



**Impact assessment**

Buying in to the 'Power of Sport' at emotional levels is easy for many of us, but how much do we really know about the impacts of sport? Jon Coxeter-Smith reports on the latest developments in Global Sports Impact

**T**he 'Power of Sport' is often acknowledged in inspirational quotations; from Nelson Mandela's "Sport has the power to change the world, the power to unite people in a way that little else does", to the International Olympic Committee's own version: "Sport has its own language, and everyone can speak it. It's a language of hope, where anything is possible."

If the scale and diversity of the impact of a winter Olympic Games were truly understood and appreciated, would we have seen the series of drop-outs among potential bidding cities that has been recorded over the last year or so?

And maybe debate in the Canadian city of Edmonton, before withdrawing its bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games, or in the Mexican city of Guadalajara, which decided to decline to organise the 2017 World Aquatics Championships, would have been different if the breadth and magnitude of the impacts of these events was better understood.

**About GSI**

GSI is a collaborative initiative, powered by Sportcal, which unites a worldwide network of partners, experts and stakeholders in sport with the vision to better understand the impacts of sport. Its mission is to create standardised ways in which these impacts can be identified, measured and analysed, providing a comprehensive, objective picture of the full potential of sports events.

**GLOBAL SPORTS IMPACT**

Nearly 90 million spectators have attended the world's leading sporting events in the last eight years, generating a huge tourism impact for the host cities and nations, according to research conducted by the GSI team.

A study of 530 major multi-sport games and world championships covering 73 sports, held between 2007 and 2014, has found an average attendance of 167,000 spectators for each of these events. Hosted in 356 cities from 84 countries, over 400,000 athletes participated in these events, representing virtually every country in the world. On average nearly 50 nations were represented at each event. In addition, 950,000 volunteers provided vital support and services to the organisers of those events.

Based on these figures, the GSI team estimates that over 13 million of these spectators, athletes and volunteers were from overseas countries, generating a huge economic benefit to the host cities and nations.

**THE GLOBAL SPORTS IMPACT REVIEW 2014**

In the second quarter of 2015, GSI will publish its first annual review of the impact of sport in 2014. The Global Sports Impact Review 2014 will analyse information and data on over 75 major World Championships and multi-sport games held in 2014. The review will include: selected case studies; 2010/2014 event comparisons (see

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Figure 1, right); event data sheets; analysis of the impacts of these events and any trends emerging, and previews of events in 2015.

As is readily apparent, distribution of the number of World Championships and multi-sport games is not even throughout the Olympic cycle. We also see an increase in the number of events held in 2014 compared to 2010 – the second years, or midway through, respectively, the 2012 and 2016 Olympic quadrennials.

It's too early to confirm this expansion as a trend, but over the longer term the GSI project will be monitoring developments to see whether growth in the calendar is sustained, or is just a blip occasioned by revisions to the format and changes to the cycle of recurring events.

A look at some of the key drivers of impact (see Figure 2, below) in a handful of the 'big' events of 2010 and 2014 – the Commonwealth Games, Ryder Cup, winter Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup – is interesting too.

**Total attendance** for an event is, to a large degree, determined by the capacity of venues and numbers of ticketed sessions included. Nonetheless, location and proximity to population centres is influential, and so too is the organisers' success in selling tickets.

Examination of two of the key drivers for **sporting impact**, numbers of athletes and numbers of competing nations, illustrates:

- That the format of events is often the defining influence on these drivers;
- The growth in the number of participants at

the 2014 editions of the two multi-sport games shown here – the Commonwealth Games and winter Olympic Games:

- An increase of over 3.5 per cent in the number of competing nations at winter Olympic Games.

While suggested, although not consistently illustrated, by the events shown in figure 2, the GSI team's analysis of **media** impact across the 77 events studied in the GSI 2014 Review highlights their rising levels, underpinned by:

- Extended broadcasting to wider audiences;
- Growth of the phenomenon of social media; and
- The growing use and reach of the internet.

Increased impact under the media pillar is considered in detail in the GSI 2014 Review.

**Volunteering:** to a large degree the numbers of volunteers required will be determined by the format and operational requirements of the event. Generally these numbers are stable.

Considering, though, that one of the stated objectives of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 was to energise the development of a culture of volunteering in Russia – something that was admittedly missing in previous years – it is particularly notable to see that 25,000 volunteers assisted with this event. Clearly, these games could be rated a considerable success against that particular objective.

The forthcoming GSI 2014 Review will be packed with insight and analysis on all the various impacts that major sporting events generated in 2014, from the winter Olympics in Sochi to the FIFA World Cup in Brazil, through the IAAF World Half-Marathon Championships in Copenhagen and the Hockey World Cup in the Hague. To order your copy, visit the GSI (Impact) section of the Sportcal website at [www.sportcal.com/GSI](http://www.sportcal.com/GSI)



**FIGURE 2: DRIVERS OF IMPACT FOR SELECTED EVENTS 2010 & 2014**

EVENT	COMMONWEALTH GAMES		RYDER CUP		WINTER OLYMPICS		FIFA WORLD CUP	
	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014	2010	2014
<b>Nation</b>								
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>								
Total	2,200,000	*1,200,000	250,000	240,000	1,500,000	*1,250,000	3,200,000	3,400,000
<b>SPORTING</b>								
Athletes	4,352	4,820	24	24	2,566	2,894	736	736
Competing Nations	71	71	8	10	82	85	32	32
<b>MEDIA</b>								
TV Nations	60*	73*	185	185	220	220	217	219
Broadcasters	20*	30*	50	43	114	250	376	700
Accredited Media	4,248	1,550	1,556	946	10,800	13,000	*15,000	16,746
<b>SOCIAL</b>								
Volunteers	14,808	15,000	1,700	1,800	18,500	25,000	15,000	14,000

\* = Estimated values

**More information**

If you would like to find out more about Global Sports Impact, or become a member of the GSI group – whether to participate in the debate, to share knowledge or to be a part of this unique project measuring the impacts of sport, and major sporting events in particular – contact Jon Coxeter-Smith at [jon@sportcal.com](mailto:jon@sportcal.com)