



Bidding to Host Mega-Sporting Events

"Striving for Excellence"
Supplementary Resources
May 2014



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Background

The material in this report was originally written for the www.megasportingevents.org website to expand on and advance the research contained in IHRB’s report “Striving for Excellence: Mega-Sporting Events and Human Rights” (2013). It is accurate and up to date as of May 2014. The www.megasportingevents.org website has since been updated and the original content replaced. The original content has been archived into this series of short reports to maintain their usefulness as early contributions to the body of research on mega-sporting events and human rights.

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What's at stake?

Countries and cities bidding to host an MSE like the Olympics, FIFA World Cup or Commonwealth Games are usually elected 7 or 8 years before the event itself takes place. The bidding process normally starts a year or two beforehand, when the sports governing body (e.g. the IOC or FIFA) publishes a detailed questionnaire, outlining the process and timeline. About one year later a handful of candidate nations / cities are selected. These are then given several months in which to submit a candidature file. Lobbying is often intense, and in the past there have been allegations of corruption influencing votes. The FIFA World Cup elections of December 2010 are now under internal FIFA investigation after the surprising victories of Russia to host the 2018 FIFA World Cup and Qatar to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Each candidate host city or country prepares the candidature file, which is its blueprint for the event. It is accompanied by a large number of legally binding guarantee letters, including financial guarantees made by the host city or other relevant local or national government body. The commitments range from details about the facilities / village, transport, security and accommodation, as well as sports and venues, marketing and questions around sustainability.

At a minimum, the candidature file must comply with various requirements set by the sports governing body. For example, in the case of the IOC's [Candidature Procedure and Questionnaire](#), bid cities are expected to meet a number of sustainability criteria. They are expected to submit an environmental impact assessment; guarantee that all construction work necessary for the event complies with relevant domestic environmental regulation and international agreements and protocols on planning, construction and environment protection; and outline what criteria will be used to assess how potential suppliers adhere to any specific, named, national or international standards, including on labour standards. Olympic and Paralympic Candidate Cities are additionally required to offer guarantees that national and international accessibility standards will be fully integrated into the planning and construction phases of the event.

The host city or government very often has an opportunity to set the tone of its own bid. As part of the IOC's candidature file, for example, the 'bid committee' of the candidate city / government can indicate any special features not covered by the sports governing body questionnaire that it believes to be relevant. Notable for instance was the commitment by the London 2012 bid to open its efforts up to scrutiny by a sustainability watchdog (see below). In the process of drafting the bid and candidature file, the host city / government will often start informal conversations with potential national sponsors and licensees, and spell out the kinds of environmental, social or human rights criteria it is likely to put in place. Host authorities might for example start to indicate particular procurement criteria and sourcing standards with which they will expect suppliers to comply, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) [Base Code](#), the World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) [Code of Conduct](#), or the Fair Labor Association (FLA) [Workplace Code of Conduct](#). This is a critical point

in the MSE lifecycle, especially if the candidate city / government wishes to tread new ground, for instance by placing human rights at the centre of its bid.

Challenges

Corruption Scandals Over the Bid Process

FIFA launched an internal investigation into alleged corruption surrounding the voting procedure for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, awarded to Russia and Qatar respectively in December 2010. Qatar was, and has remained, a controversial choice given that summer temperatures often exceed 40 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit), and the country’s apparent lack of a footballing tradition. FIFA’s Congress has [urged](#) Michael Garcia, the chief independent investigator of the FIFA Ethics Committee’s investigatory branch (set up in 2012), to “leave no stone unturned” in his efforts to discover if there is any truth in the allegations of irregularities in the voting process.

Garcia has reportedly [interviewed](#) a majority of members of the FIFA executive body that were in place during the time of the vote. His team is also believed to be examining business deals connected to several current and former executive committee members. The investigating team is also reported to be seeking interviews worldwide with people who worked for the nine rival World Cup bid candidatures. It has offered [anonymity](#) to whistle-blowers with information on any wrongdoing.

An [Independent Governance Committee](#) (IGC) set up to advise FIFA on anti-corruption matters, published a fifteen-page [report](#) in April 2014, in which it gave its full backing to Garcia’s [investigation](#). Chaired by Swiss law professor [Mark Pieth](#), the IGC report states that: “If FIFA is to emerge from the scandals of recent years it must now produce a convincing and transparent answer to any issues relating to hosting decisions, either to confirm that the suspicions are, sadly, well founded or to demonstrate that they are groundless.”

The IOC faced a corruption scandal of its own over the [Salt Lake City bid](#) to host the 2002 Winter Olympics. The IOC voted in 1999 to expel six members over [accusations](#) that they had taken in the region of three-quarters of a million US dollars in bribes. IOC investigators found that [cash payments](#) and other lavish gifts were provided to more than a dozen members over a period of six years during and after Salt Lake City’s bid on the 2002 Winter Games. Corporate sponsors, US Congressional leaders and sports officials urged the IOC to carry out a series of reforms. This led to a ban on visits to candidate cities by IOC members, and the establishment in 1999 of an independent [IOC Ethics Commission](#) made up of nine members, a majority of whom are not members of the Olympic Movement.

The [Olympic Agenda 2020](#) - the reform process launched by incoming IOC President Thomas Bach in 2013 - is now exploring the possibility of reinstating visits by IOC members to candidate cities. The proposal being considered allows for the introduction of a controlled system of visits paid for and organised by the IOC itself. Those in favour argue that the IOC has moved on from Salt Lake City debacle, and note that IOC members report finding it hard to assess the merits of the bid cities based exclusively on the promotional materials. IOC member, [Prince Albert of Monaco](#), however believes: “It’s very risky even if it’s done in a very organised and controlled fashion.”

Questions Over Suitability of Olympic and FIFA World Cup Hosts

The IOC and FIFA have both faced questions during 2013 and 2014 concerning the suitability of MSE hosts. Human rights concerns have been raised with both sports governing bodies.

FIFA is facing ongoing pressure over the choice of Qatar as host of the 2022 FIFA World Cups from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Human Rights Watch and others. Much attention has concentrated on the alleged treatment of migrant workers. News reports suggest that at least 44 Nepali migrant workers died in the summer of 2013 alone on construction and infrastructure in Qatar as the country prepares for the World Cup.

The IOC has faced media scrutiny and pressure from civil society in relation to the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. [Criticism](#) concentrated on alleged corruption and over-expenditure in preparing the venues and related infrastructure. The Sochi Olympics reportedly cost in the region of \$50 billion, far-outspending all previous Winter Olympics. Concerns were also raised about possible [forced evictions](#) of residents, exploitation of temporary and [migrant workers](#) in the construction sector, and Russia’s laws banning the teaching of homosexuality to minors and its wider treatment of [LGBT community](#).

It is notable that corporate sponsors were among those lobbying the IOC to look into the criticism. AT&T, a long-term sponsor of the US Olympic Team, spoke out against Russian discrimination against LGBT people ahead of the Sochi Olympics, and Olympic Worldwide Partners, Atos, Dow, Coca-Cola, GE, Panasonic and Samsung, all stated that they had raised concerns over Russia’s discrimination of the LGBT community with the IOC.

The IOC and FIFA are independently exploring reforms of the bid processes (see below).

Responses

Reforming the Bid Process

The IOC and FIFA are independently exploring reforms of their respective event bid processes. This follows a series of concerns over the suitability of Olympic and FIFA World Cup hosts, notably in relation to Sochi and Qatar respectively.

Incoming IOC President, [Thomas Bach](#), on his election in December 2013, unveiled plans to develop a new strategic roadmap for the future of the Olympic Movement, known as [Olympic Agenda 2020](#). The [proposals](#) focus around three themes of sustainability, credibility and youth, and look at ways of reforming the bid process. Bach's initiative seeks input from a diverse audience including the National Olympic Committees and the wider public. The roadmap is being debated and developed by a series of working groups over the course of 2014, and will culminate in Monaco in December 2014 when proposals for Olympic Agenda 2020 will be presented for approval to an IOC Extraordinary Session.

Ideas being discussed include plans to promote the social and economic benefits of hosting the Games, reduce and control the cost for bid cities, and consider if visits by IOC members to bid cities (in groups and at the IOC's expense) would improve decision-making. Under the sustainability theme, the proposals seek to replace the IOC's Sport and Environment Commission with a new Commission for Sustainability, that will continually explore opportunities for sustainability management and greater financial transparency, and to encourage bid and host cities to maximise the use of existing or temporary venues. There are also proposals to encourage greater gender equality within the Olympic Movement.

FIFA is also considering reforms to its host bid process. In evidence to the European Parliament in February 2014 over the welfare of Nepali and other migrant workers on construction projects linked to the Qatar 2022 World Cup, Theo Zwanziger, a member of [FIFA's Executive Committee](#), publicly indicated that FIFA was looking at the need to rethink the bidding process, and the possibility of giving "human rights a much higher status".

Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics

Bid commitment to First Nations' participation

During its bid, the Vancouver Organising Committee (VANOC) committed to the participation of the First Nations, on whose shared traditional ancestral land the event was held, and signed formal agreements with the four host First Nations. These agreements recognised the First Nations' title and provided for their involvement in

all aspects of the Games, including planning, delivery and legacy. This led to IOC [recognition of Aboriginal peoples as Games partners](#), a C\$59 million boost to Aboriginal business opportunities, and profiling Aboriginal culture and athletic success. Some [tribes](#) did however oppose two ski resorts built on their land over concerns about levels of tourism and real estate development.

London 2012 Olympics

A sustainability watchdog

As part of its bid document ahead of London’s election in 2005 to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, London became the first Candidate City to commit itself to opening up the work of the bodies delivering the Olympic Games - the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) – to scrutiny by the [Commission for a Sustainable London 2012](#), a watchdog body.

The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012 was formally created in 2007, and established as an independent body to monitor and assure sustainability of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. During the course of its activities, which culminated in a series of legacy-oriented reports in early 2013, the Commission actively engaged with external stakeholders and provided assurance on many social and human rights issues including diversity, health and safety, and supply chain standards. It conveyed stakeholder concerns over the ethical standards of several sponsors.

Norwegian Bid for 2022 Winter Olympics

A bid based on human rights

The Norwegian capital Oslo is one of five cities bidding to host the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. In March 2014, the Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (the Norwegian National Olympic Committee - NOC) signed a [formal agreement with four Norwegian Unions](#) - the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), the Confederation of Unions for Professionals (Unio), the Confederation of Vocational Unions (YS), the Confederation of Unions for Academics (Akademikerne) – to put human rights at the heart of the 2022 Winter Olympics if Oslo’s bid is successful.

In a ground-breaking [statement](#), President of the Norwegian NOC, Mr. Børre Rognlien, said on signing the agreement that: “We want Olympic and Paralympic Games in Norway, including the Youth Olympic Games in 2016 [Lillehammer, Norway], to be remembered as Games that truly respects human rights and labour rights. We want

to contribute to secure employees fair working conditions and make sustainable Games, and we strongly believe that by emphasizing these values we will contribute to create and secure truly memorable and historic experiences for athletes, spectators, volunteers and corporate partners."

Reinforcing Norway's leadership position on human rights within the Olympic Movement, the Norwegian NOC, in its [submission](#) to the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020 debate, has also proposed that: "Future Games must be characterised by due diligence, transparency and respect for human rights," adding that "we also underline the need for the IOC and all future hosts to take universal human rights into account on all aspects of the planning and the delivering Olympic and Paralympic Games." The Norwegians are also lobbying to ensure greater gender equality and participation by women in sport, both in the boardroom and at the grass-roots level.