

Hosting of International Sporting Events

The two biggest international sporting events are the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup, both held every four years. The Olympic Games are held in a different city each time, and the World Cup is held in a different country.

How is the host of the event decided?

The host is decided through a bidding process in which the relevant international governing body (for instance, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)) will invite various cities or countries to bid through a tender process for the right to host the event.

Within the tender process, there are minimum requirements which bidders must satisfy in order to be considered as a potential host.

Are there any restrictions on who can bid?

In relation to the Olympic Games, there are no restrictions as to which city can bid to host the games.

However, for the World Cup, from 2002 a continental rotation was introduced so that the hosting of the event would be in a different continent (restricting the possible countries who could bid). The following shows the different continents, and host for that year:

- 2002 – Asia – Hosted by both Korea and Japan
- 2006 – Europe – Hosted by Germany
- 2010 – Africa – Hosted by South Africa
- 2014 – South America – Hosted by Brazil

In 2007, this continental rotation was discontinued, and any country can now bid (so long as their continental confederation has not hosted either of the past two World Cups). The 2018 World Cup will be held in Russia, and in 2022 the hosting country will be Qatar.

Who decides who will bid for the event?

Olympics

Each country involved within the Olympic Movement has a National Olympic Committee which decides which city from that country will be able to bid for the right to host the games.

World Cup

It is the role of the National Governing Body in that particular country to decide whether it is going to bid to host the World Cup. For example, in England the Football Association decided to bid for the 2018 event (though England are now eliminated from the bidding process). Once the decision to bid has been made, the Football Association forms a bid committee to oversee all aspects of the bidding process.

What happens during the bidding process?

During the bidding process, each country or city bidding will be required to sign an initial agreement with the governing body setting out standard terms which must be adhered to in the running of the event. These standard terms relate to various issues including:

- Payment
- Host Cities
- Accommodation
- Transport
- Stadiums

Payment

There are often provisions within the agreement stating how payment will be made to the National Governing Body. For example, the Local Organising Committee hosting the World Cup will be required to make payment to FIFA, ie. an account of profits or profit share of the profit made from the event.

Host Cities

With the Football World Cup, for instance, the National Governing Body of the country bidding must put forward a specific number of host cities to host the event. Often, the decision about which cities will become host cities is carried out by an internal bidding process with the National Governing Body.

Accommodation

The bidding nation or city must agree to secure a minimum amount of accommodation in the host cities, both for the participants and for people traveling to watch the event. This must be secured through contracts with the various hotels. Once a county or city has been selected to host the event, these contracts will be transferred either to the LOC or the International Governing Body.

Transport

The bidding nation will be required to show that it has an adequate transport infrastructure in place, or can build an adequate transport infrastructure to host the event. For example, when London was bidding to host the 2012 Olympics, the bidding organisation was required to show that the London Transport System could cope with the increased usage to the Olympic areas.

Stadia

The bidding nation will be required to show that it has the required infrastructure in relation to the stadium or stadia to host the event. Often, it will be required to show plans for new stadia yet to be built. For example, when London bid for the 2012 Olympic Games the bidding organisation was required to show plans for the new Olympic venues to be built, whereas in its bid for the 2018 World Cup, no new stadia needed to be built as the existing infrastructure was already in place.

Once a country has been selected to host the event, who oversees the running of the event?

Olympics

Once a city has been selected to host the Games, it will be required to form an Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG). The Organising Committee will then work in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in all aspects for the successful running of the Games.

World Cup

Similarly, once a country has been selected to host the World Cup, the National Governing Body from the host nation will be required to form the Local Organising Committee (LOC) which will work in conjunction with FIFA to secure the success of the event.

When a country or city bids to host the event, is it required to host other events?

Often, the right to host a major international sporting event will be coupled with the hosting of another event.

Olympic Games

The host of the Olympic Games will, immediately after the closing of the Games in that city, will be required to hold the Paralympic Games.

World Cup

The World Cup host will also be required to host the Confederations Cup the year prior to the World Cup. The Confederations Cup is an event made up of the winner of each Continents top completion, for example, the European Championships, the holder of the last World Cup and the Host Nation.

The Confederations Cup is a test event for the host nation to ensure the main event will be able to be run.

Legislation

Once a country is awarded a major international sporting event, it is common to pass legislation in order to protect that event. For example, once selected to host the 2012 Olympics, the Government passed the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act 2006.