



Georgian Cultural Tourism:

Trends and Prospects

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Introduction

Cultural Tourism is one of the most important and rapidly expanding economic and social phenomena of the contemporary world

The aim of this presentation is to:

- analyse the meanings and significance of cultural tourism in a rapidly-changing tourism environment of Georgia. In doing so, it examines cultural tourism within the context of the major economic and social processes which is influencing its development
- critically explore the major issues facing the Georgia with regard to the development of tourism and its relationships with heritage and culture

Achievements in tourism 2004-2007

- Tourism investment has grown substantially to over \$1 billion in 2007
- Major hotel projects are under construction, including such international brands as the Kempinski, Park Hyatt, Inter-Continental, Meridien, Radisson, and Marriott Executive Suites.
- New airports opened in Tbilisi and Batumi.
- Tourism arrivals reached over 1 million in 2007, the first time there have over a million arrivals since the 1980s.
- In 2006, 124 new hotels opened, representing double the number compared with 2005. There was a 25% increase in new hotels in Tbilisi and more than a 50% increase in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region.
- Eight hundred 4 and 5 star international brand hotel rooms were under construction as of early 2008.
- Two new tourism colleges opened their doors to help meet industry demands for a trained tourism workforce.
- Government has disbursed 5 million GEL (US\$ 3,5 mln) in 5 year low interest rate loans and an additional 10 million GEL (US\$6.4 mln) in 2008.

Conceptual debate

The basic issue seems to be:

what elements of culture *should be included* in “cultural tourism”?

- × The first, *the “sites and monuments” approach*
- × The second approach might broadly be termed *the “conceptual approach”*

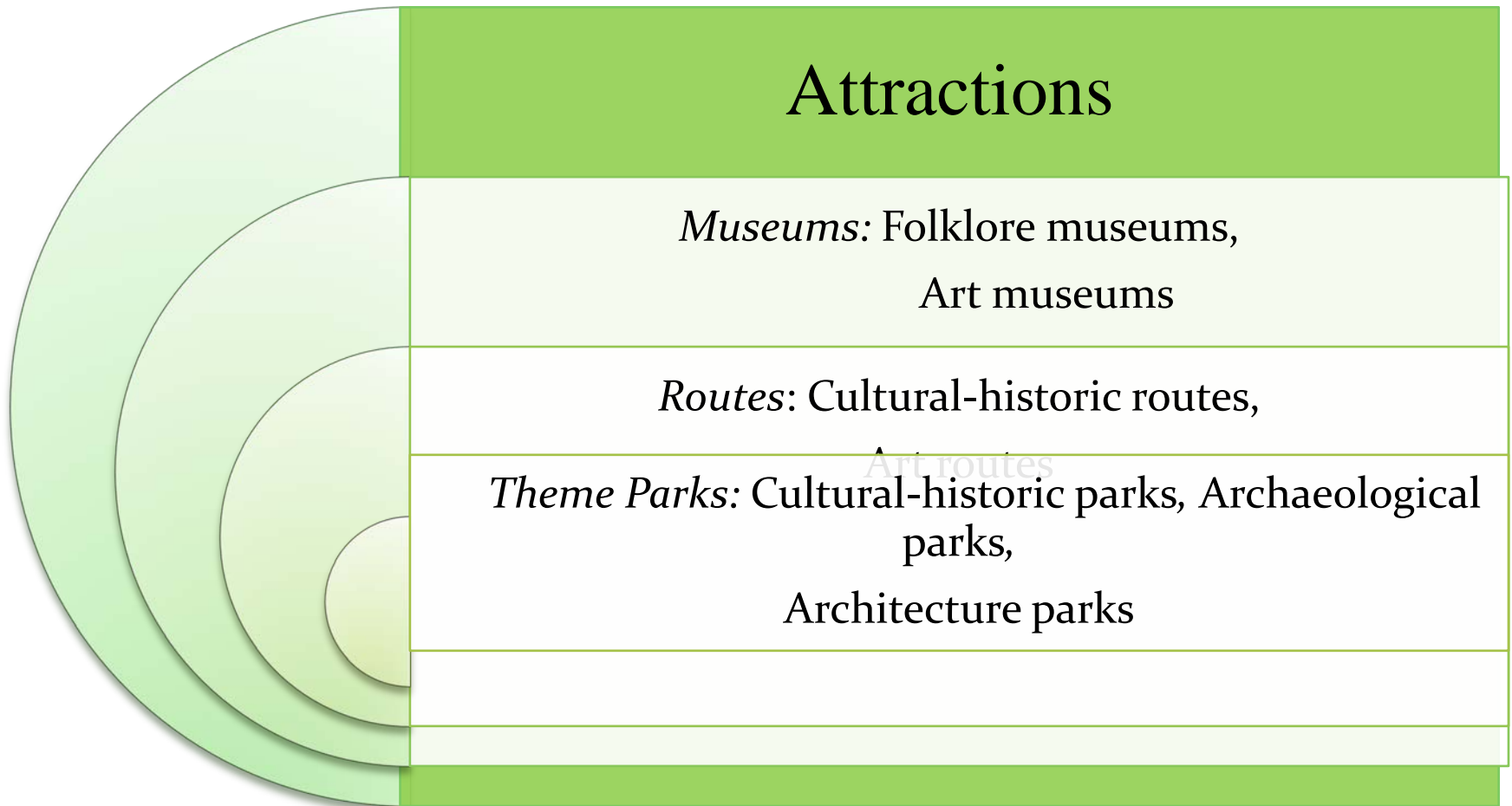
UN WTO definition(1985):

“ Movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages”.



Conceptual debate

Typology of Georgian cultural tourism resources



Typology of Georgian cultural tourism resources



Events

Cultural-historic events:

Secular festivals

Religious festivals

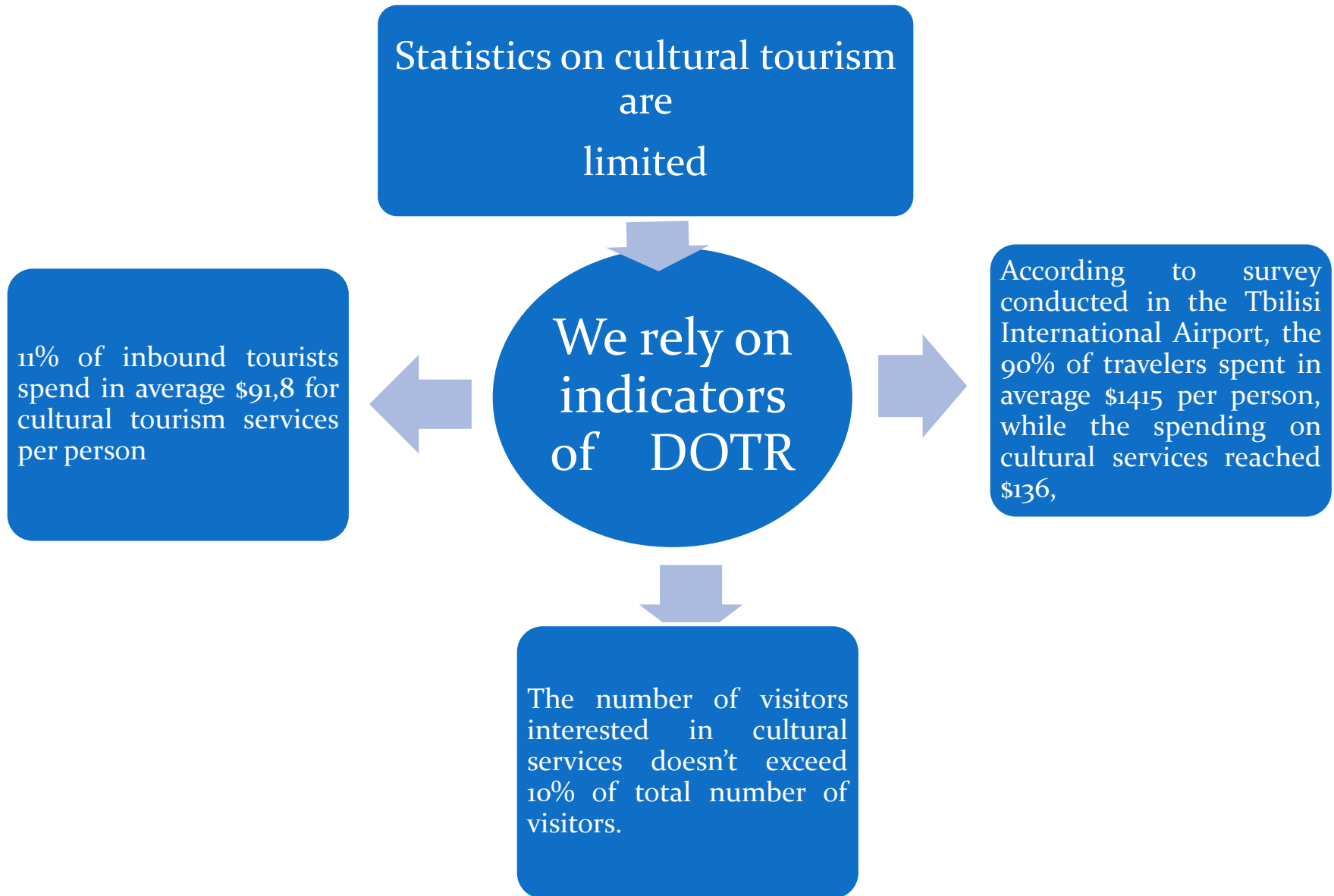
Art events:

Art exhibitions

Art Festivals

The economic impact of tourism in Georgia

The economic impact of cultural tourism



The economic impact of cultural tourism

Changing Policies - from Culture to Economics

The partnership between culture and tourism is of relatively recent origin in Georgia, which has drawn extensively on the British experience of developing heritage tourism during the 1980s.

Perfect coincidence between cultural and economic goals in public policy also stimulated the growth of cultural tourism

Georgia surely may be considered as a country of rich cultural and historical heritage.

It has been affected by many ancient civilizations.

The *reform of the museum system* of Georgia is clear example of this tendency.

The cultural patrimony is a major constituent in the marketing strategy of the DOTR.

The supply of cultural attractions

The slide briefly sketch the main characteristics of the Georgian stock of cultural and historic resources.

Historical monuments of Mtskheta(3), Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery were inscribed in the **World heritage list** in 1994. Two years later Upper Svaneti (Usguli) was also inscribed in the World Heritage list.

There are about 450 monuments on **national significance** and about 5000 monuments of **local significance**.

The supply of cultural attractions

Georgian Museums: According the statistic data of the Ministry of culture, Monuments protection and Sport in Georgia there are 223 museums, among them:

Tbilisi - 70

Adjara - 15, Abkhazeti-2, Guria -8, Imereti-31

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti - 16, Racha-Lechkhumi-
KvemSvaneti 5

Samtskhe-Javakheti - 6 Inner Kartli - 15
Lower Kartli 10 Mtskheta-Mtianeti - 10
Kakheti - 32

The supply of cultural attractions

The earliest traces of human habitation on the territory of Georgia, discovered in Dmanisi ancient city are 1 800 000 years old. Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of material culture, including settlements sites, places, tombs, as well as unique gold, silver and bronze artefacts and earthenware from Paleolithic, Neolithic and Bronze ages, Hellenistic period and antiquity.

Cultural heritage monuments and historical records attest to the three thousand year-long history of *Georgian music*

festivals: *National program to support the folklore!*

Although the number of cultural institutions are considerable, still there is not a significant growth in the supply of heritage for tourism uses.

Having heritage is one thing, using it another.

It is the accessibility of heritage which makes the difference.

Georgia is rich by the Pre-Christian, early Christian and medieval masterpieces. In general, Georgian art is characterized by openness and active interaction with the outside world- Greek, Roman, Iranian, Byzantine, Arab, Russian and Western cultures.

One of the strengths of Georgia as a tourism product is the diversity and the concentration of the cultural-historic as well as the artistic heritage. All categories of cultural attractions can be found in Georgia, within a radius of 200 km from the centrally-situated capital Tbilisi and second large city Kutaisi

Conclusion

- In the past, culture has been viewed as an integral part of the Georgian tourism product, rather than a specific form of tourism in its own right
- Tourism demand in Georgia is also highly seasonal, and spatially concentrated
- *Cultural tourism is therefore seen as one potential vehicle for diversifying the basic beach and ski holiday product, for spreading the tourism season.*
- Accordingly, the potential for cultural tourism development is considered to be enormous in Georgia



DOTR Activities



DOTR Activities

DOTR Activities

Wine tourism

Wine tourism can target local Georgian Market, expatriate community and foreign visitors.

Wine and culinary tours are attractive for wine aficionados from Western and CIS countries, who are familiar with Georgia and its cuisine and wines.

The country's wine history, 500 varieties of grapes and combination of modern and traditional wine-making technology and methods can be experienced in Kakheti and other regions of Georgia.

Wine Tourism Cluster strategy for Kakheti has been elaborated by DOTR in 2008



Next Steps

DOTR Activities: Strategic Objectives of Georgian tourism

Next Steps

Elaboration of the Cultural Tourism Strategy if we want to compete with the Black Sea neighboring countries that offer a comparable supply of cultural attractions

Georgian tourism industry, public sector administration and cultural organizations have to act more efficiently to adopt a well-structured approach to cultural tourism, based on goal-oriented research and sound organization in order to develop quality tourism.



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Thank You

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