

## Preface

This report from the Danish Institute for Sports Studies/Play the Game has the objective to obtain a greater understanding of the sporting legacy of stadiums built for or having undergone major renovations to host a major international sporting event. Several brand new stadiums have been built or renovated for specific events, but the legacy of such stadiums and to what extent they are used after the event are in many cases unclear.

The study detailed in this report was conducted in order to assess the sustainability of stadiums built for major international sports events in terms of sporting and financial sustainability. Do substantial investments in stadiums for mega events lead to significant utilisation after the event? Is it possible for all stadiums to be utilised to a higher extent after the major sporting event? Is there a complex of general problems present, and if so: How and where are they occurring? How can we avoid the potential problems? Are there any model examples? And why have they succeeded?

The overall results presented in the report allow us to answer at least some of the questions related to stadiums that have been constructed or undergone major renovations due to a major sporting event.

We wish to invite persons with an interest in the field to contribute with more precise and additional data in order for us to be able to continually develop and expand the stadium data set.

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## Summary

The present study has looked into 75 venues in 20 countries that have been built or undergone major renovations in order to host a major international or continental sporting event. The aim of the study has been to examine how and to what extent stadiums built for these events are utilised after the events have taken place.

The main variable in the report is the number of spectators per season/year. By dividing the attendance figures with the stadiums' capacities, we have created an index that has made it possible to compare the stadiums included in the study in a simple manner. The index has also made it possible to visualise the state of each stadium built or renovated for particular events, and compare and examine the events to determine which types of events have been most successful in terms of sporting legacy.

Even though the study shows that some stadiums have had positive legacies and satisfying developments post-event, it also demonstrates that numerous stadiums that have been built or renovated for major events have had problematic legacies. A majority of the stadiums included in the study have had problems attracting larger crowds, and in general their attendance figures are low.

The lack of an attractive anchor tenant from the outset or weak attendance figures are the main reasons why some stadium owners have financial problems and why several stadiums have a negative sporting legacy.

Sports federations should be more cautious when awarding major events and to a higher degree award the events to countries or cities in a manner that gives these hosts a realistic chance of converting the short-lived honour of hosting a major event into a long term stadium legacy.

However, it is not only the sports federations' fault that several stadiums stand empty. The host countries and cities also have a responsibility as they ultimately (almost every time) pay the bill. Countries and cities should have a greater awareness of what kind of impact hosting an event really has. They should take a longer time perspective when they consider becoming hosts and be more focused on what their legacy will be after the event is over.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany is the single most successful event in the study as viewed in this context, as a majority of the stadiums have had a large inflow of spectators after the World Cup.

That the World Cup stadiums in Germany would continue to have good attendance figures was not a big surprise in view of Germany's relative wealth, strong football tradition and a local football league that has highest attendance figures in the world. Nor was it surprising that several of the stadiums built or renovated for UEFA Euro 2004 in Portugal have turned out to have a problematically legacy. Aside from three teams, attendance figures in Portuguese football are low.

The experiences from Portugal show that the mantra 'If you build it, they will come' should not be seen as a trustworthy solution. It requires more than a new stadium to get an inflow of spectators. Several UEFA

Euro 2004 stadiums have since been put up for sale, and the majority have very low attendance figures in relation to their capacities.

Instead of taking local needs into account beforehand, many stadium owners have, to a great extent, chosen to customise their stadiums according to external requirements. This has led to the problem that many stadiums cannot be adapted for daily needs after the event. This has not only resulted in empty stadiums and negative sporting legacies, but also higher construction and maintenance costs for stadium owners, who are typically cities and municipalities. The cost of a stadium does not end with its completion. Weekly events with good attendance figures are needed if a stadium is to avoid becoming a financial burden and causing great financial losses for its owner(s).