

It will be exciting to catch up with Türkiye, and its new Tourism Promotion and Development Agency, TGA, at IMEX 2022.

TGA will introduce a new approach to promoting MICE and congresses to Türkiye at the show.

Many developments have happened in the country during the pandemic and we, as ecomice explorers, are going to learn about them.

The new Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency TGA was founded in June 2019. As the start of this new entity happened to collide with the beginning of the pandemic, the focus of their work in the first 2 years was on safe tourism and developing respective Health programs.

The introduction of a Health Certification program was applied in all segments related to travel – all information about Safe Tourism Certification.

<https://tga.gov.tr/home/>

MICE promotion for Türkiye falls under the efforts of the new agency and starts its activities now – after working on strategies. The exhibition at IMEX in Frankfurt is a great opportunity to show a new face to the international MICE market. For us, it will be important to see how the newly launched National Sustainable Tourism Scheme will be translated into the meetings business.

In 2022 Türkiye signed a collaboration agreement with the world's top environment and sustainability platform Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). With the agreement, Türkiye and GSTC will introduce for the first time a National Sustainable Tourism Scheme an official GSTC status.

The Turkish tourism industry will be restructured within the 3-year agreement signed with GSTC, which sets the best and most widespread standards in sustainable tourism. The first stage of the program, planned to be wholly concluded by 2030, will become operational in 2023; and the second stage will be carried out gradually in 2025. In 2030, all international standards will be met. The plan is to accelerate the sustainability practices in the Turkish tourism industry. The signing of the agreement marks an exemplary step toward sustainability—all destinations in Türkiye as well as tourism services, including accommodation facilities, will gradually receive sustainability certification within the scope of the National Sustainability Tourism Scheme.

Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) joined the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Board of Directors as an Affiliate Member for the 2022-2025 period. Representing Türkiye, TGA is expected to have a decisive role in the World Tourism Organization's goals towards the development of sustainable and resilient tourism.

A thematic debate on “Sustainable Tourism” was held at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on May 4, 2022, with the high participation of member states. Representing Türkiye, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) and the Culture and Promotion Attaché of Türkiye Republic Ministry of Culture and Tourism have attended the meeting, which was held in close cooperation with the UN, UNWTO, UNDP, UNEP and UNCTAD.

As a country that has taken an active and effective role in hosting green and sustainable meetings, Türkiye offers numerous “green meeting” projects developed by congresses, meeting venues, hotels, PCOs and DMCs. As sustainable criteria play a key role in the selection of destinations, the country aims at being a global leader in sustainable MICE business.

To fill the official mission with life, narratives for MICE and business events in Türkiye will be curated, developed and communicated in the months to come.

The Team at TGA works with the domestic partners on creating such new MICE products for some time. TGA has organized domestic Provincial Trainings for about 400 people, with topics like “Sustainability in Tourism”, “Being a Gastronomy Destination”, “What can Museums Change in the Contemporary World” among other—all suitable to increase the experiential value of MICE products together with their responsible operation.

As Thermal Tourism, as well as Cultural and Touristic preservation and development, are among national priority investment areas, there will also be good incentives for hotels to benefit from state support and to provide premium offers for wellness and rehab facilities.

For Türkiye, Cultural Sustainability will be a focus area relevant for MICE programs. Cultural Sustainability means a strong dedication to preserve and responsibly manage the indigenous treasures of a country. Türkiye has much to offer when it comes to mystics and spirituality, wellness, health, the life of the great sage RUMI and the famous Turkish Bath with its positive effects on health and wellbeing.

Sustainability will also play an important role in sports events as an important sector of MICE business in Türkiye. Resorts, training camp opportunities, hotels, and sports facilities will also join the sustainable transition. Throughout the year, many professional athletes and professional teams choose to come to Türkiye for training and professional development.

Türkiye is gradually expanding the number of Cycling Routes; moreover, it invites travelers to more sustainable and ecological trips with its Cycling Friendly Accommodation Certificate. There are 16 hotels with Bicycle Friendly Accommodation Certificate in Türkiye. At present, 54 Mountain Bike Routes, 32 Road Bike Routes, and 29 Electric Bike Routes add to the Bicycle friendly character. Hotels and routes can be accessed via Go Sustainable Türkiye.

Also, Türkiye has 531 blue flag beaches. For this reason, scuba diving and swimming sports are actively practiced on the seas.

A great example of a fashionable sport and a cultural treasure of the country is Archery. As a trend sport in the Western world, the experience of the contemplative exercise can be integrated in MICE programs in Türkiye, where archery is traditional and indigenous. The country provides the best archery facilities to professional archers and to international archery tournament organizations for unique competitions. More about sports in Türkiye: Sports GoTürkiye Experiences (sportsturkiye.com)

Since its establishment, TGA has become a member of ICCA, UIA, City DNA, PCMA, SITE, MPI, IFEA and other international sustainability and MICE organisations such as WTTC, ATTA, WTA and ECF-European Cycling Federation.

Johanna Fischer for ecomice Partner Destinations at IMEX 22
Germany, 25.05.2022