role in the development and promotion of sports tourism within the country. Their mandate is generally focused on sports development, but they also recognize that sports events are a key element in the overall sports development process.

The NSC works closely with other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Tourism, city councils and municipal bodies, event rights holders and organizers, sports facilities, and other relevant stakeholders to attract and host high-quality sports tourism events in Belize. They also provide support and resources for sports events, such as training and development for athletes, technical support for event organizers, and infrastructure development. NSC plays a key role in promoting sports tourism in Belize by leveraging sports events to drive economic development and promote the community. This can include working with local businesses to capitalize on the influx of visitors during events, and promoting the event to attract more tourists to the area, thereby boosting the economy and promoting community growth.

Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary institutions, such as universities and colleges, play an important role in the development and promotion of sports tourism in Belize. These institutions have athletic departments and faculties, as well as facilities such as stadiums and sports fields, that are often used for sports events. They recognize the key role that sports play in university and college life, both intercollegiate and intramural sports. These events provide students with opportunities to showcase their talents and abilities and foster a sense of community and pride among students.

Media, Business, and Tourism Sector

Tourism businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and transportation companies, focus on the sale of tourism products and services and benefit from the influx of visitors during sports tourism events. These events bring in not only athletes and spectators, but also officials, coaches, and media personnel, all of whom consume these products and services.

The business community, especially the media, has a broader interest in sports tourism. They are not only interested in the consumption of their products and services, but also in promoting Belize as a destination for business and investment. They also support their community and their employees and their families by promoting sports tourism events. The sponsorship of sports tourism events by the business community is often critical to the event's financial success, providing a source of funding for event organizers and enabling the events to be held.

In addition to the financial support, the media and the business community play a key role in promoting sports tourism events and raising awareness about them. This can include coverage of events in the media, social media promotion, and advertising campaigns. The business community can also leverage events to promote its products and services to a wider audience.

ASSESSING SPORTS TOURISM REQUIREMENTS VS BELIZE'S CAPACITY

All of these stakeholders have their own unique interests and priorities when it comes to sports tourism. The key to successful sports tourism development and promotion is to recognize and understand these interests, and to craft a set of objectives that ensure a win-win-win situation for everyone involved. This means finding common ground and creating mutually beneficial opportunities for all stakeholders to participate in and benefit from sports tourism events.

For example, the BTB and city councils may be primarily interested in the economic benefits that sports tourism can bring to the destination, while tertiary institutions may be more focused on the academic and community-building opportunities that sports events can provide. The National Sports Council may be focused on sports development, and the media and business community may be more interested in promoting the destination and its products and services.

By understanding these different interests and priorities, and finding ways to align them towards a common goal, sports tourism can be successful in Belize. This can include creating opportunities for all stakeholders to participate and benefit from sports tourism events, such as providing support and resources for events, promoting sustainable and inclusive events, and leveraging sports events to drive economic development and promote the community.

In summary, recognizing and understanding the interests of all stakeholders is crucial for the success of sports tourism in Belize. By crafting a set of objectives that ensure a win-win-win situation for everyone involved, and finding ways to align all stakeholders towards a common goal, sports tourism can be successful in Belize.

Stakeholder Assessment

Stakeholder Name _____

Type: Sports Tourism Facility Other

Changes and Challenges:

What changes or challenges (e.g. financial, volunteer recruitment/retention) exists within your agency of organization, and how can sports tourism assist in addressing them?

Changes and Challenges	Sports Tourism Can

KEY FACTORS DRIVING LOCATION OF SPORTS TOURISM EVENT HOSTING

The local demand assessment is a crucial component of understanding the key factors that influence event organizers' decisions on selecting a host city for their event. This includes evaluating factors such as the city's infrastructure, the availability of suitable venues, and the potential audience size and demographics. Additionally, it is important to consider any potential logistical challenges that may arise, as well as the city's overall reputation and ability to attract and retain visitors. By taking a comprehensive and holistic approach to understanding these factors, event organizers can make informed decisions on the best host city for their event. The following key factors have been derived from best practice research:

1. Sporting Facilities.

As a potential host for sporting events, Belize must have the necessary infrastructure and facilities to accommodate the event's needs. This includes providing the required number of competition venues and field of play areas as outlined in the bid guidelines or as specified by the event organizer. Each event will have different facility requirements and it is essential that Belize can meet the minimum technical standards for the competition, practice, and warm-up requirements. Additionally, Belize must also have adequate support facilities such as showers, changing rooms, and meeting rooms at the main venues. Other important considerations include the availability of a sound system, internet access, accessibility between venues and community amenities, and wheelchair accessibility and parking at the facilities.

2. Motivation to Host

When organizations evaluate potential host countries, they often look for clear and compelling reasons for why the country is bidding for the event. This includes assessing whether there is a plan in place that will benefit both the local organizers and residents. Organizers also consider the long-term impact or legacy of the event for the sports and the local community. Hosting a successful event can provide benefits such as increased tourism, economic growth, and exposure for the host country. Additionally, it can also create opportunities for the local residents, such as job creation and the development of new sports facilities. Therefore, it is important for Belize to have a well-thought-out plan that highlights how hosting the event will benefit the country and its residents in the short and long term.

3. Amenities

In addition to the quality of the sports facilities, the overall non-tournament experience for participants and their families and friends is also an important factor that should not be overlooked. This includes the quality of event accommodations and dining options. Athletes, coaches, managers, and other participants will form an overall impression of the event and Belize based on their experience in these areas. To ensure a positive experience, it is important to have a sufficient number of bedrooms in hotels that offer clean and comfortable rooms that are in reasonable proximity to the sports venue. Additionally, having a variety of restaurants and food choices, as well as shopping and other entertainment options for participants and families during their downtime, can greatly enhance the overall experience.

4. Volunteers

One of the key requirements for event organizers is to have a dedicated and experienced group of volunteers to help organize and run the tournament/event. This requires the establishment of a volunteer committee or organization that supports local events and should be done under the guidance of the National Sports Council or Belize Tourism Board. These volunteers will play a critical role in ensuring the smooth operation of the event and will be responsible for tasks such as registration, transportation, logistics, and providing information to participants and visitors. A well-trained and organized group of volunteers is essential for the success of the event and will help to create a positive experience for all involved.

KEY FACTORS DRIVING LOCATION OF SPORTS TOURISM EVENT HOSTING

5. Experience

Event organizers often take into account a bidding country's sporting history when evaluating potential host countries. Countries with a successful track record of hosting similar events are often viewed favorably as organizers recognize the experience and expertise that these countries have accumulated. This includes having a proven ability to manage logistics, host a large number of participants, and ensure the overall success of the event. A country's previous experiences in hosting events, such as the number of events hosted and their size, can also play a role in the decision-making process. By taking into account a country's previous successes and experiences, organizers can make more informed decisions on which country is best suited to host the event.

6. Youth Events Requirements

When evaluating potential host countries, event organizers place a significant emphasis on the ability to provide safe and comfortable accommodations for youth participants. This includes ensuring that suitable lodging options are available, such as youth hostels, dormitories, or other forms of group housing that are suitable for children and teenagers. Additionally, organizers also look for a wide range of restaurants with child-friendly menus that cater to the dietary needs and preferences of young participants. These facilities and services are essential for ensuring that the youth participants have a positive and enjoyable experience during the event and it is important for Belize to have these options available if it intends to host such events.



BELIZE'S MARKET BASE

Sports tourism is a rapidly expanding industry that brings together a diverse group of participants including active athletes, volunteers, and spectators. The main objective of a sports tourism strategy is to attract new visitors to a community and generate economic activity, but it is also crucial to consider the impact on the local population. Belize, as a potential host country for sporting events, must take into account the size and demographics of its local population base when developing a sports tourism strategy. This is essential in determining the potential for Belize to sell individual tickets or ticket packages, generate corporate sponsorship dollars, and secure the large number of volunteers that many events require.

A strong local population base can provide a solid foundation for the event's success by providing a ready market for ticket sales and corporate sponsorships, as well as a pool of potential volunteers. This is particularly important for Belize, where tourism is a major contributor to the country's economy. By successfully hosting sporting events, Belize can attract visitors and generate economic activity, which can in turn create jobs and opportunities for local residents. Additionally, by hosting sporting events, Belize can showcase its natural beauty, culture, and hospitality to the world, which can further boost the country's reputation as a premier destination for sports tourism. Furthermore, hosting sporting events can also create a positive legacy for the country, by promoting active lifestyles and encouraging the development of sports facilities and programs for the local population. In order to successfully host sporting events, Belize must also consider the availability of sports facilities, accommodations, transportation, and other logistical considerations. This includes assessing the availability of suitable venues for the event, such as stadiums, arenas, and sports fields, as well as the availability of accommodation for the athletes, officials, and visitors. Additionally, the country must also consider the transportation infrastructure required to move athletes, officials, and visitors to and from the event.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the potential audience size and demographics when developing a sports tourism strategy. This includes assessing the potential number of visitors who may be interested in attending the event, as well as the demographics of these visitors, such as age, gender, and income level. This information can help to inform the marketing and promotion strategies for the event and ensure that the event reaches its target audience.

Lastly, it is crucial to consider the country's overall reputation and ability to attract and retain visitors. This includes assessing the country's reputation as a tourist destination, as well as its ability to attract and retain visitors. This can help to determine the potential success of the event and the likelihood of visitors returning to the country in the future.

When developing a sports tourism strategy for Belize, it is important to consider the potential impact on the local population, as well as the country's tourism industry and reputation. This requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that takes into account the availability of sports facilities, accommodations, transportation, and other logistical considerations, as well as the potential audience size and demographics, and the country's overall reputation and ability to attract and retain visitors.

BELIZE'S SPORTS HISTORY

Sports play a vital role in the culture of Belize, despite the country's lack of international success and limited financial resources for sports. Despite these challenges, sports continue to bring the people of Belize together both on and off the field. The National Sports Council (NSC) is responsible for the development and promotion of sports in the country. The NSC works closely with various sports associations and organizations to create opportunities for participation and competition, as well as promote sports as a way of life for the people of Belize.

Association football, commonly known as football, is the most popular sport among Belizeans, with the national team competing in CONCACAF and the UNCAF tournaments. However, other sports such as softball, basketball, volleyball, cricket, rugby, netball, and track and field are also enjoyed by the local population. Additionally, Belize is renowned for its snorkeling and diving opportunities, with many sports catering to foreign visitors being water-based.

Track and Field in Belize is governed by the Amateur Athletics Association, and the main facility for these events is the Marion Jones Sports Complex, previously known as the National Stadium, located on Princess Margaret Drive in Belize City. This facility is named after the famous track and field star of Belizean descent, Marion Jones.

Basketball is governed by the Belize Basketball Federation (BBF), and the league, known as the Belize Basketball Association (BBA), was established in 1992. Although the classification of basketball in Belize is semi-professional, the sport is popular at the junior, senior amateur, high school, and primary school levels, as well as in Mini tournaments for young children and Over-35 tournaments for retired players. Basketball courts can be found in almost every neighborhood, and children can often be seen practicing regularly. The main basketball facility is the Belize Civic Center, which can seat 4,500 fans and boasts one of the region's best indoor wooden courts. Despite regional success in the Caribbean and Central America, Belize has yet to participate in the Olympic Games. A number of Belizeans, such as Nigel Miguel, Milt Palacio, Kenton Paulino, and Charles Burgess, have played or are currently playing basketball at the college and NBA levels in the United States.

Boxing was popular in Belize in the 1930s, with weekend fight cards regularly filling the premier boxing arena, Birds' Isle. Prominent Belizean boxers include lightweight Ludwig Lightburn and welterweight Fitzroy Guisseppi, originally from Trinidad and Jamaica. Verno Phillips is the only Belizean sportsperson to have held a world title, winning both the IBF and WBO junior middleweight titles. Rudolph Bent went on to fight internationally. However, by the mid-1980s, boxing largely died out, and now only occasional amateur cards are held.

Canoeing is also a popular sport in Belize, with the local association sponsoring a number of races per year, including the La Ruta Maya Belize River Challenge, a 180-mile, four-day canoe race on the Belize River that starts in San Ignacio and ends in Belize City. This race, which occurs annually on Baron Bliss Day, promotes environmental awareness while also providing intense competition for both seasoned and amateur athletes.

Cricket is mainly played in the Belize Rural area, where local villages sponsor cricket teams. The national tournament is held in the Belize District from January to May. Belize's national cricket team has had recent success in regional tournaments and played in Division Three of the ICC Americas Championship Bracket in 2008.

BELIZE'S SPORTS HISTORY

Cycling is a popular sport in Central America, and Belize is no exception. The country has a number of dedicated cycling groups and clubs, and an annual cycling event, the Cross Country Classic, is held in March. The race starts in the capital city of Belmopan and finishes in Belize City, covering a distance of over 100 miles.

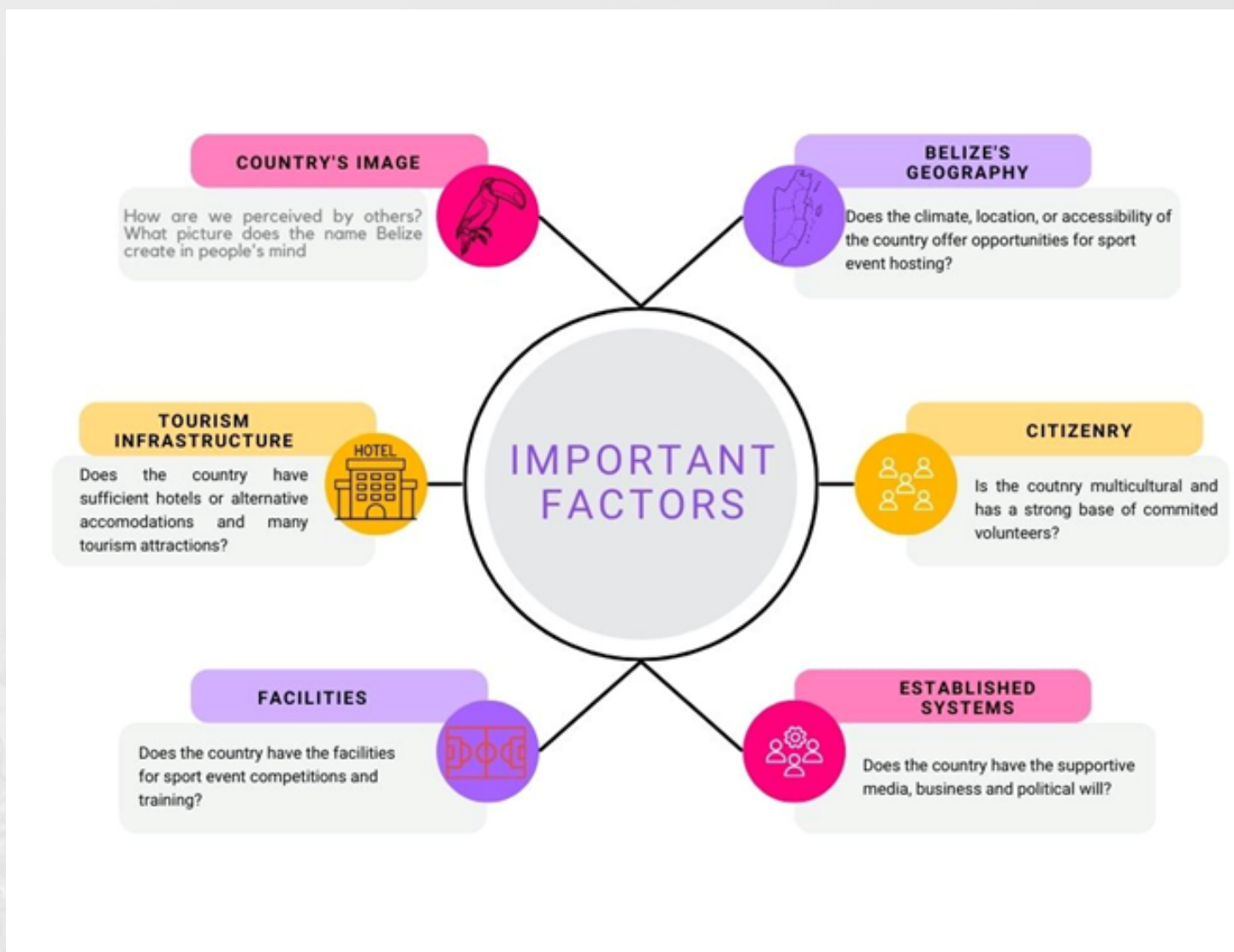
Football - The BPFL is the top-tier football league in Belize, featuring teams from all districts across the country. The league is semi-professional and plays its matches during the dry season, which runs from August to April. Football has a strong following in Belize, with matches often drawing large crowds and generating significant media coverage. The FFB is responsible for the organization and administration of football in Belize, including the oversight of the BPFL and the national team.

The national team of Belize has had limited success on the international stage, with its best performance being a third-place finish in the CONCACAF Nations League Qualifying in 2019. The team has also never qualified for the FIFA World Cup or the CONCACAF Gold Cup. Despite these struggles, sports continue to be a source of national pride and a unifying force for the people of Belize. The FFB works to promote and develop football at all levels, from grassroots to elite competition, in order to improve the performance of the national team and increase participation in sports across the country.

Tennis is not as widely played as other sports in Belize, but the BTA works to promote and develop the sport at all levels, from grassroots to elite competition. The association organizes local tournaments and clinics, and also sends teams to compete in regional and international competitions. Despite the lack of widespread participation in tennis, there have been some successful players from Belize, such as Daniel Tzun, who represented the country in the Davis Cup, and Marlon Johnson, who competed in the Caribbean Junior Championships. The BTA also works closely with the National Sports Council and other sports organizations to promote a culture of athleticism and healthy competition in Belize.

The **Softball Federation of Belize** is the governing body for the sport of softball in the country, promoting and developing sports for both men and women. Softball is particularly popular in the Belize and Cayo districts and is gaining popularity in the southern regions of the country. The local tournaments, which include teams from various organizations, are held annually and culminate in the crowning of a national champion.

Softball has traditionally been one of the most successful sports for Belize on the international stage. The country's teams have consistently won medals in regional competitions in both Central America and the Caribbean. The Federation works to develop and promote sports at all levels, from grassroots to elite competition, and to provide opportunities for Belizean athletes to compete internationally. In addition to organizing local tournaments, the Federation also collaborates with other sports organizations and the National Sports Council to promote a culture of athleticism and healthy competition in Belize.



In order to develop a sports tourism strategy for Belize that effectively identifies unique selling propositions and addresses any weaknesses, it is important to conduct a thorough analysis utilizing stakeholder surveys and focus groups. This will provide valuable insights into the current strengths and weaknesses of Belize as a potential host country for sporting events.

The stakeholder surveys and focus groups can be used to gather information from a wide range of individuals and organizations, including event organizers, athletes, tourists, local residents, and government officials. This information can be used to identify areas where Belize has a competitive advantage, such as the availability of sports facilities, accommodations, transportation, and other logistical considerations, as well as the potential audience size and demographics, and the country's overall reputation and ability to attract and retain visitors.

Additionally, the stakeholder surveys and focus groups can also be used to identify areas where Belize may have weaknesses, such as a lack of experience in hosting large-scale events or insufficient infrastructure. This information can then be used to create a strategy that addresses and overcomes these weaknesses, such as investing in the development of sports facilities or training local volunteers.

Overall, utilizing stakeholder surveys and focus groups is a crucial step in developing a sports tourism strategy for Belize as it will provide valuable insights into the country's strengths and weaknesses, and can be used to create a strategy that effectively identifies unique selling propositions, while at the same time addressing and overcoming any weaknesses.

SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE OF BELIZE

The ability of Belize to host sporting events is contingent upon the availability of appropriate facilities. While promoting sports tourism as a means of advocating for new facilities may be a viable long-term strategy, it is imperative to first address the existing sports facilities. To initiate this process, a Facilities Inventory should be prepared. This inventory should gather comprehensive information about all available facilities, including, but not limited to:

- ▶ Ownership and contact information
- ▶ Sports that can be hosted and at what levels (youth, National, International)
- ▶ Fan Capacity
- ▶ Usage Schedule (identify the times when the facility is not fully used by local residents)

The inventory should also include non-traditional sports and non-traditional venues, such as outdoor recreation venues and school auditoriums. By compiling this information, the strengths and weaknesses of the facilities can be identified. Furthermore, it is advisable to contact the facility owners, as not all facilities will be owned by the government, in order to identify any new facilities or upgrades that are in the planning stages, so that sports tourism can be factored into the process. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of facilities in Belize, which will facilitate the development of a strategic plan to improve and expand the country's sports infrastructure.

List the major facilities that are potential sports event venues in Belize

Facility Name _____ Ownership _____ Contact Person _____ Email _____	Type _____ Seating Capacity _____	
Standards		
International _____ _____ _____ _____	National _____ _____ _____ _____	Youth _____ _____ _____ _____

Asses Facility's current occupancy profile

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
100%												
90%												
80%												
70%												
60%												
50%												
>50%												

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE OF BELIZE

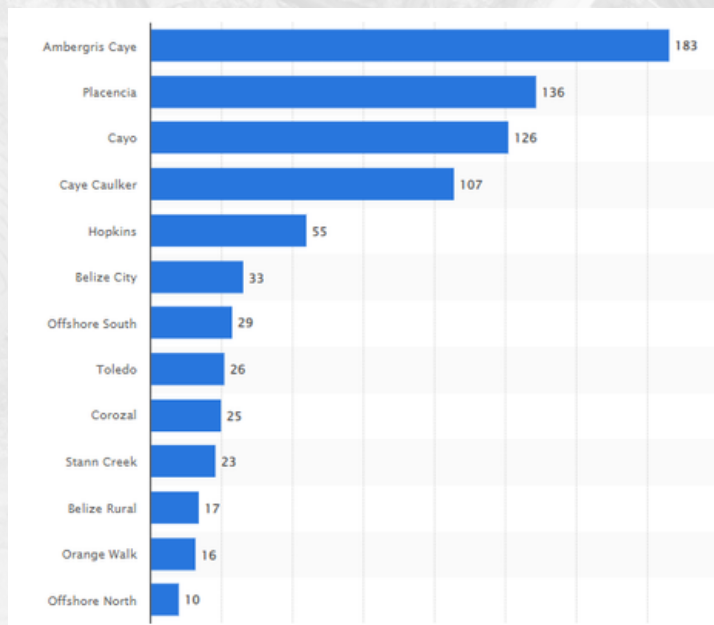
Sports tourism is a rapidly growing industry and Belize has the potential to attract a significant number of sports tourists. According to the World Tourism Organization, sports tourism accounts for over 6% of all international arrivals and is projected to grow by 4-5% annually. Belize has a diverse range of sports and recreational activities that can attract tourists such as scuba diving, snorkeling, fishing, and adventure sports. Additionally, the country has a rich cultural heritage and natural beauty that can serve as an added draw for sports tourists.

However, in order to fully capitalize on the potential of sports tourism in Belize, the country's capacity for tourism and accommodations must be taken into consideration. According to data from the Belize Tourism Board, the country has a total of 8,000 hotel rooms scattered across the country, mostly on the island of Ambergris Caye. This capacity plays a crucial role in the feasibility of hosting events with a tourism component, such as regional youth football tournaments (CONCACAF), which typically require a minimum of 250 rooms per night for 7 days within 50km of the hosting facility. Without this minimum capacity, it would not be feasible to bid for such an event. Therefore, it is essential to focus on utilizing the potential of sports tourism while also being mindful of the current capacity constraints in Belize.

Furthermore, the distribution of this capacity throughout the year is also a critical factor to consider. According to data from the Belize Tourism Board, the country's tourism industry experiences a peak in arrivals during the winter months (November-April) and a low season during the summer months (May-October). It is important to take into account traditionally high and low seasons in Belize when deciding on the time of year for hosting sports tourism events. Utilizing the country's tourism product inventory can provide opportunities to enhance the tourism component of existing and targeted events. Sports events attract athletes, but the accompanying tourism opportunities can attract their spouses and families, encouraging them to extend their stay in the area. This presents an opportunity to market local tourism attractions and services, potentially packaging them as part of the overall marketing for the event.

To fully capitalize on these opportunities, it is necessary to gather and analyze data on Belize's tourism and accommodations capacity. Additionally, it is important to conduct market research to understand the preferences and needs of sports tourists and tailor the country's sports tourism offerings accordingly. This will be crucial in developing a comprehensive and successful sports tourism strategy for the country.

Total Hotels in Belize by location as of December 2021



ACCOMODATIONS PROFILE

In order for sports events to be integrated into the existing economic structure of Belize and for accommodations and hotel operators to financially benefit from additional sports events, it is essential to ensure that the events are designed to assist them in maximizing their capacity. This can be achieved by aligning the timing of events with the country's tourism seasons, such as the peak season (November-April) and low season (May-October) as per the data from the Belize Tourism Board. Additionally, the events should be appropriately sized for the capacity of the existing accommodation, which is currently at 8,000 hotel rooms as per the data from the Belize Tourism Board.

It is also important to work closely with accommodations and hotel operators to ensure that they are able to capitalize on the increased demand for their services. This can be done by providing them with information about the event, such as the number of athletes and support staff expected to attend and the duration of their stay. Furthermore, the events can be designed to include tourism components that appeal to the families and friends of the athletes, such as sightseeing tours, cultural activities, and recreational activities, in order to keep them in the area for longer and increase the overall economic impact of the events. This approach will also help to promote the country's tourism product inventory.

Moreover, by conducting market research to understand the preferences and needs of sports tourists and tailoring the country's sports tourism offerings accordingly, will be beneficial for the accommodations and hotel operators. This will help them in providing better services to sports tourists, which in turn will result in better occupancy rates, higher room revenues, and an overall increase in their profitability.

In summary, aligning the timing of events with the country's tourism seasons, ensuring that the events are appropriately sized for the capacity of the existing accommodation, and working closely with accommodations and hotel operators to ensure that they are able to capitalize on the increased demand for their services, along with adding tourism components that appeal to the families and friends of the athletes, are key steps in integrating sports events into the existing economic structure of Belize and ensuring that accommodations and hotel operators financially benefit from additional sports events.

ACCOMODATIONS PROFILE

Assesing the curent hotel occupancy profile for Belize

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
100%												
90%												
80%												
70%												
60%												
50%												

	Xmas	Spring Break	Easter	Labour Day	Thanksgiving	Weekends	Weekdays
50%					—		
100%							
90%							
80%							
70%							
60%							
50%							
>50%							

LOCAL INPUT CRITERIA

Local input and engagement is a critical component of any strategic planning process for sports tourism in Belize. To gain insight from residents and stakeholders across the community, a variety of community and stakeholder engagement tools were utilized.

To engage a wide variety of individuals, a survey was developed. The survey explored community opinions on sports tourism, challenges, and opportunities in sports tourism development. Additionally, a survey was developed and targeted existing sporting organizations across Belize to capture their opinions on sports tourism development in the country. These surveys were distributed and indexed to ensure comprehensive data collection.

Engaging the community and stakeholders in this way is essential for developing a strategy that addresses the needs and concerns of all parties involved. This will help ensure the success of the sports tourism initiative and create a sustainable and inclusive industry for Belize.

The following themes have been synthesized from the community engagement that reflects local demand from the stakeholders.

- **Community perceptions and attitudes towards sports tourism:** The survey results indicated that while many community members are open to the idea of sports tourism, there is a lack of understanding about what it entails and its potential benefits. Respondents also expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts on the environment and local communities. However, with proper education and communication, these concerns could be addressed and the community can be made aware of the benefits of sports tourism, such as economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange.
- **Identification of challenges facing sports tourism development in Belize:** The survey results identified a lack of infrastructure, limited government support, and a lack of trained personnel as the main challenges facing the development of sports tourism in Belize. Respondents also highlighted the need for better marketing and promotion of the country as a sports tourism destination. Additionally, a lack of coordination and cooperation among stakeholders, including the private and public sectors, was identified as a major challenge. To overcome these challenges, a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the development of sports tourism is needed, including the development of a clear plan and structure for the industry, investment in infrastructure, training and support for personnel, and effective marketing and promotion of the country as a sports tourism destination.
- **Opportunities for growth and expansion of sports tourism in Belize:** Respondents identified a number of opportunities for growth and expansion in sports tourism, such as developing more eco-friendly and sustainable tourism options, focusing on niche markets such as adventure sports and cultural tourism, and investing in infrastructure and training for personnel. However, they also mentioned that these opportunities can only be taken if there is a clear plan and structure in place. Additionally, opportunities for partnership and collaboration with international sports organizations and events, as well as the use of digital and social media to reach a wider audience, were also highlighted.
- **The role of existing sporting organizations in the development of sports tourism:** The survey results showed that existing sporting organizations in Belize have the potential to play an important role in the development of sports tourism. They can be involved in the promotion of the country as a sports tourism destination, organizing sporting events, and providing training and support to athletes. However, they are not yet established in the industry and need a clear plan and structure to do so. Additionally, partnerships and collaboration with these organizations can be valuable assets in the development of sports tourism.

LOCAL INPUT CRITERIA

- The potential economic impact of sports tourism on Belize: Respondents believe that sports tourism has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to Belize through job creation, increased income for local businesses, and improved infrastructure. However, this potential can only be reached if a coordinated approach is taken to the development of the industry. Additionally, the use of sports tourism as a tool for sustainable economic development, through the promotion of local products and services, as well as the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, was also highlighted.
- The potential for sports tourism to contribute to the development of local communities: Respondents see sports tourism as an opportunity to contribute to the development of local communities by providing employment and income opportunities, improving infrastructure, and promoting cultural exchange. However, this potential can only be reached if a coordinated approach is taken to the development of the industry, including the involvement and engagement of local communities in the planning and development process.
- The impact of COVID-19 on sports tourism development in Belize: The survey results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the development of sports tourism in Belize. Respondents reported a decline in tourism numbers, a decrease in revenues, and a decline in investment in sports tourism. This highlights the importance of a coordinated approach to the development of the industry to be able to adapt to future disruptions. Respondents reported a decline in tourism numbers, a decrease in revenues, and a decline in investment in sports tourism. This highlights the importance of a coordinated approach to the development of the industry to be able to adapt to future disruptions. This includes the development of contingency plans and the diversification of markets, as well as the promotion of domestic and regional tourism.
- The potential for sports tourism to support sustainable development in Belize: Respondents see sports tourism as an opportunity to support sustainable development in Belize by promoting eco-friendly tourism options, protecting the environment, and supporting local communities. However, this potential can only be reached if a coordinated approach is taken to the development of the industry, including the integration of sustainable practices and the promotion of responsible tourism.
- The role of government in supporting sports tourism development in Belize: Respondents believe that the government has an important role to play in supporting the development of sports tourism in Belize. They recommend investing in infrastructure, providing training and support to personnel, and promoting the country as a sports tourism destination. However, they also pointed out that a clear plan and structure, as well as a strong legal and regulatory framework, needs to be in place for the government to effectively support the industry.
- The potential for sports tourism to enhance cultural exchange and promote understanding between different groups in Belize: Respondents see sports tourism as an opportunity to promote cultural exchange and understanding between different groups in Belize by bringing people from different backgrounds together through sports and providing opportunities for cultural exchange. This includes the promotion of traditional sports, as well as the hosting of international events and competitions. However, this potential can only be reached if a coordinated approach is taken to the development of the industry, including the integration of cultural and heritage preservation and promotion efforts.

LOCAL INPUT CRITERIA

Tool for assessing Belize's Strengths and Weaknesses observed as it relates to Sports Tourism

How would you rate Belize in terms of its strengths and weaknesses for sport tourism					What opportunities do these present?
Image and Attractiveness	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Geography and Location	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Climate	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Transportation Access	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Centrally located hotels/facilities	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Multicultural Population	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Political Support	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Local Media Support	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Corporate Support	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Good Competition facilities	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Good training facilities	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
University/College facilities	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Outdoor Facilities	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Facility Cost	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	
Hotel Costs	Strength 1 2		3	Weakness 4 5	

BUILDING BELIZE'S CAPACITY

Building Organizational Roles to Support Belize's Sports tourism industry



An established sports tourism planning sector does not currently exist in Belize, and there has been no national policy to establish such. To address this, the first step would be to appoint a Director of Sports Tourism Development and requisite staff. The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) plays a crucial role

in sports tourism development, serving as a catalyst and resource for various sports tourism initiatives, and helping to manage Belize's overall sporting legacy. The BTB's overarching role should be to support the development (planning, bid proposal, sponsorship, contracts, and information), coordination (maintaining network contacts and establishing new contacts, helping with logistics), marketing (audience development, event promotion, database management), and brand leadership (tracking performance, brand development) of any sports tourism event.

The role of established sporting organizations in Belize is to "champion" the sports tourism agenda with its members, the public, and local businesses. These organizations should demonstrate buy-in and show that sports tourism in Belize should be taken seriously, and they should liaise with business and tourism stakeholders for specific bids and sports tourism event planning and organization.

The role of BTB's established partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Belize Hotel Association, Belize Tourism Industry Association, and other tourism stakeholders, is to support the sports tourism agenda with its members, visitors, and clients. They should demonstrate buy-in and show that sports tourism in Belize should be taken seriously, and they should provide assistance to sporting associations aimed at attracting sports tourism initiatives. They should also develop initiatives and funding opportunities to assist sports tourism development.

It is essential to note that sports tourism must be a partnership to be effective. However, partnerships, perhaps even more so than regular organizations, need careful and complete structuring if they are to be effective. The structure selected must reflect the organizations, their strengths and challenges, and the overall operating environment in the community.

Key stakeholder functions that are essential in the development of a sports tourism sector include:

- Appointing a Director of Sports Tourism Development and requisite staff.
- BTB supports the development, coordination, marketing, and brand leadership of sports tourism events
- Sporting organizations "championing" the sports tourism agenda and liaising with business and tourism stakeholders

BUILDING BELIZE'S CAPACITY

- BTB's established partners, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Belize Hotel Association, support the sports tourism agenda, provide assistance to sporting associations, and develop initiatives and funding opportunities to assist sports tourism development.
- Structuring partnerships carefully and completely to ensure they are effective.

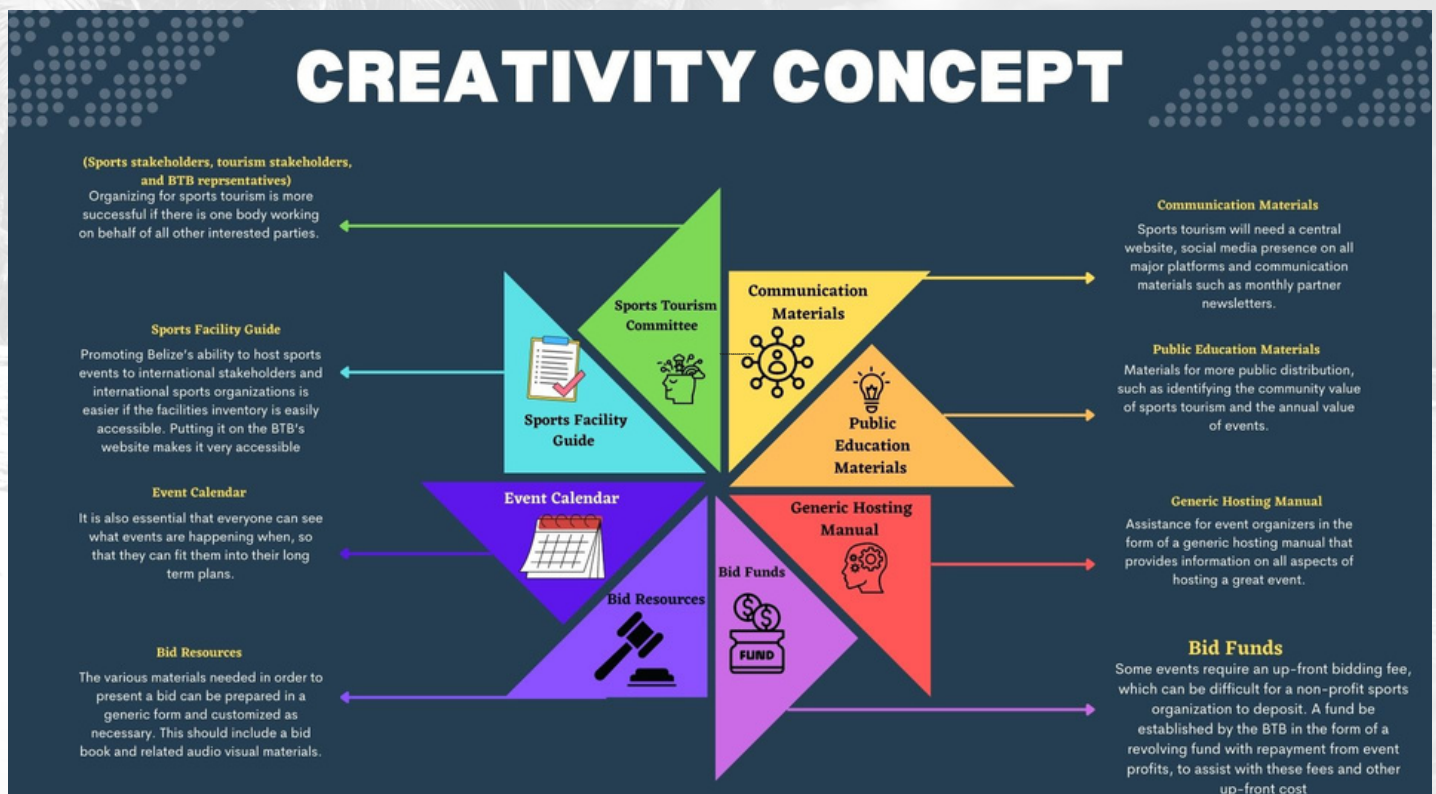
Growing existing events and managing event services

Capacity building of present events is a key aspect of growing sports tourism. New events also need these services, which could include:

- Event Planning and Administration
- Event Operations
- Event Marketing and Partner Relations
- Event Community Relations

These activities need to be undertaken by each event organizing committee, and they could be undertaken in conjunction with a private-sector event management company

The BTB's newly established Sports Tourism Development Unit will need to develop a set of tools to assist sporting organizations with the process of event assessment, selection, and bidding.



BUILDING BELIZE'S CAPACITY



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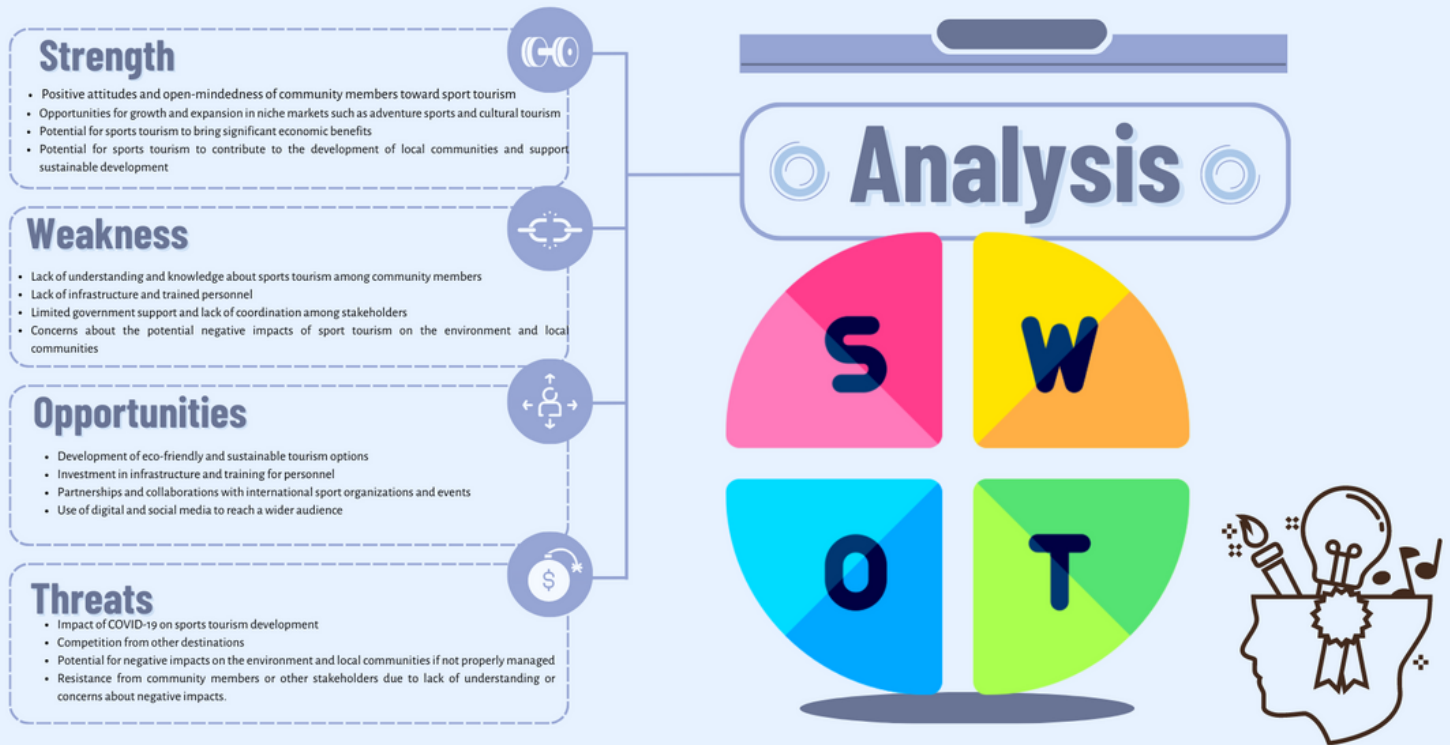
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INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS

SWOT Analysis



PESTEL



INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS

A **PESTLE** analysis is a tool used to evaluate the political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors that may affect a particular project or business. Based on the information provided in the previous responses, a PESTLE analysis for the development of sports tourism in Belize might look like this:

Political

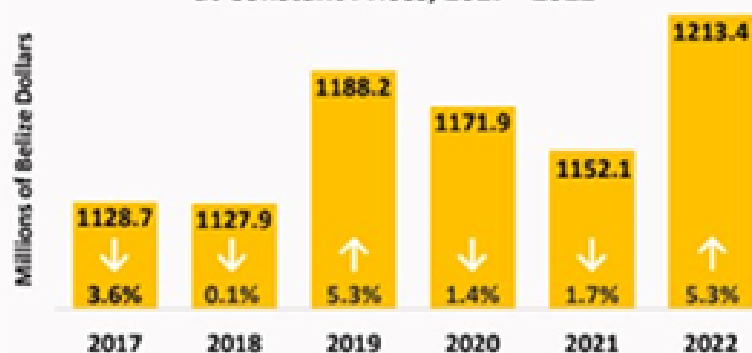
In Belize, the political landscape is dominated by a two-party system, with citizens primarily casting their ballots for either the United Democratic Party or the People's United Party. The current administration has demonstrated a pro-sports and pro-business development stance. This has resulted in various benefits for sports organizations, such as access to facilities, tax exemptions for land acquisition, financial support for national team programs, and the incorporation of sports and physical education in primary schools. Overall, the political atmosphere in Belize is characterized by stability.

Government policies and regulations can impact the development of sports tourism in Belize, such as laws and regulations related to tourism and the environment, as well as the level of government support for the industry. Belize's government has been supportive of tourism development, but the country has been facing financial challenges in recent years, and the allocation of funds for tourism development may be limited.

The stability of the government and political situation in the country can also affect the development of sports tourism, as political instability can deter tourists from visiting the country. Belize has had a relatively stable political situation in recent years, but the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the government's ability to support the tourism industry.

The level of cooperation and coordination among different government agencies and stakeholders can also impact the development of sports tourism. Belize has a Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora relations, which is responsible for the development and promotion of tourism, but there exists limited coordination between the Ministry of Tourism and other relevant government agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Health, which can affect the development of sports tourism.

Figure 1: First Quarter Gross Domestic Product at Constant Prices; 2017 - 2022



Source: Statistical Institute of Belize

Economical

The Statistical Institute of Belize's preliminary estimates for the second quarter of 2022 indicate that the country's overall economic activity increased by 5.3% (equivalent to BZD64 million) when compared to the same period in the previous year. This can be considered a reflection of the population's spending power and ultimately may lead to an increase in leisure spending. This increase in economic activity can be attributed to a number of factors such as growth in the tourism industry,

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INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS

Additionally, the increase in GDP can also be interpreted as an indication of an expanding economy and a growing standard of living for the people of Belize. The GDP growth rate is a key indicator of the overall health of an economy and this 5.3% increase is a positive sign for the future of the country.

The state of the economy in Belize can impact the development of sports tourism, such as the level of investment in infrastructure and the ability to attract tourists to the country. The World Bank data shows that the GDP per capita of Belize in 2019 was \$7,510.54, and the country has been facing a fiscal deficit and high debt levels, which can limit the capacity to invest in infrastructure and support the tourism industry.

The cost of living in Belize can also impact the development of sports tourism, as it can affect the prices of tourism products and services. According to Numbeo, the cost of living in Belize is relatively low compared to other countries in the region.

The exchange rate and the availability of foreign currency can also impact the development of sports tourism, as it can affect the affordability of tourism products and services for foreign tourists. The exchange rate of the Belize dollar to the US dollar is fixed at 2:1.

Cultural

Belize is known for its diverse cultural and ethnic makeup, with a variety of languages and customs coexisting within the population. Despite these cultural differences and social barriers, sports are a universal activity in Belize, with different sports being played among all ethnic groups and in every part of the country. Football and basketball are the two most popular sports. The composition of Belize's national teams reflects this diversity, with athletes from different ethnic backgrounds and from various regions of the country. This allows for a broader fan base that extends across ethnic barriers. According to the Statistical Institute of Belize (2022), 34% of the population is of mixed Maya and European descent (Mestizo), 35% are Kriols, about 10.6% are Maya, and about 6.1% are Afro-Amerindian (Garifuna). The remaining population includes European, East Indian, Chinese, Middle Eastern, and North American groups. Football is particularly popular among Mestizos and Kriols and as a result, it remains the most popular sport in Belize. However, it is worth noting that a significant proportion of the lower-income population belongs to these two ethnic groups, which may directly affect their spending power and ability to financially support sports in general.



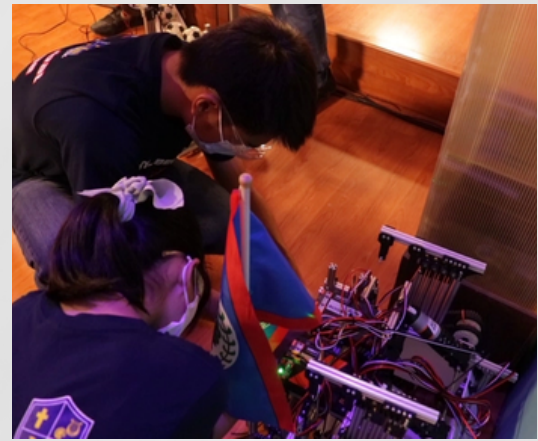
Social factors, such as the attitudes and perceptions of the community towards sports tourism, can impact the development of the industry. The survey results indicated that while many community members are open to the idea of sports tourism, there is a lack of understanding about what it entails and its potential benefits. Respondents also expressed concerns about the potential negative impacts on the environment and local communities.

The level of education and awareness about sports tourism can also impact the development of the industry, as it can affect the ability to attract tourists to the country and the quality of tourism products and services. According to the World Bank, the literacy rate in Belize is around 85%.

The cultural and natural resources of Belize can be used to create unique and authentic sports tourism experiences, which can attract specific segments of tourists. Belize has a diverse culture and natural beauty that can be used to develop unique and authentic sports tourism experiences

Technological

Belize has traditionally lagged behind the rest of the region in terms of technology adoption. However, according to the Statistical Institute of Belize (2022), there has been a significant increase in internet access, with the percentage of the population with internet access rising from 6% in 2000 to 52.3% in 2022. This increase in fast and affordable internet access has led to a solid online presence for Belizeans, with an estimated 160,000 to 170,000 Belizeans having some form of social media or online presence. This presents an opportunity



for sports tourism marketing and for the dissemination and collection of information. The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter has grown exponentially, with a reported 2.5 million active users in Belize in 2022.

Despite this recent increase in internet accessibility, the country still lags behind the rest of the region in terms of technology adoption. According to the World Bank, in 2020, Belize's ICT development index (IDI) was 0.53, which is lower than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (0.65) and the average for its income group (0.60). However, there is a potential for growth in this field as the government has been investing in the development of technology infrastructure and has implemented policies to promote digital transformation, e-commerce, and e-government.

Advancements in technology can greatly impact the development of sports tourism in Belize. For example, advancements in transportation and communication can make it easier for tourists to visit the country. While Belize has a well-developed transportation infrastructure, including an international airport and a network of roads, there are still limitations in terms of accessibility to some remote areas that can be used for sports tourism activities.

The use of digital and social media can also be a powerful tool for promoting sports tourism in Belize. With the increasing importance of digital marketing, the use of social media platforms and online travel agencies can be an effective way to reach a wider audience and increase the visibility of the country's sports tourism offerings. Additionally, the use of virtual and augmented reality experiences, and wellness and health-related activities, are new sports tourism trends that can be used to attract new segments of tourists. These technologies can be used to enhance the tourism experience, by providing a more immersive and interactive experience for tourists. Furthermore, it can be used to showcase the natural beauty and adventure activities of Belize in a more realistic way, which can **make it more attractive to potential tourists.**

Legal

Belize recognizes and protects private property rights, although enforcement can be inconsistent. Contracts are legally binding and enforceable. The judiciary system, while under-resourced, is generally independent. However, due to its location, porous borders, and poverty, Belize is vulnerable to illicit trafficking, illegal migration, transnational criminal organizations, and corruption. Complaints about government corruption in the areas of customs, land, and immigration are common. The top income and corporate tax rates are 25 percent, with petroleum profits being taxed at a rate of 40 percent. Other taxes include a goods and services tax and a stamp duty. The overall tax burden equals 32.4 percent of total domestic income. Government spending has amounted to 34.6 percent of total output (GDP) over the past three years, and budget deficits have averaged 5.2 percent of GDP.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTS



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32.4 percent of total domestic income. Government spending has amounted to 34.6 percent of total output (GDP) over the past three years, and budget deficits have averaged 5.2 percent of GDP. Public debt is equivalent to 127.4 percent of GDP. Bureaucratic inefficiencies make it relatively difficult to start a new business in Belize. The country's small size limits the development of a robust labor market, and many people are employed informally and in agriculture. The government continues to maintain price controls on basic foods (such as rice, sugar, bread, and flour) as well as on butane gas and all utilities. This legal environment can affect the development and growth of sports tourism as it may discourage investment in sports tourism infrastructure and facilities.

Legal factors, such as laws and regulations related to tourism and the environment, can greatly impact the development of sports tourism in Belize. While the country has laws and regulations related to tourism and the environment, there have been concerns about their enforcement and compliance. The lack of enforcement can lead to negative impacts on the environment and may discourage investment in sports tourism infrastructure and facilities.

The availability of legal and regulatory frameworks to support the development of sports tourism, such as certifications and standards, can also impact the development of sports tourism in Belize. Belize has certifications and standards for eco-tourism and sustainable tourism, but there is still a need for more rigorous and consistent certification and accreditation processes to ensure the quality of sports tourism experiences. This would attract more sustainable tourism and ensure that the environment and the local communities are not negatively impacted. Furthermore, it can help to promote Belize as a destination for responsible and sustainable tourism, which can attract more visitors who are looking for such experiences

Environmental

Belize is located in northern Central America, and it is bordered by Mexico on the north and Guatemala on the west and south. Including the offshore territorial limit of 20 km (12 miles), the national territory of Belize including the cayes and territorial sea is 46,620 km² (18,000 mi²), of which 49% is land. The country is known for its diverse landscape which includes rainforests, mountain ranges, savannas, and lush beaches.

Belize's climate varies from a subtropical climate in the northern part of the country to a tropical climate in southern Belize. Two weather seasons dominate the country's climate: a dry season extending from February to May, followed by the rainy season which peaks in July. There is a cool transition period extending from November to March separating the dry season from the rainy season. The mean annual rainfall increases sharply from about 50 inches (1,270 mm) at Corozal on the northern frontier to 175 inches (4,445 mm) at Punta Gorda in the south, while at Belize City rainfall amounts to about 75 inches (1,900 mm). There are, however, considerable yearly variations

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(1,270 mm) at Corozal on the northern frontier to 175 inches (4,445 mm) at Punta Gorda in the south, while at Belize City rainfall amounts to about 75 inches (1,900 mm). There are, however, considerable yearly variations throughout the country. Trade winds blow onshore most of the year, and from September to December northerly winds bring cooler drier air. Hurricanes (tropical cyclones) are a threat from July through November.

The environmental conditions of Belize play a crucial role in the development of sports tourism as the natural resources, wildlife, and the weather can be major attractions for visitors. The country's biodiversity and natural beauty make it an ideal destination for adventure and eco-tourism activities like hiking, bird watching, snorkeling, and scuba diving, among others. However, it is also important to ensure that these activities are carried out in a sustainable manner, that the environment is protected and that the local communities are not negatively impacted.

Environmental factors, such as the availability and preservation of natural resources, can impact the development of sports tourism in Belize. The country has a rich biodiversity and natural resources, but there are concerns about the sustainability of the use of these resources for sports tourism. Climate change and environmental disasters can also impact the development of sports tourism, as they can deter tourists from visiting the country. Climate change is affecting the country, with an increase in sea-level rise and more intense storms, which can impact the tourism industry.

The level of sustainability and eco-friendliness of sports tourism products and services can impact the development of sports tourism, as it can attract tourists who are looking for environmentally-friendly experiences. Belize has a growing eco-tourism and sustainable tourism industry, but there is still a need to further promote and develop sustainable practices and policies in the sports tourism sector.

This **PESTLE** analysis has highlighted the various factors that can impact the development of sports tourism in Belize. The political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental factors all play a crucial role in the development of the industry. A comprehensive understanding of these factors is important for the authorities and stakeholders in Belize to take into consideration when planning and developing sports tourism in the country. This will help ensure that the industry is sustainable and successful in the long term. Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that these factors are interrelated and can have a direct or indirect impact on the development of sports tourism. Therefore, it is crucial to approach the development of sports tourism with a holistic and integrated perspective, considering the interplay of these factors, in order to achieve the best possible outcome.

SECURING FINANCIAL STABILITY NECESSARY FOR DEVELOPING BELIZE'S SPORTS TOURISM INDUSTRY

Sports tourism is a rapidly growing industry that has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to countries and regions that are able to successfully host and promote major sporting events. However, in order for sporting organizations to be able to host and organize these events, it is crucial that they have access to the necessary resources. The primary source of funding for many sporting organizations is fundraising, grant assistance, and corporate partnerships. While these sources of funding can be helpful, they are often limited and may not provide enough support for organizations to host large-scale sports tourism events.

In order to address this issue and ensure that sports tourism initiatives are sustainable, it is important for the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) to work closely with all partners and stakeholders involved in sports tourism to develop a Sports Tourism Fund. This fund would be designed to increase the funding resources available for sporting organizations, enabling them to host and promote a wider range of events and bring more visitors to the country.

There are a number of different ways in which the BTB and other tourism stakeholders could contribute to the creation of a Sports Tourism Fund. One option could be to establish a public-private partnership, where the government and private sector organizations invest in the fund together. This could involve the BTB working with corporate sponsors and other businesses to contribute to the fund, while also seeking out grants and other forms of financial support from international organizations.

Another option could be to create a dedicated tax or fee on tourism-related activities, such as hotel stays or ticket sales, that would be used to support the fund. This could be a particularly effective strategy, as it would provide a steady stream of revenue that could be used to support sporting organizations and their events. Additionally, it would also ensure that the cost of supporting sports tourism initiatives is shared by all stakeholders, including visitors to the country.

In addition to these financial strategies, BTB and other tourism stakeholders should also focus on building strong relationships with sporting organizations and other partners in the sports tourism industry. This can be done by working closely with these organizations to understand their needs and providing them with the support and resources they need to host successful events. This could include providing training and education for event organizers and volunteers, as well as offering assistance with logistics, such as transportation and accommodation.

The BTB should also actively promote sports tourism in Belize and work to attract more major sporting events to the country. This could involve working with international sports organizations and event organizers to showcase the country's facilities and resources, as well as highlighting the country's unique culture and natural beauty. Additionally, BTB should also work to build a strong reputation for hosting successful sports tourism events and make sure that the country is known as an attractive destination for sports tourism.

Furthermore, the BTB should also work to create a favorable environment for sports tourism. This can be achieved by improving the infrastructure and facilities that are used to host sporting events, such as stadiums, arenas, and training centers. Additionally, the BTB should also work to ensure that there are adequate transportation and accommodation options available for visitors, as well as a wide range of activities and attractions to keep them entertained.

In conclusion, in order for sports tourism initiatives to become sustainable, it is essential for BTB and other tourism stakeholders to develop a Sports Tourism Fund. By increasing the funding resources available for sporting organizations, the BTB can help to ensure that they have the necessary resources to host and promote a wide range of events. Additionally, by building strong relationships with sporting organizations and other partners in the sports tourism industry, the BTB can help to

SECURING FINANCIAL STABILITY NECESSARY FOR DEVELOPING BELIZE'S SPORTS TOURISM INDUSTRY

ensure that events are well-organized and that visitors have a positive experience.

One important aspect of promoting sports tourism in Belize is to identify and target specific sports and events that would be well-suited to the country's resources and capabilities. For example, Belize has a rich and diverse natural environment, with a wide range of outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking, and bird watching, that could be promoted as part of a sports tourism package. Similarly, the country has a rich cultural heritage, with a wide range of historical sites and traditional festivals that could be integrated into sports tourism events.

Another important aspect of promoting sports tourism in Belize is building strong relationships with international sports organizations and event organizers. This can involve working with these organizations to understand their needs and requirements for hosting events, and making sure that the country has the necessary facilities and resources to meet these needs. Additionally, BTB should also work to build a reputation for hosting successful and well-organized sports tourism events, which will help to attract more events in the future.

Finally, it is important for BTB and other tourism stakeholders to work together to create a favorable environment for sports tourism. This can involve improving the infrastructure and facilities that are used to host sporting events, such as stadiums, arenas, and training centers, as well as ensuring that there are adequate transportation and accommodation options available for visitors, as well as a wide range of activities and attractions to keep them entertained. Additionally, it is crucial that the country's political and economic stability are maintained to attract and retain sports tourism.

In order to achieve these goals, the BTB should work closely with other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Tourism, as well as private sector organizations and sports clubs, to develop a comprehensive strategy for sports tourism. This strategy should include clear goals and objectives, as well as a detailed plan of action that outlines the steps that need to be taken to achieve these goals. Additionally, the BTB should also work to build a strong and cohesive team of professionals who have the skills and expertise needed to implement the strategy and achieve the desired outcomes.

Overall, the development of a Sports Tourism Fund is an essential step in ensuring that sports tourism initiatives in Belize are sustainable and that the country is able to capitalize on the economic benefits that come from hosting major sporting events. By working closely with partners and stakeholders, and by implementing a comprehensive and well-planned strategy, the BTB can help to ensure that Belize is able to attract and host a wide range of events and that sports tourism becomes a key contributor to the country's economy and reputation.



THE NEED FOR A SPORTS TOURISM FUND IN BELIZE

It is clear that there is a significant potential for sports tourism to bring economic benefits to Belize, and that the development of a Belize Sports Tourism Fund (BTSF) would be a crucial step in realizing this potential. By providing funding for sports tourism marketing and bid preparations, the BTSF would help to level the playing field with other countries in the region, making it easier for Belize to compete in major sporting events.

One key strategy for funding the BTSF could be to allocate a portion of hotel taxes collected by the BTB. This would provide a steady stream of revenue to support sports tourism initiatives, and would also ensure that the cost of supporting these initiatives is shared by all stakeholders, including visitors to the country. Additionally, by consulting with hotel and accommodation providers, the BTB could work to identify alternative incentives for these providers to participate in the BTSF, such as increased occupancy rates during off-peak and low-season periods.

It would also be beneficial for the BTB to identify a key spokesperson among hoteliers to promote the BTSF to the industry and to work with other tourism partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, restaurants, and other attractions to build support for the fund. By involving a wide range of stakeholders in the BTSF and demonstrating the potential benefits of sports tourism for the country, the BTB can help to ensure that the fund is well-supported and that sports tourism initiatives are sustainable in the long term.

In addition to the strategies mentioned above, BTB could also consider other ways to generate revenue for the BTSF. One approach could be to seek out sponsorships and partnerships with sports equipment manufacturers, sports apparel companies, and other related businesses. These companies could provide funding for the BTSF in exchange for advertising and promotional opportunities during the events. Another option could be to develop a ticketing system for sports tourism events and use the proceeds to finance the BTSF. This would not only provide a source of revenue for the fund but also create an additional revenue stream for the sporting organizations hosting the events.

It is also important to manage the BTSF effectively to ensure that the funds are used efficiently and effectively. This could involve creating a board of trustees to oversee the fund, developing a budget and spending plan, and implementing a system of accountability and transparency to ensure that the funds are used in the best interests of sports tourism in Belize.

Overall, the development of a Belize Sports Tourism Fund is a vital step in promoting sports tourism in Belize and realizing its potential economic benefits. By allocating a portion of hotel taxes, consulting with accommodation providers, involving other tourism partners, seeking out sponsorships and partnerships, implementing a ticketing system, and managing the fund effectively, the BTB can ensure that the BTSF is sustainable and successful. With the right strategies in place, sports tourism can become a key driver of economic growth and development in Belize.

The development of a Belize Sports Tourism Fund is a crucial step in ensuring that sports tourism initiatives in Belize are sustainable and that the country is able to capitalize on the economic benefits that come from hosting major sporting events. By allocating a portion of hotel taxes to the fund, consulting with accommodation providers, and involving other tourism partners, the BTB can work to create a favorable environment for sports tourism and ensure the success of the fund. This will ultimately lead to a positive impact on the country's economy and reputation as a destination for sports tourism.

TYPE OF EVENTS BELIZE CAN TARGET



There are over 2 dozen sporting bodies recognized by the National Sports Council, and each has international federations. Each of these sports has a number of championships, and these are normally segmented to ensure equality of competition:

- ▶ By age - youth age groups, seniors, masters, etc
- ▶ By gender - men's, women's, mixed
- ▶ By ability - Junior A, Junior B, etc
- ▶ By Characteristics
- ▶ By equipment type - sailing has championships for different types of boats; there are at least 19 sub-disciplines of equestrian events
- ▶ By geography - international, national championships, qualifiers, etc

Clearly, there are many competitive events within sports. In addition, other types of events offer the potential for sports tourism:

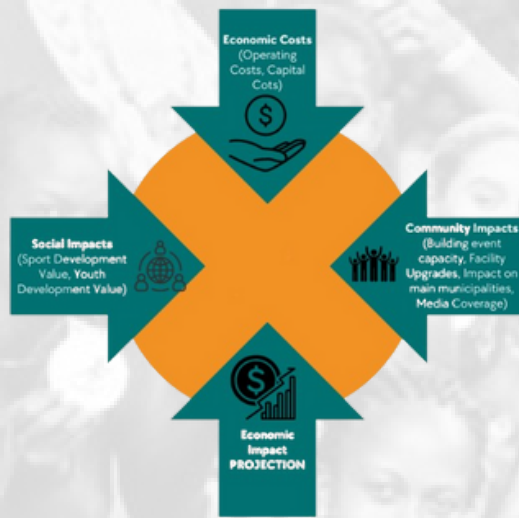
- ▶ Events for persons with a disability - Blind Sports, Special Olympics - both multi-sports events and single sports events,
- ▶ Events for likeminded people - Police and Fire Games, Gay Games, Military Sports events, ethnic sports events
- ▶ Meetings and conferences - AGMs of sports governing bodies, meetings of international coaches and referees
- ▶ Coaching and officiating clinics and courses - where these people are trained.

The number of sporting events that exist is startling. However, a strategic approach needs to be taken in identifying which events and what type of events best suit the Belizean Market based on the country's tourism infrastructure and sporting infrastructure. The question becomes how does Belize choose a set of events that it should host?



TYPE OF SPORTSING EVENTS THAT BELIZE CAN TARGET

The plethora of sporting events available is quite impressive. However, in order to effectively target the Belizean market, a strategic approach should be employed in selecting events that align with the country's existing tourism and sporting infrastructure. The question then arises: How can Belize effectively determine which events to host?



In broad terms, there are therefore four main criteria for consideration:

This process will assist stakeholders in sports tourism to identify which events align with the community's strategic objectives and assist event organizers in understanding how to optimize their events to provide greater economic benefits to the community.

The most viable event types for targeting are competitive, single sports events, such as international, national, or regional championships. These have been the primary event types that sports organizations in Belize have successfully brought to the country.

Created Events

Custom-designed, invitational events, also known as "created events," have been gaining popularity in the tourism industry as a way to attract visitors and generate revenue during low occupancy seasons. These events are tailored to target specific locations and capitalize on their unique geographical features, such as the Placencia Peninsula.

One of the benefits of creating events is that they can fill specific niches in the tourism market. For example, a gastronomic festival in a small town that is known for its local cuisine, or a music festival in a city with a rich music history. These events can attract visitors who are interested in those specific niches and help to promote the destination as a whole.

However, organizing created events can be a challenging task. One of the main challenges is recruiting volunteers to help organize the event. Unlike traditional sports events, which often have established organizational structures, created events are typically organized by a small group of individuals or a community organization. This can make it difficult to find enough volunteers to help with the planning and execution of the event. Additionally, created events often require a significant amount of resources, such as funding, equipment, and infrastructure, which can be difficult to secure.

Another challenge is the coordination of different stakeholders. Created events involve a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, private businesses, and community organizations, each with their own interests and objectives. Coordinating these stakeholders can be difficult, and requires a high level of communication and collaboration.

Despite these challenges, created events have the potential to be a valuable tool for tourism development. They can help to attract visitors to specific locations, generate revenue, and promote the destination. However, to be successful, they require careful planning, coordination, and resources. It's important to understand the logistics, the target audience, and the goals of the event, and to have a clear plan in place to execute it. To overcome the challenges of organizing created events, it's helpful to work with experienced professionals, such as event planners, tourism experts, and marketing professionals. These experts can help to identify opportunities, develop strategies, and secure resources to make the event a success.

In conclusion, created events are becoming a popular strategy for tourism development, especially during low occupancy seasons. They can help to fill specific niches in the tourism market and promote the destination. However, organizing created events can be challenging, particularly in terms of recruiting volunteers, coordinating different stakeholders, and securing resources. With proper planning, coordination, and resources, created events can be a valuable tool for tourism development.

PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

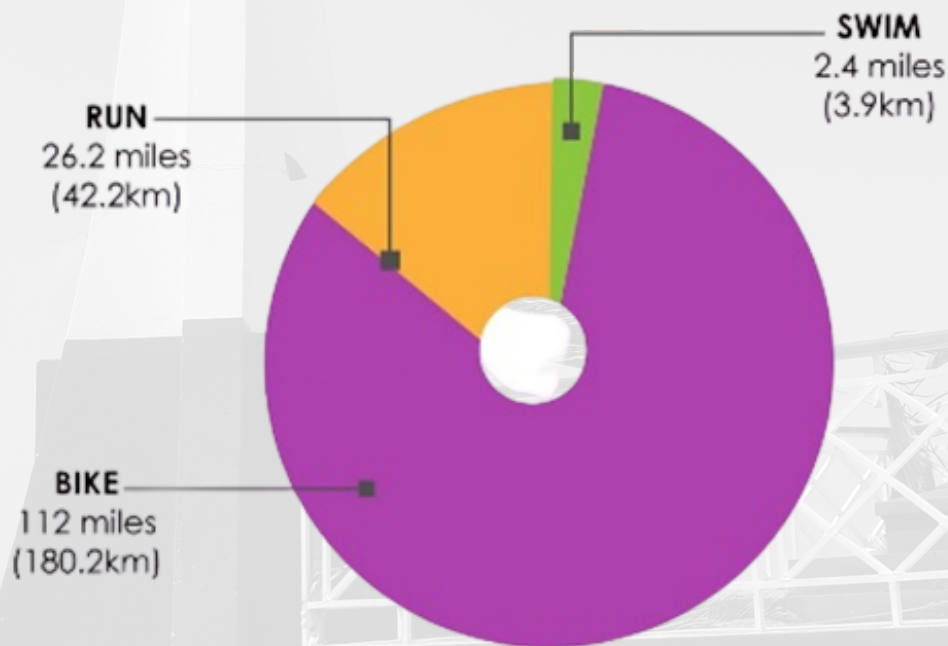
The IRONMAN is a highly-regarded triathlon event that draws a large number of participants and spectators, many of whom come from high socio-economic backgrounds. These individuals are often highly dedicated to training and preparation, spending months and even years getting ready for the event. They also tend to travel with teams of supporters, who will often stay in hotels, eat at local restaurants, and visit other attractions while they are in town. This generates significant revenue for the host city and surrounding areas.

The popularity of the IRONMAN is evident in the fact that registration for the event often fills up within just a few hours of becoming available. Participants come from all over the country and the world to test their endurance and push themselves to the limit. Many of these tourists are also likely to return to the host city in the future, perpetuating the economic impact of the event.

Belize, as a destination, can use similar marketing strategies to promote a created event such as the IRONMAN. By highlighting the unique geographical features of the country, such as its beaches, jungles, and Mayan ruins, Belize can attract participants and spectators from all over the world who are interested in testing their endurance in a unique and challenging environment. Additionally, Belize can leverage its rich cultural heritage and history to attract visitors who are interested in learning more about the country's past and present.

The IRONMAN is an elite triathlon event that generates significant revenue for host cities through tourism. Belize can leverage its unique geographical and cultural features to create a similar event and attract participants and spectators from all over the world. With the right planning and execution, this event can become a popular and successful way to promote tourism in Belize and generate revenue for the local economy.

Full-Ironman Distances



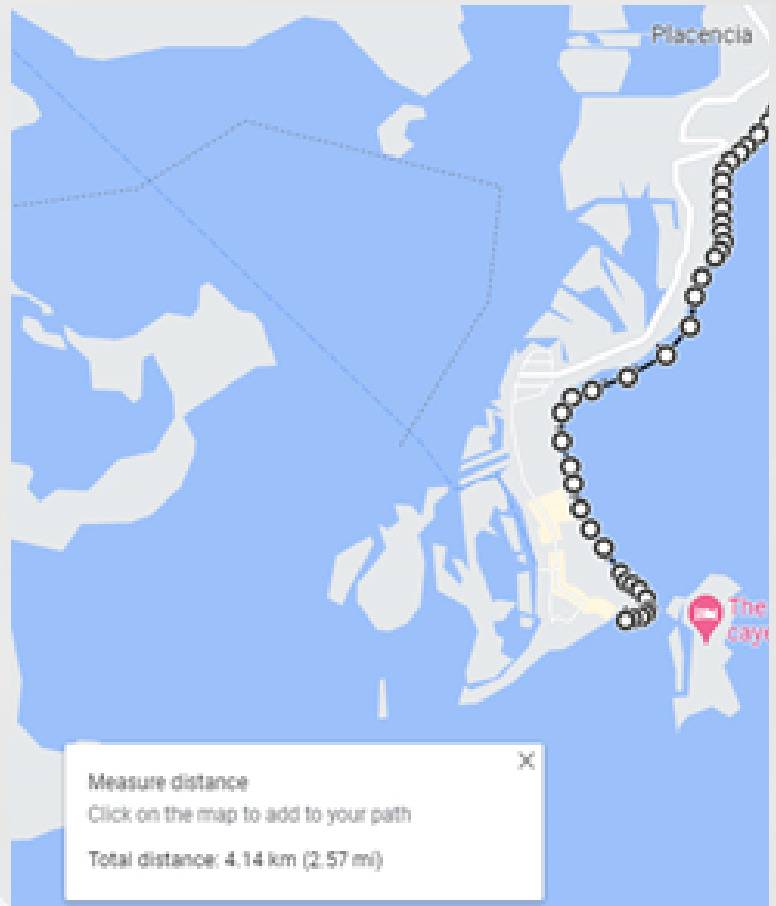
There are basic standard course requirements that are needed in order to be deemed an IRONMAN challenge.

PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

The Belize Tourism Board's newly formed Sports Tourism Development Unit would engage the IronMAN Group in order to sanction the newly created event. Using Belize's Natural Terrain- the following course can be created

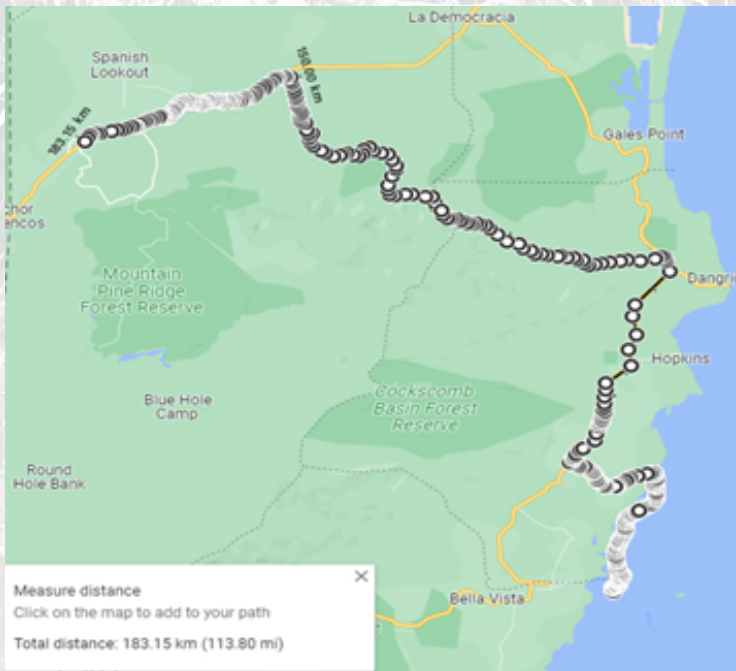
Swimming - The swimming segment provides a challenging start to the event, as it requires participants to navigate the open waters of the Caribbean Sea. The distance of 2.57 miles makes it a moderate swim, suitable for experienced swimmers, but the beautiful scenery and the opportunity to discover the local culture make it worth the effort. Additionally, the event could be organized in collaboration with the local communities, to promote sustainable tourism, and support the conservation of the marine ecosystem.

After completing the swimming segment, participants will move on to the next segments of the event, which include riding and running. The event is designed to showcase the diversity of Belize's landscapes, culture, and people, and to provide a unique and challenging experience for participants. The event can be marketed to attract adventurous and active tourists, who are looking for an opportunity to test their endurance and push themselves to the limit.



PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

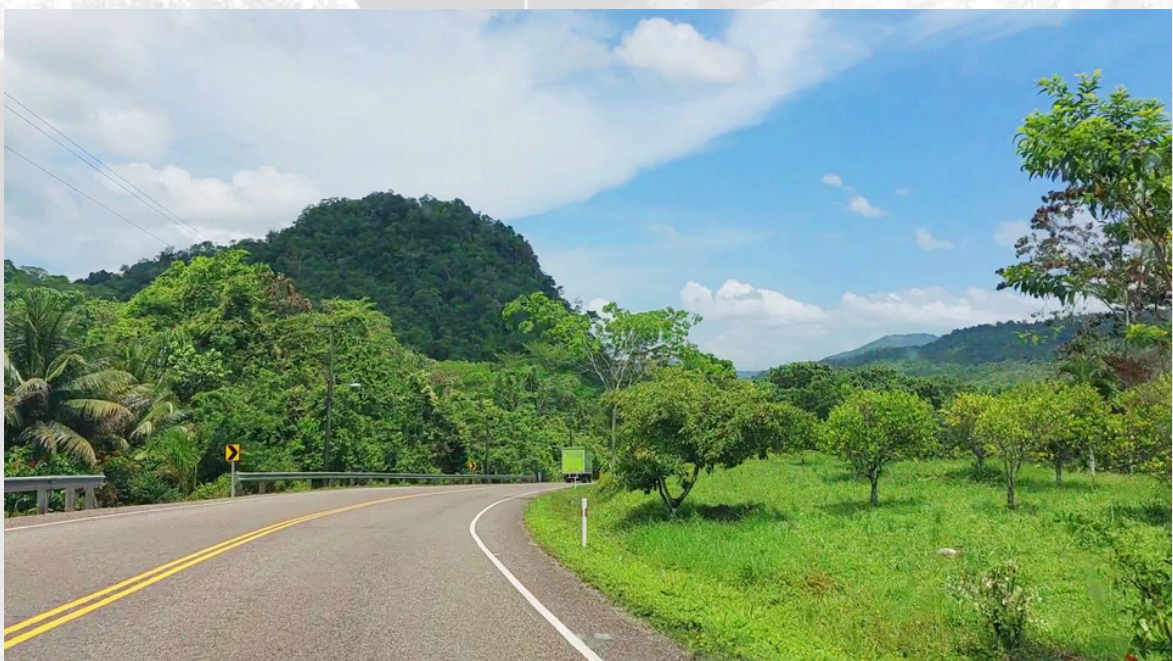
Riding – Placencia Peninsula offers a great starting point for a scenic route. The ride begins on the Placencia Peninsula and heads south on the Southern highway, passing through picturesque countryside and small villages. The route then turns onto the Hummingbird highway, known for its scenic views and winding roads. This highway takes riders through the Capital City of Belmopan and the surrounding countryside, offering a glimpse of the daily life of the local people. The ride continues on the George Price highway,



named after the late Prime Minister of Belize, who played an important role in the country's history. This highway takes riders through the beautiful mountains of the Cayo District, with incredible views of the lush jungle and rolling hills. The route then takes riders through the bustling towns of San Ignacio and Santa Elena before reaching the finish point at the Santa Elena roundabout, a total of approximately 113.8 miles.

This route offers a great way to experience the diversity of Belize's landscapes, culture, and people. The distance of 113.8 miles makes this a challenging ride, suitable for experienced riders, but the stunning views and the opportunity to experience the local culture make it worth the effort. This type of created event could be promoted as a way to attract adventurous and active tourists looking for a unique and challenging experience.

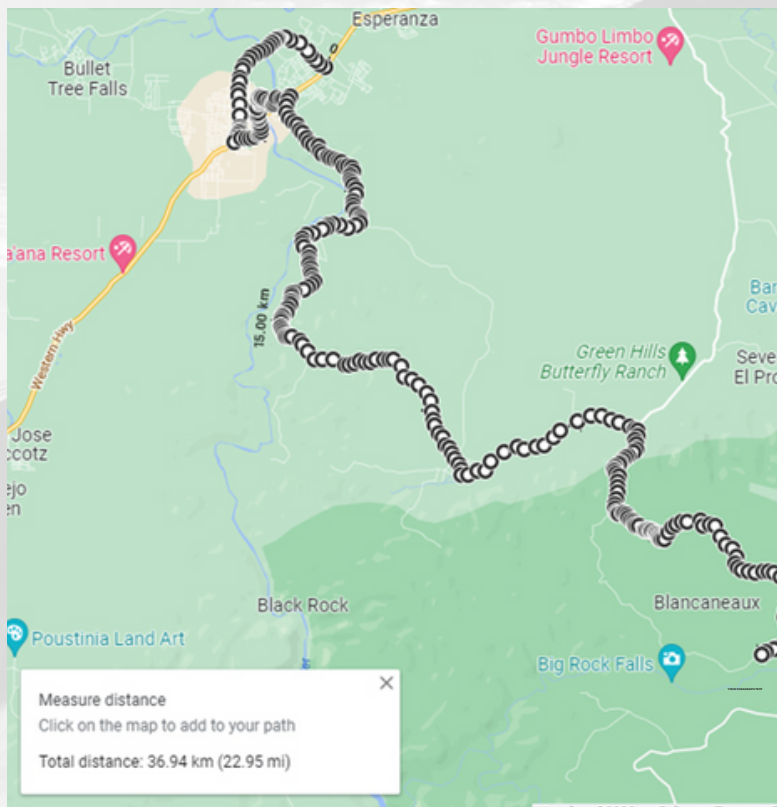
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PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

Running - The route starts at the Santa Elena roundabout, and runs through the bustling town of San Ignacio, offering runners the chance to experience the local culture and way of life. The route then takes runners through the newly built Santa Elena Bridge, which offers a panoramic view of the surrounding area. After crossing the bridge, runners will continue on Joseph Andrews Drive, passing through the beautiful countryside of the Cayo District.

The route then takes runners back through downtown San Ignacio, crossing the wooden bridge to return to Santa Elena, and then onto the Cristo Rey road for a final ending point at Blancaneaux Lodge. This route offers a great way to experience the diversity of Belize's landscapes, culture, and people. The distance of 22.95 miles makes this a challenging run, suitable for experienced runners, but the stunning views and the opportunity to experience the local culture make it worth the effort.



Summary:

This type of created event could also be promoted as a way to showcase the diversity of Belize's landscapes and culture and attract tourists who are interested in outdoor activities and adventure travel. The event could be marketed to target specific demographics, such as endurance athletes, nature enthusiasts, and eco-tourists. Additionally, the event could be organized in collaboration with local communities and organizations to promote sustainable tourism and support conservation efforts.

The event could also be marketed as a destination event, where tourists can travel to Belize specifically to participate in the event and make it a part of their vacation. This would include offering package deals that include accommodation, transportation, and other

activities and tour options. This would also be a great opportunity to showcase other attractions and activities in Belize and to encourage tourists to stay longer and explore more of the country.

In addition, the event could also be promoted through social media and online platforms, such as blogs and online communities, to reach a wider audience and attract participants from all over the world. This could include creating a website for the event, where participants can register, view the route and get information about the event. The event could also be live-streamed so that people can follow the progress of the participants, and see the beautiful landscapes of Belize.

Promoting a created event such as the one described, as a way to attract adventurous and active tourists looking for a unique and challenging experience, can be a great way to promote tourism in Belize. The event has the potential to showcase the diversity of Belize's landscapes and culture and attract tourists who are interested in outdoor activities and adventure travel. Additionally, by collaborating with local communities and organizations, the event can support conservation efforts, and promote sustainable tourism.

PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

Tourism Impact for the event:

The statistics extracted from the Chattanooga IRONMAN event show that the event had a significant economic impact on the local economy. The event attracted a large number of visitors and spectators, including a minimum of 10,270 out-of-town visitors, who generated significant revenue for the local area through lodging, dining, and other activities.

The event also attracted a high-income demographic, with participants and visitors primarily from upper-middle class (\$60-100k) and upper-class (\$100k+) household income levels. This demographic is known to have higher spending power and tends to spend more on their travel experiences.

The event also had a positive impact on the local tourism industry, with participants and visitors spending an average of \$1598 and \$1137 respectively, while in the area. Participants stayed an average of 3.7 nights, and visitor spectators 3.3 nights, for a total of 27,266 lodging nights.

The event generated a total direct impact on the local economy of \$10,319,097, with participants generating an estimated \$2,378,646 and visitors an estimated \$7,940,451. When factoring in indirect and induced impacts, the event contributed \$13,352,550.40 to the local economy.

The itemized and total expenditures for visiting participants and spectators can be further broken down into various categories, such as lodging, transportation, dining, and recreation. This would provide more insight into the specific areas of the economy that benefited the most from the event.

In conclusion, The IRONMAN event in Chattanooga had a significant economic impact on the local economy. The event attracted a large number of visitors and spectators, including a high-income demographic, which generated significant revenue for the local area through lodging, dining, and other activities. The event also had a positive impact on the local tourism industry and contributed significantly to the local economy through direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

	Participants (n=1498)	Spectators (n=6593)
Food	286	211
Lodging	692	477
Entertainment	150	114
Shopping	292	144
Transportation	120	111
Other	58	80
Total	1598	1137
Direct Impact	\$2,378,646	\$7,940,451

PROSPECTIVE CREATED EVENT CASE STUDY

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Total Direct Impact = \$10,319,097

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The economic boost from the event also has indirect impacts, as businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and other facilities purchase additional supplies to support the visitors. This can have a positive impact on the local economy, as it supports the growth of local businesses.

The extra income generated from the event will also induce spending from companies and employees who have extra expendable income. These impacts were estimated via an input-output model using only marginal effects to account for "leakages" that occur from purchases of non-local goods.

While the report provides a good indication of the direct economic impact of the event, it's important to note that it doesn't include the full picture of the event's impacts on the local community. Other costs and indirect impacts should also be considered when evaluating the overall impact of the event on the local economy.

OTHER TYPES OF EVENTS

None Competitive Events:

There is a wide range of non-competitive events that can fit into a sports tourism strategy:

- ▶Sports conferences and meetings – sports governing bodies have annual general meetings and many other meetings to discuss everything from rule changes to drug policies. Some of these meetings are open for bid, especially for larger sports and organizations, but many are simply set by the board.
- ▶Training courses and clinics – athlete training, team preparation, spring training...all are key parts of the sports industry and involve participants' spending in other cities on hotels and related tourism expenses. These are often organized by the sports governing bodies, but can also be privately organized by individuals or by colleges and universities. Professional Sports Teams

Professional Sports Teams

Professional teams in North America are often looking for destinations to host off-season camps and training, especially during the winter. This is because the harsh weather conditions in many parts of North America during the winter make it difficult for teams to train and practice effectively. Hosting off-season camps and training in warmer destinations can provide teams with the ideal training conditions and facilities they need to prepare for the upcoming season.

Off-season camps and training can include a variety of activities such as conditioning, skill development, and team bonding exercises. These events can be organized by professional teams, sports governing bodies, or other organizations and can attract a large number of athletes, coaches, and sports enthusiasts.

This type of sports tourism can generate significant economic benefits for the host destination. Professional teams and their entourage will spend money on lodging, transportation, dining, and other activities, which can have a positive impact on the local economy. In addition, off-season camps and training can also generate media exposure for the host destination, which can attract more tourists in the future.

In conclusion, professional teams in North America are often looking for destinations to host off-season camps and training, especially during the winter. This type of sports tourism can provide teams with the ideal training conditions and facilities they need to prepare for the upcoming season. It also generates significant economic benefits for the host destination and can attract more tourists in the future.

SPORTS TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Sustainability is a critical issue that has been at the forefront of global discourse in recent years. The tourism industry, in particular, has been identified as a key contributor to sustainable development and the achievement of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sports tourism, as a segment of the broader tourism industry, also plays an important role in promoting sustainable development.

One of the key strengths of sports tourism is its ability to engage individuals in physical activity. Regular physical activity is essential for overall health and well-being and is a key component of many SDGs, including SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). By providing opportunities for individuals to participate in physical activity, sports tourism can help promote healthy lifestyles and contribute to the achievement of these SDGs.

Another key strength of sports tourism is its ability to provide opportunities for interactions between individuals and communities. The social interactions that occur during sports events and activities can foster a sense of community and belonging, which is essential for social cohesion and sustainable development. This aspect of sports tourism aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), which emphasizes the importance of collaboration and cooperation in achieving the SDGs.

Finally, sports tourism has a high development potential almost anywhere. Small events or light activities like walking can be organized in almost any location, making sports tourism accessible to a wide range of communities. This allows sports tourism to contribute to sustainable development in a variety of settings, from urban to rural areas. This aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), which focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation.

In conclusion, sports tourism can play a significant role in promoting sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. Its ability to engage individuals in physical activity, provide opportunities for interactions, and have high development potential make it a unique and valuable contributor to sustainable development. However, it is important that sports tourism is developed and managed with consideration of the SDGs to ensure that it is truly sustainable. By aligning sports tourism with the SDGs, we can create opportunities for sustainable development in communities around the world.



SPORTS TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

SDG'S	How sports tourism can contribute to SDGs	What needs to be considered when developing sports tourism and advancing the SDGs
<p>SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere + SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>	<p>Jobs and income opportunities: Sports tourism, as other segments of tourism, provides jobs and income opportunities including those for less favored groups. Depending on the nature of sports tourism products and experiences developed, local people can work as instructors and guides who are likely to be paid more than average for their special skills. New businesses catering to sports tourists can be also expected: e.g., equipment rentals, transports services, etc.</p> <p>Visitor spending: Sports tourists tend to spend more than average tourists (for renting equipment, hiring instructors, participation fees, etc.). Sports events, even small ones, attract participants and spectators, whose spending at the destination directly brings in economic benefits. Sports tourists tend to enjoy the destination's other attractions, which results in more spending.</p> <p>Competitiveness: Sports tourism can enhance a destination's attractiveness and competitiveness by expanding the destination's tourism offer. This helps increase a length of stay and spending of visitors. Sports tourism products and sports events can contribute to dispersal of tourists spatially and temporally when they are organized in a less-visited area of the destination or in off-peak season.</p>	<p>Partnerships and community involvement: Successful development of sports tourism requires close cooperative relationship among stakeholders in sports (including sports associations) and tourism sectors, and private and public sectors. Involvement of the communities is also crucial for sports tourism to benefit the destination as a whole and enhance welfare of the locals, the disadvantaged in particular. Engaging local people is crucial in various ways since it enables them to act for tourism development and improvement of quality of life of their own. .</p> <p>Support of the locals: Hiring local people, encouraging local entrepreneurs and utilizing local products help minimize economic leakage and maximize local benefits. Employees for sports tourism are often required to have special skills, especially as instructors and guides. Therefore, training opportunities need to be provided for local people. It is preferable that new or expanded business opportunities brought in by sports tourism are materialized by local SMEs and it is necessary to provide them with business advice and micro finance.</p> <p>Sports events: When a sports event is planned, the type and size needs to be appropriate based on the capacity and characteristics of the destination. Timing and venue of a sports event should be considered with the objectives of the event taken into account. In order to distinguish the event from others, it is important to add something with local flavors: for example, combining sports activities with local culture and gastronomy and offering an opportunity to interact with the locals. Also it can be considered to offer incentives (e.g., coupons) to participants to spend more at local shops, restaurants and other services. Efforts in public relations should be made since sports events are a good opportunity of promotion through media. If the event is held regularly, it is possible to achieve long-term positive impacts</p> <p>Sports events for a cause: Sports events can be held for a cause, where part of participation fees goes to projects or charities to help local communities. This not only helps communities but also</p>

SPORTS TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

		<p>enhances visitor satisfaction and visitors' mental attachment to the destination, which stimulates repeat visits and good word of mouth.</p> <p>New sports: A destination can even create a new sports or sports event taking advantage of its unique natural and cultural heritage. It may start small, but it can be a major attraction if it becomes popular to visitors and residents alike</p> <p>Combining sports tourism with other tourism resources: Sports tourists are likely to want to experience other attractions during their stay at a destination. Participants of a sports event, non-competitive ones in particular, tend to take advantage of the event opportunity to discover other tourist attractions at a destination. Therefore it is important to combine sports tourism with other tourism resources and promote them together. This also helps distinguish a destination from others and bring more benefits to a destination as a whole.</p> <p>Safety: Whatever sports tourism is developed, safety is the utmost important. Sports activities must be programmed with minimum risk. Participants need to be informed of the risk and safety measures and act responsibly. Instructors and guides need to have a good knowledge of how to act in emergency through trainings. Visitors, employees and businesses should be appropriately insured</p>
<p>SDG 3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	<p>Well-being of tourists: Sports tourism enhances physical and mental well-being of participants. It helps maintain or improve health of tourists. Participants of sports tourism can also have positive emotions such as fun and excitement, a sense of togetherness of fellow travelers, and feelings of accomplishment and self-esteem. For youth, sports tourism helps them achieve both educational and personal development goals while they are having fun with friends.</p> <p>Welfare of the locals: Sports tourism provides residents of the destination with sports opportunities and can have impacts on the residents similar to those on tourists, which leads to healthy and active lifestyle. Sports activities can bring about self-fulfillment and enhance self-confidence among local people, through which the locals are empowered</p>	<p>Participation of residents: It is preferable to promote sports activities not only to visitors but also local residents for health and well-being of their own. If visitors and residents participate in the same sports programs, it also brings about good opportunities for them to interact, which enhance visitor satisfaction and local pride. In this sense, sports opportunities for the locals and sports tourism can be developed hand in hand</p>

SPORTS TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

<p>SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	<p>Jobs and income opportunities: Jobs and income opportunities mentioned above are also relevant here. Women can take jobs from sports tourism. Nowadays, more women take sports holidays and women-only travel groups are on the rise, which may expand opportunities for local women to cater to these groups.</p> <p>Athletes as a role model: Female athletes participating in sports tourism or events can be an inspiring role model for the local women</p>	<p>Consideration of women: It is important to provide training and micro finance for women, sometimes intentionally, to enhance empowerment of women. It is beneficial to create opportunities for women in the destination to meet female athletes to get inspired</p>
<p>SDG 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries + SDG 11 – Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p>	<p>Accessibility: Accessible sports tourism products (e.g., hand bikes) provide people with disabilities, both residents and visitors alike, with opportunities for sports. Para sports activities can be enjoyed by everybody including tourists and residents with and without disabilities. Development of accessible sports tourism can improve general accessibility in the destination by provision of not only such tourism products but also accessible accommodation and transports. Accessible sports tourism also helps enhance understanding of people with disabilities in society and engage the disabled in social activities.</p>	<p>Enhancement of accessibility: Accessible sports tourism should be considered as an accelerator for social inclusiveness with local needs taken into consideration.</p>
<p>SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns + SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts + SDG 14 – Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development + SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystem and halt biodiversity loss</p>	<p>Enhancing awareness and encouraging environmental measures: Nature-based sports tourism provides opportunities to directly experience and enjoy the nature. As such, it relies on the very presence of natural resources. Global warming has negative impacts on sports tourism; loss of biodiversity affects diving; and loss of fauna and flora degrades enjoyment of hiking and trekking. Thanks to this close relationship with natural-environment, sports tourism can play an important role to enhance awareness of nature’s value and importance of its protection, and to encourage measures for environmental preservation among travelers, the locals and the tourism industry</p>	<p>Sustainable use of natural resources: Sports tourism must be developed taking into account sustainability of natural resources including biodiversity. And nature-based sports tourism must champion the preservation of natural environment without which it cannot sustain. Preservation of landscape and avoidance of visual pollution should also be considered. Tourism fees can be used for preservation of natural resources</p> <p>Environmental measures: Sports tourism operators should make the best efforts in taking environmental measures: for example, to use motors and other equipment with less (preferably no) emissions of CO2, noise and pollutants, to reuse/recycle sports equipment and to restrict use of hazardous materials (e.g., pesticide). Sports resorts and events should be managed in an environmentally friendly way (efficient water and energy use, waste management, recycling, etc.). Sports tourism operators and sports event organizers (large ones in particular) can consider sustainability in choosing suppliers and products.</p>
<p>SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all</p>	<p>Promoting mutual understanding: Sports tourism provides encounters between people of diverse cultural backgrounds from all over the world and let them interact with each other through sports</p>	<p>Encouraging interactions: It is important to ensure opportunities where the locals and visitors can interact; it can be a sports activity itself, a specially created space</p>
<p>and build inclusive institutions + SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</p>	<p>activities. It can foster friendship and mutual understanding, laying the foundation of more peaceful societies. It also helps the locals and visitors have friendly relationship through sports and other activities.</p>	<p>such as fan zones or programs that both residents and visitors can participate</p>

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Community benefits of sports tourism include the promotion of healthy lifestyles through increased physical activity, the fostering of social cohesion and community spirit through interactions and the creation of a sense of belonging, and the development of resilient communities through the promotion of sustainable development.

Economic benefits of sports tourism include the generation of revenue through the increased tourism that sports events and activities can bring, the creation of jobs in the tourism and sports industries, and the development of local economies through the construction and maintenance of sports facilities and of sports facilities and infrastructure.

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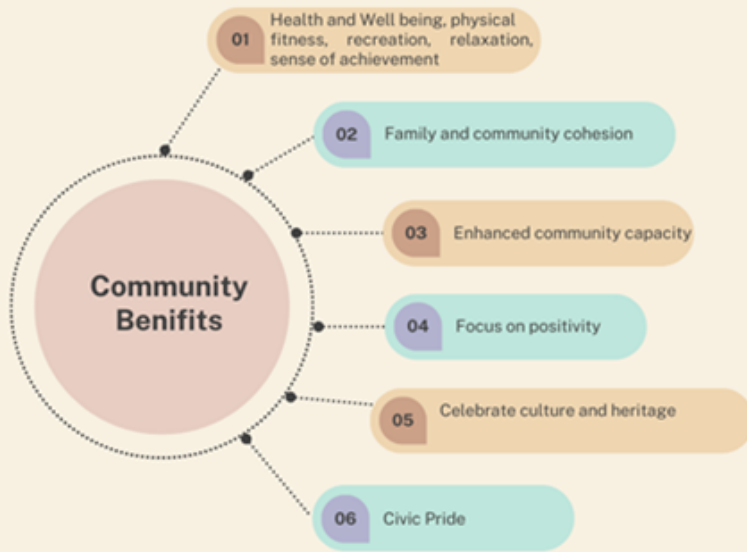
In addition to these benefits

its, sports tourism can also help to raise the profile of a destination and attract new visitors, leading to the diversification of the tourism industry. It can also contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage and environmental conservation, as well as encourage the development of sustainable transport and accommodation options.

Overall, sports tourism can be an effective tool for promoting sustainable development and achieving the SDGs. However, it is important to ensure that the development and management of sports tourism take into account the needs and concerns of local communities and that the benefits are shared equitably among all stakeholders.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN



It is true that many of the direct economic benefits from sports tourism flow to event organizers, private businesses, and the government in the form of sales and income taxes. However, it is also important to note that these benefits can also be distributed more widely to the local community. This can be achieved through the use of local suppliers and vendors, the hiring of local staff, and the implementation of programs that support local businesses.

In addition, sports tourism can also help to boost the country's tourism sector by providing opportunities for national media exposure. This can help to raise the profile of the destination and attract new visitors, leading to

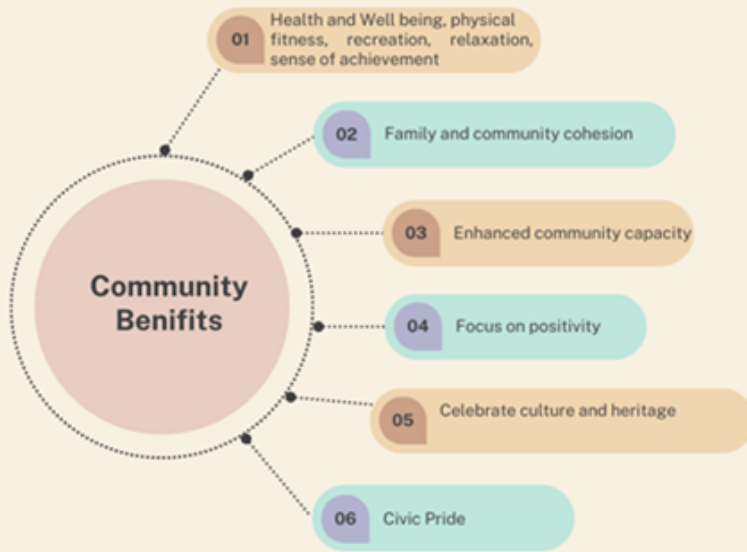
increased tourism and economic benefits for the local community.

The Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan can be a valuable tool for ensuring that the benefits of sports tourism are distributed equitably among all stakeholders, including the local community. The plan can be designed to focus on the development of sports facilities and infrastructure, the promotion of sports tourism as a key component of the country's tourism industry, and the creation of programs that support local businesses and communities.

Overall, sports tourism has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to a country. However, it is important to ensure that these benefits are distributed equitably among all stakeholders and that the development and management of sports tourism take into account the needs and concerns of local communities. By following a comprehensive strategy such as the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan, countries like Belize can ensure that they are able to maximize the economic benefits of sports tourism while also promoting sustainable development.

The Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan is an important strategy that will provide a comprehensive approach to the development of sports tourism in Belize. By providing a clear and actionable roadmap for the development of sports tourism in the country, the plan will help to ensure that the benefits of sports tourism are distributed equitably among all stakeholders, including the local community. By following a comprehensive strategy such as the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan, countries like Belize can ensure that they are able to maximize the economic benefits of sports tourism while also promoting sustainable development.

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MISSION AND VISSION

Mission

"Our mission is to position Belize as a premier sports tourism destination in the region by creating innovative and sustainable tourism products in partnership with sports, tourism, and business organizations while maximizing the potential of the country."

Vission

"Our vision is to showcase Belize's natural beauty and resources as a premier destination for sports tourism in the region, offering unique and diverse sports experiences, utilizing sustainable tourism practices, and promoting the growth and development of the Belizean economy and society."

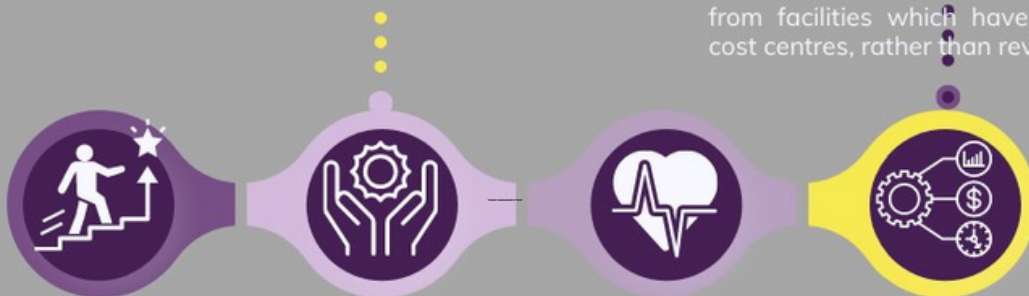
Building towards Belize's Vision

Building Community Legacy and Enriching Quality of Life

Sports events enrich the quality of life. The legacies they leave provide ongoing recreational opportunities. Watching high-performance sport events provides children and young people with role models and inspiration. Sports participation increases with exposure to high-performance events.

Spending Wisely and investing Strategically

Where major sports events are planned with major facility legacies, the central government will also be a partner. The concept of 'legacy' is fundamental to modern sport tourism planning. A focus on sport events within the regular capital funding processes of a country will allow revenue streams to be leveraged from facilities which have traditionally been cost centres, rather than revenue centres.



Increasing Growth and Opportunities

Tourism is a major international growth industry and sports tourism is a rapidly growing market segment. Sports events can bring people to Belize, who will spend money in its hotels, restaurants and shops.

Creating a healthy and safe country

A country with high participation rates in sports and related recreation activities is usually healthier than one with a lower participation rate. In the long term, healthy people are attracted to countries where they can maintain their lifestyles.

1. Foster Partnership that will advance the development of Sports Tourism in Belize

Objective - To build leadership capacity to implement the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan

By building leadership capacity, Belize can ensure that it has a strong team of professionals in place to guide the development of sports tourism in the country and to implement the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan effectively.

Recommended Actions

- Appointment of a Director of Sports Tourism Development within the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) to lead the implementation of the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan.
- Allocation of resources to enable the Director of Sports Tourism Development to operationalize the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan.
- Development of a Sports Tourism Committee that brings together public and private sector stakeholders to provide guidance and direction for the development of sports tourism in Belize.
- Establishment of an ad-hoc internal Sports Events Supports Team that includes dedicated staff representatives from key departments within the BTB to assist in securing information and resources in a timely manner.
- The establishment of ad-hoc Major events supports a team that includes representation from emergency services, law enforcement, the National Sports Council, and the Olympic and Commonwealth Games Committee to ensure the smooth execution of major sports events.
- Advocacy for additional budgetary allocations for the National Sports Council to support Sports Tourism.
- These actions aim to create a collaborative environment that brings together the government, private sector, and other key stakeholders to actively participate in the development of sports tourism in Belize, and ensure that the resources are available to implement the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan.

2. Create A Hosting Policy to Assist in the growth of the Sports Tourism Industry in Belize

Objective – Create a Hosting Policy for Belize

Creating a Hosting Policy for Belize is an important step in developing and promoting sports tourism in the country. A Hosting Policy can provide a framework for the organization and execution of sports events and ensure that they are of high quality and leave a positive impact on the country

Recommended Actions

- Develop a hosting policy document in collaboration with key stakeholders including the Belize Tourism Board (BTB), National Sports Council, Olympic and Commonwealth Games Committee, and other relevant organizations, to ensure buy-in and support for the policy.
- Create a hosting policy that supports the bid development process by outlining the procedures and requirements for submitting bids to host sports events.
- Ensure that the hosting policy properly describes the country's capacity in terms of available facilities, transportation infrastructure, and other resources that can support the hosting of sports events.
- Post the Hosting Policy on BTB's website to make it easily accessible to potential event organizers, sports organizations, and other stakeholders.
- Review the Hosting Policy regularly to ensure it is kept up to date and make additions as they become relevant, such as best practices, new legislations, and updates to facilities.
- By taking these recommended actions, Belize can establish a comprehensive and effective Hosting Policy that will guide the organization and execution of sports events in the country, promoting the development of sports tourism in Belize.



3. Secure Financial Stability through the establish a Sports Tourism Fund to enhance Belize's Sporting organization's ability to finance and bid for events

Objective - Securing financial stability for the development of sports tourism in Belize is essential for the growth and success of the industry. One way to achieve this is through the establishment of a Sports Tourism Fund. The aim of this fund would be to improve the country's capacity to bid for and finance more events, as well as enhance the positive impacts of sports tourism.

Recommended Actions

- Obtain buy-in from tourism stakeholders to promote the establishment and use of a Sports Tourism Fund, as well as establish protocols and methods for how they can support the Belize Tourism Board's (BTB) sports tourism efforts.
- Explore other methods to secure funding, such as fundraising, grant assistance, and corporate sponsorship.
- Create a plan for the organizational structure of the Sports Tourism Fund to ensure accountability and transparency. This structure should include the roles and responsibilities of all committee members, as well as protocols for the use of the funds.
- Develop a marketing plan that describes strategic actions to promote Belize's competitive advantages as a destination for sports tourism events.
- Work with local sports organizations to develop policies for the creation of new events and prioritize the list of prospective events already established with the intent to pursue the opportunity to host.

By taking these recommended actions, Belize can establish a sustainable source of funding for sports tourism development, which will allow the country to bid for and finance more events, and enhance the positive impact of sports tourism in the country.

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4. Build Belize's capacity to deliver well-managed and sustainable sporting events

Objective –Build on the county's capacity to deliver well-managed and sustainable events with the intent to maximize the community and economic benefits of sports tourism

- Develop a communication medium for stakeholders to share resources, best practices, and experiences in hosting events, this can be achieved through the creation of a platform where stakeholders can come together and discuss their experiences.
- Develop and implement a series of workshops to encourage event organizers to establish locally created events, this will help to promote the development of sports tourism in the country.
- Promote and support efforts to improve local businesses, such as restaurants, retailers, and cultural amenities with the aim of encouraging sports visitors to enjoy the experiences the country has to offer, this will help to maximize the economic benefits of sports tourism.
- Create a database of volunteers and actively encourage, scout, and train volunteers for future events, this will help to build a pool of skilled volunteers who can support the organization and execution of sports events.
- Find mediums and methods to reward civic pride, this can be done through the recognition of local volunteers and businesses that support sports tourism in the country, it can also be done through the organization of contests that recognize the efforts of local communities in supporting sports tourism.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

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- Develop a communication medium for stakeholders to share resources, best practices, and experiences in hosting events, this can be achieved through the creation of a platform where stakeholders can come together and discuss their experiences.
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- Create a database of volunteers and actively encourage, scout, and train volunteers for future events, this will help to build a pool of skilled volunteers who can support the organization and execution of sports events.
- Find mediums and methods to reward civic pride, this can be done through the recognition of local volunteers and businesses that support sports tourism in the country, it can also be done through the organization of contests that recognize the efforts of local communities in supporting sports tourism.

By taking these recommended actions, Belize can build on its capacity to deliver well-managed and sustainable events and maximize the community and economic benefits of sports tourism.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementing the Sports Tourism Strategic Master Plan in Belize will require a significant financial commitment. Currently, there is no budget established or proposed for the delivery of the plan, which will require the allocation of resources for the hiring of a full-time Director of Sports Tourism Development and administrative support. The Director will work closely with other Directors within the Belize Tourism Board (BTB) to properly establish the Sports Tourism Department and will be responsible for overseeing all sports tourism activities, from the development of bid packages to logistical support for the hosting of events.

In addition to the salary and administrative costs, there will also be additional expenditures required to implement the proposed actions outlined in the plan.

These include:

- **Development of a sports tourism fund:** This fund will provide financial support for the organization of sports events and activities, as well as for the development of sports infrastructure and facilities.
- **Establishment of a hosting policy:** This policy will provide guidelines for the selection and hosting of sports events, and will ensure that the country is able to attract and host high-quality events that will benefit the local community and economy.
- **Organization of training and development programs:** These programs will be designed to train local sports organizations and individuals in the art of event planning and management, as well as in the areas of marketing and promotion.
- **Investment in sports facilities:** The development of sports tourism in Belize will require investment in sports facilities, including stadiums, arenas, training facilities, and sports academies.
- **Marketing campaigns:** To attract visitors to the country for sports events, it will be important to invest in marketing campaigns, both domestically and internationally.

It is important to note that the development of sports tourism in Belize will require investment in sports facilities, marketing campaigns, and other expenses, and it is crucial that great consideration be given to the necessary financial commitments to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategic Master Plan. This should also include identifying potential external funding/grants that can be derived from other government sources, as well as the private sector and philanthropic contributions, to support the development of sports tourism in Belize. Furthermore, it is important to work with both the public and private sectors to create a strong, sustainable funding model that will support the long-term growth of sports tourism in the country.

Sports tourism can be a valuable source of revenue for the country, by attracting visitors and creating jobs, it is important to invest in the development of sports tourism as it can have a positive impact on the economy as well as community development. Therefore, it is important that all stakeholders work together to secure the necessary funding to support the implementation of the plan and promote the growth of sports tourism in the country. This includes government agencies, private sector organizations, sports clubs, and community groups all working together to achieve a common goal of promoting sports tourism in Belize.

SUMMARY

The global sports tourism industry has undoubtedly been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many events and seasons being canceled or postponed. However, as the world begins to recover and spectators return to events, it is likely that the upward trends seen in the latter half of the 2010s will continue in the coming years. This presents a unique opportunity for countries like Belize to capitalize on the sports tourism market.

One potential trend that has emerged as a result of the pandemic is the increased importance of regional events. With people being more hesitant to travel long distances for events, this presents an opportunity for cities and municipalities to focus on a mix of major events and more local, recurrent events. This will allow Belize to attract a diverse range of tourists, from those looking to attend major international events to those interested in experiencing the unique culture and atmosphere of local events.

The development of a sports tourism sector in Belize will require the full support of the government in the implementation of a comprehensive sports tourism policy. This policy should be developed through ongoing stakeholder consultations to ensure buy-in from all relevant parties, including the private sector, sports organizations, and local communities. The Belize Tourism Board (BTB) will play a critical role in the development of sports tourism in the country, including documenting decisions and compiling an annual sports tourism action plan.

To capitalize on the sports tourism market, Belize needs to focus on developing a wide range of sports infrastructure and facilities. This includes not only stadiums and arenas, but also training facilities, sports academies, and accommodation options for athletes and tourists. The government should also consider investing in sports marketing and promotion to attract international events and visitors to the country.

Moreover, the country should focus on developing a sustainable approach to sports tourism, taking into account the environmental impact of events and the long-term economic benefits for the local community. This can be achieved by implementing green initiatives and supporting local businesses and communities through the development of sports tourism.

In summary, the global sports tourism industry will continue to recover and evolve in the coming years, with regional events becoming more important. Belize has a unique opportunity to capitalize on this trend, but it will require a comprehensive and collaborative approach from the government, the BTB, and other stakeholders. The government should focus on developing a wide range of sports infrastructure and facilities, promoting the country as a sports tourism destination, and implementing a sustainable approach to sports tourism, which will not only attract international events and visitors to the country but also benefit the local community in the long term.

APPENDIX A

Table 1.0 (Sports Tourism Opportunities)

Event Selection and Bidding	Good Potential	Possible	Not For US	Comments
Looking outside the major sport	1	2	3	
Focusing on indoor events with minimal facility requirements	1	2	3	
Focusing on women's sports	1	2	3	
Focusing on participation events	1	2	3	
Looking for multi-sport events	1	2	3	
Sport festivals- linking two or more sport events	1	2	3	
Developing national and provincial training centres	1	2	3	
Masters events	1	2	3	
Events for multicultural groups	1	2	3	
Military sports	1	2	3	
Indigenous Sports	1	2	3	
Event Marketing				
Better event marketing	1	2	3	
Stronger marketing to the USA	1	2	3	
Linking to community events for more fun	1	2	3	
Other- Please Specify	1	2	3	
Community Programmin Opportunities				
Sport Exchange	1	2	3	
Focusing on summer sports camps	1	2	3	
Expanding existing programs and camps	1	2	3	
Other - Please Specify	1	2	3	
Improving the Systems				
Facility upgrading				
Public education and promotion about the value and values of sport event				
Enlisting a local athletes to be the spokesperson for sport tourism				
Other - Please specify				
Other Ideas				