

Research Article

Sports Development Management in the Republic of Armenia: The Structure and Statistics

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Abstract

Sports is one of the many branches of the national economic complex and represents a complex and unique socio-economic system, the activity of which is characterized by multifaceted social and state relations. It should be considered that the management structure of any socio-economic sector of the state is largely determined first by the state policy, the very structure of the state. It should be organically integrated into the sports movement management system. The state body responsible for the development of sports in Republic of Armenia (RA) is the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS), which is entrusted with the functions of implementing state policy and legal regulation, as well as providing support to sports organizations and sports federations. The main goal of its activity is the formation of a positive attitude of society, the state and the entire nation towards sports as an effective means of maintaining and strengthening human health, an integral part of universal culture, and as a factor, especially in the physical and moral education of children and young people. The Ministry carries out the functions of state policy and legal regulation in physical culture, sports and youth issues and the processes of developing and implementing them. Along with that, public sports organizations in the form of NAOC of Armenia and national sports federations and units play an important role in the development of sports in the republic. Funding for mass sports and high-performance sports is increasing year by year in Armenia, which is aimed at increasing the number of events, as well as increasing the number of incentives for the achievements of people who do sports and high-level athletes.

Keywords

Republic of Armenia, Sports Management, State Funding, National Federation, Sport School

1. Introduction

Sport has a serious role in the life of modern states and society and is one of the most important bases of their activity.

A country's reputation in the international arena is enhanced by sporting successes, which also promote the idea of a healthy lifestyle among the population and contribute to the involvement of a larger number of people in sports.

It is acknowledged that the global sports industry is cur-

rently undergoing two distinct developments: the growth of mass sports and the advancement of high-performance sports. Each one addresses a specific objective and a distinct set of challenges. Therefore, mass sports (or sports for all) are designed to facilitate the physical education and physical development of the general population through organized or independent training and participation in mass sports compe-

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titions.

The principal objective of high-performance sports, or "big sports," is to attain superior athletic outcomes, which subsequently garner public approval and recognition.

A review of the literature available to us, as well as of Internet websites, reveals a lack of data concerning the bodies that ensure the current development of sports in the Republic of Armenia, their interaction, and the features of sports financing.

The aim of the research is to identify the bodies that manage the development of sports in Armenia and the peculiarities of funding in recent years.

2. Research Methods

study and analysis of educational, scientific literature, legal acts, other official documents.

Research Results Analyses

An important role in the development of the global sports movement is played by international sports associations (organizations), which are among non-state bodies. Among them are the largest and most influential associations: the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS), which is part of the UNESCO structure.

The state body responsible for the development of sports in the Republic of Armenia is the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS) represented by the Sports Policy Department. The Ministry is entrusted with the functions of implementing state policy and legal regulation in the fields of physical culture and sports, as well as providing support to sports organizations and sports federations (Figure 1).

The main goal of its activity is the formation of a positive attitude of society, the state and the entire nation towards sports as an effective means of maintaining and strengthening human health, an integral part of universal culture, and as a factor, especially in the physical and moral education of children youth.

The main forms of public associations of physical education and sports in the Republic of Armenia include the National Olympic Committee of Armenia, Paralympic, Special Olympic Committees, sports federations (unions, associations, for example, the Armenian Sports Committee of the Deaf, "Labor Reserves" sports non-governmental organization), sports clubs, Pan-Armenian Games World Committee. Among public organizations, the leading role belongs to the National Olympic Committee of Armenia (NAOC), which represents the sports interests of our country in the International Olympic Movement. Along with that, it performs the functions of the state body coordinating the management of high-performance sports, and also coordinates the activities of all public sports organizations.

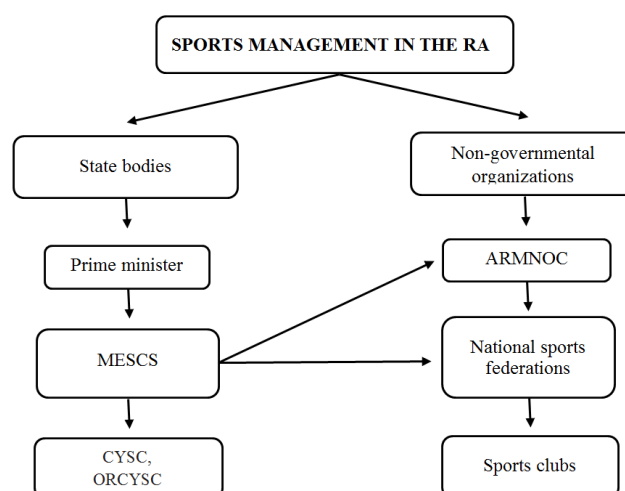


Figure 1. Structure of sports management in the Republic of Armenia.

In the structure of sports management in the Republic of Armenia, in addition to the MESCS, there are 39 national sports federations (associations, unions) based on the legislation of the Republic of Armenia on public associations. To them should be added the Football Federation of Armenia, the Student Sports Federation of Armenia, the Armenian National Federation of Disabled Sports [18].

National sports federations are members of international federations and carry out the training of athletes in a specific sport. They tend to follow the basic organizational model of international sports federations.

The effective preparation of the sports shift is important for the development of sports and the development of sports movement. In our country, sports are mainly carried out through sports-oriented extracurricular educational institutions - children's youth sports schools (CYSC) and Olympic reserve children's youth sports schools (ORCYSC) [6]. Training in them can be carried out in one (specialized sports school) or several sports (comprehensive sports school). CYSCs are mainly created by local self-government bodies, they operate under their control and funding. ORCYSC creates the MESCS for the purpose of preparing sports shift in Olympic sports.

It is necessary to note that the system of sports schools in our country solves 2 main goals: to raise a healthy young generation, and to prepare a sports shift for "big sport". As an example, let us mention that the development of children's and youth sports in the city of Yerevan is carried out through 36 sports schools, 11 of which are complex sports schools [7].

In December 2023, the government approved the 2024-2030 strategy for the RA physical culture and sports sectors, one of the important directions of which is the review and quality reform of management processes in the sports sector [5]. Compared to 2018, the RA government has increased the state funds allocated to sports several times. In order to develop sports in Yerevan and regions, new sports facilities are being built with great intensity.

It is necessary to note that for the purpose of effective management of sports facilities and property, various programs in the field of sports, the MESCS has created the "Sports Management Center" CJSC. The company will be a unified specialized management center that will manage the sports facilities being built and to be built in the republic [10].

With the creation of the center, it will be possible to organize and use the former "Mika" complex in Yerevan, to hold various sports events and training camps, to implement training programs in accordance with training standards. The activity of the center will also provide an opportunity to maintain sports equipment, purchase new ones and make necessary investments.

The sport management center will be handed over the gymnasiums with quick assembly light metal constructions intended for each region. According to the plan of the 2023-2030 strategy of the spheres of physical culture and sports, it is planned to build sports complexes in each region, a wrestling training ground in Shamut village of Lori region, as well as a sports complex, a weightlifting school named after Simon Martirosyan built in Jrarat community of Armavir region, and other sports facilities to be built.

In order to effectively manage sports in RA, a 5-person management council will be created, which will include the RA Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the deputy minister coordinating the sports sector, one representative each from the Ministries of Finance, Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, and the sports world. The board will elect the head of the executive body of the newly created center.

The development of sports in each country is conditioned by some important factors. In addition to the necessary number of sports facilities, their nature and equipment, it is also important to organize sports promotion among mass and high-achievement athletes, as well as competent use of various forms of encouragement of athletes. The latter motivates those practicing mass and high-achievement sports, and those preparing for the Olympic Games, prompting them to train even more actively and regularly for the benefit of their own health, high sports achievements, and raising the status of the homeland in international politics and the sports arena.

It is necessary to add that motivation plays a key role in the success of both high-achieving and mass sports. There are quite a lot of such motives, but as an example, let's present the most common ones: personal goals, parental approval, striving for excellence, national pride, sports frenzy, intrinsic value of sports, approval from society [11-14] health, social motives, securing a higher status in society, making new friends, feeling satisfied by participating in sports events [15, 16].

In this context, it is important to clarify the features of the approach to the promotion and awarding of Olympic Games prize winners in RA. According to the 2021 decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, certain amounts for awarding the Armenian prize winners of the Olympic Games are defined. Thus, athletes who took 1-3 places receive 12,500

USD more than the previous approach. For example, first-place athletes receive \$50,000 under the current decision, and as a result of the 2023 change, their one-time award will reach about \$61,000, and second-place athletes will receive about \$49,000. In case of winning the third place, the Olympians will receive about 37,000 US dollars [2, 3, 9].

The sums of nominal pensions, lifetime monthly stipends for Olympic champions and prize-winners have also been increased and doubled. Thus, according to the current procedure, the Armenian champion-athlete of the Olympic Games received a nominal pension of 1,250 US dollars, and as a result of the change, he will receive 2,500 US dollars. The athlete who became the second prize winner received 875 US dollars, as a result of the change he will receive 1750 US dollars. The athlete who became the third prize-winner receives 750 USD, as a result of the change, he will receive an amount of 1500 USD. The Olympic champion who receives monthly honorarium for life currently receives 500 USD, as a result of the change he will receive 750 USD. The silver medal winner of the Olympic Games receives \$350, and as a result of the change will receive a sum of \$500. The third prize-winning athlete of the Olympic Games receives 250 USD, as a result of the change, he will receive 400 USD [9].

It should be noted that in order to ensure the development of sports, the funding portions are also important, which are aimed at both logistical support, organization of sports events, and the implementation of other such important issues. In order to visualize the dynamics of financing sports events, let's present these changes with the example of the Yerevan community. Thus, if in 2020 the financing of sports events in all administrative districts of Yerevan amounted to about 120,000 USD, then in 2023 it increased to about \$125,000. As for the financial resources allocated to sports schools under Yerevan city, their funding for 2022-2023 has also increased. As an example, let's present the increase in financial resources of some sports schools in Yerevan. Thus, the financing of "Olympic Shift Children's Sports School of Gymnastics after Albert Azaryan" in 2023 compared to 2022 increased by 15,000 USD and amounted to about 197,500 USD, the financing of "Yerevan Figure Skating and Hockey Youth Sports School" in 2023 was 72,500 USD, which is 36,250 USD more than in 2022¹.

Another organizational unit of Armenian sports is the sports club. Sports clubs are established and operate to provide various services in the field of sports. According to the Law "On Physical Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia", sports clubs can be established by legal entities and individuals, moreover, regardless of the chosen organizational legal form. They are established and carry out their activities in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Armenia. In order to achieve the goals of their activities, sports clubs

¹ https://e-request.am/hy/e-letter/check?tracking_id=YNC1-D9A5-411D-657B
(After activating the sent link, it is necessary to activate the line marked in red in the right column of the 6th line Press here, to see the reply in the opened window. After that, the data download will start).

mainly use their own funds, which they raise from various sources, as well as from other sources not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia, carrying out entrepreneurial activities as well.

Sports clubs are those non-governmental organizations within the framework of which training and preparation of athletes or teams for competitions are carried out. Modern sports clubs carry out educational, training, competition and physical education activities.

All those who want to train in a chosen sport or strengthen their health can join sports clubs. Sports clubs are often established in universities, academies, institutes, colleges and other educational institutions, providing ample opportunities for young people to train and compete. Thus, the Armenian State Institute of Physical Culture and Sport operates a FIMA sports club, which carries out multidisciplinary activities, creates collective teams of the institute, organizes the training of the collective teams of various sports of the institute and participation in different types of championships of Armenia, implements mass sports events for the employees of the university. The Yerevan State University sports club, which is part of the department of physical education and sports, has 25 sports improvement groups, each focusing on a different sport. The clubs aim to improve the health and physical fitness of students, develop their sporting abilities, and contribute to the strengthening of the RA national teams through various forms of physical education and sports.

Analyzing the information about mass sports, it is necessary to note that the financing of mass sports in RA has positive dynamics in recent years. In particular, the state strives to introduce the important idea of a healthy lifestyle among the population. The clear evidence of this is the organization and holding of such a mass physical culture and sports event as the "Prime Minister Cup". Thus, in 2021 MESCS spent 375,000 USD on mass physical culture events, and 500,000 USD in 2022. As a positive change in the popularization of sports, it is necessary to mention the following: if the 2021 "Prime Minister Cup" competitions were held in 3 sports: swimming, athletics, cross-country running, then in 2023 table tennis and cross-country cycling have been added to them, as well as competitions for schoolchildren of different ages. Let us add that the reward fund has also increased. Thus, if in 2021 it was 37,500 USD, then in 2023 it increased to 80,000 USD. Women and men in two age groups participate in the competitions, and 40 participants in each sport receive cash prizes.

According to the 2024-2030 development strategy and strategic action plan for the fields of physical culture and sports of the Republic of Armenia, it is planned to increase the share of people leading a healthy lifestyle by 2030, respectively:

- 1) children: increase from 60% to 80%,
- 2) adults: 30% to 50%,
- 3) the elderly: from 10% to 20%,
- 4) people with disabilities: from 3% to 5% [5].

Turning to the issue of financing the development of sports in

RA, it is necessary to note that the MESCS, planning this process, provides appropriate financial support to national federations and encourages the 10 best athletes of RA every year. In 2020-2022, Armenian athletes won 518 medals in international tournaments, which reflected on the further increase of state funding. In particular, in 2023, the financing of the sports sector amounted to 10 billion 288 million AMD [1, 8].

It should be noted that the volume of sports financing depends on the degree of development of the sport, as well as on the fact that it belongs to the number of base sports. According to the decision of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, the amount of financial support to the sports federations of Armenia from the state budget of the Republic of Armenia is calculated taking into account the inclusion of sports federations in three conditional groups:

- 1) 1st - base sports (weightlifting, Greco-Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling, boxing, gymnastics, shooting, chess, athletics).
- 2) 2nd - prospective sports (judo, basketball, cycling, fencing, karate, diving, figure skating, sambo, volleyball, skiing, swimming, taekwondo, wushu).
- 3) 3rd - program sports (handball, table tennis, tennis, artistic gymnastics, badminton, archery, canoeing, field hockey, sailing, acrobatics, water polo, modern pentathlon, sports dances and other sports) [17].

In 2023, \$3,420,000 was allocated to national federations. The largest financial support was received by "Armenia Wrestling Federation" in the amount of 950,000 USD. Next in terms of financial support is "Weightlifting Federation of Armenia" with 577,500 USD. The lowest funding the Ministry planned to provide to 5 sports federations was USD 5000 (Figure 2).

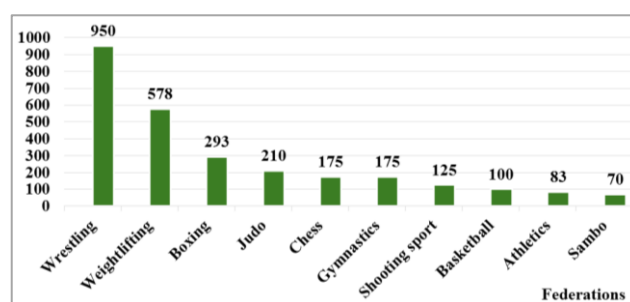


Figure 2. The 10 national sports federations that received the most financial support from the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport in 2023 (thousands of US dollars).

The RA Government conditions the development of sports in the republic mainly with the increase of the total amount of funding. In particular, the 1,875,000 US dollars budget allocated to the sports sector in 2023 will be increased by another 3,750,000 US dollars in the next two years, which will be directed to the expansion of existing programs: holding tournaments, increasing the number of nominal pension recipients, property acquisition, mass sports, in particular, to encourage the

participants of the "Prime Minister Cup" tournaments [3].

The state also attaches importance to the possibility of people with limited abilities to practice sports. For this purpose, 7 relevant federations were funded with a total amount of USD 302,500. The largest amount of funding was provided to the "National Paralympic Committee of Armenia" in the amount of 105,000 USD, and the smallest amount - 1,563 USD - was provided to the "Armenian Table Tennis Federation of Disabled Persons". Starting from 2021, the volume of state funding for disabled sports has increased more than 10 times, exceeding 250,000 USD. Thus, in 2021, a total of 260,000 USD has been allocated for holding and participating in the events planned during the year. In 2022, the amount of government support for disability sports amounted to more than 280,000 USD, and in 2023 it increased to 302,500 USD [4]. In the last 3 years, state funding for disabled sports has increased more than 10 times. At the same time, the number of organizations receiving funding from the state has also increased.

3. Conclusions

Thus, as a result of the studies, it became clear that the management of the development of sports in the Republic of Armenia is mainly carried out by state bodies, particularly with the funding of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. Along with that, public sports organizations in the form of NAOC of Armenia and national sports federations and units play an important role in the development of sports in the republic. In terms of financing the development of mass and high-achievement sports, there is a trend of increasing state funding every year, which is manifested both in the increase in the number of sports events and in the increase in the financial volume of encouraging successful athletes.

Abbreviations

RA	Republic of Armenia
MESCS	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports
NAOC	National Olympic Committee of Armenia
IOC	International Olympic Committee
GAISF	Global Association of International Sports Federations
CIGEPS	the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport
CYSC	Children's Youth Sports Schools
ORCYSC	Olympic Reserve Children's Youth Sports Schools
USD	United States Dollar

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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