

REPORT BRIEF

HARNESSING MICE FOR ZAMBIA'S TOURISM SECTOR GROWTH

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INTRODUCTION

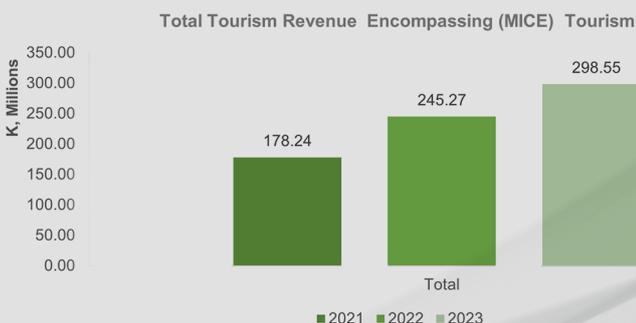
The study 'Harnessing MICE for Zambia's Tourism Sector Growth' examines the economic potential of Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism as a driver of growth within Zambia's tourism sector. The analysis highlighted the strategic importance of MICE tourism as a high-value segment, capable of generating substantial multiplier effects across the broader economy.

Employing a comparative analysis of Zambia and Rwanda, the study evaluates key trends in MICE tourism performance, identifies determinants of growth, and assesses structural and policy barriers that constrain the subsector's full economic contribution. The findings address critical gaps in the policy frameworks and offer evidence-based insights into strategies for fostering sustained MICE sector expansion.

FINDINGS

The MICE tourism concept represents a critical component of the global tourism industry, with MICE travelers' spending margins estimated to be 2 to 5 times higher than those of average leisure travelers. Globally, the MICE tourism market is projected to reach USD 1,439 billion by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.6 percent from 2018 to 2025 (Business Insider, 2023).

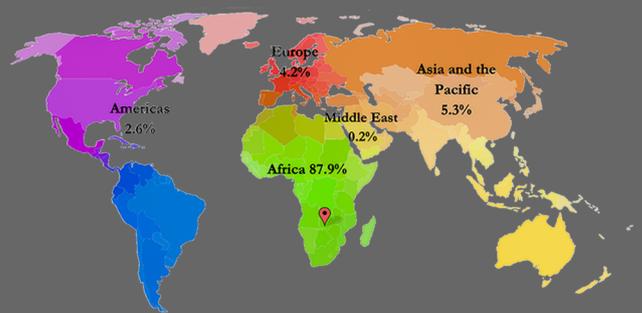
Findings reveal that Zambia has the potential to become a successful MICE destination. Tourism revenues, including contributions from MICE tourism, have demonstrated robust growth, rising from K178.24 million in 2021 to K298.55 million in 2023, a 67.49 percent increase in the two-year period (ICCA, 2017). The findings indicate substantial revenue potential through enhanced regulatory enforcement of MICE tourism revenue channels, including hotel managers licensing, the tourism levy, and the tourism enterprise license, optimizing fiscal performance and compliance.



Potential Target Markets for Developing Zambia as a MICE Destination

Africa dominates Zambia's international tourist arrivals, accounting for 87.9% from 2018 to 2021, followed by Asia and the Pacific (5.3%), Europe (4.2%), the Americas (2.6%), and the Middle East (0.2%). This concentration presents short-term growth opportunities for Zambia's MICE sector. For medium- to long-term expansion, key international markets include India, the UK, and the US (Tourism 2021 Tourism Statistical Digest Report).

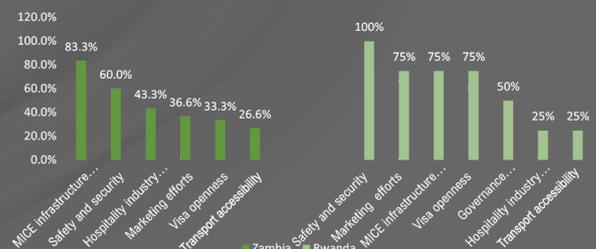
Tourist Arrivals by UNWTO Regions (2017 - 2021)



The study highlights that SADC, COMESA, EAC, and the AU offer significant market opportunities for Zambia's MICE sector. The results suggest that targeting regional frameworks and leveraging agreements like AfCFTA can enhance and expand Zambia's MICE market entry through its existing membership and economic collaborations in the short to medium term.

Drivers of Mice Tourism in Zambia and Rwanda

The study results reveal that Zambia's recent increase in MICE activities is perceived to have been mainly driven by infrastructure development, particularly following the construction of the Kenneth Kaunda Wing at the Mulungushi International Conference Centre, which has enhanced capacity and appeal. This has also been supported by Zambia's international reputation as a peaceful nation.



The results suggest that while both Zambia and Rwanda recognize the crucial role of infrastructure in driving MICE tourism, Rwanda places greater emphasis on safety, security, and marketing efforts as key drivers. Rwanda's proactive approach, supported by a Convention Bureau and a dedicated MICE strategy, gives it a competitive edge over Zambia, which currently lacks these structures.

FACTORS HINDERING MICE TOURISM GROWTH

- Absence of a MICE strategy & convention bureau
- Tax burden
- Multiple tourism service charges and licenses
- Accommodation & conference infrastructure gaps
- Limited MICE statistical data

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study confirmed that MICE tourism is crucial for the overall growth of Zambia's national tourism. Based on the findings, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions/Events cannot thrive in any country without key tourism enablers such as good infrastructure, robust marketing, peace, and security, among others. Additional enablers like a comprehensive MICE strategy and a convention bureau are essential for effective marketing and promotion. A balanced combination of these factors or an ecosystem is necessary for the development of MICE tourism in Zambia.

The following recommendations are prioritised to strategically position Zambia as a preferred MICE destination, enhancing its competitiveness and fostering economic growth.

- 1 **Develop and Implement a National MICE Tourism Strategy:** Establishing a comprehensive national strategy is fundamental for guiding the development and promotion of MICE tourism in Zambia.

- 2 **Increase Funding and Investment Support for the Existing MICE Unit within the Zambia Tourism Agency (ZTA):** Enhancing financial and investment support for the ZTA's MICE unit is crucial for building the foundation of the convention bureau.
- 3 **Establish and Implement a National Convention Bureau:** Creating a dedicated national convention bureau is key to facilitating seamless operations, marketing, and stakeholder engagement, which is essential for attracting and retaining MICE events.
- 4 **Development of the International Convention Centre in Livingstone City:** Livingstone can be a strong puller for MICE events in Zambia leveraging on its tourism activities such as safaris, boat cruise, and bungee jumping. Available options include developing a new convention centre or simply resolving pending issues hindering the development of the proposed Shungu Namutitima International Convention Centre in Livingstone City.
- 5 **Implement a Single Licensing Initiative to Reduce Costs and Streamline Multiple Licensing Requirements:** Simplifying the licensing process by introducing a single licensing initiative will help to reduce costs and administrative burdens for MICE operators.
- 6 **MICE Data Management Systems:** Advance discussions on the systematic collection and management of MICE-related statistics between the Ministry of Tourism, ZamStats, and the Immigration Authority.

You can access the full report, "Harnessing MICE for Zambia's Tourism Sector Growth," on our website by scanning the QR code provided.

