

# Sustainable Planning for the Olympic Legacy

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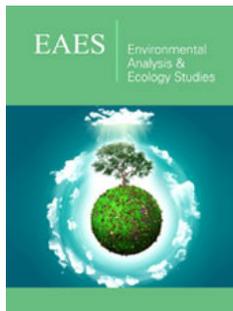
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## Abstract

The Olympic legacy, whether temporary or transitory, can manifest itself before, during or after the Games. It can quickly disappear after the event if efforts are not made to keep it alive through, for example, cultural programming, new environmental legislation, public awareness programming or new wider applications.

In recent years, the Olympic legacy and the planning of the Olympic legacy have become increasingly important in the choice of host cities. The importance that has allowed many cities such as London, Sydney, and Tokyo, to develop an entity in charge of the planning and management of the post-Olympic legacy. In addition, holistic sustainability and planning have become two key elements for Olympic success. The intangible possibility of training and involving new profiles in the territory proves to be fundamental to being able to manage the Olympic structures in the post-Olympic period. However, cities will have to overcome the biggest challenge: considering sustainability as a holistic element.

## Introduction

Olympic legacy planning requires great respect for the environment sustainability of the processes involved in organizing the Olympic event. "To encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games be conducted accordingly" (Olympic Charter, Art. 2, IOC mission and role) [1]. As global mega-events, the Olympic Games represent a specific historical moment reflecting the globalized world's visions. For this reason, the universal dimension of the Olympic event and the increasing size of the event has, over the years, introduced new concerns for the environment's protection. However, the IOC during the 1970s and 1980s was very concerned about the negative image of the event worldwide and even seriously considered that the Olympic event was in danger of disappearing. <sup>1</sup>The Montreal 1976 edition can be considered one of the most critical moments for the future of the modern Olympic Games. The overestimation of Olympic works and mega projects has introduced new concerns and criticisms regarding respect for the environment.

However, the Rio de Janeiro Charter of 1992, the introduction of Agenda 21, and the collaboration with UNEP in 1994 made it possible to set up a specific commission on sport and the environment in 1995. Thus, in 1996, the environment was finally added to the Olympic Charter as a third pillar [2]. Indeed, the Lillehammer 1994 edition and the presidency of the Norwegian prime minister as a president of the UN were intangible elements in raising awareness of the environmental risks identified in the 1970s and 1980s by the scientific community.

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<sup>1</sup>The city of Denver in 1976 provided for a referendum to observe the public's intention to host a mega-event. The Denver referendum highlighted citizens' concerns about environmentally destructive landscape practices. Thus, the winter edition was assigned to Innsbruck, Olympic city for the second time (1964-1976).

Norway is recognized as one of the driving forces behind the creation of the European Commission's "Our Common Future" project. As such, the planning and organization of the Lillehammer Olympics introduced four critical points for protecting the environment:

- A. companies were instructed to use natural materials wherever possible.
- B. Emphasis was placed on energy savings in the heating and cooling system.
- C. A recycling program was developed for the entire Winter Games region.
- D. It was stipulated that the stadiums should harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

Therefore, the Lillehammer edition served as a reference and case study for future editions and the implementation of environmentally friendly strategies<sup>2</sup>.

### The Environment in the Bid Process

The IOC, through its handbook for candidate cities, includes a specific section on the compliance of host cities with environmental measures. The handbook is seen as the cities' commitment to the environment. In addition, the IOC guides future cities through policies that should be implemented for a positive assessment of the Olympic bid<sup>3</sup>. Over time, the meanings and terms of sustainable development have evolved into different practices and applications within each context. The only hope is that in the future, the IOC can update the criteria for considering sustainable practices in all specific contexts. To date, the IOC, in its report for candidate cities, includes the following obligations regarding the environment:

1. Provide a map and graphic description of the local environmental situation regarding natural resources used by the relevant authorities, with emphasis on their interaction with OCOG;
2. Provide an official guarantee from the competent authorities, stating that all works necessary for the organization of the Games will comply with local, regional, and national standards, as well as international agreements and protocols on planning, construction, and environmental protection;
3. Conduct environmental impact assessment of all sites;
4. Describe the environmental management system envisaged by the OCOG (including possible collaboration with NGOs and/or their feedback on the Games;

5. Describe environmentally friendly technology about the Games;
6. Describe plans to minimize the environmental impact of game-related infrastructure projects (road widening);
7. Outline how waste management (wastewater treatment) plans are expected to influence the city and the region in the future;
8. Explain how the OCOG will integrate its environmental approach into contracts with suppliers and sponsors, e.g., about the procurement of recyclable or compostable products in recyclable or compostable packaging;
9. Outline plans to raise environmental awareness [3,4].

We observe that the IOC emphasizes the impact and legacy of Environmental Sustainability (ES) in the Games, which adheres to the principles outlined by the Ecological Modernization (EM) perspective [5].

### The Main Objective of Olympic Sustainability

According to Ritchie [6], the Olympiad must be imagined and designed as a global event, in which all stakeholders are equally involved. For this reason, the Olympic legacy to be conveyed must be understood and aligned with the value system of the citizens, as only they can guarantee a broad base of support for "welcoming the world". Cities, step by step, started to include in their bidding process a specific part on the environmental sustainability of the event and the structures. However, we cannot overlook the inclusion of community groups, associations, and entities, as it will allow the inclusion of all subjects in the holistic sustainability planning processes in the post-Olympic period. Agenda 2020, as already mentioned, offers some general indications on the means to achieve greater Olympic sustainability.

Meanwhile, in environmental terms, the United Nations (UN) calls for minimizing negative impacts on the biosphere; conserving natural and rural spaces; saving energy, water, and materials; using environmentally friendly technologies and green building design techniques; using local resources; promoting public transport; minimizing waste; and so on. Agenda 2020 refers to the importance of comprehensive environmental impact assessments before Olympic construction projects. It stresses the importance of involving the whole city and region to ensure their long-term socio-economic and health benefits. Subsequently, with the introduction of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup> By 2030, the UN will mark the importance of achieving a shared outcome concerning the environment and the development of a sustainable world.

<sup>2</sup>In Olympic history, the city of Sydney has a reputation for delivering the first sustainable and environmentally friendly mega-event.

<sup>3</sup>However, the assessment of environmental practices is subjective, especially when looking at Sydney, Athens, Turin, Beijing, Vancouver, London, Sochi, Rio, PyeongChang, and Beijing.

<sup>4</sup>The SDGs are 17 goals introduced by the UN to raise awareness of sustainable development, inclusion, integration, and respect for the environment through a few key points.

On the other hand, it is argued that the winter edition will always have a more significant environmental impact than the summer edition. Consequently, winter Olympic venues should carefully consider the natural context to achieve landscape conservation. Furthermore, the realization, design, and construction of sports facilities must be carried out to “ensure their harmonious integration into the local context”.

The analysis produced by Furrer<sup>5</sup> on Olympic holistic sustainability suggests six main objectives:

- A. Equality:** Implication of the sharing of Olympic risks and responsibilities,
- B. Strategic planning:** The Games should be integrated into the long-term urban development strategy and catalyse activities and improvements in social policies,
- C. Responsible resource management:** Financial, social and environmental resources must be invested in a way that safeguards and possibly enhances the socio-economic integrity,
- D. A new form of governance for urban sustainability:** It is characterized by integrity and transparency in decision-making, accountability in the management of public resources, and genuine public consultation,
- E. Sustainability monitoring and reporting:** This is an important aspect of accountability and transparency,
- F. Sustainable local design:** Special attention needs to be developed to the temporary infrastructure.

Furthermore, Furrer [7] argue that partnerships and social networks are indispensable for developing the long-term holistic sustainability of host cities. Therefore, the economy and society constitute a social network that will provide the necessary activities and processes to expand sustainability in the Olympic areas. Sustainable planning aims to facilitate communications between the public and private sectors, mediating the different

interests of stakeholders<sup>6</sup> [8]. However, to ensure community sustainability, citizens must be actively involved in the planning process, informing them of the opportunities, challenges, and risks involved in hosting the Olympics. Public-private partnerships represent a unique opportunity to resolve long-standing problems and major unfinished projects [9-12]. In addition, the centralization of the organization of the Olympic Games means that the event's needs may have different priorities between the central state and local administrations. Therefore, the challenge for future host cities will be to offer long-term planning that considers sustainability as a dynamic, holistic element.

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