



# ITF World Tennis Masters Tour 2023–2026 Strategic Plan

Released 15 June 2023



# 2019–2022 Strategic Pillars

In January 2019, the ITF released a Strategic Plan for the upcoming 3-to-5-year period, which focussed on four pillars

## Circuit Expansion

More tournaments; explore demand for 30+ age group; growth in focus regions (notably North & Central America).

## Marketing & Promotion

Brand review to ensure relevance to players, promoting the theme: 'Sport for Life'.

## Existing Tournament Improvements

More flexible draw & scoring format option; new tournament structure & grading; ranking point formula improvements.

## Outstanding World Championships

Improved bid process and host arrangements; exceptional event planning and delivery.



# 2019–2022 Strategic Pillars & Key Achievements

## Circuit Expansion

- ✓ Introduction of 30+ and 90+ age groups
- ✓ Introduction of 30+ and 85+ World Team Championships for Men and Women
- ✓ Removal of upfront cost to register for an IPIN
- ✓ Growth from 24k IPIN members (2018) to 35k IPIN members (2022)
- ✓ Record number of 508 tournaments in 2022

## Existing Tournament Improvements

- ✓ New tournament structure and grade names for ease of understanding
- ✓ Greater flexibility for tournament organisers and referees on draw and match scoring formats
- ✓ Player Feedback survey introduced for each tournament
- ✓ Launch of Tournament Recognition Scheme
- ✓ New objective Tournament Grading Criteria

## Marketing & Promotion

- ✓ Launch of new Tour Name and Branding
- ✓ Social media improvements, including new Facebook group in 2019 (18k members as of December 2022)
- ✓ New channel on YouTube with 25 videos since 2018
- ✓ Introduction of monthly player newsletters and weekly tournament promotion emails

## Outstanding World Championships

- ✓ Introduction of 30+ and 85+ World Team Championships
- ✓ New host cities introduced, such as Lisbon, Portugal
- ✓ Introduction of post-event player feedback survey
- ✓ Consistent high standard of event delivery across events

# Strategic Plan for 2023–2026

## Mission

**Our mission is for Masters Tennis to become the leading sport in terms of tournament participation for persons aged 30 and over**





# Tennis helps people live longer

<b>TENNIS</b>	<b>9.7 YEARS</b>
<b>BADMINTON</b>	<b>6.2 YEARS</b>
<b>SOCCER</b>	<b>4.7 YEARS</b>
<b>CYCLING</b>	<b>3.7 YEARS</b>
<b>SWIMMING</b>	<b>3.4 YEARS</b>



Whether it's one reason, or several reasons, there are a range of benefits which motivate people to participate on the ITF Masters Tour



Three interconnected pillars identified to help achieve the Tour's mission

**1** Increase attractiveness and commercial potential of the Masters Tour



**2** Increase the number of players and tournaments

**3** Deliver a world-leading Tour that supports the attraction and retention of players

**1** Increase  
attractiveness  
and commercial  
potential of the  
Masters Tour



**2** Increase the  
number of players  
and tournaments



**3** Deliver a world-  
leading Tour that  
supports the  
attraction and  
retention of players



# Marketing & Communications

## Statement

**Increase Player Engagement to drive interest; encourage player participation and support the increased commercial attractiveness of the Tour**





A photograph of two female tennis players on a clay court. They are standing on opposite sides of a net, high-fiving each other. The player on the left is wearing a black athletic outfit and has her hair in a ponytail. The player on the right is wearing a white tank top, a white visor, and teal shorts. The court is reddish-brown clay with white lines. The scene is brightly lit, casting shadows on the court.

PRIMARY MESSAGE

# Age Group Competition

The Tour provides appropriate **age-based competition** for players aged 30 and over with similar lifestyles and commitments







SECONDARY MESSAGE

# Achievable and Aspirational

The Tour is for all players aged 30+ who wish to improve their skills, challenge themselves, and enjoy the enriching benefits of being part of an international community







SECONDARY MESSAGE

# Sport for Life

Tennis without boundaries

Players up to 98 years of age are actively competing in ITF Masters tournaments

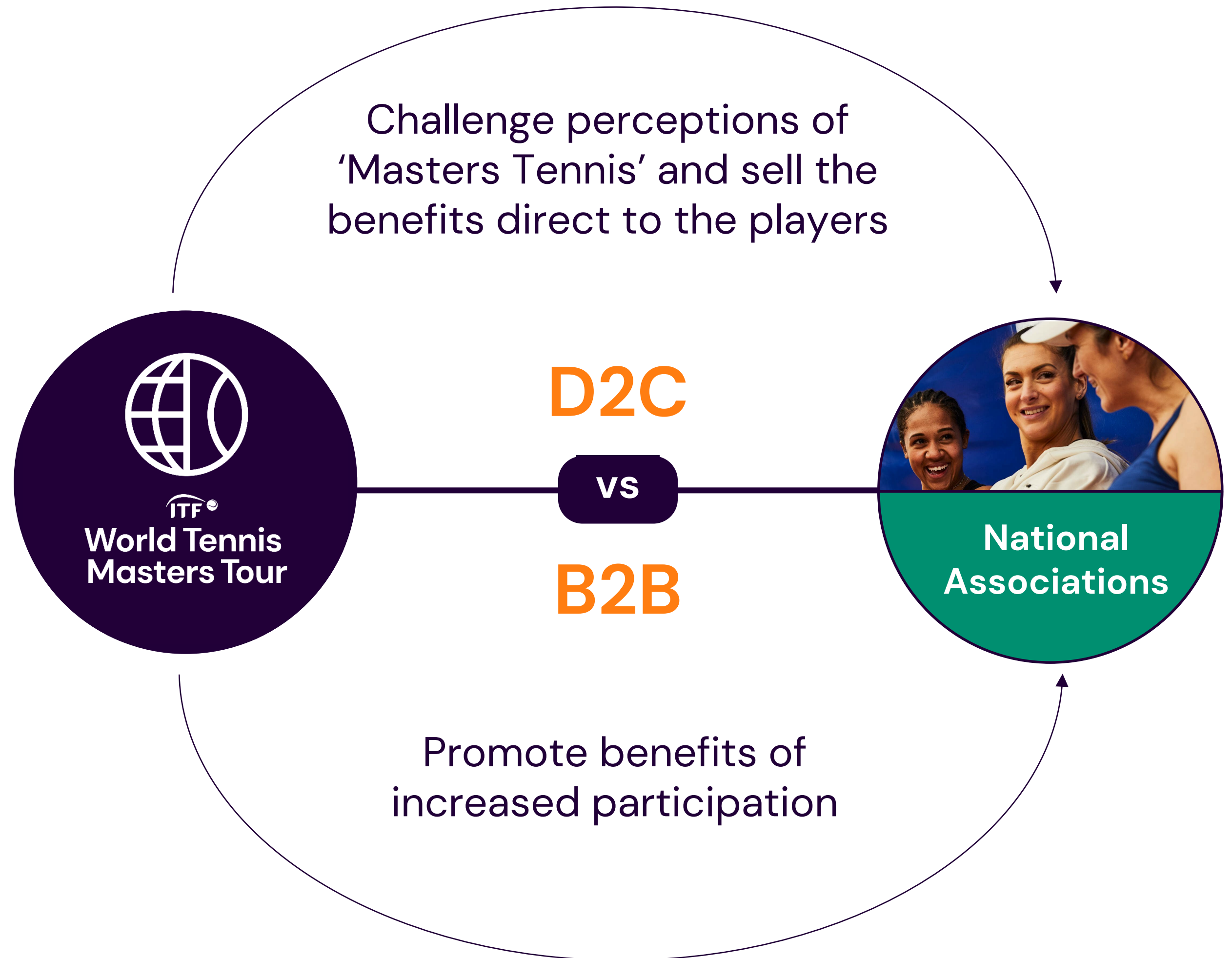




# Engagement Strategy

Capitalise on the Tour's organic growth thus far and invest in a dedicated Marketing & Communications Strategy to supercharge engagement with players and National Associations.

Dedicated business to business (B2B), and direct to consumer (D2C) approaches to maximise awareness.





**Renewed narrative  
and messaging to  
make the Tour  
more relatable to a  
larger, wider base  
of new players**





**1** Increase attractiveness and commercial potential of the Masters Tour



**2** Increase the number of players and tournaments on the Tour



**3** Deliver a world-leading Tour that supports the attraction and retention of players





# Growth

More Players, More Tournaments

## Statement

**Significantly increase the number of registered and active players who can capitalise on an expanded volume of tournament opportunities**



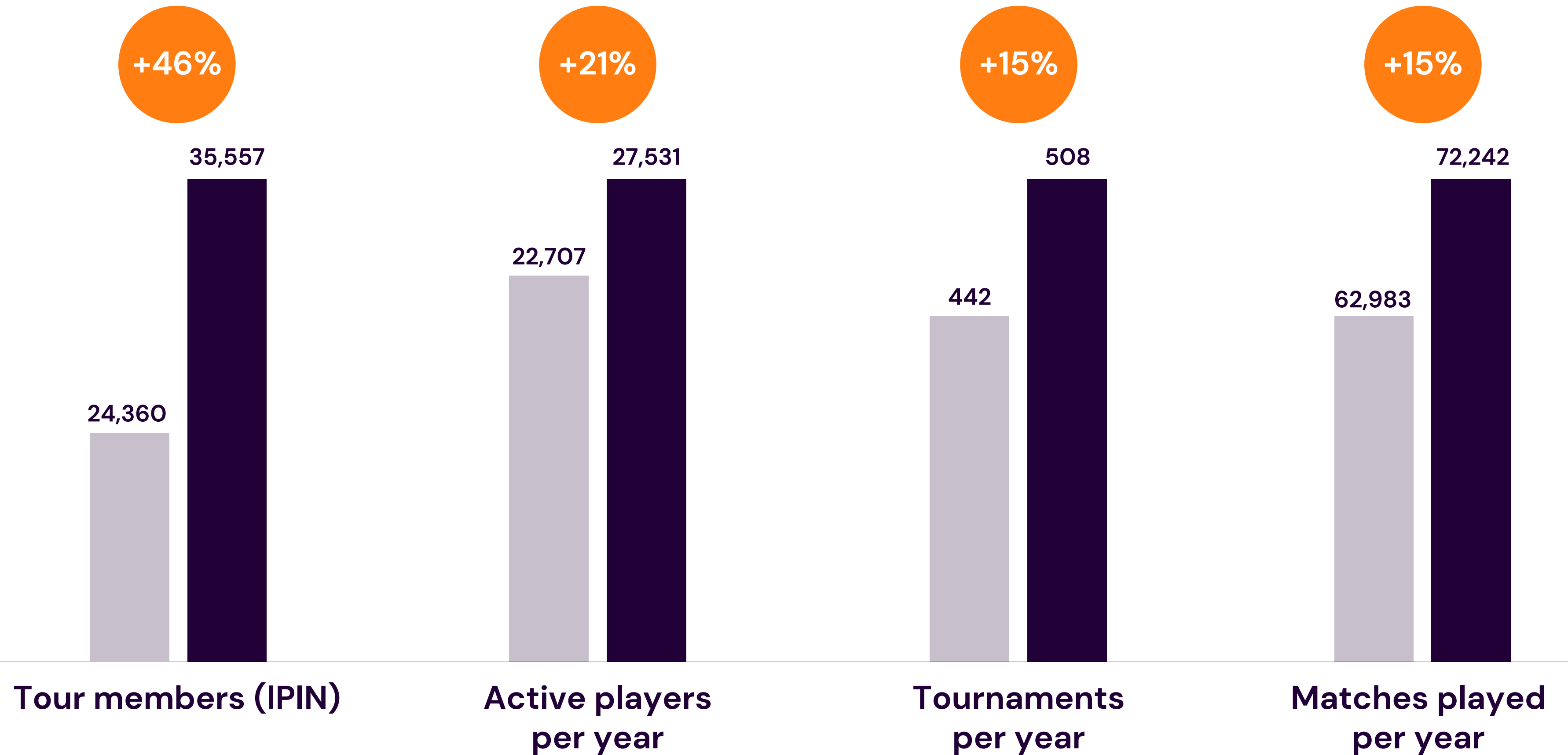


**The Masters Tour offers equal opportunity to all persons aged 30 and over, regardless of gender or location**





# We have seen growth since 2018





**We want to accelerate growth and provide more local opportunities for players to access ITF Masters tournaments**





**We aim to provide suitable formats and event experiences to drive an increase in women's participation within the Tour**

**Women's Players**

**7,293**

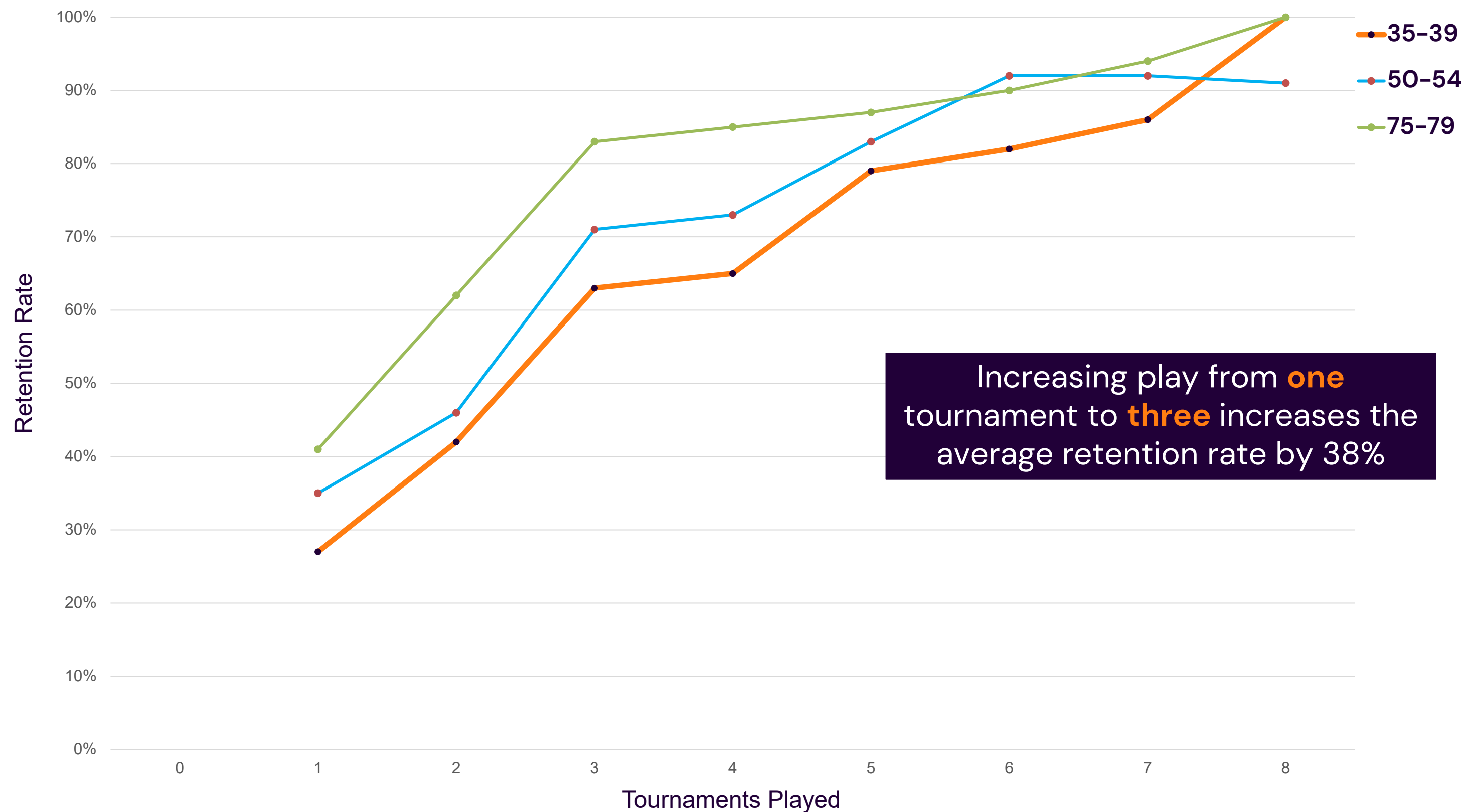
Played 1+ tournament in 2022





# Research shows the more tournaments played, the higher the year-on-year retention rate

Date from Player Retention Study by Two Circles



Increasing play from **one** tournament to **three** increases the average retention rate by 38%





# Attract and retain more players

Journey of engagement to drive registrations, convert to active players and increase frequency and loyalty

## Stage 1 Attract

### Goal: Register on the Tour

ITF needs to raise awareness, increase Tour promotion and reach new players.

## Stage 2 Convert

### Goal: Enter First Tournament

Tournaments need to be promoted close to home and made easy to participate in

## Stage 3 Retain

### Goal: Transition to 3+ Tournaments Per Year

Ensure enough tournaments available close to home





# Engage with younger age groups

Focus on the Tour providing **age-group competition** in 5-year age categories from 30+

Earlier introduction to realise benefits sooner

Explore introduction of 25+ age group

## Age of Tennis Players\*

**70%** aged 25+  **20%** aged 25-34



*\*Sports Marketing Surveys study of 17 major tennis nations (2017)*





# Renewed promotion of Doubles Events

Recognition that Doubles is a preferred format for many players within Masters Tennis

Promote the ability for players to compete in Doubles only

The ITF World Tennis Masters Tour provides a Doubles specific World Ranking in each 5-year age category for:

- Men's Doubles
- Women's Doubles
- Mixed Doubles

Players can improve their ITF World Tennis Number in doubles

The ITF will strive to improve the doubles partnering process to create more playing opportunities







# Explosion of local tournaments

**Increase supply of entry-grade MT100 & MT200 tournaments in each nation and region to support progression for players and tournaments**

**Short length events (2-3 days) to attract and retain more players, particularly new people.**

**Local opportunities to participate in 3 or more tournaments, reducing cost and time commitment**

**Amplify the benefits of the Masters Tour for tournament hosts, and the reasonable possibility of making profit**

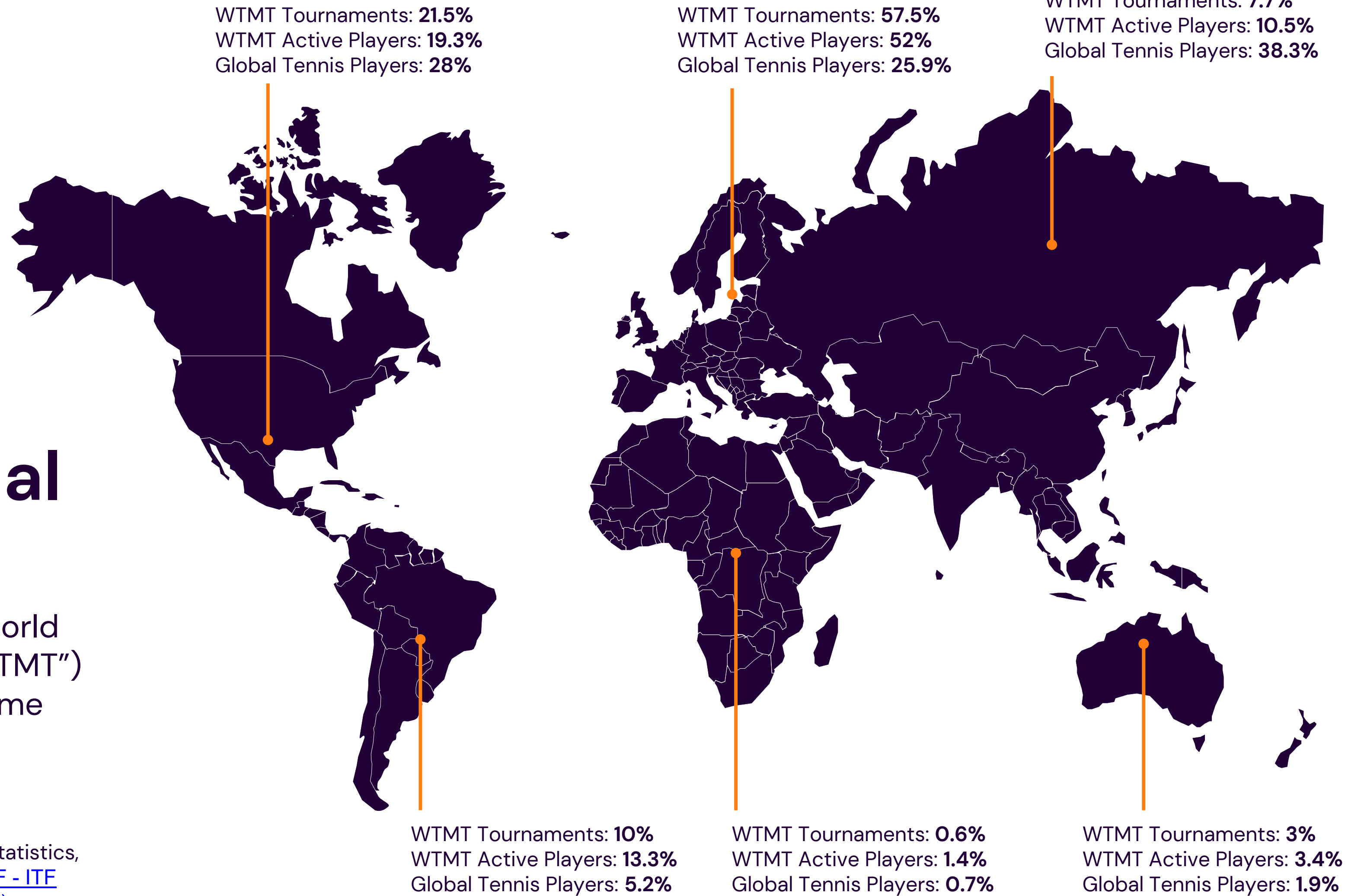




# Improve geographical balance

Increase access to ITF World Tennis Masters Tour (“WTMT”) tournaments close to home and drive participation

\* Data from WTMT 2022 tournament statistics, and ITF Global Tennis Report 2021 - [ITF - ITF Global Tennis Report 2021 \(uberflip.com\)](https://www.itftennis.com/press-centre/2021/global-tennis-report-2021)

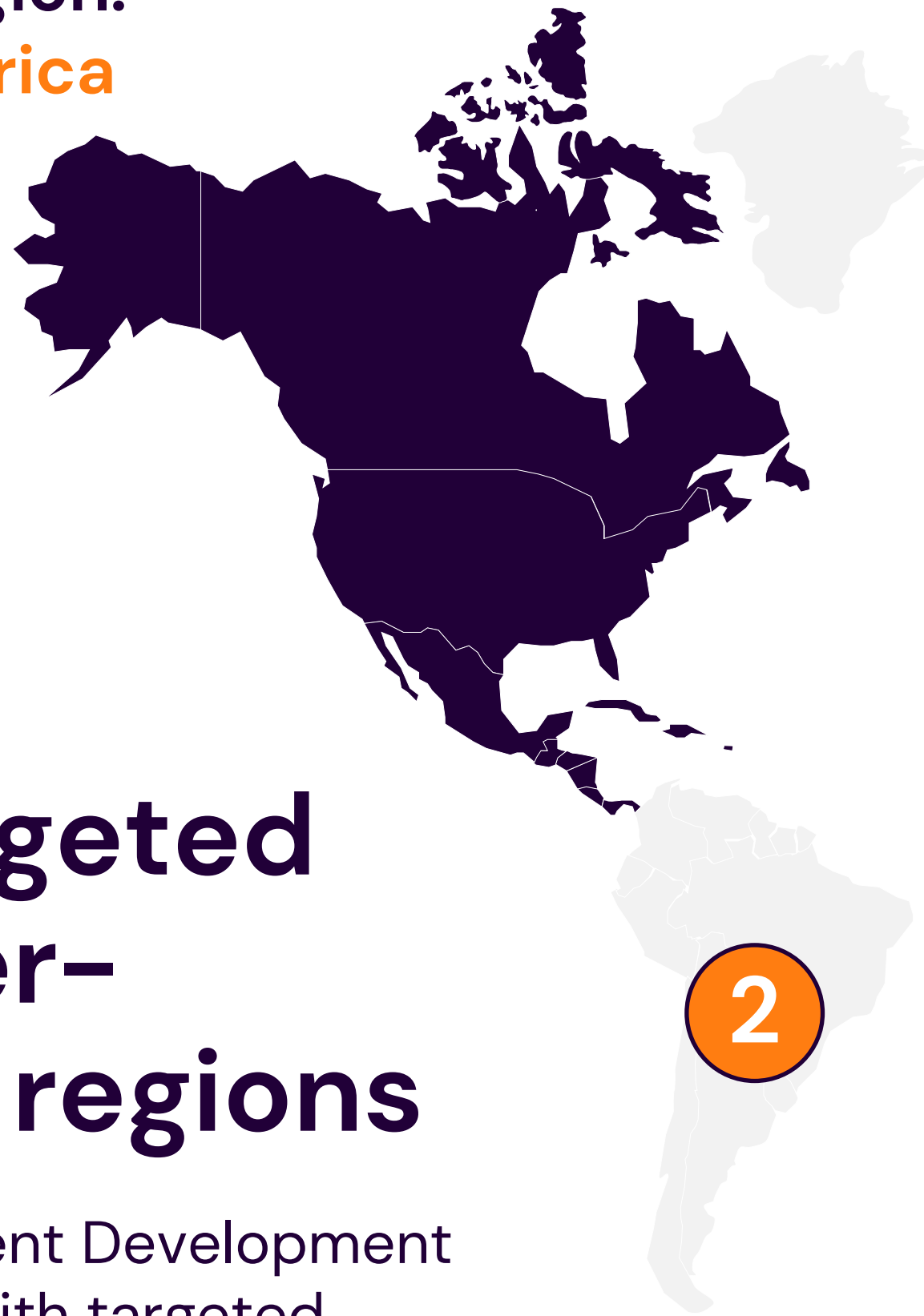






## 2018–2022 Focus Region: North & Central America

Growth in Tournaments:



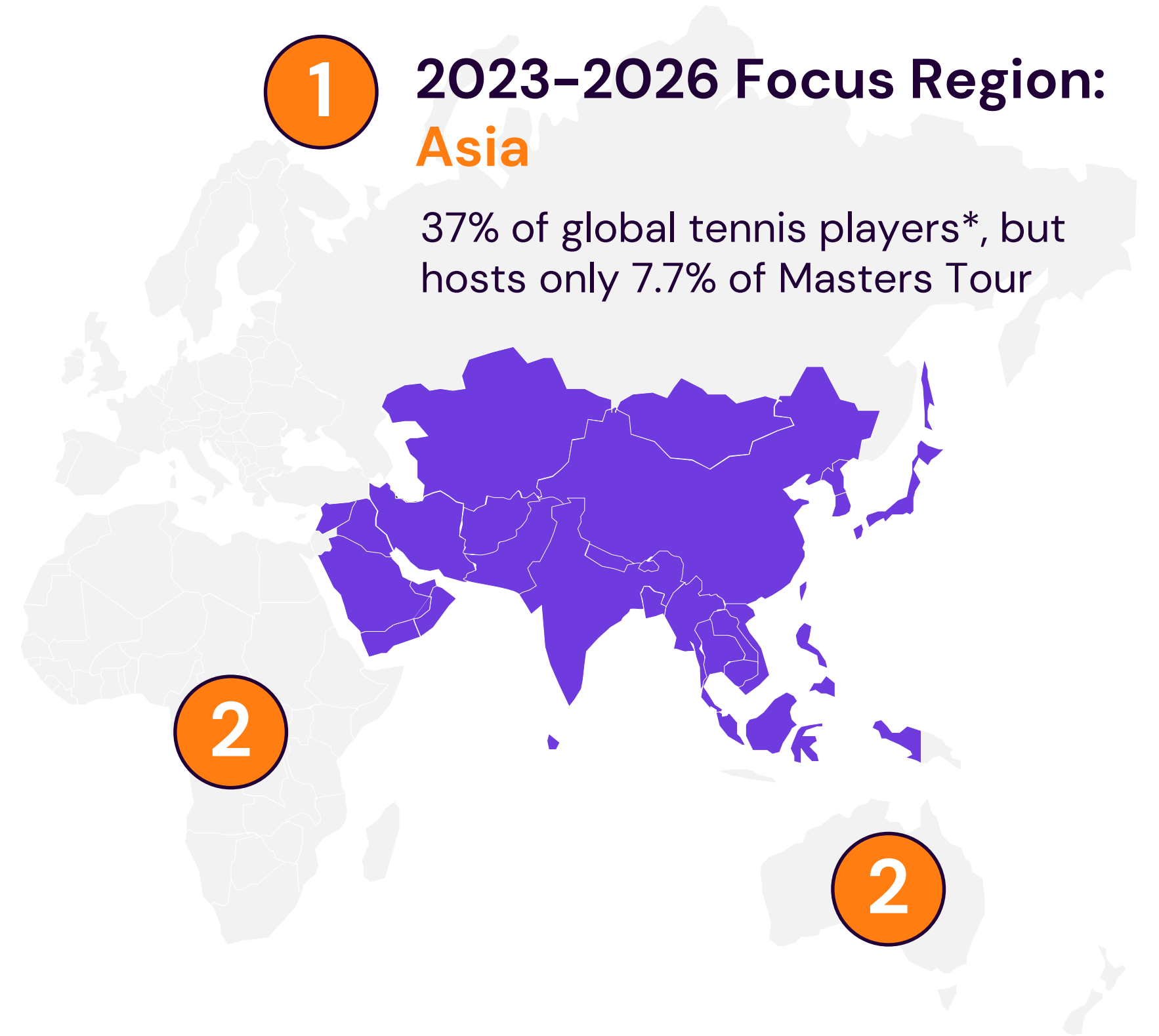
# Continue targeted drive in under-represented regions

Specific 3-year Tournament Development Strategies to be agreed with targeted nations and key stakeholders

**1**

## 2023–2026 Focus Region: Asia

37% of global tennis players\*, but hosts only 7.7% of Masters Tour



\* Data from ITF Global Tennis Report 2021 - [ITF - ITF Global Tennis Report 2021 \(uberflip.com\)](https://www.uberflip.com)



**1** Increase attractiveness and commercial potential of the Masters Tour



**2** Increase the number of players and tournaments



**3** Deliver a world-leading Tour that supports the attraction and retention of players



# Tour Services, Standards & Innovations



Statement

**Deliver excellent Tour Services and Standards to support the attraction and retention of more players and tournaments**





# Maximise benefits of ITF World Tennis Number

ITF World Tennis Number (“WTN”) is a global rating that factors results over previous 4 years

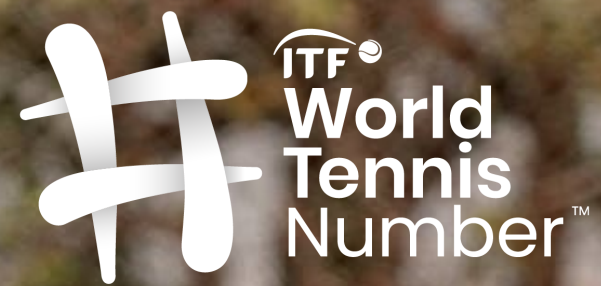
Introduced as a secondary measure of tournament acceptance since May 2022

WTN to support players with entry into suitable tournaments based on their WTN relative to other players in their age group.

Help players to benefit from closer, more appropriate, and more enjoyable matches.

Explore further uses of WTN within the acceptance and/or seeding process

Prominence of ITF ranking to remain, with ongoing review of ranking point tables





# Support NAs and Tournament Directors to improve workforce and tournament standards

## Digital Upgrade

- Player improvements in IPIN: registrations, renewals, entry process and online payments
- Develop a new web-based tournament application process for organisers

## Cost & Value for Money

Strive to deliver a more consistent experience for players, considering value for money for participants

## Optimal Calendars

Continued assessment of national, regional and global calendar by grade and region through the new Grading Criteria

## Tournament Experience

Enhance the experience for each player, measured through post-event feedback survey

## Reward & Recognition

Recognise and motivate high standards of delivery through an objective Tournament Recognition Scheme & Grading Process

## Officiating

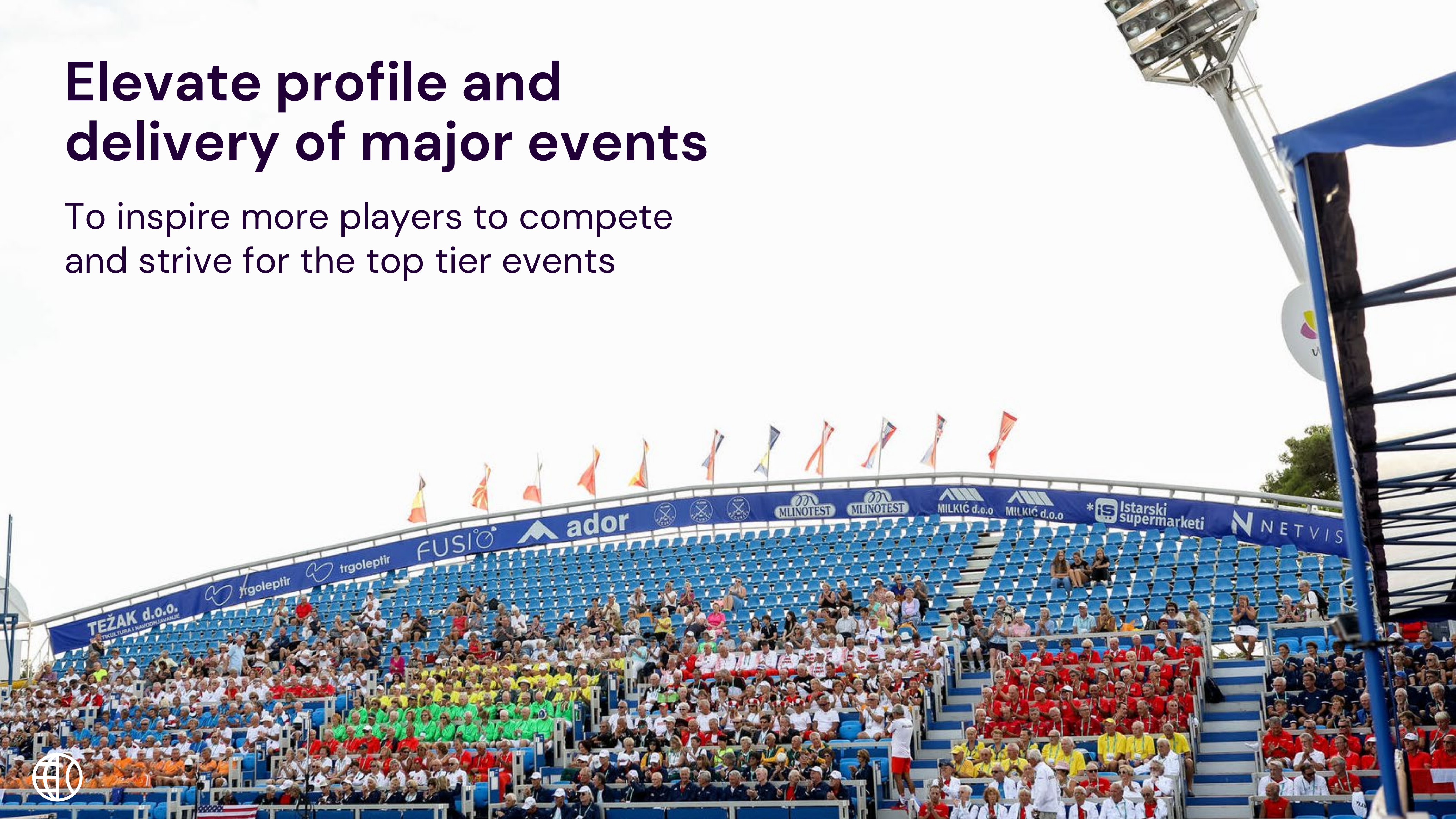
Develop officiating workforce and standards to meet increased tournament demand and increased player participation





# Elevate profile and delivery of major events

To inspire more players to compete and strive for the top tier events





# Incorporate the IMGGA Games into ITF World Tennis Masters Tour

Provide multi-sport games experiences for Masters Tour players



The IMGGA World Masters Games – the world’s largest multi-sport participatory event – next take place in Taipei City, 2025.

Events in key strategic locations during next IMGGA Games cycle

Ambition to introduce recreational and elite tennis events to the IMGGA Games, with ITF WTMT ranking points on offer

IMGGA Masters Games can support the increase of ITF WTMT players

ITF WTMT events can support the build-up and legacy of IMGGA Masters Games events

## Upcoming Events



PAN-AMERICAN  
MASTERS GAMES  
2024 CLEVELAND

ATHLETES TODAY. COMPETITORS FOR LIFE

**2024**  
USA



WORLD  
MASTERS  
GAMES  
2025

TAIPEI CITY  
NEW TAIPEI CITY

**2025**  
Taipei



WORLD  
MASTERS  
GAMES  
2027 KANSAI  
JAPAN

**2027**  
Japan





# Enhance World Championships bid arrangement & event innovations

Proactive approach to expand the number of host cities and nations

Balanced delivery requirements to increase attractiveness

Introduction of 30+ Team Event

Possible 90+ Team Event within 5 years

Standardise Live Streaming and Scoring at events





# Key Performance Indicators



## Key Performance Indicators

	2018	2022
# Nations Hosting Tournaments	69	61
# Players Registered (IPIN)	24,360	35,557
# Active Players	22,707	27,532
# Active Female Players	6,455	7,293
# Nations with Active Players	118	129
# Unique Tournament Entries per calendar year	57,090	64,035
# Total Matches Played on the Tour	62,983	72,242
Average # of Matches per Player per Year	6.13	5.82
Average overall Player Satisfaction Score at Tour events (out of 7.0)	N/A	5.9
Average overall Player Satisfaction at World Championships	82%	75%







Meet.  
Compete.  
Thrive.  
Repeat.