

ARMENIA



Country Para sport Factsheet

February 2026

"Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities"

This country factsheet was drafted by ACT LLC in collaboration with the Council of Europe, the European Union and other Sport For All joint project partners.

The data in this factsheet is from the "Sport For All: Promoting Inclusion and Combating Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities", a European Union (EU) and Council of Europe joint project, to create a more inclusive sports culture by addressing the barriers to the participation of persons with disabilities in sport and fostering a safe and welcoming sports environments for all. One of the project goals was to generate a comparable, policy-relevant evidence base on disability inclusion in sport across eight countries and identify how Para sport systems are structured, where systemic constraints recur, and which strengthening priorities emerge.

►► To find more information about the project and other countries involved in the project, as well as a synthesis report and an educational toolkit created to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport settings, have a look at the project website: www.coe.int/sport/sportforall

Co-funded
by the European Union



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe

Country Context

Indicator	Data
Population (estimate)	3 Million (Armstat, 2024)
Estimated number of persons with disabilities	161,459 (Armstat, 2024)
Persons with disabilities in Para sport	More than 200 individuals, of whom approximately 60 compete at international level (ANPC administrative records; indicative estimate, not a verified statistical figure)
Paralympic Games 2024 (Paris)	3 athletes (2 men; 1 women); Medals - 0
Paralympic Games 2020 (Tokyo)	1 athlete (1 men, 0 women); Medals - 0
Paralympic Games 2016 (Rio)	2 athletes (0 men; 2 women); Medals - 0

Source: Armstat statistical database (2024); ANPC administrative records. The participation figure of more than 200 reflects licensed competitive athletes only and does not capture recreational or informal participants. Comprehensive data on participation by disability type, gender, region, or age group is not systematically published.

System Summary

The summary below highlights the main systemic strengths and constraints shaping Para sport development in Armenia.

Key Strengths

- The Physical Culture and Sports Strategy 2024-2030 sets a measurable participation target for persons with disabilities alongside a time-bound action plan, providing a policy accountability mechanism beyond general non-discrimination commitments.
- The Armenian National Paralympic Committee functions as the recognised central coordination body, maintaining active links with discipline federations and the Ministry for planning and budgeting.
- The Para sport ecosystem includes multiple specialized organizations beyond the ANPC: the Armenian Deaflympic Committee (serving deaf athletes), Armenian Special Olympics (serving athletes with intellectual disabilities), and the Union of the Blind of Armenia, each addressing distinct disability communities and funded by the Ministry based on their domestic and international performance.

- A performance incentive mechanism provides monthly financial compensation to athletes placing in the top 24 at major international competitions, with support extended to their coaches.

Key Gaps

- Public funding for Para sport is significantly constrained and reported by stakeholders as insufficient even for basic operational needs; no multi-year dedicated budget line exists, leaving the system structurally dependent on annual programme allocations.
- Grassroots infrastructure is underdeveloped: local clubs receive little or no stable funding, the nationwide network of children's and youth sports schools is largely inaccessible to persons with disabilities, and no structured national pathway connects community participation to athlete development.
- Outreach and referral mechanisms remain limited, restricting recruitment into Para sport and contributing to very low participation levels, particularly among women with disabilities and in regions outside Yerevan.

Legal and Policy Framework

Armenia is a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD). Provisions related to participation in sport, as set out in Article 30 of the CRPD, are to a limited extent reflected in national legislation and policy documents. At the Constitutional level, the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia includes an explicit reference to sport and physical culture among the functions of the state. The core legal framework governing sport in Armenia is established by the Law "On Physical Culture and Sport" (2001), which sets out the general foundations of the sport sector and assigns responsibilities to the authorised state body. The law does not include provisions specifically addressing Para sport or sport for persons with disabilities, and any related activities or measures are implemented within the general sport framework under the same institutional arrangements.

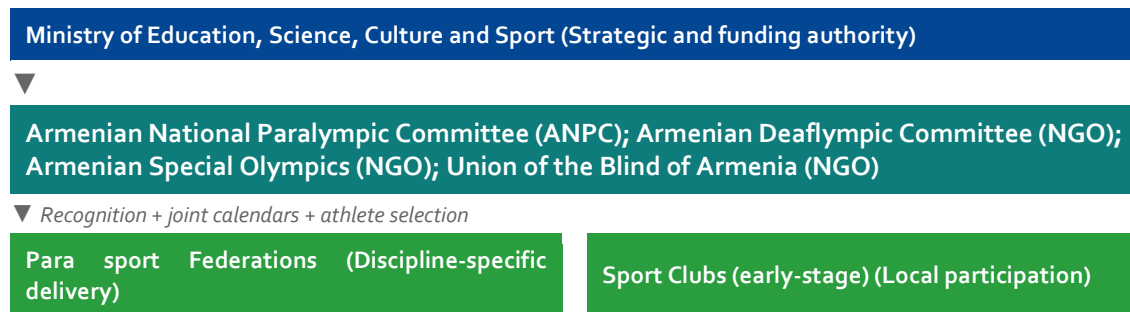
Within the broader disability rights framework, the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021) provides that the State shall ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in recreational, leisure, and sporting activities on an equal basis with others, including through participation in mainstream sporting activities, access to sporting facilities, and the provision of appropriate instruction, training, and resources.

At policy level, Armenia has adopted the Physical Culture and Sports Strategy for 2024-2030, together with its accompanying Action Plan, which sets out strategic priorities aimed at promoting public participation in sport and physical activity across all population groups, including children, adults, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Within its objective to make "physical activity and a healthy lifestyle a national way of life", the Strategy explicitly includes persons with disabilities and sets a specific target to increase participation of "people with disabilities" in healthy lifestyles from 3% to 5% by 2030, alongside targets for children, adults, and the elderly. The Strategy further recognises that existing sports facilities require adaptation and envisages adapting them to the needs of persons with disabilities, as well as the creation

of accessible conditions for persons with disabilities within the development of mass sports and physical culture.

Para sport System Overview

Governance Structure



Responsibility for sport policy and public financing in Armenia lies with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, which defines national sport policy priorities, adopts annual programme plans, and allocates state budget resources for sport development, including activities related to persons with disabilities. The Ministry therefore exercises the primary regulatory and funding authority within the national sport system.

Within this institutional framework, the Armenian National Paralympic Committee (ANPC) functions as the central coordination body for Para sport. The ANPC represents Armenia within the international Paralympic movement, coordinates national Para sport programmes, and serves as the main institutional interface between Para sport federations and the Ministry in matters related to programme planning, funding allocation, and participation in international competitions. The broader Para sport ecosystem also includes the Armenian Deaflympic Committee (serving deaf athletes), Armenian Special Olympics (serving athletes with intellectual disabilities), and the Union of the Blind of Armenia. Each organization operates within its specific mandate and disability community, interfacing with the Ministry in matters related to programme planning, funding allocation, and participation in international competitions.

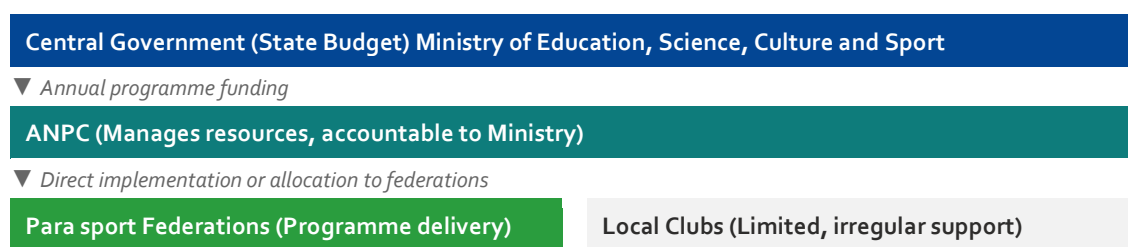
Para sport disciplines are delivered through specialised Para sport federations, which operate under ANPC recognition. These federations organise training activities, register athletes, manage national competitions, and support athlete preparation within their respective disciplines. Federations therefore constitute the principal operational level for discipline-specific sport development.

Coordination between the ANPC and federations occurs through joint planning of annual competition calendars, coordination of athlete selection for international competitions, and programme proposals submitted to the Ministry for public funding. Federations retain operational autonomy within their disciplines while relying on ANPC recognition to access national programmes and international competition structures.

At the local level, sport clubs represent the primary entry point for participation. Clubs organise training activities and provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in sport. However, the number of clubs implementing Para sport activities remains limited, and participation opportunities vary significantly across regions.

In institutional terms, strategic decisions and budget allocations for Para sport are defined by the Ministry, while the ANPC coordinates programme implementation at national level. Discipline-specific federations manage athlete development within individual sports, and sport clubs provide local participation opportunities. This governance structure reflects a centralised model in which national policy direction and financing are concentrated at ministerial level, while operational delivery depends on federations and emerging local club structures.

Funding Mechanisms and Distribution



The central government is the primary source of funding for Para sport in Armenia. Financial resources are allocated through the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport under the state budget programme “Services Related to Sport for Persons with Disabilities,” which supports Para sport activities and events nationwide.

The Ministry provides annual funding to the Armenian National Paralympic Committee (ANPC). The ANPC then implements programme activities directly or allocates resources to Para sport federations responsible for discipline-specific development, while remaining accountable to the Ministry for financial reporting and programme implementation.

The Ministry also provides annual funding to other specialized Para sport organizations, including the Armenian Deaflympic Committee, Armenian Special Olympics, and the Union of the Blind of Armenia. Funding decisions for all Para sport organizations are made based on their activities in Armenia and the results they have achieved in domestic and international championships in previous years, creating a performance-linked allocation mechanism.

Local authorities may occasionally provide financial support to sport clubs or Para sport initiatives at municipal level. However, such support is not structured within a dedicated funding mechanism and generally takes the form of limited contributions to individual activities or events.

In some cases, private donors and philanthropic organisations also provide limited support to local Para sport initiatives, particularly for equipment procurement or event organisation. However, private funding remains sporadic and does not represent a stable financing source for the sector.

Overall, Para sport financing in Armenia remains largely centralised within the state budget and concentrated at national level. Limited diversification of funding sources and the absence of structured grassroots financing mechanisms appear to constrain the expansion of local Para sport activities and long-term programme development.

Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination among stakeholders in the Para sport sector in Armenia is facilitated by the ANPC. Para sport federations cooperate closely with the Committee in the planning and implementation of sector activities, jointly developing annual competition and activity calendars and coordinating budget planning processes. These coordination activities are primarily carried out through the ANPC's own resources, with coordination meetings held approximately ten times per year, mostly in an online format.

Moreover, Armenia has established a national coordinating mechanism on the rights of persons with disabilities, in line with Article 33(1) of the UN CRPD, to ensure cross-government coordination of disability policy. The mechanism brings together multiple ministries and sectors to oversee the implementation of the UN CRPD and national disability legislation. It operates as a horizontal, disability-wide framework and serves as a platform for discussion of a range of issues, including the participation of persons with disabilities in sport.

Data Collection

No unified national monitoring system consolidating Para sport participation data has been identified in Armenia. Available participation estimates are based primarily on administrative records maintained by the Armenian National Paralympic Committee (ANPC) and relevant Para sport federations.

The commonly cited figure of more than 200 individuals participating in Para sport, including approximately 60 athletes competing at international level, reflects athletes registered within national federation structures and competition programmes. These figures should therefore be understood as indicative estimates of competitive participation rather than a comprehensive measure of sport participation among persons with disabilities in the country.

Recreational and informal participation in sport by persons with disabilities is not systematically monitored at national level. Data disaggregated by gender, disability type, geographic region, or age group is also not publicly available. As a result, existing participation figures primarily capture organised Para sport activities and may not reflect the broader level of physical activity engagement among persons with disabilities.

Available information is held across multiple institutional sources, including the ANPC, discipline-specific Para sport federations, and public authorities responsible for sport and disability policy. However, the absence of a centralised national database or unified monitoring framework makes comprehensive participation data difficult to consolidate, verify, and compare over time.

This fragmentation of monitoring responsibilities may limit the ability of policymakers and sector stakeholders to track participation trends, assess programme effectiveness, and identify underrepresented groups within Para sport. The establishment of a coordinated national data

collection and monitoring mechanism could therefore support more systematic planning of Para sport programmes and strengthen evidence-based policy development in the sector.

Participation Pathway



⚠ Transition Gap: No formalised progression framework between initial participation and elite preparation has been identified.

Entry

Initial entry into Para sport typically occurs through referrals from rehabilitation institutions, outreach activities conducted by the ANPC or federations, or personal initiative by individuals seeking sport participation opportunities. Armenia does not currently operate a structured national referral mechanism linking health services, schools, or rehabilitation programmes with sport organisations.

Development

Athlete development is primarily organised through federation-affiliated clubs and training groups. Development opportunities remain concentrated in a limited number of disciplines and locations. Talent identification activities appear to depend primarily on federation initiatives rather than a coordinated national programme.

Elite Preparation

Athletes progressing to international competition are supported through federations and the ANPC, which coordinate participation in European and World Championships and the Paralympic Games. Financial incentives are available for athletes achieving high placements in international competitions.

Transition gap

The absence of a formally defined national athlete development pathway creates a structural transition gap between initial participation and elite performance. Limited coach education opportunities and the small number of specialised training environments further constrain systematic athlete progression.

Key Challenges

Despite the presence of a functioning institutional framework, several structural and operational challenges continue to affect the development of Para sport in Armenia.

Structural system constraints

- Overall, financial resources for Para sport development remain significantly limited, including to support the operational strengthening and capacity development of existing Para sport organisations.
- The limited development of local sport clubs and the relatively modest level of public investment in grassroots Para sport appear to constrain the expansion of participation opportunities across the country. Institutional capacity for systematic athlete development and data monitoring remains limited.
- Although the Ministry maintains a nationwide network of children and youth sports schools, Para sport opportunities for persons with disabilities are largely not available across these institutions.

Participation barriers

- Recent armed conflict has increased the number of individuals who could potentially benefit from sport and rehabilitation programmes; however, willingness among persons with disabilities to engage in sport remains relatively low, which may be partly associated with insufficient promotion of Para sport opportunities and limited outreach activities, underscoring the need for expanded awareness-raising and inclusive participation initiatives.
- Participation of women with disabilities in Armenian Para sport remains extremely limited. Available evidence indicates that female athletes are significantly underrepresented within national federations and international delegations. Several structural factors contribute to this pattern. Participation data is not systematically disaggregated by gender, limiting the visibility of the gap for policymakers. No targeted recruitment or retention programmes focusing on women and girls with disabilities have been identified. In addition, women with disabilities may face compounded barriers related to disability stigma, gender norms, and limited access to sport opportunities outside urban areas.

Institutional capacity constraints

- Para sport organisations require stronger capacities in areas such as fundraising, governance, and sports management, with a need for additional professional training and technical support.
- Opportunities for specialised training and retraining of coaches in Para sport remain limited, which may constrain programme expansion and athlete development.

Governance and policy-process issues

- Stakeholders report that in the development of the Physical Culture and Sports Strategy for 2024-2030, together with its accompanying Action Plan, the involvement of Para sport organisations was not ensured at an adequate level.

Opportunities

- The Physical Culture and Sports Strategy 2024-2030 and Action Plan provide an active policy window; the implementation phase creates a structured opportunity for Para sport organisations to engage and integrate specific development priorities.
- The nationwide network of children and youth sports schools represents infrastructure that, if progressively made accessible, could serve as a primary entry point for Para sport participation across all regions.
- Armenia's post-conflict context has increased the number of potential beneficiaries for rehabilitation-linked sport, strengthening the public health and inclusion rationale for increased Para sport investment.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport:

develop and formally adopt a national Para sport athlete development pathway framework defining progression stages from entry-level participation to elite competition and clarifying the roles of the ANPC, federations, and sport clubs within this pathway.

Recommendation 2.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport:

promote the gradual introduction of Para sport opportunities within the nationwide network of children's and youth sports schools in order to expand entry points for participation.

Recommendation 3.

The Armenian National Paralympic Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and disability organisations:

develop and implement a structured outreach initiative targeting individuals with disabilities in rehabilitation settings, schools, and community organisations.

Recommendation 4.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport:

establish a dedicated multi-year budget for Para sport development within the national state budget cycle.

Recommendation 5.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport:

introduce dedicated funding mechanisms within the national sport budget (such as small grants) to support the establishment and initial operational costs of new Para sport clubs, with priority given to regions outside Yerevan and clubs operating in cooperation with rehabilitation institutions.

Recommendation 6.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and the Armenian National Paralympic Committee:

develop targeted capacity-building programmes for Para sport organisations focusing on governance, organisational management, and resource mobilisation.

Recommendation 7.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, in cooperation with the Armenian National Paralympic Committee and relevant sport federations:

expand training and professional development opportunities for coaches working in adaptive sport.

Recommendation 8.

The Armenian National Paralympic Committee, in cooperation with Para sport federations and disability organisations:

develop targeted outreach and recruitment initiatives aimed at women and girls with disabilities and introduce systematic collection of gender-disaggregated participation data to support monitoring and policy development.

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe