

Session: **Project management of big sport events**

Abstract nr: **EASM-0083**

Developing criteria for assessing Major Sport Events in alpine regions.

M. Schnitzer¹

¹*Institute for Sport Science, University of Innsbruck, Austria*

martin.schnitzer@uibk.ac.at

The region of the Austrian federal state Tyrol has hosted almost a dozen of different Major Sport Events in the last five years. Currently, preparations for the first ever Winter Youth Olympic Games, which will be held in January 2012, are being carried out. Tyrol is also hosting many recurring major events, especially in Winter Sports such as the Hahnenkamm Race in Kitzbühel (Alpine Skiing) or the Four Hills Tournament in Innsbruck (Ski Jumping).

After having successfully hosted the Winter Universiade Innsbruck/Seefeld 2005 local politicians felt the need to act more sustainable and more goal-oriented when organising major events in the region. Questions like “Which are the right events for our region?”, “Do certain events contribute positively to our regions development?” have been raised. The perceived need for creating a long-term strategy for events and integrating events with other strategic initiatives, led to a research project executed by the Institute for Sport Sciences of the University of Innsbruck.

The aim of the research project is to develop criteria in order to assess the potential impact of Major Sport Events in the State of Tyrol. Assessing the potential impact of an event is crucial for starting a successful project and its project management.

Different impact models for Major Sport Events have been developed as literature shows for instance in Gans / Horn / Zemmann (2003), the Event Scorecard (2007), Sport Canada Policy for hosting International Sport Events (2007) or the newly developed Event Impact Model (2010) by UK Sport. Key success criteria for event bidding have been identified by Botella (1995), Emery (2001) or Westerbeek / Turner / Igerson (2002). On occasion of the Interreg III B Project Sentalps (2006) different practical approaches show how regions may develop their economy and tourism through Major Sport Events.

After an extensive literature review the author has developed a first hypothetical catalogue of criteria which can be used for assessing Major Sporting Events. This catalogue contains six major groups of criteria areas focusing on six questions:

- 1) Criteria “Sport”: How will sport (participation) develop in the region where a major event takes place?
- 2) Criteria “Economy”: What economic impact (short and long term) does an event create in the hosting region?
- 3) Criteria “Social”: How does the local population integrate the event in its daily live and what impacts occur for residents of the host region?

4) Criteria “Ecology”: How much is the ecological environment suffering (or benefiting) from the event?

5) Criteria “Infrastructure”: How much do the region’s infrastructural needs fit with the event’s required permanent infrastructure?

6) Criteria “Tourism”: Can short term tourism effects be reached without crowding out? Does the event support long-term tourism goals?

Going more into detail the author has identified 80 criteria and 16 event coefficients by answering these six questions. Using these criteria and event coefficients he realised several problems, which are basically caused by interdependencies, phasing complexities (criteria vary in importance at different stages of a Major Event) and difficulties to measure. Therefore further investigations need to be done (1) to complete the number of criteria, (2) to objectify the criteria and (3) to operationalise the criteria for adequate measurement. Thus, the author is interviewing 15 experts of Major (Sport) Event Agencies around the globe to better understand the criteria they use for assessing events in order to (1) complete the list of criteria, (2) to objectify the criteria and to find out (3) how to best measure the chosen criteria.

The desired outcome of this study is to have a list of criteria which sport event bidders may use as important and reliable data for taking the decision to bid (or not to bid) for a given event. Also, the list of criteria may be built into an individualised tool or model for dedicated sport event regions such as the Tyrol. The tool may also reflect specific circumstances of the alpine region, such as limited space, focus on winter/alpine sports or specific touristic target groups. The selected event criteria may also be useful evaluating the event after staging it (ex-post analysis) and are therefore offering important strategic boundaries for efficient project management of Major Sport Events.