

SETTING EVENT OBJECTIVES

It may be stating the obvious, but no sporting or cultural event should be staged without a specific reason or reasons for doing so. An event should be a means to an end, rather than an end in itself – and different events are put on for different reasons. It's clearly important, therefore, that whenever organizers or other interested parties are looking to measure the impact of an event, they do so in relation to the original objectives of that event.

Organisers should be clear about their objectives at the very earliest stages of planning and/or bidding for an event. By the same token, there is little point in setting objectives if, in doing so, there is no accompanying commitment to measure those objectives. Objectives must therefore be measurable: organizers should have a clear sense of how they would go about evaluating the intended impact of their event; what information they would need in order for the evaluation to be made; and how costly and time-intensive it might be for them, or an outside contractor, to actually carry out that evaluation. [eventIMPACTS categorizes all impacts into groups based on their potential complexity and cost to measure.](#)

Our belief is that organisers have sometimes struggled with these things, occasionally because they have not understood how to go to about them - but often because they have not been aware of the possibilities. Our hope is that, in providing guidance and advice about data collection and analysis, *eventIMPACTS* will not only help organizers get better at setting objectives, it will also make some of them think about the purpose of their event in ways they might not even have considered before.

Whether organizers have large or small-scale ambitions for their event, they should always think carefully as to whether their intended outcomes are actually achievable. This thinking will need to take account of the strategic, political, financial and organisational context within which their event is taking place. What exactly are the processes by which the hoped-for outcomes will be produced? Will the situation in which the event is taking place enable these things to happen? Are there any obvious barriers? Does anything need to change?

In summary, then, our advice is that any impact evaluation exercise should be underpinned by a statement of the strategic objectives that the organisers of an event intend to achieve or make a contribution towards, plus details of the specific resources being invested in order to deliver those objectives. The following points are intended to serve as a full checklist of issues that should be taken into account when preparing this statement:

- What social, economic and environmental objectives do organisers wish to achieve by hosting this event?

- What specific resources will be allocated to 'activating' the event to ensure the delivery of these objectives?
- Whose responsibility will it be to deliver these objectives?
- What mechanisms will be used to bring about the desired objectives?
- How realistic is it that, on the basis of the first four questions, the desired objectives can in fact be delivered?
- How will those responsible know if they have been successful?
- What timescale is required to demonstrate (successful) performance?
- What evidence, if any, is required to demonstrate (successful) performance?
- What resources are available to conduct the requisite monitoring and evaluation?
- Is it actually cost-effective to conduct any monitoring and evaluation around the event?