



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# MICE TOURISM

MARKETING TOOLKIT



**Welcome to your customized toolkit for navigating the world of tourism marketing! Whether you're just starting out or looking to enhance your existing efforts, this toolkit is here to guide you step by step. We've simplified complex strategies into easy-to-follow advice so that you can confidently promote your unique experiences and connect with travelers. Let's embark on this journey together and unlock the potential of your small business in the world of tourism.**

**DISCLAIMER**

This document was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by International Development Group LLC (IDG) for the Indo-Pacific Opportunity Project, task order number 7200AA19F00024. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of IDG and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

# CONTENTS

CLICK PAGE NUMBER FOR DIRECT LINK

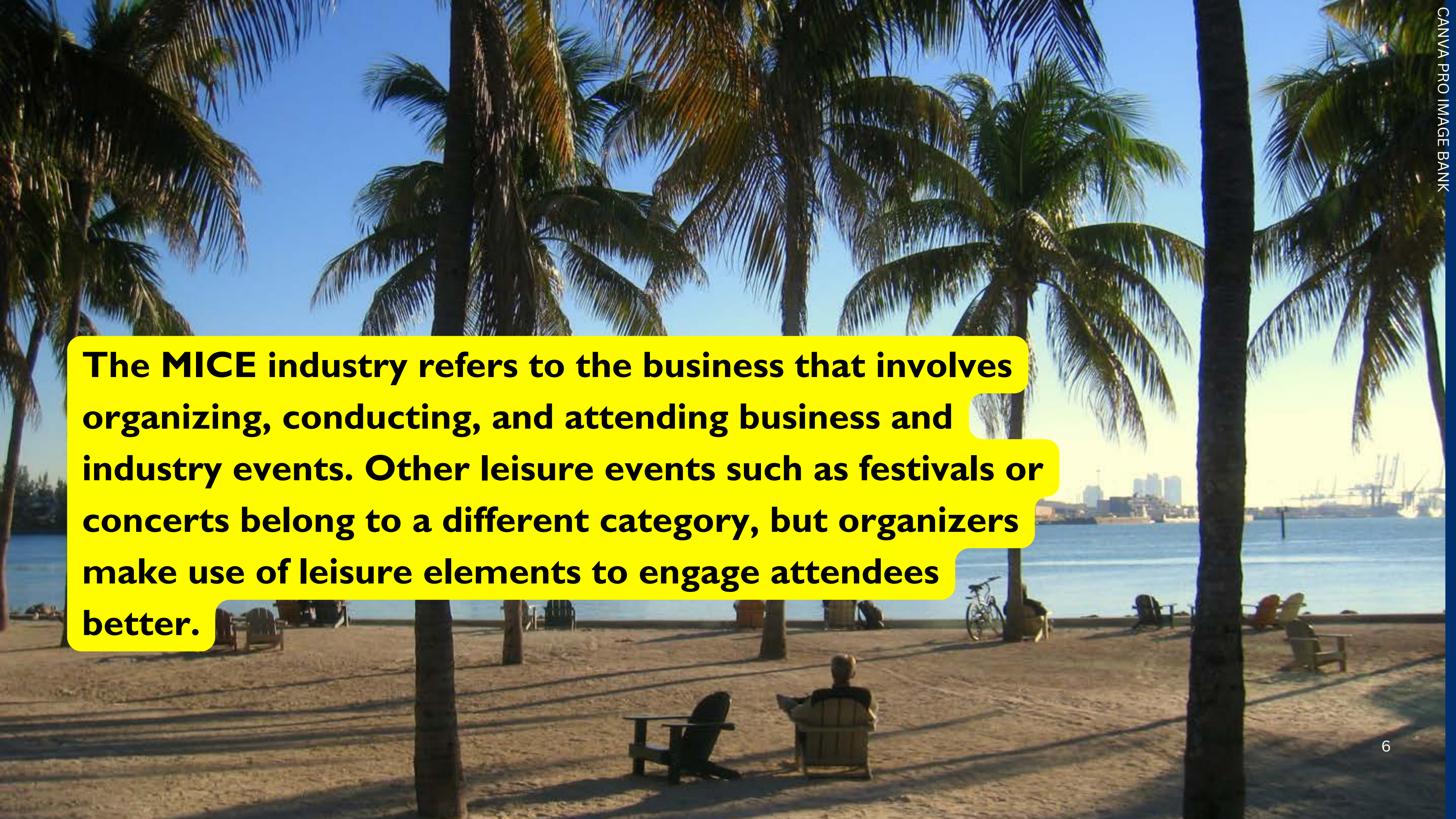
<b>MICE TOURISM EXPLAINED</b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b><u>9</u></b>
<b>MICE TRAVELER PROFILES</b>	<b><u>19</u></b>
<b>WHY IS MICE TOURISM IMPORTANT</b>	<b><u>32</u></b>
<b>DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MICE &amp; LEISURE TRAVELERS</b>	<b><u>40</u></b>
<b>MICE ECOSYSTEM</b>	<b><u>52</u></b>
<b>SRI LANKA'S POTENTIAL</b>	<b><u>65</u></b>
<b>SPARKING IDEAS</b>	<b><u>83</u></b>

A silhouette of a person in a suit walking away from the viewer on a beach at sunset. The person is pulling a suitcase. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the water. The sky is filled with soft, golden light and some clouds.


**"Where business meets experience,  
MICE tourism transforms  
destinations into global crossroads  
of collaboration and culture."**

# What is MICE Tourism?

**MICE stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Exhibitions. It is business tourism at its finest, aimed at bringing together top professionals from every sector in an enhanced, tailor-made hospitality setting.**

A tropical beach scene with several tall palm trees in the foreground. In the background, there is a body of water and a city skyline. A person is sitting on a lounge chair in the foreground, and a bicycle is parked nearby. The scene is bright and sunny.

**The MICE industry refers to the business that involves organizing, conducting, and attending business and industry events. Other leisure events such as festivals or concerts belong to a different category, but organizers make use of leisure elements to engage attendees better.**



**The MICE industry also includes taking care of travel and tourism needs. It makes up a large part of global business travel as meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions invite and attract attendees from different parts of the country and the world.**

A silhouette of a man in a suit walking on a beach at sunset, pulling a suitcase. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm orange glow. The man is walking away from the viewer towards the right side of the frame. The beach is wide and flat, with some footprints visible in the sand.

**"In the realm of MICE, it's not just about hosting events; it's about sculpting global narratives and positioning destinations at the crossroads of innovation and tradition."**



**Let's delve deeper...**

# Meetings:

**A FORMAL ASSEMBLY FOR DISCUSSION OR DECISION-MAKING.**

A background image showing a business meeting in progress. Several people in professional attire are seated around a table, looking at documents and laptops. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an office environment.

### **Board Meetings:**

A gathering of a company's board members to discuss quarterly results, future strategies, or other crucial matters.

### **Training Sessions:**

Workshops where employees receive training on new software, industry practices, or corporate guidelines.

### **Team Building Retreats:**

Off-site gatherings where corporate teams engage in activities to strengthen collaboration and morale.

### **Annual General Meetings (AGM):**

Where stakeholders meet yearly to discuss company performance, elect board members, and make significant decisions.



# Incentives:

**A REWARD TO MOTIVATE AND RECOGNIZE PERFORMANCE.**



## Performance

### Rewards:

A luxury trip awarded to top-performing sales representatives or employees as a reward for their accomplishments.

## Loyalty Programs:

An excursion for longstanding clients or partners, reinforcing business relationships.

## Skill-Based Competitions:

Winners of corporate competitions might get a trip to an exotic location.

## Employee Recognition:

Rewarding long-serving or exceptionally innovative employees with special travel experiences.

# Conferences:

A LARGE GATHERING FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING, NETWORKING, AND INDUSTRY DISCUSSION.

**Industry Conferences:**

Events where professionals from a specific industry gather, like the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) for tech enthusiasts.

**Academic Symposiums:**

Where researchers and scholars present findings, often in fields like medicine, technology, or the humanities.

**Summits:**

High-level gatherings, such as the G7 or G20, where leaders discuss global challenges and strategies.

**Product Launches:**

When a company introduces a new product to market, inviting media, stakeholders, and industry experts.

# Exhibitions:

A PUBLIC DISPLAY SHOWCASING PRODUCTS, INNOVATIONS, OR ARTISTIC WORKS.





### **Trade Shows:**

Businesses display their products to potential buyers. For instance, WTM in London for the tourism industry.

### **Book Fairs:**

Where publishers, authors, and readers come together, like the Frankfurt Book Fair.



### **Art Exhibits:**

Artists or galleries showcasing artworks for appreciation, critique, or sale.

### **Consumer Expos:**

Direct-to-consumer events, like food and beverage expos, where businesses offer samples and sell products directly to the public.

**Each of these activities under MICE caters to different objectives, but collectively, they drive business travel and position destinations as centers for professional exchange and growth.**

# Profile of the MICE traveler...

## **Purpose Driven:**

**MICE travelers have a primary objective for their trip, whether it's attending a meeting, presenting at a conference, showcasing in an exhibition, or being part of an incentive trip.**

## **Decision Influencer, Not Decider:**

**While they might have influence over aspects like venue selection or the event's logistics, the destination choice is often decided by corporate teams, event organizers, or incentive program managers. Their travel locations may be determined by factors like event costs, logistics, or strategic partnerships.**

## **Time-Bound:**

**Their trips are often of a fixed duration based on the event schedule, leaving them with limited free time to explore the destination.**



## High Expectations:

Given the professional nature of their trips, they anticipate high standards in accommodation, transportation, and other services.



## **Structured Itinerary:**

**Their travel schedules are usually pre-planned and closely aligned with the event's agenda, which could include back-to-back meetings, conference sessions, or exhibition timelines.**



## **Networking Focused:**

**One of their primary motivations, beyond the core event, is to network with peers, potential partners, or clients.**

## Limited Leisure Time:

While they might be eager to experience the destination's local culture or attractions, their tight schedule often allows for only a few such experiences, making them prioritize the most authentic or significant ones.

## **Budget-Conscious (or not):**

**Depending on the nature of their trip, MICE travelers might have their expenses covered by their organization (leading them to choose more premium options) or might be self-funded (making them more budget-conscious). In incentive trips, luxury experiences are often the norm as they are meant to reward and motivate.**

**MICE TRAVELERS ARE**

**authentic  
experience  
seekers**

A man and a woman are smiling and looking at each other at a food stand. The man is on the left, wearing a light green shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a dark top. They are both looking towards the right. The food stand is on the right side of the image, with various items on display. In the background, there are trees and a "DO NOT ENTER" sign.

# experience

IS THE NEW LUXURY

A person is shown from the chest up, shirtless, in a wooden sauna. They are holding a wooden bucket and pouring water into a wooden tub. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from a window in the background. The text 'luxury IS AN ATTITUDE' is overlaid in the center.

**luxury**  
**IS AN ATTITUDE**



**status =  
EXPOSURE & RECOGNITION**

**Why are  
MICE travelers  
important  
to a destination?**



## **Economic Boost:**

**MICE travelers often have higher daily expenditure rates than leisure tourists, spending on premium accommodations, dining, transportation, and other related services. This influx can provide a substantial economic boost to the local community and businesses.**

## Off-Peak Tourism:

**MICE events can be scheduled during a destination's off-peak season, ensuring a more consistent flow of tourists throughout the year and stabilizing seasonal employment fluctuations in the tourism sector.**

## Promotion & Branding:

Hosting significant MICE events can elevate the destination's profile on a global scale. Successful events can boost a location's reputation as a preferred venue for future gatherings, attracting even more events and visitors.

## **Infrastructure & Development:**

**The need to cater to MICE travelers can drive improvements in local infrastructure, including better transportation, world-class event venues, and upgraded hospitality services, which benefit not just MICE travelers but all visitors and locals.**

## Potential for Repeat Visits:

While MICE travelers visit primarily for business reasons, a positive experience can encourage them to return for leisure or even recommend the destination to their network, leading to increased future tourism.

## Cultural Exchange & Networking:

**MICE** events bring together professionals from diverse backgrounds and cultures. This melding of perspectives can lead to fruitful exchanges, fostering international collaboration, and providing locals with an opportunity to interact with a global audience.

**In essence, MICE travelers can be catalysts for growth, development, and international recognition for a destination.**

**What are the key differences between MICE travelers & leisure travelers?**



# Purpose of visit

## TOURISTS

Primarily leisure-driven. They travel to relax, explore, and enjoy a destination, often driven by personal interests and preferences.

## MICE

Business or professional-oriented. Their primary reason for travel is to attend a specific meeting, incentive trip, conference, or exhibition.

# Duration & itinerary

## TOURISTS

Typically have a flexible itinerary, allowing spontaneous changes or explorations based on personal interests or new discoveries.

## MICE

Often have a structured and tight schedule tied to the event's agenda. Free time for leisure activities may be limited.

# Decision-making on destination

## TOURISTS

They usually have complete autonomy in choosing their travel destination based on personal interests, recommendations, or research.

## MICE

The choice of destination is often not in their hands but is determined by event organizers, corporate decisions, or incentive program coordinators.

A man and a woman are looking at a smartphone together in a public setting. The man is wearing a light blue shirt and a red jacket, and the woman is wearing a light blue shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the phone. The background is blurred, showing other people and buildings.

# Spending patterns

## TOURISTS

Spend across a range of categories, such as attractions, dining, souvenirs, and more, based on personal budgets and preferences.

## MICE

Often have a higher daily spend, staying in upscale accommodations and dining. Many expenses are often covered or reimbursed by organizers or employers.

# Potential for return

## TOURISTS

If they enjoy the experience, they may return for future visits, either for leisure or to explore aspects of the destination they missed previously.

## MICE

Even though their primary visit is business-driven, a positive experience can motivate them to return as leisure tourists or recommend the destination to others.

# Group dynamics

## TOURISTS

Can travel solo, with family, or in small groups of friends, making decisions based on the group's shared interests.

## MICE

Typically travel in large groups linked to their event, with group-centric plans for activities and accommodations.

# Your clients?

## TOURISTS

Individual travelers, families, or small groups making independent decisions.

## MICE

Corporate entities, event organizers, or incentive program coordinators handling arrangements for larger groups.

# Their motivation?

## TOURISTS

Primarily leisure-driven, seeking relaxation, exploration, and personal experiences.

## MICE

Business or professional-driven, focused on a specific event, but also open to added leisure experiences during their stay.



# Supply chain?

## TOURISTS

Direct bookings, use of travel agencies, or online travel platforms; less structured and more fragmented.

## MICE

Involvement of event management companies, corporate travel planners, and specialized MICE agencies; more structured and streamlined processes.



An aerial photograph of a valley with a town, likely Cappadocia, with numerous hot air balloons floating in the sky. The balloons have various colors and patterns, including blue, green, orange, and red. The town below is built into the rocky landscape, and the sky is a clear, light blue.

# Products?

## TOURISTS

Seek diverse products like sightseeing tours, cultural experiences, souvenirs, and local attractions.

## MICE

Need event-focused services like conference facilities and team-building, but also seek premium leisure activities in downtime.

**Understanding these distinctions can help MSMEs tailor their offerings more effectively for each audience.**

A close-up of a silver microphone with a mesh grille, positioned in the center of the frame. The background is a blurred crowd of people, suggesting a public event or performance. The text is overlaid on the microphone and background.

**Let's  
explore  
the MICE  
ecosystem...**

# Venue Providers

Convention  
centers

Hotels with  
conference facilities

Unique event  
spaces (e.g.,  
historic sites,  
open-air venues)

# Event Organisers

Professional  
conference  
organizers (PCOs)

Event management  
companies

Incentive trip  
planners

# Travel & Logistics

Travel agencies  
specializing in  
MICE

Transportation  
companies (charter  
buses, private car  
rentals)

Airline  
partnerships and  
charter services



# Technology Providers:

Event registration  
and ticketing  
platforms

Virtual event  
platforms and  
hybrid event  
solutions

Audience  
engagement tools  
(e.g., live polling,  
event apps)



# Catering & Dining

Specialized event caterers

Local restaurants offering group packages or experiences

Pop-up dining experiences or food trucks for outdoor events

# Entertainment & Leisure

Local tour operators offering tailored experiences for MICE groups

Cultural performers or local artisans for event entertainment

Team-building activity providers (e.g., adventure sports, workshops)

# Production & Setup

Audio-visual service providers

Staging and décor companies

Lighting and sound specialists

# Promotion & Marketing

MICE-focused PR agencies

Local influencers or bloggers for event promotion

Branding and signage producers

# Local Artisans & Merchandisers

Customized  
souvenir producers  
for event  
memorabilia

Local craftsmen  
offering workshops  
or live  
demonstrations

Providing regional  
specialties like  
jams, cheeses, or  
wines as event  
tokens or tasting  
sessions

# Sustainability Experts

Green event  
consultants

Sustainable product  
vendors (e.g., eco-  
friendly event  
materials)

Waste  
management and  
recycling  
specialists

# Wellness & Leisure

- Beauty care and grooming:  
Hairdressers and makeup artists

Wellness Services:  
Local spas and  
massage centers.

Shopping:  
Malls, markets,  
and boutique  
stores

**By diving into this ecosystem,  
MSMEs can identify potential  
niche areas to specialize in or  
find collaboration opportunities  
to enhance their service  
offerings.**





An aerial photograph of a coastal city skyline at sunset. The sky is a mix of deep blue and orange. The city features a mix of modern high-rise buildings and older, lower-rise structures. A prominent dark blue skyscraper stands out in the mid-ground. The foreground shows a road with traffic and a railway line running parallel to the coast. The ocean is visible on the left side of the frame.

# **Sri Lanka has potential to grow its MICE offering**

## **Diverse Locations:**

**From urban centers like Colombo to beachside venues in Galle or jungle retreats in Yala, Sri Lanka offers a variety of settings suitable for any event.**

## **Rich Cultural Heritage:**

**Sri Lanka's history, steeped in thousands of years of civilization, offers a unique backdrop for events. Iconic sites like the Sigiriya rock fortress or the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy can make MICE events memorable.**

## **Natural Beauty:**

**With pristine beaches, lush rainforests, and scenic highlands, the island's beauty can provide relaxation and recreation opportunities for delegates.**

## **Quality Infrastructure:**

**Modern conference facilities, luxury hotels, and improved road networks, especially around Colombo and key tourist areas, facilitate seamless events.**



**Experiential Opportunities:**  
From wildlife safaris to tea garden visits in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka offers unique experiences that can be integrated into MICE itineraries, providing delegates with unique memories.

## **Accessible & Compact:**

**The Bandaranaike International Airport near Colombo and Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in the south ensure international connectivity. Being a compact island, Sri Lanka allows for swift and convenient travel between varied locations, making multiple experiences accessible within short durations.**

## **Affordability:**

**Compared to many global destinations, Sri Lanka offers competitive pricing for high-quality MICE services.**





## **Warm Hospitality:**

**Sri Lankan culture is renowned for its warmth and hospitality, ensuring a welcoming experience for all attendees.**

## **Culinary Delights:**

**Sri Lankan cuisine, a blend of rich flavors, can be a unique experience for delegates, adding an additional layer to the event.**

## **Safety & Security:**

**Over recent years, Sri Lanka has enhanced its security apparatus, making it a safer destination for international gatherings.**

A scenic sunset over a lake with buildings in the background. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of purple, pink, and orange. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, the calm water of the lake reflects the colors of the sky and the silhouettes of the buildings on the far shore. The buildings are lit up, and their lights are reflected in the water. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

**Which  
MICE categories  
align best with  
Sri Lanka?**

An aerial photograph of a coastline. On the left, there is clear turquoise water. In the center, a rocky beach with white foam from waves is visible. To the right of the beach, there is a paved road and a dense area of green trees and vegetation.

## **Meetings & Corporate Retreats:**

The serene beaches and luxury resorts of areas like Galle, Mirissa, or Trincomalee are perfect settings for corporate meetings or retreats. They provide a relaxed environment that can foster creativity and team bonding.

## **Incentive Travel:**

Sri Lanka's unique experiences – from wildlife safaris in Yala National Park to train journeys through the scenic tea gardens of Nuwara Eliya – can serve as exciting rewards for employees or partners.

## **Conferences:**

Colombo, the capital city, with its modernising infrastructure, can host some conferences. The city's blend of the modern and the traditional can offer a unique backdrop for international delegates.

## **Exhibitions:**

Sri Lanka can promote its indigenous industries, such as tea, spices, gemstones, and handloom, by hosting specialized exhibitions. Colombo, with its convention centers, would be an ideal location.



## **Cultural & Wellness Retreats:**

Given the country's rich heritage and Ayurvedic traditions, Sri Lanka can position itself as a destination for cultural and wellness retreats. Locations like Kandy, Anuradhapura, and Sigiriya offer deep cultural immersion.

## **Eco & Adventure MICE Activities:**

With its rainforests, hills, and water bodies,

Sri Lanka can cater to groups looking for adventure-based team-building activities like white-water rafting, trekking, or wildlife spotting.



**Collaboration & imagination will  
help us create a uniquely Sri Lankan  
MICE offering!**

# Art Conventions / Specialised Auctions





**Cricket Expo**



# Tea Symposiums



# Blue Sapphire Expos



**Batik Expos**





**Coconut Culture Expo**



**Cinnamon Trade Fair Convention**



# Sustainable Tourism Expo



**Ocean Conservation Summit**

A lush green rainforest landscape with misty hills and a prominent red banner with white text. The scene is filled with dense, vibrant green trees and foliage, with a soft, hazy atmosphere of mist or fog rising from the forest floor and clinging to the slopes of the hills. The overall mood is serene and natural. A bright red banner with rounded corners is centered horizontally across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Rainforest Conservation Expos' in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

# Rainforest Conservation Expos



# Mythology Symposiums



**Endangered Species Symposiums**



# Climate Resilience Assemblies



# The Islands Of The World Symposiums



# World Languages Symposium

# Hydraulic Civilizations Conventions



**Package our beaches, mountains & culture into the perfect incentive packages!**

An overhead view of a business meeting around a wooden table. Several people are visible, some using laptops and tablets. One tablet displays '85.00%'. There are notebooks, a pen, and a small potted plant on the table. The text is overlaid in red boxes.

**Think about how you appeal to big employer markets like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, The Middle East, Singapore, Malaysia, Hongkong & China.**



**Play to our natural strengths as one of  
the world's most enchanting & diverse  
islands.**

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest, showing a dense canopy of trees and ferns. A prominent red text box is centered over the image, containing the text "Leverage the trend towards sustainability & personalization." in white, bold, sans-serif font. The text box has a slightly irregular, rounded shape.

**Leverage the trend towards sustainability & personalization.**



**The possibilities are fascinating!**



