



HOSTCITY

Host cities identify key learnings for delivering impact

On 2nd December 2024, representatives of IAEH member organisations and selected guests attending the Host City conference, held a Destination Workshop focusing on economic, social and environmental impacts from major events. The roundtable discussion included recent examples of impactful events and measurement tools for evaluating and planning positive impact.

In 2021 IAEH agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) to establish common measures of impact resulting in collaboration for the publication of a “menu” of Common Indicators which has since been recognised by the OECD and IOC.

On the Common Indicators for Measuring the Impact of Major Events

In Norway, Innovation Norway have created a tool to help event organisers maximise impact from their events using the structure of the Common Indicators and adapting it to ensure it is also relevant to cultural and business events.

Host cities and destinations have also recognised the importance of soft power or international influence as an area where events add value to host organisations. There is currently not any specific reference to that in the model of Common Indicators, therefore it is relevant for inclusion when there is a revised edition in the future.

Host cities and destinations recognise the importance of gathering and reporting robust data in helping political leaders make decisions to invest in major events, particularly those that also involve infrastructure investment.

On the Economic Impact of Major Events

There are examples where major event venues located centrally have helped drive economic impact to city centre businesses, addressing the decline of footfall from out-of-town retail developments. In the case of Tampere, Finland, the new indoor arena was

located close to public transport without the provision of new parking spaces, and events provide the option of free public transport immediately before and after each event.

There are examples where host cities and destinations prioritise the benefit from the “brand association” of major events over the short-term tourism impact (for example Cirque du Soleil).

Host cities and destinations are also interested in using major events to have an impact on employability, either directly by providing employment opportunities related to delivery of events and “upskilling” through volunteer programmes, or indirectly by using events to showcase employment opportunities with major employers in the host community.

On the Social and Environmental Impacts of Major Events

Host cities and destinations value the pride of hosting high profile events, and often work with event organisers/rights-owners to create specific programmes of community engagement in addition to the core event delivery.

There are examples of impactful social and environmental programmes, including the 2024 World Athletics Indoor Championships in Glasgow which included providing a fully electric car fleet and working with a local mental health charity. Stavanger in Norway have also made impact on the sport of motorcycle trials by establishing a new international women’s event alongside their hosting of the X-Trial world series.

Experience has suggested the events make the most impact from social and environmental initiatives when there has been a dedicated individual holding responsibility within the organising team.

Such responsibility should also have the potential to contribute a wider commitment to an ongoing relationship with host cities and destinations after the event, which would be of assistance to implementing legacy.