

Telfer School of Management

University of Ottawa

EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN SPORT ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT



MEMOS XXVII

2024-2025

Developing a Sports Tourism Policy Framework for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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ABSTRACT

Sports tourism presents significant potential to diversify tourism, strengthen the sports sector and advance national development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG). However, there is no formal sports tourism policy to capitalise on this potential. This study proposes a policy framework to guide the development of a national sports tourism policy that integrates sport and tourism for sustainable development.

A qualitative research approach was used. The research combined a desk review of existing sports tourism policies, a national sports venue inventory and assessment, and interviews with key stakeholders from the sports and tourism sectors. Critical gaps and opportunities were identified. Findings reveal that SVG has untapped capacity for sports tourism. While the nation has made strides in event hosting, challenges such as inadequate facilities, limited funding and weak collaboration between the Government and sports organizations hinder growth.

To address the identified challenges, the study proposes that the government establishes a sports tourism policy with key components such as establishing a dedicated sports tourism task force, launching a collaborative marketing strategy, integrating sports events with the national tourism calendar, offering incentives for event sponsors and hosts, creatively developing and upgrading sports venues, enhancing volunteer programs, and strengthening governance.

This work explores a potential model for sport-driven development in small-island contexts. It draws connections with Olympic Agenda 2020+5 by considering themes of inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability. While focused on SVG, the study positions the country as a possible example of how sport tourism strategies might contribute to broader development goals, and the expansion of Olympic sports.

RÉSUMÉ

Le tourisme sportif présente un potentiel important pour diversifier le tourisme, renforcer le secteur sportif et favoriser le développement national à Saint-Vincent-et-les-Grenadines (SVG). Cependant, il n'existe actuellement aucune politique formelle de tourisme sportif permettant de tirer parti de ce potentiel. Cette étude propose un cadre politique visant à orienter l'élaboration d'une politique nationale de tourisme sportif intégrant le sport et le tourisme dans une perspective de développement durable.

Une approche de recherche qualitative a été utilisée. L'étude a combiné une analyse documentaire des politiques de tourisme sportif existantes, un inventaire et une évaluation des infrastructures sportives nationales, ainsi que des entretiens avec des parties prenantes clés des secteurs du sport et du tourisme. Des lacunes et des opportunités cruciales ont été identifiées. Les résultats révèlent que le SVG dispose d'un potentiel inexploité en matière de tourisme sportif. Bien que le pays ait fait des progrès dans l'organisation d'événements, des défis subsistent, tels que l'insuffisance des infrastructures, le financement limité et la faible collaboration entre le gouvernement et les organisations sportives, ce qui freine la croissance du secteur.

Pour répondre à ces défis, l'étude recommande que le gouvernement adopte une politique de tourisme sportif comprenant des éléments clés tels que la mise en place d'un groupe de travail dédié au tourisme sportif, le lancement d'une stratégie de marketing collaborative, l'intégration des événements sportifs au calendrier touristique national, l'octroi d'incitations aux organisateurs et commanditaires d'événements, le développement et la modernisation créative des infrastructures sportives, le renforcement des programmes de bénévolat, ainsi que l'amélioration de la gouvernance.

Ce travail explore un modèle potentiel de développement fondé sur le sport dans le contexte des petits États insulaires. Il établit des liens avec l'Agenda Olympique 2020+5 en abordant les thèmes de l'inclusivité, de l'innovation et de la durabilité. Bien qu'il se concentre sur le SVG, l'étude positionne le pays comme un exemple possible de la manière dont des stratégies sport-tourisme peuvent contribuer aux objectifs de développement plus larges et à l'expansion des sports olympiques.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Olympic Committee, Olympic Solidarity, and the International Olympic Committee for providing this invaluable opportunity to pursue the Executive Masters in Sport Organisation Management. A special thank you to my tutor, Dr. Donald Rukare, for his guidance and support. I also acknowledge Mr. Stephen Joachim, Mr. Keith Joseph, Dr. Kishore Shallow, Mr. Otashie Spring, Mrs. Faylene King and Mr. Akin John for their significant contributions to the successful completion of this project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDS	Barbados Dollar
CANOC	Caribbean Association of National Olympic Committees
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
ICC	International Cricket Council
IOC	International Olympic Committee
NBA	National Basketball Association
NF	National Federation
NFL	National Football League
NLA	National Lotteries Authority
NSC	National Sports Council
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PASO	Pan American Sports Organisation
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
SVG	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
SVGOC	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Olympic Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WINAIR	Windward Islands Airways
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association
XCD	Eastern Caribbean Dollar

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Sports tourism has the potential to boost economies and strengthen communities by combining a country's sporting and tourism assets. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), this opportunity remains largely untapped due to the absence of a national sports tourism policy. Without a clear framework, efforts are scattered, and the country misses out on the chance to integrate sports and tourism into a driver of sustainable growth and national development. This gap highlights the need for a cohesive strategy to unlock SVG's sports tourism potential and position it as a destination that leverages its strengths for economic and social progress. By reviewing existing challenges, identifying opportunities, and proposing actionable strategies, the study aims to contribute to an integrated approach to sports tourism.

1.1 Background

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a multi-island Caribbean nation with a population of approximately 110,000, has long relied on tourism and agriculture as the main pillars of its economy (European Commission, n.d.). Agriculture, particularly banana production, once played a central role in SVG's economy, but global trade changes have necessitated diversification. In response, the government has promoted tourism, focusing on SVG's unspoiled natural beauty, which includes azure waters, lush rainforests, and pristine beaches.

However, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022) describes the tourism sector as largely concentrated on leisure and environmental tourism, leaving areas like sports tourism underdeveloped. Sports, while popular in local communities, are still widely perceived as extracurricular recreational activities and not as a potential contributor to economic

growth (Thomas, 2024). The absence of a formal sports tourism policy in SVG highlights the country's underutilization of sports as a pillar of national development or as a means to diversify its tourism offerings. SVG's current 2005 sports policy and the draft 2023-2028 National Sustainable Tourism Master Plan do not adequately address the potential synergy between sports and tourism, nor have they been updated to reflect modern opportunities in this domain.

Recent sports achievements underscore this missed opportunity. In 2024, SVG had an athlete meet the Olympic standard and reach the finals of an Olympic Games for the first time in its history, demonstrating the nation's potential in global sports (Schwager-Patel, 2024). This milestone adds to a legacy of Vincentian talent that has excelled internationally, including Adonal Foyle, who played in the NBA, Sophia Young and Sancho Lyttle, who made their mark in the WNBA, and N'Keal Harry, who currently plays in the NFL. However, without a supportive sports tourism framework, these accomplishments fail to generate broader economic or social benefits. SVG has yet to position itself as a go-to destination for sports events or sports related travel, despite favourable natural conditions, including a year-round warm climate and diverse terrain that can support a range of sports like sailing, football, and BMX racing.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), sports tourism represents one of the fastest-growing sectors in the global tourism market, contributing billions to the global economy annually. Countries with established sports tourism strategies have benefited not only from increased tourism revenues but also from infrastructure development, international visibility, and community engagement. For example, Russia generated over \$14 billion in tourism-related revenue from hosting the 2018 FIFA World Cup (Timofeyev, 2023), while Japan saw significant infrastructure upgrades and job creation from the 2019 Rugby World Cup (Ernst and Young, 2020).

Given SVG's current economic challenges, such as a high debt-to-GDP ratio and reliance on a narrow spectrum of tourism, including leisure and environmental attractions, diversifying the tourism sector to include sports tourism is both a timely and necessary strategic shift. This shift could address several issues: diversifying income streams, improving public infrastructure, promoting national pride and identity through competitive sports events and more. Sports tourism can align with both the government and SVG Olympic Committee's broader goals of promoting sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives.

1.2 Research Question

The central research question guiding this study is: ***“What are the key components of a sports tourism policy framework for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines?”***

1.3 Objectives

1. To provide critical insights into how a well-structured sports tourism policy could unlock new opportunities for SVG, enhancing local sports development while strengthening synergies between the sports and tourism sectors.
2. To assess the infrastructure and resources necessary for developing a sustainable sports tourism framework.
3. To recommend strategies for SVG's Government and sports organisations to foster sustainable sports tourism.

1.4 Scope

This study focuses on the development of a sports tourism policy framework for SVG. It specifically examines sports that align with the country's features - size, geographical location, climate, topography - and their potential for transforming SVG into an exciting location for hosting regional and international sporting events. The research will evaluate existing infrastructure, identify gaps and opportunities, and engage stakeholders to ultimately propose a policy framework that addresses the strategic, operational, and resources necessary to foster sustainable sports tourism development in SVG.

1.5 Limitations

1. Limited Data: SVG currently lacks updated sports and tourism policies, and there is no established body of sports research. This restricts access to baseline data and comparable benchmarks, limiting the depth and scope of this research.

2. Implementation Feasibility: Although the thesis aims to provide practical recommendations, the adoption and implementation of a sports tourism policy depend on SVG's governmental priorities, available funding, and political will, which may not be immediately within the researcher's control.

3. Evolving Economic Conditions: Given the dynamic nature of global tourism and sports sectors, particularly with post-pandemic or natural disaster recovery factors, changes in economic conditions during or after the research period could influence the relevance of the proposed framework.

1.6 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction - This chapter introduces the research topic, providing background information on sports tourism in SVG, outlining the research question, objectives, scope, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - This chapter provides a review of existing literature on sports tourism and focuses on identifying factors that could inform a sustainable sports tourism policy for SVG.

Chapter 3: Methodology - This section details the research methods used for data collection and analysis. It includes an overview of the desk review, sports venue inventory and assessment, and the interview process with key stakeholders. It also explains the rationale behind the selected methods.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion - This chapter presents the findings and discussions gathered from the research methods and provides insights into SVG's current sports and tourism landscape.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and Action Plan - The final chapter offers practical recommendations and an informed action plan for implementing a sports tourism policy to support sports development and the integration of sports with tourism in the broader national development plan.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition

Sports tourism, at its core, represents the intersection between the fields of sports and tourism. It is a growing area of interest for both academic study and policy development, particularly due to its potential to drive economic, social, and cultural benefits for host nations. As Kim & Nauright (2021) suggest, sports tourism exerts profound influences across various global sectors, from boosting local economies to promoting international diplomacy and enhancing community cohesion. However, despite its growing significance, defining the concept remains a complex task due to its multifaceted nature. Higham (2021) emphasises that there is no single, universally agreed-upon definition of sports tourism, which adds to the difficulty in establishing clear parameters for analysis and development of the concept.

Definitions of sports tourism vary across the literature. For example, the Canadian Sports Tourism Alliance (2013) defines sport tourism as when individuals travel more than 80 kilometres to either participate in, or spectate at, sporting events. This definition emphasises the physical distance travelled, suggesting that proximity plays a key role in distinguishing sports tourism from local sports participation. However, other definitions are more inclusive, recognizing a broader range of activities, such as recreational sports, adventure sports, and sports-related leisure experiences, as part of the sports tourism domain. This lack of consensus on a single definition points to the diverse and evolving nature of the sector, which can encompass everything from elite international competitions to community-based sporting activities and recreational pursuits.

For the purposes of this study, we adopt the definition provided by the United Nations

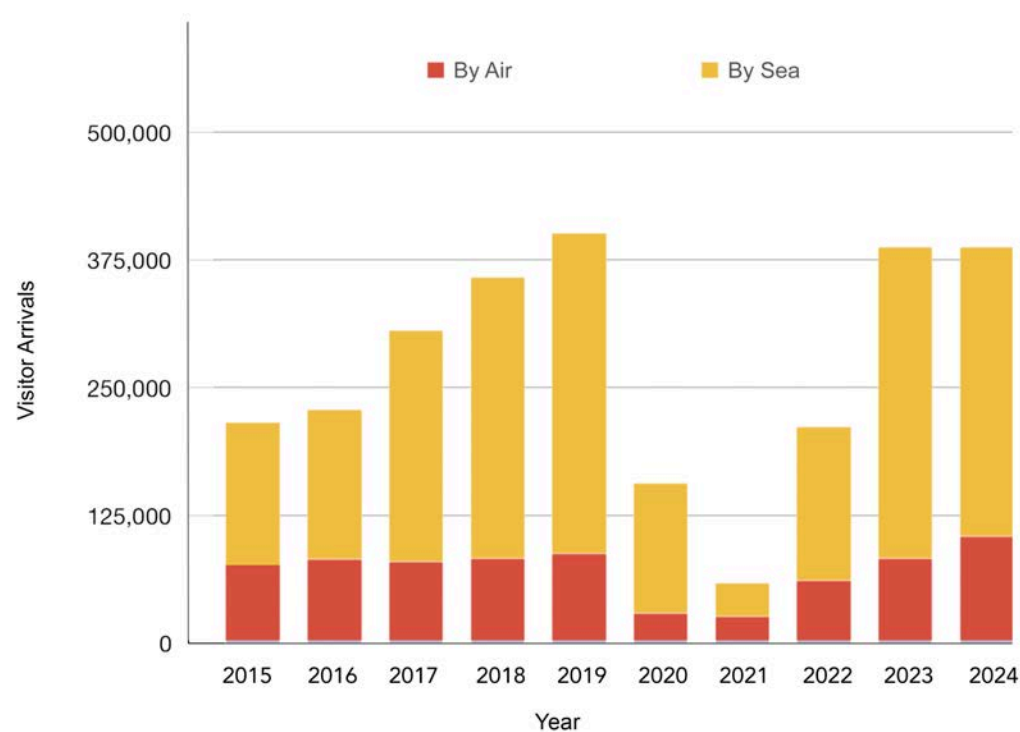
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023). According to the UNWTO, **sports tourism is defined as travel experiences where tourists either participate in or observe sporting events, combining physical activity or sports engagement with the travel experience itself.** This definition is comprehensive, as it accommodates both active and passive forms of sports participation, making it particularly suitable for a study focused on a nation like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), where the potential for both spectator-driven and participation-driven sports tourism exists.

The diversity of experiences encapsulated within the definition of sports tourism reflects its versatility as a tool for national development. For SVG, a nation seeking to diversify its tourism product offerings, sports tourism presents an opportunity to merge the country's natural assets with structured sporting events, activities, and experiences. By doing so, SVG can leverage this sector to create new economic pathways and elevate its international profile.

2.2 Tourism in SVG

Tourism in SVG is on an upward trajectory. According to the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (2024), between 2015 and 2019, visitor arrivals grew by approximately 95.5%. Although the pandemic period (2020-2022) led to a drastic decline the recovery began in 2022, signaling a strong rebound. The most significant growth occurred in 2024, with stayover arrivals reaching a record-breaking 101,471 (Caribbean Journal, 2025). These statistics reinforce tourism's role as a key economic driver and highlight a growing market with strong potential to support sporting events.

Figure 1: Tourist Arrivals in SVG from 2015 to 2024



Source: Data from the Ministry of Tourism, St Vincent and the Grenadines

Air access to SVG has seen significant growth, further supporting the development of the country's tourism sector. In 2024, Minister of Tourism, Carlos James, announced the arrival of four new airlines: LIAT20, WINAIR, JetBlue and Sunrise ultimately enhancing regional connectivity and making SVG more accessible to international travellers. This momentum continued in 2025 with the addition of Delta Airlines. This increase in air service options is transformative, as it opens new travel routes, reduces travel time, and provides visitors with more flexible and affordable options. Improved accessibility directly contributes to SVG's tourism growth by attracting more visitors, particularly from previously underserved markets. As air access expands, it complements the potential of a sports tourism framework, facilitating easier travel for athletes, teams, and spectators attending sports events.

Visa-free access further enhances SVG's appeal as a travel destination. The majority of foreign nationals can enter SVG without a visa for up to one month, while CARICOM nationals, holders of British passports, and British Overseas Citizens are permitted stays of up to six months. Additionally, OECS nationals benefit from the right to remain indefinitely (Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, 2025). These relaxed entry requirements support greater visitor flow, making the country an attractive option for sports tourism.

2.3 Sports Tourism in SVG

While there is evidence of sports tourism activity in SVG, the absence of a guiding policy means its value remains under-recognised, and its development consequently restricted. For instance, the draft SVG Sustainable Tourism Master Plan 2023-2028 reflects the government's commitment to sustainable tourism through the Ministry of Tourism. However, the plan lacks a dedicated strategy for sports tourism. Instead, it primarily highlights "low-impact water sports" under the coastal and marine tourism category, promoting eco-friendly activities such as canoeing, paddleboarding, and other non-motorized water sports. It also encourages the exploration of emerging water sports technologies - such as inflatable stand-up paddleboards and Foot Actuated Steering Technology (FAST) - to attract enthusiasts seeking innovative, sustainable options. While the draft Master Plan includes occasional sports-related events, such as kite and windsurfing competitions, marathons, triathlons, and cricket matches, these recommendations are fragmented and lack a structured, year-round approach to sports tourism.

In 2024, SVG recorded over 100,000 stayover arrivals for the first time, an achievement widely credited to the "Sandals Effect" - the surge in visitors following the opening of the Sandals Resort (*Winn Media, 2025*). However, this singular focus overlooks the role of sports

tourism. For reference, Barbados, a country with sports tourism policies, hosted nine matches - including the finals - of the 2024 ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup, that saw over 100,000 visitors from this event alone (Barbados Sports Tourism Policy, 2024). In contrast, SVG hosted five matches of the same tournament, yet there is little data assessing its contribution in achieving this record breaking number.

Beyond cricket, SVG also hosted several regional and international sporting events in 2024, including the OECS Swimming Championships, which brought in over 300 visitors, a regional drag racing competition featuring over 40 cars and their teams, and events in football, tennis, athletics, rugby and cycling (Thomas, 2024). Despite sporting events contributing to visitor arrivals, their impact on tourism remains largely unrecognized.

2.4 Global and Regional Trends in Sports Tourism

The global sports tourism market size was estimated to be valued at USD 796.37 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 1.7 trillion in 2032. It has witnessed significant growth, with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) reporting that sports tourism now accounts for approximately 10% of global tourism expenditures. The UNWTO further states that this sector is projected to expand at a rate of 17.5% from 2023 to 2030, driven by increasing demand for authentic sports-related experiences. Countries such as Australia, Canada, and the UK have leveraged sports tourism for economic development, illustrating the potential benefits for smaller nations like SVG (Australia Tourism and Transport Forum, 2012; Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance, 2016).

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (2024) highlighted that sports tourism remains an underexplored niche in the Caribbean. Despite regional examples of its success in

places such as Jamaica and Barbados other islands, including SVG, have yet to establish structured policies to capitalise on this growing trend. This represents a unique opportunity for SVG to position itself as a sports tourism destination, tapping into a growing global market.

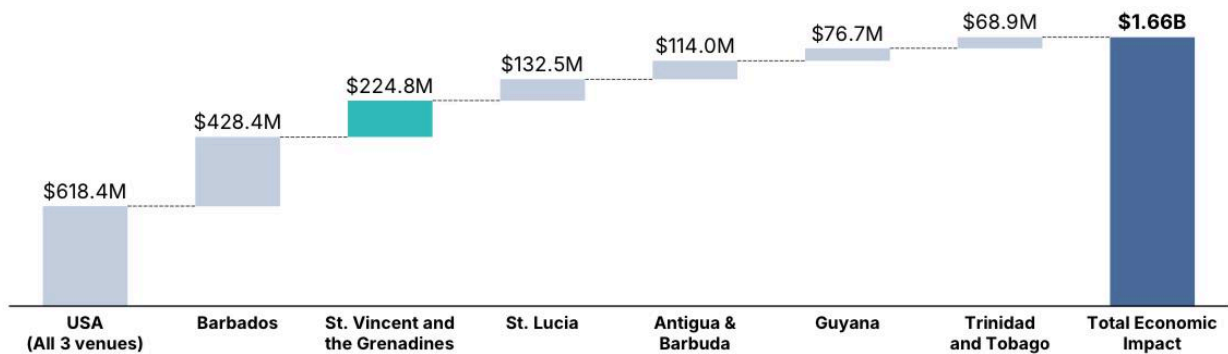
2.5 Potential Benefits of Developing Sports Tourism in SVG

One of the primary benefits of sports tourism is its potential to enhance athletic performance. International sports events provide local athletes with exposure to high levels of competition. Buchheit, Mendez-Villanueva, Simpson and Bourdon (2014) found that increased competition fosters the "competition effect," where athletes push their limits when faced with more skilled opponents. This phenomenon has been observed in SVG sports, such as swimming and track and field, where more national records tend to be broken during regional and international competitions than local competitions (Thomas, 2024).

Furthermore, hosting sporting events can necessitate the development and upgrading of sports facilities, which benefits both athletes and the wider community. This was seen in the preparation for the 2024 Cricket World Cup when the Government of SVG invested \$14 million USD to upgrade the local cricket stadium to meet international standards (Thomas, 2024). These upgrades not only enhance the quality of the event but also provide long-term infrastructure that benefits local athletes. As Knott & Tinaz (2021) point out, improved sports facilities provide athletes with better training environments, which, in turn, boosts their chances of success at future competitions. Moreover, such infrastructure improvements have broader social and economic benefits, as they often leave a legacy. Communities gain access to high-quality sports facilities long after the events are over, which can encourage greater participation in sports at the grassroots level (Morfoulaki et al. 2023).

Substantial economic growth spans multiple sectors, including tourism, hospitality, and media, driven by hosting sporting events. This was evident in the 2024 ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup, which highlighted the economic potential of sports tourism in the Caribbean, generating an estimated \$1.66 billion USD across host nations (Cricket West Indies, 2025).

Figure 2: Economic Impact of the 2024 Cricket World Cup on Host Nations

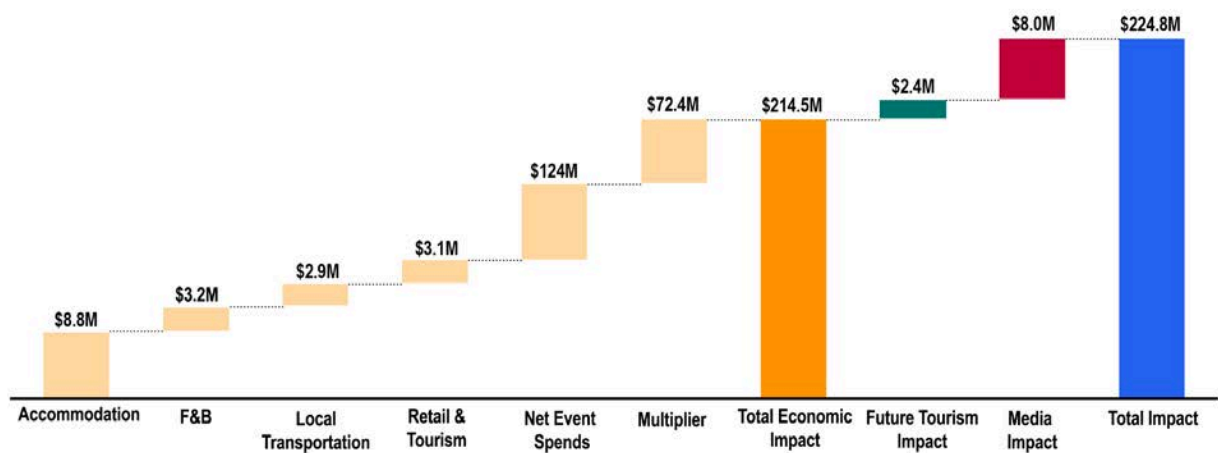


Source: Economic Impact Assessment ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 - St. Vincent & the Grenadines (December, 2024)

According to the independent impact assessment, SVG experienced an economic impact of \$224.4 million USD. This influx was attributed to accommodation, food and beverage sales, retail and tourism, and local transportation, illustrating the direct, indirect, and induced economic benefits of sports tourism. Additionally, the multiplier effect of \$72.4 million USD and projected future tourism gains of \$2.4 million USD underscore the long-term impact of hosting major sporting events. As Cricket West Indies President Dr. Kishore Shallow stated, *"This tournament was more than a sporting event - it was a transformative moment that showcased sports as a driver of economic resilience and investment"* (Cricket West Indies, 2025). A carefully

constructed sports tourism policy in SVG can leverage these opportunities to ensure sustainable economic benefits, positioning sports as a pillar of national development.

Figure 3: Economic Impact of the 2024 Cricket World Cup on St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



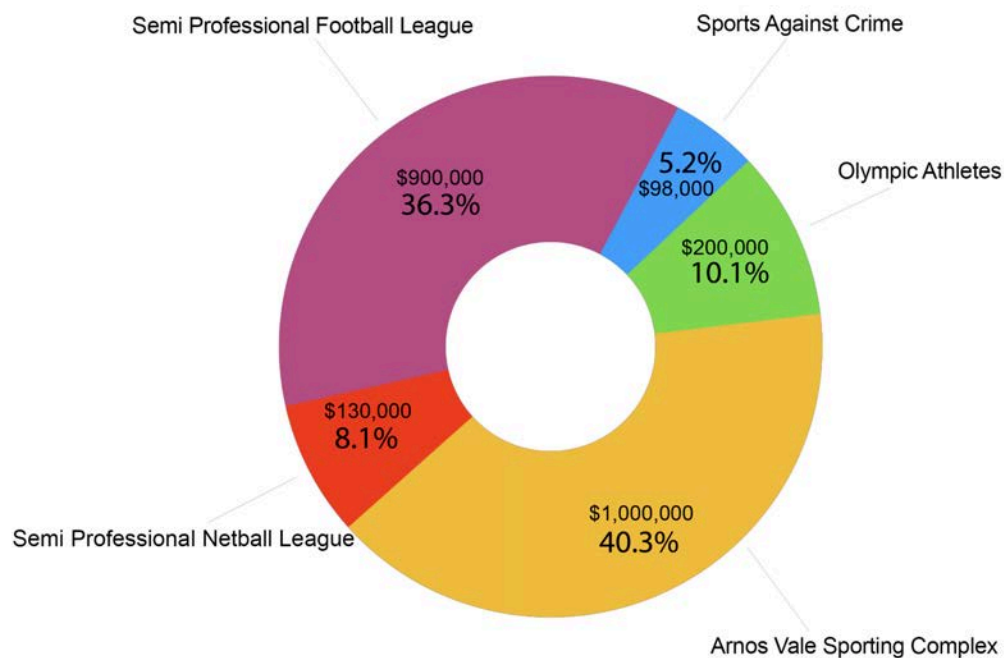
Source: Economic Impact Assessment ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 - St. Vincent & the Grenadines (Dec, 2024).

Sports tourism development can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing SVG’s visibility on the global stage. This visibility draws awareness from investors, sponsors, and international sporting bodies, increasing the likelihood of long-term support for programs and infrastructure development (Tourism Economics, 2021). Widespread media exposure further strengthens this visibility which can elevate the country’s reputation as a competitive sports destination.

The 2025 Budget Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure (Government of SVG, 2025) reflects a notable investment in sports development. It also highlights a key challenge: the focus remains on a few mainstream sports such as cricket, football and netball. Disciplines, particularly

indoor sports, such as karate, gymnastics and squash, as well as emerging sports including archery and chess - receive limited to no attention. This underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive sports tourism policy that ensures equitable investment and development across all sports. Rather than sporadic allocations, a structured approach can lead to the creation of strategies and programs for all sports to develop - not just those traditionally prioritized.

Figure 4: Budget Estimates of Expenditure for Sports 2025.



Source: Budget Estimates of Expenditure for Sports 2025, Government of SVG.

2.6 Challenges in Executing a Sports Tourism Policy in SVG

By adopting a tailored sports tourism policy that draws from regional and global best practices and is rooted in SVG's context, the country can unlock new opportunities for growth in sports. However, sports tourism development is not without challenges. As Thomas (2024) emphasised, SVG lacks both an embedded sports culture and the necessary infrastructure to attract significant sports tourism activities. For SVG, funding limitations, infrastructure deficits, and national sport federations governance issues could impede progress. To overcome these challenges, strategic planning, investment in facilities, and stakeholder collaboration will be essential. Sustainability is also crucial, policies must be designed to ensure that both the economic and social impacts of sports tourism extend beyond short-term gains from individual events.

The high costs of international and regional travel present significant challenges for the expansion of sports tourism in SVG. Although the opening of Argyle International Airport in 2017 is a positive development, the fragility of regional air travel has since been exposed. Delays and disruptions, which are common globally, have a disproportionate impact on SVG due to limited travel options (Thomas, 2023). Such issues bring the potential to disrupt athlete schedules and cause undue stress for stranded passengers, further complicating the viability of a reliable sports tourism infrastructure.

Another potential challenge for SVG's sports tourism framework is its limited accommodation capacity. In 2017, Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves stated that the nation had 2,200 hotel rooms. In 2024, Minister of Finance Camillo Gonsalves noted that this number had increased by 500. Despite this construction boom and the emergence of new hotels, SVG still

lacks the infrastructure to host multiple large sporting events simultaneously. For example, during the 2024 Cricket World Cup, 75% of hotel rooms were booked nine months in advance, and by one month before the event, occupancy had reached 100%, leaving no options for last-minute travelers. Additionally, not all hotels are located on the mainland or in close proximity to sporting venues, which increases transport costs and complicates logistics for event organizers.

There are multiple ministerial portfolios tied to the critical sectors of tourism and sports, which may dilute focused attention on sports tourism development. According to the official Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines website, from 2012 to 2020, Cecil McKie served as the **Minister of Tourism, Sport, and Culture**, overseeing a portfolio that fostered synergy between tourism and sports. During this period, the organizational structure (Appendix 3) supported this integration, enabling greater collaboration in policy development, event planning, and resource allocation. However, as of 2020, the ministerial structure changed, with tourism now under the Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Sustainable Development, and Culture, while sports falls under the Ministry of Housing, Informal Human Settlement, Youth, and Sports. Carlos James, the current Minister of Tourism, under whose portfolio a sports tourism policy would fall, has broad ministerial responsibilities spanning tourism, aviation, sustainable development, climate change, oceans, heritage and recreational sites, national parks and beaches, culture, filming, copyright, Memorial Hall, the National Trust, and various related government agencies and statutory bodies (Government of SVG, 2025).

The absence of a unified ministry overseeing both tourism and sports presents challenges for sports tourism development. This fragmented structure may result in misaligned strategic objectives, inefficiencies in resource allocation, and delays in policy implementation. Without a

clear, centralized authority, decision-making processes risk becoming disjointed, making it difficult to drive a cohesive sports tourism agenda.

2.7 Summary

This literature review examines the definition, growth, potential benefits, and challenges of sports tourism, particularly in the context of SVG. Sports tourism, defined by the UNWTO as travel experiences involving participation in or observation of sporting events, is increasingly recognized for its potential to drive economic, social, and cultural benefits for host nations. Despite the lack of a universally accepted definition, it encompasses a wide range of activities, highlighting its versatility as a tool for economic development.

The global sports tourism sector is witnessing significant growth, accounting for approximately 10% of global tourism expenditures, with projections for a 17.5% expansion from 2023 to 2030. Successful examples from countries like Australia and Barbados demonstrate how strategic development of sports tourism can lead to economic diversification. In SVG, the rising number of tourists, improved air access and increasing accommodation capacity present a prime opportunity for leveraging sports tourism to enhance its tourism offerings.

Potential benefits for SVG include enhancing athletic performance through exposure to international competitions, improving local sports facilities, and attracting investment. Hosting international sporting events can generate economic growth across various sectors while providing a legacy of improved infrastructure that benefits local communities. However, challenges such as funding limitations, governance issues, ministerial misalignment and infrastructure deficits must be addressed. through strategic planning and collaboration among stakeholders.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research approach to develop a sports tourism policy framework for SVG. Qualitative methods were selected to capture stakeholder perspectives, assess infrastructure readiness, and analyze regional policy models, ensuring a comprehensive and contextually relevant framework. This chapter outlines the data collection methods, their rationale, data analysis processes, limitations, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Desk Review

A desk review was conducted to analyze sports tourism policies from jurisdictions with socio-economic and political contexts similar to SVG, namely Trinidad and Tobago (Sports Tourism Sub-Policy, 2017–2027), Barbados (draft Sports Tourism Policy, 2024–2028), and Jamaica (Vision 2030 plans). These jurisdictions were chosen for their shared Caribbean identity, reliance on tourism, and established sports tourism initiatives, providing relevant benchmarks for SVG. SVG's existing tourism and sports structures were also reviewed to identify gaps and opportunities. The review aimed to extract best practices, policy structures, and implementation strategies adaptable to SVG's context.

3.2 Sports Venue Inventory and Assessment

A sports venue inventory and assessment evaluated SVG's physical readiness to host sports tourism events and compliance with international competition standards. The inventory cataloged multi-sport venues, beaches, pools, roads, and public spaces with event-hosting potential, documenting attributes such as size, location, capacity, amenities and lighting. The

assessment, guided by standards from governing bodies (e.g. FIFA for football, World Aquatics for swimming), identified venues meeting or upgradeable to meet international requirements, informing targeted infrastructure recommendations.

This method was critical to assess SVG's tangible assets for sports tourism, as venue quality directly impacts event feasibility. Subjective judgments about "event-hosting potential" were mitigated by adhering to standardized criteria.

3.3 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted, in person, to explore challenges, opportunities, and stakeholder priorities for sports tourism development in SVG. Engaging these key stakeholders ensured the proposed framework reflects practical realities and secures buy-in from implementers. The in-person format facilitated deeper engagement while the semi-structured approach allowed flexibility to probe emergent themes, ensuring context-specific data. The small sample size was justified by the interviewees' expertise but limits generalizability. Questions are included in Appendix 1.

3.3.1 Sports Federation Presidents

Interviews were conducted with the Presidents of Cricket West Indies, Team Athletics SVG, SVG Swimming Association, and SVG Football Federation. These sports were selected due to their recent involvement in regional and international events, providing insights into SVG's infrastructural, organizational, operational, and technical capacities for sports tourism.

3.3.2 Expert

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the Director of Tourism within SVG's Ministry of Tourism, chosen for her pivotal role in tourism policy integration and oversight in the development of the supporting policy framework for transforming the tourism industry. This interview validated findings from the desk review, venue inventory, and sport federation president interviews, providing insights into policy feasibility and alignment with national tourism goals.

The expert perspective ensured recommendations were actionable within SVG's tourism context. This single expert interview provided high-level insights and additional perspectives on the integration of sports and tourism.

3.4 Justification of Methods

The chosen methods - desk review, venue inventory and assessment, and stakeholder interviews - were designed to address the research aim holistically; developing a sports tourism policy framework grounded in regional benchmarks, infrastructure readiness, and stakeholder insights. The desk review provided a theoretical foundation, the venue inventory ensured empirical grounding, and interviews captured a qualitative approach that focuses on understanding perspectives.

Semi-structured interviews were selected for their balance of structure and flexibility, enabling in-depth exploration of tangible (e.g. infrastructure) and intangible (e.g. stakeholder enthusiasm) factors. The focus on four Federation Presidents and one expert prioritise quality over quantity, targeting informants with direct relevance to sports tourism. This multi-method

approach ensured analytical depth and practical relevance.

3.5 Data Analysis

The policies reviewed during the desk review were manually categorized and tabulated to allow for comparative analysis. This process enabled the identification of common themes, policy gaps, and variations across different policy documents. While NVivo software was considered for qualitative coding, the limited volume of data made manual thematic analysis a more practical approach.

The venue inventory was conducted using information received from the NLA and NSC. Characteristics such as facility capacity, amenities and services, playing service quality, lighting and technology were catalogued to ascertain SVG's physical readiness to support sports tourism. The assessment was guided by the international competition standards set by each sport's respective governing body.

All interviews were recorded using the Voice Note mobile application and transcribed verbatim using TurboScribe, an online transcription tool. Transcripts were processed using generative artificial intelligence to identify recurring patterns and themes. To ensure accuracy and contextual relevance, these themes were then manually reviewed and categorized by the researcher.

3.6 Limitations

Access to data was a limitation. The NLA and NSC's databases were expected to provide reliable information, yet there were significant gaps in the data. Site visits were used to address this. However, access to certain areas of the venues was limited affecting the comprehensiveness

of the sports venue inventory. This limitation highlights the need for improved data management to support future research and policy development.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

All participants were contacted individually and provided with detailed information about the research objectives and methodology. Informed consent was obtained from each participant prior to collecting data, ensuring that they fully understood their role in the study. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Additionally, they were assured that all data being securely stored was used solely for the purposes of this research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Desk Review

The desk review explored key focus areas of Trinidad and Tobago’s Sports Tourism Sub-Policy (2017–2027), Barbados’ draft Sports Tourism Policy (2024-2028) and Jamaica’s Vision 2030 plan. The table below presents a structured comparison of these policy documents against the structure that exists in SVG.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Sports Tourism Policies.

CATEGORY	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	BARBADOS	JAMAICA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Sports tourism policy	No formal policy.	Designated sports tourism policy, also integrated into the national tourism master plan.	Integrated in both Sports and Tourism sector plans.	Designated sports tourism sub-policy, also integrated into national sports, and tourism policies.
Government support	Ad-hoc funding.	Dedicated budget for sports tourism.	Long term funding partnerships and incentives.	Government backed initiatives and funding for sports events.

CATEGORY	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	BARBADOS	JAMAICA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Infrastructure	Very limited regional and international standard venues.	Well maintained event-ready venues that meet international standards	World class sports venues.	Modern stadiums and multi-purpose facilities catering to international events.
Economic impact	Information limited to independent assessment from cricket world cup 2024.	Significant revenue especially from cricket, golf and water sports events. The annual horse racing event brings in \$2.5 M BDS annually.	Major income source especially through athletics and sports festivals.	High revenue from hosting regional and international sporting events such as cycling and football.
Private sector involvement	Information not available.	Strong cooperative partnerships and	Strong collaboration with the private sector.	Strong cooperative partnerships and

CATEGORY	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	BARBADOS	JAMAICA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
		sponsorships from corporate events.		sponsorships from corporate events.
Marketing and Branding	Limited to event promotion rather than a sustained brand strategy.	Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. plays a pivotal role in promoting the island's sports tourism offerings.	Icons like Usain Bolt are utilized. Reggae marathon, Cricket Test Matches, and Track & Field Events are heavily marketed to international audiences.	Market events such as the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), cricket tournaments and annual regattas to attract sports tourists.
Sports and tourism sector collaboration	Collaboration with Sailing Association and Tourism Authority for Sailing week.	Strong collaboration through Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc	Strong collaborations among multiple agencies including ministry of tourism, sports	The National Sports Council oversees sports development, including all sports

CATEGORY	ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	BARBADOS	JAMAICA	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
		for all Sports Tourism events.	development foundation, Brand Jamaica for all sports tourism events.	tourism-related initiatives.
Key strengths	Tourism growth.	Established event hosting reputation.	Recognised global sports destination.	Cricket, athletics and carnival related sports tourism opportunities
Challenges	Lack of policy	Competition from other Caribbean nations	Balancing tourism demand with infrastructure upkeep.	Inter-agency coordination, and environmental impact.

4.1.1 Discussion

The comparative analysis reveals key components that drive successful sports tourism strategies in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Barbados have strategically

integrated sports into their broader tourism and economic development plans. Key components of their approaches are formal policies, government-backed funding, purpose-built infrastructure that meets international standards, consistent branding and marketing by national tourism agencies, strong public-private partnerships, inter-agency coordination, and measured economic impact.

In contrast, SVG lacks a formal sports tourism policy, and sports tourism is not integrated into the draft Sustainable Tourism Master Plan. SVG also lacks structured government support, and coordinated stakeholder involvement. Infrastructure remains limited and marketing efforts are event-specific rather than strategic. These gaps place SVG at a strategic disadvantage and highlight the need for a policy-driven approach.

4.2 Sports Venue Inventory and Assessment

Information received from the offices of the National Sports Council (NSC) and the National Lotteries Authority (NLA) indicates that most public sporting venues in SVG are managed by both the NSC and the NLA, while others are overseen by their respective National Federation (NF). Several venues are located on public school compounds. Information received further indicates that the public facilities include approximately **57 playing fields, 65 hard courts, two swimming pools, and two squash courts**, distributed across all 15 constituencies on mainland Saint Vincent, as well as the Grenadine Islands of Bequia, Canouan, Mayreau, and Union Island

The majority of these facilities were not included in this analysis because they **do not meet competitive standards**. Many lack essential amenities such as washrooms, spectator seating, changing rooms, proper field lighting, and regulation-sized playing areas.

Table 2: Sports Venue Inventory and Assessment

VENUE	LOCATION	SPORT(S) SUPPORTED	KEY FEATURES	MEETS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?
National Squash Centre	Kingstown	Squash	2 squash courts (3 required), 2 small changing rooms equipped with restrooms accommodating one at a time, seating for 120 combined, limited admin office.	No
Brighton Football Field and Technical Centre	Brighton	Football	Natural grass field, 500 lux lighting, dormitory-style accommodation, meeting room, medical treatment area, washroom and changing facilities.	No
Sir Vincent Beache National Stadium	Diamond	Track & Field, Football	400m 8-lane track - World Athletics Class 2 certified, football field under construction, covered seating for 1,500, washrooms. Under active construction at the time of this research.	Yes (Track only)
Shrewsbury Aquatic Centre	Ratho Mill	Swimming	One 25m 6-lane pool (8 lanes required), one 10m 3-lane learn-to-swim pool, 400 capacity seating, locker rooms, washrooms,	No

VENUE	LOCATION	SPORT(S) SUPPORTED	KEY FEATURES	MEETS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?
			lights, modest office space, canteen.	
National Tennis Centre	Villa	Tennis	6 hard courts (8 required), clubhouse, first aid room, changing room, limited uncovered permanent seating, canteen.	Yes (Junior level only)
Arnos Vale Sporting Complex	Arnos Vale	Cricket, Football, Rugby, Netball, Basketball.	Multiple pavilions (seating over 8,000), LED lighting towers, HD display, media centre, admin offices, electronic score board, 4 hard courts. ICC Certified for cricket.	Yes (Cricket only)
Kingstown Netball Centre	Kingstown	Netball	1 hard court, covered stand (200 capacity), 4 washrooms, 2 showers, a bar.	No
Victoria Park	Kingstown	Football, Athletics	Multi-purpose stadium, capacity approx. 3,500, inadequate lighting.	No
Park Hill Playing Field	Park Hill	Cricket	Pavilion with locker rooms, umpire's room, restrooms with changing rooms and lockers.	No
Coconut	Canash	Sailing	SVG Sailing base, boat storage for	Yes

VENUE	LOCATION	SPORT(S) SUPPORTED	KEY FEATURES	MEETS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?
Grove Beach			10 boats.	
New Montrose Basketball Facility	New Montrose	Basketball	Outdoor court, FIBA dimensions, washrooms, concrete seating.	No
Sion Hill Playing Field	Sion Hill	Football, Cricket, Rugby, Netball, Basketball.	Hard court, playing field, two-level pavilion, 300+ seating.	No
Cumberland Playing Field	Cumberland	Cricket, Athletics, Football	Playing field with covered pavilion.	No
Arnos Vale Tarmac	Arnos Vale	Drag Racing, Autocross	Asphalt runway, no permanent structures.	No
Sion Hill to Torouma Route	Windward Coast Road	Cycling	37.8 km 2 lane route, varied terrain.	No
Chilli Playing Field	Georgetown	Football, Athletics, Cricket,	Natural grass playing field, lights, two level pavilion - upper for spectators and media while lower	No

VENUE	LOCATION	SPORT(S) SUPPORTED	KEY FEATURES	MEETS INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS?
		Athletics, Rugby	has two dressing rooms, bar, small kitchen, and storeroom.	

4.2.3 Discussion

The sports venue inventory and assessment reveal that SVG currently lacks the sporting infrastructure necessary to attract a variety of regional and international sports tourism events. While SVG's outdoor sports, such as cricket, football, and track and field, have facilities that either meet or have the potential to meet international competition standards, **there is a notable gap in the development of indoor sports venues.**

A key observation is that many of the existing venues were not originally designed with competition-level standards in mind. The focus appears to have been primarily on multi-sport, community-level recreation and training, which may limit the potential to host higher-level events. This design choice has resulted in venues that are not fully equipped to meet the demands of regional and international competitions in terms of field of play standards, seating capacity, and amenities.

Additionally, indoor sports, which are increasingly popular for both participation and spectator engagement, have received little attention in the current infrastructure planning. This lack of investment limits the growth and development of these sports and further hinders SVG's ability to attract a diverse range of events that could boost sports tourism.

In summary, substantial investments and upgrades are needed to ensure that venues are designed and equipped to host competitive-level events. As of this research, cricket, football, tennis, rugby, sailing, swimming, and track and field are the most viable sports for immediate integration into a national sports tourism strategy, due to relative infrastructure readiness - though further upgrades remain necessary.

4.3 Interviews with Federation Presidents

The interviews with the presidents of Team Athletics SVG, Cricket West Indies, SVG Football Federation, and SVG Swimming Association provide a comprehensive view of SVG's sports tourism potential, revealing both strengths and barriers that must be addressed to develop an effective policy framework. The thematic analysis, covering SVG's sports ecosystem strengths, the economic impact of sports tourism, key challenges, and opportunities for growth, offers critical insights into the opportunities and constraints shaping SVG's ambitions as a sports tourism destination.

1. Strengths of SVG's Sports Ecosystem

SVG's sports landscape is built on a solid foundation of talent and expertise. As Keith Joseph, President of Team Athletics SVG, noted, *"SVG has a long sporting history. It also has a tremendous amount of talented individuals in competitive sport."*

The country's structured programs, such as those offered by Team Athletics SVG, ensure athlete development at every stage. Joseph highlighted that, *"There is a program that starts with kids athletics through all stages of an athlete's career, and we have a number of scholarship winners who have done and continue to do well."* This development pipeline is supported by

certified coaches, technical officials, and administrators, enabling SVG to host events aligned with international standards.

Otashie Spring, President of the SVG Football Federation, echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the role of grassroots football in nurturing talent. He stated, *“Football is one of the most popular sports in SVG, and we have a structure that allows young players to transition into competitive levels...we have FIFA certified referees, certified match commissures, venue coordinators, the grounds men are trained...”* However, he also pointed out that more investment is needed to provide exposure to international level competition.

2. Impact of Sports Tourism

The integration of sports and tourism presents significant economic opportunities for SVG. Dr. Kishore Shallow, President of Cricket West Indies, emphasized the economic impact of cricket, stating, *“Tourism and cricket are intertwined seamlessly. In fact, it has already generated millions of dollars in the Caribbean over the years.”* Dr. Shallow further observed the growing global appetite for cricket and its potential to boost SVG’s economy: *“The cricket industry is growing exponentially, suggesting that consumers' appetite for the game, even as travelers, is on an upward trajectory.”*

Spring also highlighted football's economic potential, particularly in attracting regional tournaments. *“We have a strong local fan base, and hosting regional tournaments can bring in teams, fans, and media coverage, boosting local businesses,”* he stated. However, he acknowledged the need for better coordination with tourism stakeholders to capitalize on these opportunities.

Joachim provided additional insights into the economic potential of swimming events.

“Hosting regional swimming championships brings in athletes, their families, and supporters, which contributes to the local economy through accommodation, food services, and transportation.”

3. Key Challenges in Executing a Sports Tourism Policy in SVG

Despite its strengths, SVG faces several challenges. Joseph pointed out gaps in the organizational framework, stating, *“What we are not sufficiently endowed with is a clearly defined sports structure that examines all aspects of bidding and successfully hosting regional and international competitions.”*

Additionally, he identified logistical and infrastructural barriers: *“There are issues with facilities around the track, accommodation, transportation, sponsorship, [and] Governmental support.”* Addressing these deficiencies will require strategic investment and collaboration.

Spring added that football, while popular, lacks the necessary infrastructure to host large-scale tournaments. *“We don’t have a stadium that meets international standards for football. We need better lighting, seating, and media facilities to attract FIFA-sanctioned events,”* he explained.

Joachim echoed these concerns, specifically regarding swimming. *“Inadequate regional air transport is an obstacle. Hotel facilities and standards vary widely. It is difficult to compete with Barbados and St. Lucia in terms of their competitive swimming facilities,”* he said.

4. Opportunities for Growth

To unlock the potential of sports tourism, SVG must strategically align its sports and

tourism sectors. Dr. Shallow noted, “*If embraced and leveraged prudently, sports tourism could be the stimulant that lessens the gap between the Caribbean and the more developed nations.*”

Joseph added that successful event hosting hinges on fostering interagency collaboration: “[There is] the absence of any sort of organization that can facilitate the inter-ministerial [and] interorganizational collaboration that is necessary for hosting such events to be successful.”

Spring emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships, particularly for football. “*If we can secure corporate sponsorships and align them with current government support, we can improve infrastructure and create a steady flow of events that attract international teams and tourists,*” he suggested. He added that any government minister that can make a sports tourism policy a reality will lead in the region.

Joachim recommended targeted investment in swimming infrastructure and logistical support. “*If SVG wants to become a serious player in regional swimming tourism, we need an upgraded pool facility and better transportation options. Addressing these key areas would make us more competitive in attracting international swimming events.*”

4.3.1 Discussion

The interviews suggest that SVG has strong potential to be a leading sports tourism destination in the Caribbean. However, several critical challenges continue to hinder progress. Despite the presence of local talent and promising sports programs, weaknesses in organizational structure and the inadequacy of sports facilities restrict SVG’s ability to compete with more developed Caribbean nations. Opportunities to generate substantial revenue - particularly through cricket, football, athletics and swimming - are evident, but realizing this potential

requires addressing key issues such as travel accessibility and strategic marketing. While ideas around collaboration and investment are viable, a cohesive national policy is urgently needed to align stakeholders and drive coordinated action. Without decisive intervention, SVG risks falling further behind its regional counterparts. With the right strategies, however, it can position itself as a premier destination for sports tourism.

The interviews point to several priority actions for developing an effective sports tourism policy. SVG should establish a dedicated sports tourism body responsible for coordinating inter-organizational and inter-ministerial communication, ensuring streamlined planning and execution. A phased plan to upgrade key sports infrastructure to international standards is essential, alongside strong government support to facilitate implementation. By capitalizing on existing strengths and executing these targeted interventions, SVG can unlock the economic and social benefits of a vibrant sports tourism sector.

Importantly, the interviewed sports representatives expressed strong commitment to engaging in strategies that promote a more coordinated and collaborative approach, inclusive of public and private sectors, positioning sport as a central pillar of national development.

4.4 Expert Interview

An expert interview was conducted with the Director of Tourism from the Ministry of Tourism, SVG. The following are the significant insights from the interview.

1. Ministerial Structure & Coordination

While tourism, sports, and culture were once unified under a single ministry fostering a strong and complementary synergy, they are now separate. Establishing a task force could be an

effective first step in a sports tourism policy, serving as an interim solution to foster collaboration among ministries and stakeholders without the immediate need for ministerial restructuring.

2. Challenges in Sports Tourism Development

Air access, limited accommodation, and the readiness of sporting facilities remain significant challenges. While developments at the Arnos Vale Sporting Complex, Sir Vincent Beache Stadium, and the Holiday Inn Hotel are positive steps, further investment is essential. These resource constraints limit the ability to host major sporting events during peak months - April, June, July, November, and December. Communication with the Tourism Authority is crucial to prevent scheduling conflicts.

3. Efforts in Sports Tourism

Sailing is a major niche market with high economic impact per visitor. The SVG Sailing Week is an example of efforts to revitalize this sector. Diving is a strong market with logistical challenges such as transporting equipment. There is a Sandals-sponsored run that demonstrates the potential for events to attract tourists while supporting social causes.

4. Feasibility of a Sports Tourism Policy

A sports tourism policy framework is welcomed. The Ministry of Tourism recognises the importance of sports to the sector and the need to diversify beyond leisure and adventure tourism. While funding and human resource capacity are critical considerations, public and private sector involvement can help drive investment.

The Sustainable Tourism Master Plan will be reassessed. Any independent policy

development should align with this broader initiative as sports tourism aligns with all sectors of tourism. This Master Plan should then be used to inform the broader National Economic and Social Development plan. Cabinet approval is needed at all stages.

4.4.1 Discussion

The Director supports a sports tourism policy to diversify tourism beyond beaches and adventure. Funding and staff are concerns but partnerships with businesses could help. Aligning the policy with the Sustainable Tourism Master Plan and the National Economic and Social Development Plan is crucial, with Cabinet approval at every step. Overall, the interview shows sports tourism is feasible. For this to be realised, strong coordination, investment, and planning are necessary. A policy must tackle these issues while building on successes like sailing events to make SVG a sports tourism destination.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLAN

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the primary recommendation is for the Cabinet of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to formally approve a national **sports tourism policy**. This policy should include the following key components:

1. A SVG Sports Tourism Organisation

Given the absence of a unified Ministry, establishing a formal organisation or task force dedicated to sports tourism will help coordinate efforts among stakeholders and drive strategic initiatives. This organization should facilitate inter-ministerial and inter-organizational collaboration and communication to ensure a unified approach to sports tourism development.

This task force should serve for one year, after which a consultant should be hired under the Tourism Authority to oversee the implementation of the sports tourism policy, ensuring evidence-based planning and stakeholder alignment.

SVG has a strong history of forming multi-sector task forces (e.g. for COVID-19 response and disaster management), which makes this model familiar and administratively feasible. The Ministry of Tourism already has coordination experience in Sports Tourism and could initiate this with minimal financial cost.

2. Sports Infrastructure and Venue Development, with Maintenance Plan

To attract annual sporting events, SVG must upgrade existing sports facilities and develop new venues that meet competition standards. This includes:

- a. Ensuring compliance with sport-specific regulations.
- b. Enhancing spectator experience, administration, technical and athlete amenities.
- c. Collaboration with national federations.
- d. Integrating sustainable environmental practices and disability access into facility management.

Currently, indoor sports receive little attention in SVG, limiting the country's ability to host a diverse range of events. Constructing a modern indoor multi-sport, multi-purpose facility would enable SVG to host various sporting and cultural entertainment events year-round, cost effectively expanding opportunities beyond outdoor sports and enhancing its appeal as a sports tourism destination. The facility could accommodate indoor sports such as karate, taekwondo, squash, table tennis, and gymnastics with shared amenities like washrooms, a conference room, and storage areas.

A national facility audit can be conducted using existing infrastructure data and technical expertise from NFs and the Ministry of Works. SVG has demonstrated capacity for phased development (e.g. Arnos Vale Stadium upgrades). The indoor multipurpose facility proposal aligns with community and school use, increasing its viability for public investment and PPPs.

3. A Sports Tourism Marketing Strategy

A targeted marketing strategy should be created to promote SVG as a sports tourism hub. This strategy should include branding initiatives, digital campaigns, partnerships with local successful athletes such as SVG's Olympic finalist Shafiqua Maloney and collaborations with NFs. Emphasizing SVG's unique attractions, climate, and culture can differentiate the country from other destinations.

Consider naming community playing fields, hard courts or pavilions after successful or inspirational athletes from the area, rather than solely based on their location. This would honor local sporting achievements and inspire future generations.

The Tourism Authority already manages digital platforms and destination branding. Integrating sports into existing marketing operations is low-cost and has been piloted through Sailing Week. This marketing strategy requires only policy direction, not new funding. This is a high-impact, low-barrier action.

4. A Tourism Experience Package

A bespoke package, featured on the Tourism Authority platform, would direct visitors to places to eat, experiences to enjoy with family and teammates, must-visit sites, and more, ensuring an immersive sports tourism experience. Physical “welcome” packages can be distributed at sporting events or as welcome packages on arrival in SVG.

The platform already exists, this requires content integration, not new systems. Businesses are likely to participate since it benefits their visibility and revenue. Welcome packages can be co-branded with sponsors and are low-cost, especially if created as digital versions.

5. Integration of Sports Events into the National Tourism Calendar

A structured events calendar should be created to manage the scheduling of sports tourism activities and ensure that major events do not overlap, considering SVG's limited accommodation capacity. This calendar should be integrated into the national tourism platform to allow for better planning and coordination among stakeholders. Additionally, a digital navigation

system for sports events and venues should be developed to enhance accessibility and awareness. This calendar can ensure that SVG becomes a 365 day per year destination to replace the present “off-season and on-season” tourism climate.

The Tourism Authority already manages an events calendar. Coordination with sports bodies requires administrative meetings rather than major investments. A digital navigation map for venues can be built on platforms like Google Maps or OpenStreetMap with limited technical assistance.

6. Public-Private Partnerships

Collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential for the sustainable growth of sports tourism. The government should provide incentives for private investment in sports facilities, event sponsorship, and athlete development programs. Establishing PPP models can lead to better resource mobilization and infrastructure improvement.

SVG already has PPP frameworks in education and infrastructure. A sports-specific adaptation is operationally achievable. Regional examples (e.g. Jamaica's sports infrastructure PPPs) offer templates.

7. Incentives for Hosting Sports Events

To attract major sporting events, the government should offer tax breaks to event sponsors, and logistical support to event hosts. A dedicated sports events fund could be established to assist local sports organizations in bidding for and hosting recognised regional and international competitions.

Tax incentives and subsidy models already exist for other sectors (e.g. tourism and construction). A sports event support fund could begin as a modest annual allocation and scaled up based on returns. Legal and financial frameworks exist, political will and stakeholder alignment are needed.

8. Volunteer Recruitment and Training Program

A joint initiative between the Ministry of Education, National Sports Council, Ministry of Youth, and the Ministry of Sports should promote and recruit volunteers to support the execution of sporting events. Suitable rewards or courtesies such as meals and memorabilia should be offered to encourage participation. Renaming “volunteers” as “national service ambassadors” or “impact leaders” can instill a greater sense of national pride and purpose.

There’s strong precedent in SVG for volunteerism through Red Cross, schools, and national events. Renaming volunteers and offering recognition adds psychological value rather than cost. Basic training can be delivered through school curriculums or short workshops.

9. Opportunities to Attract New Olympic Sports

SVG should pursue the introduction of new sports that align with existing infrastructure, national sports tourism goals, and the country’s physical and cultural landscape. Sports that require minimal infrastructure, such as 3x3 basketball, beach volleyball, flag football, and lacrosse, present immediate opportunities for expansion. SVG’s terrain also lends itself to adventure sports, including mountain biking and BMX racing, which can appeal to the growing market of active tourists.

The suggested sports (e.g. 3x3 basketball, beach volleyball) require minimal capital.

Beach and open-space access is plentiful. Regional federations and international sports bodies often fund pilot programs for sport introduction.

10. Increase Number of Participants in Existing Events

Existing sporting events should be scaled by increasing grassroots participation, particularly among youth. Programs such as Kids Athletics and introductory festivals in football, volleyball, and athletics can leverage the high number of accessible fields and courts without requiring significant new investment. Equipment should be distributed across zones to reduce centralization, with oversight provided by the National Sports Council in collaboration with respective federations. Low-cost sports like athletics, football, and 3x3 basketball offer viable pathways for both participation and talent development. Promoting inter-community events and school partnerships can enhance visibility and engagement.

Most of the infrastructure already exists. Equipment can be secured through grants facilitated through the NOC.

11. Impact Assessment Tool

The success of a sports tourism policy needs to be assessed; tools like the Sports Tourism Economic Assessment Model (STEAM) to measure the economic impact of each sporting event can be used. This evaluation will provide insights to refine strategies and maximize benefits. Cost Benefit Analysis can also be considered as it provides an argument for the government to subsidize events.

STEAM and similar tools are publicly available and adaptable to small states. Data can be collected incrementally through event registration and surveys. The Research & Information

Unit at the Tourism Authority already conducts assessments and can integrate sports metrics.

12. Strong Governance and Institutional Capacity

Effective governance structures should be established within sports organizations to enhance accountability and operational efficiency. Implementing transparent financial management, clear governance policies, and regular performance evaluations will contribute to a stronger sports ecosystem. Ethical standards should also be considered.

Training and templates are already offered through regional and international sporting partners (e.g. PASO, CANOC, Olympic Solidarity). Institutional strengthening has been done in other sectors (e.g. education), making it contextually familiar.

13. Policy Development

In addition to the proposed sports tourism policy framework, the Ministries of sports and tourism should review their sports and tourism policies in tandem to ensure that both sectors can mutually benefit from each other's growth and development. The sports policy, in particular, should prioritize fostering a strong sports culture through intersectoral collaboration, laying the foundation for a 'sports revolution' in SVG. Sports Tourism should also be included as a subsector in both the sports policy and tourism policy.

Both Ministries have policy units and experience in developing sectoral strategies. A joint review can be initiated by ministerial instruction and supported by this thesis' findings. External support (e.g. OECS, UNESCO) is often available for cross-sectoral policy development.

5.1.2 Addressing Funding Concerns

Beyond government allocations, International Federations offer support for hosting international events while the NSC provides access to funding through the NLA. With the increase in tourism a commitment that a percentage of increased revenue can be allocated to the practical execution of the Policy over the next 5 years. Public-private partnerships remain a crucial investment avenue; however, further consultation with economic and public policy experts can help refine financial strategies.

Dr. Dalano DaSouza, an Economics lecturer at the University of the West Indies, has highlighted key economic strategies that Caribbean nations can leverage to enhance financial stability, even amid economic uncertainties. During a guest speaker presentation at the 2025 Antigua and Barbuda Employers' Federation's Executive Breakfast Meeting, Dr. DaSouza emphasized the importance of strengthening supply chain resilience, managing inflation, controlling costs, embracing digital transformations, enhancing workforce agility and talent retention, supply chain integration, import substitution, captive insurance collaborations, and fostering government-private sector collaboration.

Applying these principles within the sports tourism sector can provide a more sustainable financial model. For example, supply chain integration and import substitution could lower event operational costs, while digital transformation and workforce agility may improve revenue generation through better marketing, television rights, ticketing, and hospitality services. Additionally, captive insurance collaborations could mitigate financial risks associated with large-scale events. A structured public-private sector approach to sports tourism funding, informed by these economic insights, would strengthen the sector's long-term viability.

5.2 Action Plan

A phased approach is presented to ensure practical implementation:

- Short-term (0-1 year): Formation of a sports tourism task force, policy draft submission, pilot marketing campaigns for existing events, comprehensive facilities audit, engagement with stakeholders - National Federations, Tourism Authority, Government.
- Medium-term (1-3 years): Infrastructure upgrades, strengthen stakeholder partnerships, and formal policy adoption. Dissolve task force, introduce a sports tourism consultant.
- Long-term (3+ years): Establish consistent event hosting, corporate sponsorship integration, and policy evaluation mechanisms.

Table 3: Action Plan

POLICY

Priority	Recommendation	Actions required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
1	Develop a formal Sports Tourism Policy	Use identified key components from this study	Director of Tourism within the Ministry of Tourism	September - October 2025	Support from the Minister of Tourism, Cabinet approval

IMPLEMENTATION

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
1	Create a national Sports Tourism Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a working group with key stakeholders from tourism and sports sectors. - Develop governance structure and Terms of Reference, with clear affiliation with the Tourism Authority. 	Ministry of Tourism.	Oct 2025 – Mar 2026	Stakeholder commitment, Government approval, funding availability.
2	Upgrade existing sports infrastructure and develop a new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a comprehensive national facility audit. - Develop a phased 	Ministry of Transport, Works, Land and Surveys,	Jan 2026 – Dec 2028	Access to funding, compliance with international

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
	multipurpose indoor sports facility	infrastructure upgrade plan. - Construct an indoor multi-purpose facility.	and Physical Planning		/competition standards, Government support, consultations with respective National Federations.
3	Integrate Sports Events into the Tourism Calendar	- Develop an annual and quadrennial sports events calendar. - Coordinate and integrate with the national tourism events calendar. - Implement a digital navigation system	Tourism Authority	Oct 2025 – June 2026	Collaboration between tourism and sports bodies, user-friendly digital platforms, widespread public

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		for events and venues.			awareness.
4	Develop a Tourism Experience Package by event/sport activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify key tourism sites, experiences and hospitality services for the sports enthusiast. - Launch the package on the Tourism Authority's platform. 	Visitor experience Unit managed by the Ministry of Tourism	Jan 2026 – Dec 2026	Engagement from businesses, effective marketing strategy, seamless integration into tourism offerings.
5	Implement a communications and marketing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a strategic media and public relations plan. - Highlight local athletes and 	Marketing department of Tourism Authority	Jan 2026 – Dec 2026	Effective messaging, strong media partnerships, public

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		<p>successful events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch an awareness campaign via digital and traditional media. 			engagement.
6	Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify potential investors and sponsors. - Develop an incentive structure for private sector involvement. - Formalize agreements for facility investment and event sponsorship. - Develop tax incentives and 	Ministry of Finance	Oct 2025 – Dec 2027	Attracting investors, ensuring mutually beneficial agreements, government incentives.

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		subsidies for event organizers.			
7	Introduce Incentives for Hosting Sports Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a sports events support fund. - Promote SVG as a destination for regional and international competitions. 	National Sports Council	Oct 2025 – Dec 2027	Availability of funding.
8	Coordinated Volunteer Recruitment Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a national volunteer program for sports events. - Partner with schools, universities, and community groups. - Provide incentives and recognition for 	Ministry of Youth	Oct 2025 – Dec 2026	Strong recruitment efforts, effective training programs, community engagement.

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		volunteers.			
9	Support sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide/coordinate technical, operational, and other support for existing sports events. - Enhance event marketing and logistical planning. - Integrate local culture into events. 	Sports Tourism Task Force	Jan 2026 - Dec 2027	Funding accessibility, strong coordination between sports and tourism stakeholders.
10	Actively Seek Opportunities to Host Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct feasibility studies for potential events. - Identify regional and international competitions SVG 	National Federations	Jan 2026 - Dec 2028	Successful bidding, sufficient event infrastructure, logistical

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		can bid for. - Develop a strategic approach to attracting major events.			readiness and available funding.
11	Assess Impact of Sports Tourism	- Implement sports tourism economic impact assessments or cost based assessment. - Conduct performance evaluations of sports tourism initiatives.	Research and Information Manager at the Tourism Authority.	Jan 2026 - Dec 2028	Access to reliable data, accurate measurement tools, stakeholder participation.
12	Strengthen Governance and Institutional Capacity	- Implement governance training for sports organizations.	National Olympic Committee	Oct 2025 - Dec 2028	Institutional buy-in, transparency in

Priority	Recommendation	Actions Required	Lead	Time Scale	Critical Success Factors
		- Develop clear policies for financial management and accountability.			governance, ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
13	Hire a Sports Tourism Consultant	- Oversee sports tourism policy implementation.	Tourism Authority	Dec 2027+	Commitment to implementation, effective communication, stakeholder support.

5.3 Conclusion

In summary, this study has critically examined the potential for SVG to develop and execute a sports tourism policy that meaningfully integrates sports and tourism as engines for long-term national development. It presents an original policy framework rooted in local realities and regional best practices offering a clear, feasible, and actionable pathway for implementation.

This framework supports SVG's broader goals to strengthen its sports sector and diversify its tourism offering.

Importantly, the proposed policy framework aligns with the tourism sector's stated vision to improve the quality and competitiveness of its tourism product while maintaining social and environmental sustainability, as outlined in the National Tourism Sector Strategies Plan (2002–2006). Although that strategy is now outdated and has not been revised, this research builds on its foundational principles by offering a modern and targeted solution. In addition, the proposed framework reflects the more current policy of the SVG National Economic and Social Development Plan 2013–2025, which emphasizes re-engineering economic growth and promoting diversification across key sectors.

Sport is a platform for economic opportunity, cultural exchange, and national branding. By adopting a sports tourism policy, SVG can redefine its position in the region, attract new sports, and capitalize on growing global interest in sport-related travel. The stakeholder enthusiasm uncovered in this research signals a strong appetite for change. What is now required is a policy to channel this momentum into tangible progress.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Federation Presidents

1. Support for Sports Tourism Development:

"What role does {insert sport} play in the growth of sports tourism in SVG? Are there specific attributes of the sport or its community that align well with tourism goals?"

2. Infrastructure and Facilities:

"How suitable do you think SVG's current {insert sport} facilities are for hosting major tournaments?"

3. Upgrades Needed:

"If SVG were to focus on becoming a competitive sports tourism destination, what areas would you prioritise to support {insert sport}?"

4. Local and International Interest:

"How does SVG currently compare to other Caribbean countries in terms of appeal and capacity to host {insert sport} events?"

5. Benefits to Sport:

"What specific benefits could the growth of sports tourism bring to {insert sport} locally, in terms of talent development, visibility, or financial support?"

Interview Questions for Expert

1. Sports Tourism in SVG

What role does sports tourism play in the country's overall tourism strategy?

2. Policy and Strategic Development

Is there an existing sports tourism policy in SVG? If not, what key elements should be included in one?

What are the major challenges in developing a sustainable sports tourism framework in SVG?

3. Infrastructure and Facilities

What are the main limitations of SVG's current infrastructure for hosting international or regional events?

4. Stakeholder Involvement and Collaboration

Did the former ministerial alignment of Tourism, Sport and Culture work well in SVG? If we were to develop sports tourism in SVG, how do we move forward under the current alignment?

5. Marketing and Sponsorship

What is the tourism marketing strategy in SVG, is there an opportunity for Sports to be integrated?

Appendix 2: Interview Transcript

Date: March 11, 2025

Interviewee: Mr. Otashie Spring, President SVG Football Federation

Interviewer: Researcher

Interviewer:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me, Otashie. I'm looking at sports tourism and how we can develop a sustainable framework for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. So, the first part of my study looks at recent contributions to sports tourism in SVG. Specifically, how has football contributed to sports tourism last year? I know we had the CONCACAF qualifiers, but what was the impact of hosting such events?

Interviewee:

For 2024, from my experience in football, I'd say we had a historic moment—it may have been the first of its kind. Thanks to upgrades to our sporting facilities, the entire experience was totally different. We were able to host our leg of the Nations League here in St. Vincent. We hosted four matches involving three other teams. The win against El Salvador sparked a renewed sense of national pride. It also helped us expand our fan base, especially by attracting younger people who aren't traditional football supporters. The energy and vibes around the event, the venue, and the significance of the games all contributed to that.

Football continues to be one of the most popular sports in SVG. We've built a structure that allows young players to transition through the ranks into competitive levels. That kind of pathway is critical for long-term development and talent retention.

In fact, we were in a position where positive results could have significantly boosted our

relevance and value within the regional and global football landscape. We achieved excellent results—particularly against El Salvador, a team ranked nearly 100 places above us. That win created a lot of goodwill, and I think our Football Federation is still benefiting from that momentum, especially heading into the Jamaica playoff games.

Interviewer:

That's fantastic. You touched on something significant - the impact on community engagement, youth interest, and building a fan base. I'm also looking at the challenges of hosting events. What are the current issues with Victoria Park, and what events is it suited for? Any challenges with hosting football competitions in SVG?

Interviewee:

Just before I dive into that—on the sports tourism angle—you're right to explore that. While we didn't have a huge influx of foreign spectators, what we did accomplish was laying a platform for future opportunities. We've now demonstrated that St. Vincent can successfully host high-level matches. That builds trust with our regional and international partners and creates opportunities for future events that could attract foreign visitors.

We've even seen that some people are coming in for the Jamaica game, and that kind of experience gives credibility to our hosting capacity. We had to be certified to host these games, and last year's experience certainly helped demonstrate that St. Vincent is capable. Some of the delegates visiting now seem to be coming just to experience the event atmosphere.

To meet those standards, we've developed human resource capacity as well. We have FIFA-certified referees, certified match commissioners, venue coordinators, and trained groundsmen. This kind of capacity building is essential if we're to host more events of this

calibre.

We already have a strong local fan base, and regional tournaments help amplify that. These events bring in visiting teams, media coverage, and even some fans, which directly boosts local businesses—from hospitality to vendors around the stadium.

As for Victoria Park: Our current administration firmly believes that athletes need not only technical support but also quality facilities. We've done serious assessments and believe the playing environment needs to evolve. We're exploring options like artificial turf and multi-use facilities with proper amenities.

Victoria Park is a unique venue - historic and emotionally significant. However, it has limitations. It's not certified for international matches due to inadequate amenities. Lighting is also below international standards. Serious upgrades are needed. Without improved lighting, seating, and media facilities, we can't realistically attract FIFA-sanctioned events.

That said, with the right investment, Victoria Park could actually deliver a more intimate, energetic fan experience than even the Arnos Vale Sporting Complex. Its closeness between fans and players gives it a special edge.

Interviewer:

Great! Can you explain how events are prioritized at the Arnos Vale Sporting Complex? What's the process for applying to host an event there?

Interviewee:

Ideally, each sporting discipline should have its own facility to avoid scheduling conflicts. But as a developing country, we don't have that luxury. Arnos Vale is more of a cricket venue by design. However, we've always coexisted across disciplines and shared the facilities as

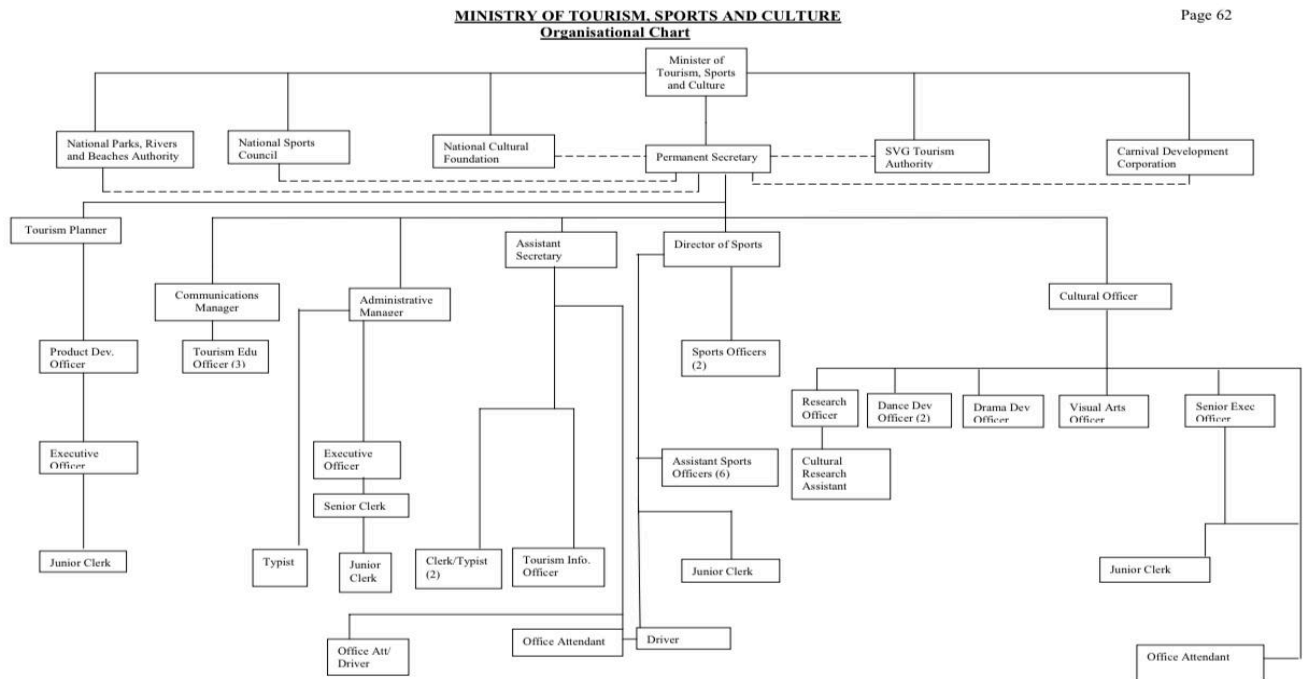
best we can.

I don't think there's any discrimination when allocating venue access. Authorities try their best to accommodate all parties equally. That said, the preparation required for cricket vs. football is very different - especially in terms of pitch condition, outfield treatment, and timing. For example, earlier this year cricket took precedence, and football couldn't get access when we wanted to host friendlies in January. We ended up with March instead, which aligned better with our national game.

From what I understand, the National Sports Council has a policy where international and regional activities are given priority over local ones. So the level and scope of the event are factored into scheduling decisions.

Looking ahead, if we can secure corporate sponsorships and align those efforts with existing government support, there's real potential. That kind of public-private partnership could lead to infrastructure upgrades.

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Appendix 4: Sports Venues Managed by NSC

Sports Venues Managed by the National Sports Council

Constituency	Playing Fields Location	Hard Courts Location
	1) Fancy 2) Owia 3) Orange Hill 4) Overland	1) Fancy 2) Owia 3) Sandy Bay School Yard 4) Orange Hill 5) Dickson 6) Langley Park School Yard
North Central Windward	1) Georgetown 2) Black Point 3) Colonaire School Yard 4) Gorse 5) South Rivers 6) Park Hill School	1) Byera 2) Colonaire School Yard 3) Chilli- Lighted
South Central Windward	1) Mt. Grenan 2) North Union 3) North Union Secondary School 4) Lauders/Antoine 5) Greiggs 6) Diamonds School Yard	1) New Grounds School 2) Sans Souci 3) Lowmans's Windward 4) Lauders 5) Greiggs 6) Greiggs Primary School 7) North Union Secondary
South Windward	1) Biabou 2) Stubbs	1) Biabou – Lighted 2) Stubbs 3) Carapan 4) Calder Primary School
East St. George	1) Brighton 2) Calliaqua	1) Brighton 2) Enhams 3) Calliaqua – Lighted
West St. George	1) Arnos Vale 1 PF (Lighted) 2) Arnos Vale 2 PF 3) Belair 4) Dauphine	1) Arnos Vale Sporting Complex – Lighted 2) Belair 3) Gomea – Lighted

	5) Sion Hill 6) Dorsetshire Hill	4) Sion Hill/Walveroo - Lighted
Marriaqua	1) Richland Park	1) Richland Park 2) Evesham
East Kingstown	1) Richmond Hill	1) Sion Hill Village 2) Tennis Triangle 3) Girls' High School
Central Kingstown	1) Sharpes 2) Green Hill 3) Largo Height	1) Bishop's College 2) Green Hill (Lighted) 3) Paul's Avenue
West Kingstown	1) Ottley Hall	1) Edinboro 2) New Montrose Basketball Centre (Home of Basketball) 3) Campden Park Community - Lighted
South Leeward	1) Penniston 2) Clare Valley School Yard	1) Questelles 2) Clare Valley 3) Du Bois 4) Hope Hard Court
Central Leeward	1) Buccament 2) Peters Hope Playing Field	1) Buccament School
North Leeward	1) Spring Village 2) Troumaca 3) Rose Hall 4) Petit Bordel 5) Chateaubelair 6) Fitz Hughes 7) Golden Groove	1) Spring Village School Yard 2) Troumaca 3) Fitz Hughes School yard 4) Rose Bank – Lighted 5) Petit Bordel - Lighted
Northern Grenadines	1) Clive Tennis/ Bequia 1 2) Paget Farm/ Bequia 2	1) Clive Tannis/Bequia 1 2) Paget Farm/Bequia 2 - Lighted
Southern Grenadines	1) Canouan 2) Clifton Union Island	1) Canouan – Lighted 2) Mayreau

	3) Ashton Union Island	3) Ashton – Union Island 4) Clifton Union Island
Total	Playing Fields- 48 Mainland-43 Grenadines-5	Hard Courts – 55 Mainland - 49 Grenadines - 6

Appendix 5: Sports Venues Managed by NLA

Sports Venues Managed or owned by NLA

Hard Courts	Playing Fields	Other
Rose Hall	FitzHughes	National Squash Centre
Keartons	Cumberland	
Questelles	Hope Vermont	
Lowman's	Buccament	
Richmond Hill Triangle	GreenHill	
Green Hill	Ribishi	
Choppins	South Rivers	
Sans Souci	Park Hill	
Chilli Georgetown	Chilli Georgetown	
The National Tennis Centre (6 hard courts)		
The Triangle		