

**UNWTO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOURISM AND SPORTS
DA NANG, VIET NAM,
24th September 2016
TECHNICAL NOTE**

BACKGROUND

In Barcelona 2001 the (then) Secretary-General of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), together with the (then) President of the International Olympic Committee, were joint signatories to a *communiqué* recognising sports and tourism as “*forces for mutual understanding*”. This symbolic gesture resounded around the world like a ‘starter’s pistol’, releasing what has become one of the fastest growing sector in the global travel and tourism industry. As a result, today, sports-related tourism can no longer be regarded as a niche sector of tourism.

There are now over 1.1bn international tourist arrivals worldwide with UNWTO predicting that by 2020 this will rise to 1.4bn. Tourism accounts for 9% of global GDP, one in eleven jobs worldwide and has a value of over \$US1.5 trillion in exports. Within this extraordinary resilient and multi-faceted industry sports-related tourism is now presenting major opportunities for both emerging and mature destinations (be they nations, regions, cities, coastal, countryside, mountains, deserts). Indeed, many observers regard international sports tourism as being one of the primary reasons for this global growth in tourism.

EUROSPORT (a multimedia eDiscovery broadcaster) has recently estimated that sports tourism is worth \$US800bn constituting +10% of the international travel and tourism receipts. In some destinations, sports tourism accounts for 25% of all tourism receipts rising to as much as 55% in Australia and parts of New Zealand.

The growth phenomenon of sports tourism over the past ten years should come as no surprise. It was predicted in the mid 1990s when “sports tourism” was referred to as “the sleeping giant of tourism”. This was on the back of the arrival of the new generation of sports stadia often driven by the clamour amongst cities to host globally broadcast mega-sporting events. This was followed by the success of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics in transforming the city’s tourism industry and the global media’s new millennium frenetic interest in the revenue potential of major sporting events and the global interest in golf, soccer and athletics.

Over the past 20 years researchers have defined ‘sports tourism’ in many different ways. A universally accepted starting point is that provided by Standeven and De Knop (1999) in their book ‘*Sports Tourism*’:

“All forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organised way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitates travel away from home and work locality”.

Clearly this broad definition embraces all types of participation in sports as wide ranging as low impact rural activities (such as hands free rock climbing or fishing) or those in an urban setting (such as Parkour) to mass participation activities in rural areas to the major city marathons of London and New York as well as the stadia team sports and the wide range of peripatetic or self-developed, signature sports events.

There are three clearly defined motivations for sports-related travel each of which demands appropriately planned services, facilities and amenities to meet the demands of these consumers. So, today we see people travelling for sports-related tourism to:

- Actively participate in a sport or sporting event, - individually or as part of a team

- Self development or enhanced training for sport as an individual or as a team
- Watching sport as a spectator or supporter of a team, a sport or a sporting event
- Visiting sites and places associated with the history, heritage, culture of a sport or a sporting legend
- Improve their health and well-being through a sporting activity

These markets are increasingly demanding new experiences and pushing the boundaries of their own performance and expectations. This creates challenges and opportunities for destinations.

There are two relatively new concepts in sports tourism: (i) the rise of the ‘*charity mission*’ where groups, often involving sporting celebrities, undertake physical challenges such as climbing Kilimanjaro or cycling from A to B to raise money and develop profile for a global charity and the associated involvement of sporting celebrities in charitable activities involving sport in a developing country; and (ii) the rise of mass participation events for the amateur and the professional sports persons involvement at the same time.

The scale and power of global media coverage, together with the considerable positive economic impact of mega sporting events provides a seductive concoction that encourages countries and cities to scramble to bid to host these globally peripatetic events. The raw data of benefits are impressive. There is now a ‘*Global Nations*’ and ‘*Global Cities*’ Sporting Events Index (produced by SPORTCAL) as well as an Adventure Tourism Destinations Index.

It is no wonder, therefore, that destinations around the world are increasingly looking to develop their sports tourism appeal. The ‘heady’ mix of celebrity appeal, links to lifestyle, use of natural and man-made assets, media coverage

and the (relatively) high value of sports tourists makes sports tourism a very attractive proposition.

There are other many and varied positive impacts arising from sports-related tourism. These include:

- Regeneration and the development/investment in new facilities and associated technical innovations
- Place promotion, re-imagining destinations and creating platforms for branding and marketing
- Enhanced global awareness
- Uplift in civic pride and strengthening identity
- Increased levels of participation in sport amongst the resident communities
- Positive attitudinal changes and new values across the community

These benefits are equally applicable and relevant to rural, as well as urban, destinations. With competition to achieve standout and to claim global standout driving the search for hybrid, innovative, new sports (such as urban golf, street ball, bike polo in urban areas) and off-the-wall adrenalin sports and new types of spectator sports for rural destinations.

In the context of this explosion of interest in sports tourism a number of key issues and opportunities become apparent:

- (1) Destination planners must remember that travel for sport occurs at many different levels with the potential for sustainable impact being as relevant and significant for small communities as much as larger communities
- (2) Increased destination awareness and the scope for repositioning and branding a destination may be more significant from the indirect benefits of hosting a major event or a major league team.

(3) The development of sports tourism must be wholly in line with the destination's tourism and sporting / cultural / touristic assets and positioning to be successful.

(4) Securing the legacy impacts of hosting major investment in sports infrastructure is a real challenge.

In summary, therefore, sports tourism is today a major driver of contemporary tourism on a global basis. However, more sophisticated and robust research is needed to understand its real contribution to destination development and into the motivation of consumers.

Sports are a fast moving and dynamic sector with new forms of equipment and new forms of activities being created on a constant basis. This creates a tremendous range of opportunities for destinations with foresight to align themselves with these innovations and capture the world's attention as a '*Sports Tourism*' destination.

OBJECTIVES

This conference is designed to help tourism destinations, the tourism industry and the sports industry (both public and private sector stakeholders) together with media and sponsorship interests understand emerging trends in sports-related tourism and the opportunities this brings for socio-economic, sustainable, development.

In particular the Conference will examine:

- The wide range of consumer motivations driving travel for sports-related tourism experiences, mega-events and other activities;
- The potential, positive, impacts for a destination that extend beyond sport into many other aspects of economic and cultural life of a destination;
- The breadth of different types of sporting activity and events that are now available in the market place;

- The importance of strategic planning and the alignment of policies and resources in order to optimise the benefits that sports-related tourism can deliver;
- The need for innovation in product development that will allow a powerful and effective approach to marketing to succeed;

METHODOLOGY

The Conference program has been designed to allow delegates to explore the many dimensions that helps build a successful sports tourism strategy for a destination.

Detailed case studies combined with expert insight and opinion will examine:

- Trends in both the supply and the demand side in the global market
- The different aspects of sports tourism, including (a) travel to participate in or (b) to watch a sport or a sporting event and (c) travel to experience the heritage associated with a sport or a sporting venue
- How to achieve a sustainable approach to socio-economic development is about the implementation of a balanced approach to preparing a tourism and sports strategy
- The creation of innovative products and activities that help convert the comparator assets of a destination into stand out and highly competitive assets
- The wide range of communication and marketing channels are available to successfully market and promote sports tourism, including traditional methods, the new digital media and, importantly working with mass media (especially TV partners and sponsors).

PARTICIPANTS

The Conference is **PRIMARILY** aimed at:

- Representatives of National Tourist Authorities and National Tourism Organisations

- Destination managers, marketers together with policy makers and planners
- Representatives of the tourism industry, including stakeholders from the private sector (accommodation, transportation, tour operators) and NGO's

The Conference is also relevant to:

- Representatives from the sports industry – policy makers, event organisers, governing bodies of sport
- Managers and owners and designers of sports stadia, arenas and other venues
- Representatives from the media, sponsors and other partners involved the development of sport and health
- Educationalists and researchers

OUTCOMES

1. A statement – **The Da Nang Declaration** – of the future of sports-related tourism
2. A related set of conclusions and recommendations emerging from the Conference discussions
3. An enhanced level of understanding of the opportunities and critical success factors that help deliver a successful sustainable approach to sports-related tourism for wider socio-economic development in a destination