

# Leveraging Major Sport Events' Success Towards Positioning Qatar as a Sport Tourism Destination

Mohammed Yaqot<sup>1</sup>, Brenno C. Menezes<sup>1</sup>, and Kamilla Swart<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Division of Engineering Management and Decision Sciences, College of Science and Engineering, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Doha, Qatar Foundation, Qatar

<sup>2</sup>School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, South Africa

[moyaqot@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:moyaqot@hbku.edu.qa)

[bmenezes@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:bmenezes@hbku.edu.qa)

[kswartarries@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:kswartarries@hbku.edu.qa)

**Abstract:** Through substantial investments in the sports sector, Qatar has solidified its position as a prominent global sport events destination. Notably recognised for hosting the monumental 2006 Asian Games, this marked the inception of Qatar's evolution into a hub for sport tourism. Since then, Qatar has successfully hosted several large-scale international sporting events, culminating in the historic hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup. This trajectory continues with Qatar securing bids for forthcoming events such as the 2027 FIBA Basketball Cup and the 2030 Asian Games. Despite earlier unsuccessful bids for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016 and 2020, Qatar remains committed to upholding its exceptional hosting legacy. This study seeks to discern the critical dimensions contributing to successful hosting and their broader impact on the host country. Drawing insights from a critical review of past events, including comparative analyses with FIFA World Cups from 2022, 2018, and 2014, this research aims to identify common key indicators and their influence on local communities. By discerning these elements, the study endeavours to craft a roadmap for hosting major sporting events, addressing challenges, and leveraging supporting factors. The outcomes will offer prospective agendas and recommendations intended to bolster Qatar's strategic positioning as a competitive international sport tourism destination. For aspiring nations like Qatar, these large-scale sporting events serve as catalysts for sustainable impacts that transcend the event itself.

**Keywords:** Major Sport Events, Sport Tourism, Sustainable Development, Roadmap, Leveraging Legacy

---

## 1. Introduction

Qatar's transformative journey into the realm of sport has become emblematic of a nation harnessing the power of athletic prowess for economic diversification and global prominence. Over the past two decades, Qatar has strategically invested in sport, transcending its conventional notion as mere entertainment (Lo, 2023). This multifaceted commitment has metamorphosed Qatar into a global sporting hub. The landmark 2006 Asian Games served as a watershed moment, not just for Qatar but for the entire Middle East (Amara and Bouandel, 2022). This major event, spanning diverse sporting disciplines, was more than a spectacle; it was a strategic pivot, marking the initiation of Qatar's ambitious foray into sport tourism (Revindo, 2023). The success of these Games propelled Qatar into the international limelight, laying the foundation for a trajectory that would redefine the nation's identity and role on the global stage. Building on this foundation, Qatar has consistently demonstrated its hosting prowess across a spectrum of major and mega sporting events. The subsequent hosting of the 2011 AFC Asian Cup reinforced Qatar's commitment to elevating its sports profile. The 2014 FINA World Swimming Championships showcased the nation's ability to organise world-class aquatic events. In 2015, Qatar hosted the World Handball Championships and the Men's World Boxing Championships. These events not only expanded Qatar's sports portfolio but also underscored its versatility in organising diverse sporting spectacles (MDPS, 2017). The subsequent bid victories for the 2019 World Athletic Championships and the 2019 World Beach Games marked Qatar's ascent as a preferred destination for global sporting competitions. The pinnacle of Qatar's hosting journey materialised in 2022 with the FIFA (Men's) World Cup<sup>1</sup> (FWC), an event that transcended sports, becoming a cultural and diplomatic milestone (Næss, 2023). As the first Arab nation to host the FWC Qatar's successful execution of this global spectacle solidified its position as a premier host, capable of managing the world's most-watched sporting event with finesse. Table 1 lists some large-scale sporting events awarded to Qatar (utilising Müller's (2015) event classification).

Looking forward, Qatar's commitment to sport remains unwavering, with an impressive lineup of future events: the 2023 AFC Asian Cup, the 2024 World Aquatics Championships, and the much-anticipated 2030 Asian Games showcase Qatar's sustained momentum in hosting various sporting events. The inclusion of Qatar in the F1

---

<sup>1</sup> Note: All subsequent reference to the FWC refers to the men's edition

Grand Prix<sup>2</sup> and the FIA World Endurance Championship (from 2024) calendars underline Qatar's diversification not only across sports but also within the realm of motorsports. Additionally, in 2023, the country was successful in its bid for the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup, reinforcing its ability to attract and organise wide-ranging sport events (FIBA, 2023). The inclusion of this basketball spectacle in Qatar's future lineup further diversifies its sport tourism appeal.

**Table 1: Major sporting events awarded and hosted in Qatar**

Year	Event	Scale	Year	Event	Scale
2006	Asian Games	Mega	2021	Ongoing: Formula One (F1) Grand Prix	Mega
2015	Men's World Boxing Championships	Major	2022	FWC	Giga
2019	World Athletic Championships	Major	2023	AFC Asian Cup	Major
2019	World Beach Games	Major	2024	World Aquatics Championships	Major
2019	FIFA Club World Cup	Major	2024	FIA World Endurance Championship	Major
2020	FIFA Club World Cup	Major	2027	FIBA Basketball World Cup	Major
2021	FIFA Arab Cup	Major	2030	Asian Games	Mega

This study aims to dissect the multifaceted dimensions of Qatar's hosting accomplishments, exploring the contextualisation of success factors, sustainability impact beyond the events, and the overarching roadmap for future events. The analysis, rooted in a critical examination of the three prior FWCs (Qatar 2022, Russia 2018, and Brazil 2014), aims to distill key success factors and challenges, offering a roadmap for Qatar's sustained leadership in the global sport landscape.

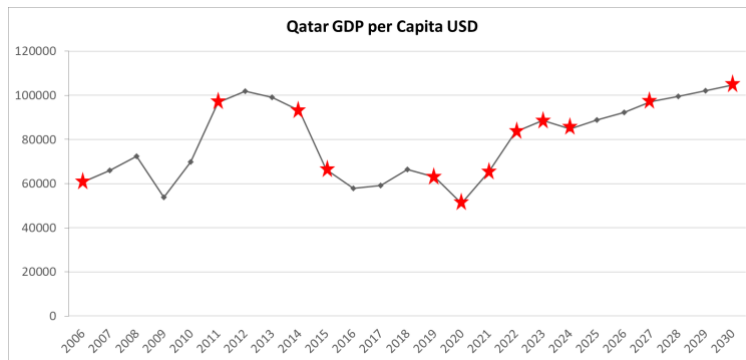
## 2. Contextualising Hosting Success

The economic impact and global perception of hosting large-scale sport events have been extensively explored. Studies emphasise the potential economic benefits derived from increased tourism, infrastructural development, and heightened international visibility. Baade and Matheson (2004) and Ferris et al (2022) underscore their limited economic impact and potential long-term costs. In contrast, Scheu et al (2021) and Reis' (2023) examination of the Olympic Games suggests that, despite challenges, host cities often experience positive economic legacies. Furthermore, Kobierecki and Strozek's (2021) study on the long-term economic effects provide valuable insights into the sustained impact beyond the event itself. Understanding these economic dimensions is crucial for evaluating Qatar's approach to hosting and its broader economic diversification strategy. Previous studies have identified key success dimensions crucial for hosting major sports events. Bason and Grix (2023) examined success factors for Olympic Games, emphasising effective planning, stakeholder engagement and post-event legacy considerations. Similarly, Parent and Ruetsch's (2020) provide a broader perspective applicable to the management of various sport events.; whereas Johnston et al (2023) highlight the social and community dimensions of hosting and the associated legacies. Understanding these success factors is imperative for contextualising Qatar's hosting achievements and providing a foundation for the subsequent analysis of its hosting strategy.

According to Statista (2023), Qatar's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita from 2006 to 2030 (depicted in Figure 1), with red star-dots reflecting the events' years, presents a compelling narrative of sustained economic growth and prosperity. With an average GDP per capita of USD 79408.54 over this period (actual and projected), Qatar positions itself among economically affluent nations. The trend analysis underscores a consistent upward trajectory, showcasing the success of its economic strategies and targeted investments. While no specific thresholds were defined, the absence of significant fluctuations above the current global average (USD 13453) indicates a level of economic stability (International Monetary Fund, 2023). Examining yearly percentage changes highlights notable spikes in 2011 and 2022, corresponding to global oil market dynamics and the successful hosting of the FWC, respectively. The maximum value in 2023, USD 88731.45, aligns with the FWC's positive economic impact, while the 2020 dip reflects the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A relatively low standard deviation suggests economic stability, emphasising Qatar's resilience in navigating challenges and leveraging opportunities for sustained growth on the global stage.

<sup>2</sup> Hosted in 2021 and from 2022 awarded a 10-year contract.

In examining the strategic endeavors behind hosting major sport events, a comparative lens presents itself through the recent FWC versions held in Qatar, Russia, and Brazil. These global spectacles not only celebrated sporting excellence but also served as pivotal platforms shaping economic, social, and cultural narratives within their respective host nations.

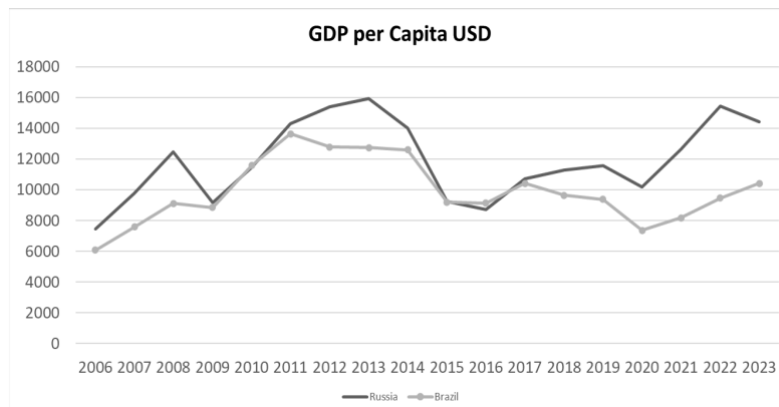


**Figure 1: GDP per Capita trend and projection in Qatar with events' years**

Delving into the contrasting trajectories of these events offers a unique opportunity to discern the nuanced strategies adopted by host countries, illuminating the divergent impacts on economic stability, societal integration, and sustainable legacies. By scrutinising the outcomes and approaches of these tournaments, a comprehensive understanding emerges, paving the way for informed discussions on sustainable impact beyond the events and forging a foundational roadmap to guide future hosts. This examination not only underscores the immediate successes but also prompts an exploration into enduring legacies, thereby laying the groundwork for a holistic analysis of the transformative power of major sport events. The factors influencing success in hosting major sport events are discussed next.

### 2.1 Economic Prosperity as a Catalyst

According to Statista (2023), the examination of GDP per capita data for Russia, Brazil, and Qatar from 2006 to 2023 reveals distinctive economic trajectories, each holding implications for their capacity to host major sport events. Russia experienced consistent growth until 2013, followed by a notable dip in 2014 attributed to geopolitical factors. Brazil, in contrast, displayed economic oscillations, with peaks in 2011 and 2014, intertwined with periods of recession. Qatar stands out with a continuous and substantial upward trajectory, showcasing robust economic growth. Notably, Qatar's consistently high GDP per capita reflects a stable economic foundation, a crucial factor for hosting major sport events successfully. In contrast, Russia and Brazil, despite hosting events like the FWC, faced economic challenges that may have influenced their hosting dynamics. This analysis underscores the correlation between economic stability, reflected in GDP per capita trends, and a nation's capacity to invest in sport infrastructure, ultimately impacting the successful hosting of major sport events. Qatar's sustained economic growth positions it favorably in this context. Figure 2 illustrates the GDP per capita trends in Russia and Brazil from 2006 to 2023 in U.S. dollars.



**Figure 2: GDP per Capita trends in Russia and Brazil (2006-2023)**

## 2.2 Diversification and Investment in Sport

The Global Economic Development Index (EDI) offers a comprehensive lens through which to assess the diversification efforts of countries (EDI, 2023). The yearly average EDI of Russia, Qatar, and Brazil reveals intriguing patterns in their economic development strategies. Russia, despite its natural resource abundance, displays consistent EDI scores, indicating a stable but resource-centric economic structure. Qatar, with a notably high initial EDI, showcases a steady increase, reflecting concerted efforts in diversification with strategic emphasis on sport-related investments. The country has successfully broadened its economic base, evidenced by its ascending EDI scores. In contrast, Brazil demonstrates a relatively stable EDI trajectory, with minor fluctuations. This suggests a nuanced approach to economic diversification, balancing reliance on natural resources with other sectors. The EDI trends emphasise the importance of diversification for sustainable economic development, positioning Qatar as a notable success story. Figure 3 illustrates the average EDI scores for these countries for the period 2000-2021. Qatar's consistently higher average EDI reflects its strategic emphasis on sport-related investments as a pivotal element in economic diversification, distinguishing it from Russia and Brazil.

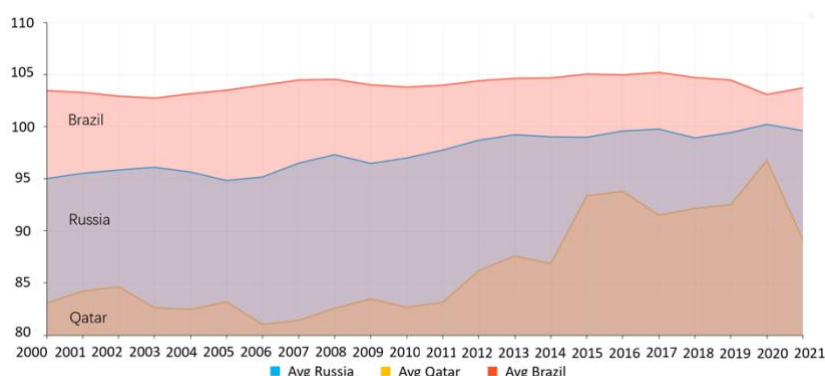


Figure 3: Average Economic Development Index (EDI) comparison (2000-2021)

## 2.3 Global Recognition and Investment Magnet

The convergence of Qatar's rising GDP per capita and its consistently high EDI serves as a compelling narrative in its positioning. The significant upward trajectory in GDP per capita shows not only economic prosperity but also a strengthened capacity for global investments. As Qatar continues to distinguish itself with an average EDI higher than both Russia and Brazil, it reinforces the nation's commitment to diversification and sustainable economic development. This strategic focus, coupled with the successful hosting of major sport events, contributes to Qatar's enhanced global recognition, making it an attractive destination for international investments. The symbiotic relationship between economic indicators, diversification efforts, and the hosting of major events solidifies Qatar's status as a magnet for global recognition and investments on the world stage.

## 2.4 Cultural and Diplomatic Milestones

Hosting major and mega sport events, like the FWC, marks significant cultural and diplomatic milestones for Qatar, strategically positioning the nation on the global stage. The emphasis on using sport as a tool for international diplomacy aligns with the nation's broader soft power strategy (Grix et al, 2019). Qatar's successful hosting of the FWC serves as a unique case in the diplomatic impact of major sport events. The ability to execute such events with precision and grandeur not only enhances Qatar's cultural reputation but also elevates its diplomatic influence on the international arena. This is evident in the positive global image cultivated through successful event execution and the fostering of diplomatic relations with participating nations and global stakeholders. In comparison to Russia and Brazil, Qatar's deliberate investment in sport diplomacy has yielded distinctive results, contributing to the nation's cultural and diplomatic ascendancy. This strategic approach underscores the multifaceted impact of hosting major sport events, shaping a nation's cultural narrative and diplomatic influence on the global stage (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2023). Contrastingly, Russia and Brazil, despite hosting significant events, might not have encountered a comparable degree of diplomatic influence as witnessed in Qatar's case.

## 2.5 Infrastructure Development and Job Creation

Major and mega sport events have the potential to serve as catalysts for significant infrastructure development and job creation. In Qatar, substantial investments, estimated over \$200 billion for the 2022 FWC, have been directed towards state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure. This aligns seamlessly with the visionary Qatar National Vision (QNV) 2030, ensuring not only the successful hosting of events but also leaving a meaningful legacy for sustained economic growth and development (QNV, 2023). Similarly, in Russia, hosting the 2018 FWC prompted substantial infrastructure investments, totaling about \$40 billion. Despite concerns about the long-term utilisation of some facilities, the event stimulated economic activity and job creation during the preparation and hosting phases (WEF, 2023). Likewise, Brazil invested around \$20 billion in event-related infrastructure for the 2014 FWC. The event brought about short-term economic benefits and job creation, showcasing the potential of major sport events in enhancing infrastructure and boosting employment. These global events underscore the universal impact of sport in fostering infrastructure development and job creation, contributing positively to the economic landscape of host nations (Fett, 2020).

## 2.6 Tourism Surge and Service Sector Impact

Hosting international sport events, notably the FWC, has proven to be a catalyst for tourism surges and a consequential positive impact on the service sectors of Qatar, Russia, and Brazil (UNWTO, 2023). Qatar's strategic focus on positioning itself as a global sports hub has translated into an influx of tourists, stimulating economic activities in the hospitality and service sectors. Qatar's successful hosting of events has consistently correlated with increased spending, contributing to a significant boost in GDP per capita. Comparatively, Russia and Brazil, while experiencing notable tourism spikes, may not have achieved the same sustained impact on their service sectors and GDP per capita as observed in Qatar mainly due to the geographical scale. Factors such as infrastructure readiness, marketing strategies, and post-event engagement have played pivotal roles in shaping the varying degrees of impact on the service sectors in these host countries (Subathra, 2022).

## 2.7 Long-term Vision and Sustainability

While Qatar has made commendable strides toward sustainability, the nation faces unique challenges that puts it at a potentially greater risk of maintaining long-term sustainability compared to countries with larger populations like Russia and Brazil. Qatar's emphasis on large-scale sport events as a driver for economic growth and sustainability is clear from its 2030 vision. However, the relatively small population of Qatar compared to the vast infrastructure developments and economic investments necessitated by these events poses a distinct challenge. Maintaining the momentum of economic growth, especially in per capita terms, demands a continuous influx of large-scale events to ensure that the economic benefits derived from these investments are sustained. The risk lies in the need for a delicate balance between economic growth and the potential strain on resources, particularly with a smaller local population to support such endeavors. While the commitment to sustainability is evident, the sheer scale of Qatar's ambitions requires a careful examination of the long-term feasibility, considering demographic factors and resource management (Hugaerts, 2023). In contrast, Russia and Brazil, with their larger populations, may have a broader domestic base to absorb the economic impacts of these events as illustrated by the economic fluctuations observed post-event. Qatar's strategic approach to hosting these events, while commendable, necessitates a cautious assessment of its sustainability trajectory, given its unique demographic challenges. Thus, a nuanced evaluation, recognising that each nation's context and population size contribute to the complexity of sustaining economic benefits derived from hosting is underscored. Table 2 summarises the key factors influencing the success of hosting major sport events utilising the last three hosting countries for the FWC. Each country exhibits unique strengths and challenges across economic, diplomatic, infrastructure, and sustainability dimensions, shaping their distinct trajectories in hosting major sport events.

**Table 2: Key factors (Fac) comparison: Qatar, Russia, and Brazil as FWC hosts**

Fac	Qatar 2022	Russia 2018	Brazil 2014
Fac1	Continuous growth	Fluctuating trends	Consistent growth
Fac2	High EDI increase	Steady EDI	Relatively stable EDI
Fac3	Elevated GDP per capita and EDI	Moderate GDP per capita and EDI	Moderate GDP per capita and EDI
Fac4	Diplomatic prowess	Moderate impact	Limited influence

Fac	Qatar 2022	Russia 2018	Brazil 2014
Fac5	Substantial investments \$200B	Substantial investments, \$40B	Significant investments, \$20B
Fac6	Tourism surge	Moderate impact	Tourism fluctuations
Fac7	Challenges due to smaller population	Less strain due to larger population	Less strain due to larger population

### 3. Sustainable Impact Beyond Events

Large-scale sport events have increasingly become a catalyst for sustainable impact, transcending the confines of the event's timeline and location. They serve as pivotal platforms for implementing sustainable practices and for leaving enduring legacies (Mair et al, 2023). Host countries are leveraging these occasions to drive positive change across the triple bottomline (Wolfe et al, 2023). Environmental efforts often entail developing eco-friendly stadiums, implementing renewable energy sources, and adopting waste management strategies, aiming to reduce the event's carbon footprint and promote long-term sustainability practices (Pourpakhdeh and Oboudi, 2022). Additionally, community engagement programs, including sport development initiatives, educational campaigns, and social projects, leave a lasting impact on local populations (Gillett and Tennent, 2022). Infrastructural developments, such as upgraded transportation networks and urban improvements, are not only beneficial during the event but also contribute to the long-term growth and development of host regions. This evolving approach underscores a paradigm shift where these events are seen not only as entertainment extravaganzas but also as vehicles for driving positive socio-economic and environmental change, creating sustained legacies for host nations and regions. In the pursuit of these events, nations embark on ambitious endeavors that promise both immediate impact and lasting legacies. However, amidst their grandeur lie multifaceted challenges that extend beyond the celebratory moments. Assessing and addressing these challenges is pivotal, as they encompass critical factors impacting long-term sustainability, social harmony, and economic resilience. The inherent risks associated with infrastructure, societal disruptions, decision-making inclusivity, short-term focus, and policy coherence, are explored further to shed light on the complex landscape that shapes sustainable impact beyond the euphoria of the event.

#### 3.1 Infrastructure Viability

Ensuring the sustainability of infrastructure post-event poses a significant challenge. Often, grand stadiums, transportation systems, and accommodation facilities constructed for major sporting events become underutilised or face challenges with sustainable use post-event. This raises concerns about the viability of these structures. The necessity for strategic planning to repurpose infrastructure for continued utility, such as converting stadiums into multi-purpose community spaces, to avoid financial burdens on host cities is underscored (Lopes et al, 2022). Without such strategies, the financial and environmental sustainability of these structures remain questionable.

#### 3.2 Societal Disruptions

Hosting major sport events often entails substantial urban development and regeneration. However, such initiatives might lead to societal disruptions like community displacement or exacerbation of income inequalities. Fitzgerald and Maharaj (2023) highlight the risk of gentrification and social segregation. Displaced communities may struggle to benefit from post-event legacies, creating a potential divide between the event's benefits and local communities. Ensuring inclusive urban development policies and addressing concerns prior to hosting is crucial to mitigate these disruptions. Addressing these concerns in the pre-event phase is critical to avoid widening the gap between event benefits and local communities.

#### 3.3 Inclusive Decision-making

Involving local communities in decision-making processes is crucial for ensuring the legitimacy and sustainability of major and mega-event planning. However, achieving meaningful participation can be challenging due to power imbalances and unequal representation. Weaver et al (2022) emphasise the importance of moving beyond tokenism in community engagement, advocating for genuine collaborative approaches that incorporate community voices in decision-making processes, thereby fostering greater social cohesion and acceptance of the event.

### 3.4 Short-termism

The pressure to deliver successful events often leads to a focus on short-term gains over long-term sustainability. The necessity of balancing immediate economic impacts with enduring benefits is emphasised (Ferris et al, 2022). Striking this balance requires meticulous planning and comprehensive strategies to ensure that the event's legacy extends beyond short-term financial gains to encompass lasting triple bottomline benefits.

### 3.5 Policy Integration

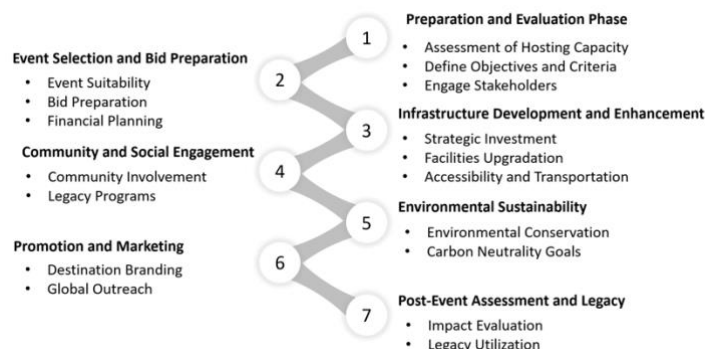
Coordinating national policies with post-event sustainable initiatives poses a challenge due to the diverse interests and priorities of stakeholders involved. Miragaia et al (2022) underscore the importance of aligning national policies towards sustainable urban planning and economic development post-event. It requires cohesive policy frameworks, effective governance, and collaboration between governments, private sectors, and civil society to ensure that post-event initiatives are integrated into broader national development strategies. In evaluating the risks inherent in post-event sustainability, Table 3 provides a comprehensive summary of challenges and their associated severity levels.

**Table 3: Summary of challenges and severity levels in post-event sustainability**

Challenge	Brief Description	Severity Level
Infrastructure Viability	Long-term maintenance challenges for event infrastructure	High Risk
Societal Disruptions	Potential community displacement and post-event economic uncertainties.	Moderate to High Risk
Inclusive Decision-making	Local community involvement impacts post-event relations.	Moderate Risk
Short-termism	Immediate success may hinder long-term event impact.	Moderate Risk
Policy Integration	National policies may obstruct sustainable post-event strategies	High Risk

## 4. Roadmap for Future Events

In the modern era, major sport events transcend their primary purpose of showcasing athletic prowess; they serve as pivotal platforms shaping economic, social, and cultural landscapes. Qatar, alongside other nations, stands at the threshold of global recognition as a host for major and mega sporting events. Yet, the significance lies not solely in executing these events with grandeur but in leveraging them as transformative instruments for sustainable development and strategic positioning. This section illuminates a comprehensive roadmap meticulously tailored not just for Qatar but designed as a structured framework with broader applicability, guiding host nations worldwide in harnessing major sport events to establish themselves as premier destinations for sport tourism. The proposed roadmap presented here encompasses nuanced strategies and considerations, addressing the manifold challenges and opportunities inherent in the hosting process. Rooted in sustainable development principles, it endeavors to fashion enduring legacies that transcend the temporal moments of these events. Figure 4 illustrates a roadmap step for leveraging major sports events towards successful hosting. This strategic seven-step roadmap is designed to highlight the key components in hosting major sport events, emphasising sustainable development goals and long-term legacy.



**Figure 4: Roadmap toward successful hosting of major sporting events**

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail this roadmap fully, it is important to underscore that this roadmap demands a visionary approach that transcends conventional hosting strategies. It necessitates a harmonious convergence of multifaceted elements—robust infrastructure, inclusive community engagement, financial prudence, and environmental consciousness. Aligning with the earlier discussions, this roadmap recognises that the success of hosting major events lies not just in their execution but in the lasting impact they leave. It is about setting visionary minimum standards across various dimensions, ensuring that these events not only promote sport tourism but also foster long-term sustainable development. By strategically integrating these visionary prerequisites across the roadmap's steps, from initial feasibility studies to post-event legacy assessments, Table 4 encapsulates the summary of these challenges and offers best practices to navigate through them. This analytical framework aims not merely to host events but to propel nations into becoming global benchmarks for sustainable sport event management and strategic positioning.

**Table 4: Challenges and best practices in leveraging major sport events for sustainable strategic positioning**

Steps	Challenges	Best Practices
Step 1	Limited infrastructure, financial constraints, uncertain stakeholder engagement	Conduct thorough feasibility studies, seek partnerships for investment, engage stakeholders early for buy-in
Step 2	Intense competition, stringent bid requirements, financial commitments	Highlight unique selling propositions, focus on sustainable legacies, develop comprehensive sustainable bid strategies
Step 3	Budget limitations, time constraints, potential environmental impact	Prioritise legacy infrastructure, employ sustainable construction, seek public-private partnerships for funding
Step 4	Community resistance, lack of inclusivity, varying interests	Conduct regular dialogues, offer community benefits, ensure transparency, create shared ownership of event success
Step 5	Balancing event needs with sustainability goals, mitigating ecological impact	Set clear sustainability targets, adopt eco-friendly practices, promote green initiatives, engage in offsetting measures
Step 6	Competing in a crowded market, limited budgets, reaching diverse audiences	Craft unique branding, leverage digital marketing, establish strategic partnerships, focus on target audience segments
Step 7	Maintaining momentum post-event, sustaining legacies, measuring long-term impact	Develop transition plans, create legacy programs in advance, measure impact comprehensively, ensure continued community engagement

## 5. Conclusion

Qatar's journey in hosting major sport events reflects a dynamic fusion of strategic planning, economic foresight, and a commitment to leveraging sport beyond mere entertainment. The nation's trajectory, from the landmark 2006 Asian Games to the groundbreaking FWC in 2022, epitomises a strategic pivot towards sport tourism, cultural diplomacy, and economic diversification. Through meticulous examination, this work unveils Qatar's economic prowess, diplomatic milestones, and sustained growth, positioning it as a global recognition and investment hub. Beyond the allure of these events, the analysis emphasises the pivotal role of sustainable practices, inclusive decision-making, and legacy-building, underscoring the imperative for host nations to transcend event spectacle and focus on fostering enduring legacies that propel sustainable development and positive societal impacts. The roadmap presented offers a comprehensive framework, not just for Qatar but as a blueprint for host nations worldwide, elucidating the intricate nuances and visionary prerequisites essential for orchestrating major sport events, steering them towards lasting economic, social, and environmental legacies. Qatar's story transcends sports; it's an illustration of strategic vision, transformative hosting, and the catalytic potential of major sport events in shaping a nation's global identity and impact. However, while this roadmap offers a comprehensive structure, it remains foundational in nature and warrants further empirical studies and practical validations. A limitation lies in its generic nature, designed to accommodate diverse contexts and events. Tailoring these strategies to fit Qatar's specific socio-economic landscape and cultural intricacies demands further nuanced analyses and empirical validations. Additionally, the roadmap operates on a premise of ideal conditions, often diverging from the complex realities and unforeseen challenges encountered during event execution. Empirical studies and real-time evaluations become imperative to gauge the roadmap's adaptability, efficacy, and resilience in diverse geopolitical and socio-economic scenarios.

Recommendations entail an interdisciplinary approach, fostering collaboration between academia, policymakers, and industry stakeholders. This collaboration should pave the way for empirical research endeavors that validate the roadmap's efficacy in real-world event hosting scenarios. Engaging in systematic case studies and longitudinal analyses of Qatar's ongoing and future events becomes instrumental in refining,

validating, and customising this roadmap to Qatar's unique context. Additionally, investing in capacity-building measures, training programs, and knowledge-sharing initiatives empowers local stakeholders, ensuring effective implementation of the roadmap's principles. Moreover, the future agenda urges the integration of this roadmap into Qatar's national policy frameworks, aligning with QNV 2030. Incorporating these strategies into broader national development plans ensures sustained commitment and institutional support for the long-term success of major sporting events. Beyond hosting, this agenda recommends leveraging these events as catalysts for socio-economic development, community empowerment, and global diplomacy, fostering enduring legacies that extend far beyond the event's timeline.

## References

- Amara, M. and Bouandel, Y. (2022) Culture and the World Cup: The Case of Qatar, In *The Business of the FIFA World Cup* (pp. 243-251), Routledge.
- Baade, R.A. and Matheson, V.A. (2004) Mega-sporting events in developing nations: Playing the way to prosperity, *South African Journal of Economics*, 72(5), pp.1084-1095.
- Bason, T. and Grix, J. (2023) Every loser wins: leveraging 'unsuccessful' Olympic bids for positive benefits, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(1), pp.167-187.
- Economic Diversification Index (EDI). (2023) Global Economic Diversification Index – The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, [online], <https://economicdiversification.com/>
- Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) Basketball. (2023) Qatar announced as host of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2027, [online], <https://www.fiba.basketball/news/qatar-announced-as-host-of-the-fiba-basketball-world-cup-2027>
- Ferris, S.P., Koo, S., Park, K. and Yi, D.T. (2022) The effects of hosting mega sporting events on local stock markets and sustainable growth, *Sustainability*, 15(1), p.363.
- Fett, M. (2020) The game has changed – a systematic approach to classify FIFA World Cups. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12:3, 455-470, DOI: 10.1080/19406940.2020.1784978
- Fitzgerald, T. and Maharaj, B. (2022) Mega-event trends and impacts. *A Research Agenda for Event Impacts*, Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.181-192.
- Gillett, A.G. and Tennent, K.D. (2022) Hybrid goals: institutional complexity and 'legacy' in a global sporting mega-event, *Public Management Review*, 24(3), pp.372-397.
- Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., and Lee, D. (2019) Entering the global arena: Emerging states, soft power strategies and sports mega-events, Springer.
- Hugaerts, I., Schunk, H. and Könecke, T. (2023) Environmental sustainability as factor for mega sport event support – Empirical evidence regarding the Olympic Games and the Football World Cup, MDPI, *World*, 4(3), pp.477-489.
- International Monetary Fund (2023) GDP per Capita, Current Prices, IMF.org, [online], [https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPDPC@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO\\_WORLD](https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPDPC@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD)
- Johnston, M., Naylor, M. and Dickson, G. (2023) Local resident support for hosting a major sport event: The role of perceived personal and community impacts, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(3), pp.877-896.
- Kobierecki, M.M. and Strožek, P. (2021) Sports mega-events and shaping the international image of states: How hosting the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups affects interest in host nations, *International Politics*, 58(1), pp.49-70.
- LO, A.A. (2023) Leveraging sports for public diplomacy outcomes: The case of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022, *Anadolu Akademi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1), pp.33-49.
- Lopes dos Santos, G., Macário, R., Delaplace, M. and Di Vita, S. (2022) The long-standing issue of mobility at the Olympics: From host cities to host regions in the ongoing case study of Milan–Cortina 2026, *Sustainability*, 14(2), p.910.
- Mair, J., Chien, P.M., Kelly, S.J. and Derrington, S. (2023) Social impacts of mega-events: A systematic narrative review and research agenda, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(2), pp.538-560.
- Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics (MDPS). (2017) SPORTS In Qatari Society a Statistical Overview, [online], [https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/Sport/2016/Sport\\_In\\_Qatar\\_2016\\_En.pdf](https://www.psa.gov.qa/en/statistics/Statistical%20Releases/Social/Sport/2016/Sport_In_Qatar_2016_En.pdf)
- Miragaia, D.A., Ferreira, J.J. and Ribeiro, I.J. (2022) Can sports events contribute to public policy development strategies?, *Managing Sport and Leisure*, pp.1-20.
- Næss, H.E. (2023) A figurational approach to soft power and sport events, The case of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™, *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 5, p.1142878.
- Parent, M.M. and Ruetsch, A. (2020) *Managing Major Sports Events: Theory and Practice*, Routledge.
- Pourpakdelfekr, T. and Oboudi, B. (2022) Overview of sustainable solutions to improve the environmental impacts of mega sporting events, *Athens J. Sport*, 9, pp.1-16.
- Qatar National Vision 2030 (QNV). (2023), [online], <https://www.gco.gov.qa/en/about-qatar/qatar-national-vision-2030/>
- Reis, R., Telles, S. and Teixeira, M.C. (2023) Measuring the legacies of sports mega events: a systematic review, Reis.
- Revindo, M.D., Widyasanti, A.A., Nusantoro, N. and Siregar, C.H. (2023) Sports event satisfaction and word-of-mouth intention: Evidence from the 2018 Asian Games international participants and spectators.
- Scheu, A., Preuß, H. and Könecke, T. (2021) The legacy of the Olympic Games: A review, *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 6(3), pp.212-233.

- Statista (2023) The statistics portal for market data, market research and market studies, [online], <https://www.statista.com/>
- Subathra, S., Sivanesan, K., Narmadha, M., Senthilkumar, K., Kitani, M.A., Essa, M.M. and Qoronfleh, M.W. (2022) Economic implications of hosting FIFA World Cup–A study with special reference to South Africa, Brazil, Russia and Qatar, FIFA 2022: Qatar, The Legacy ISBN: 978-1-53619-682-5 Editors: M. Walid Qoronfleh et al. © 2021 Nova Science Publishers, Inc., pp.73-94.
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Reports. (2023), [online], <https://www.unwto.org/>
- Weaver, D., McLennan, C.L., Moyle, B. and Casali, G.L. (2022) Early community recommendations for sustainable mega-events: Evidence from the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, pp.1-21.
- Wolfe, S.D., Gogishvili, D., Chappelet, J.L. and Müller, M. (2022) The urban and economic impacts of mega-events: mechanisms of change in global games, *Sport in Society*, 25(10), pp.2079-2087.
- World Economic Forum. (2023), [online], <https://www.weforum.org>