

# The Development of a Systematic Approach to Government Involvement in International Tourist Events

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## Abstract

Although there seems to exist recognition that hosting international events may bring many tourism benefits, what seems to prevail is an *ad-hoc* approach in their use as a marketing tool. The lack of strategy is likely to result in less than full accomplishment of the benefits. Hence, a more planned and systematic approach to events is necessary in order to fully take advantage of the opportunity posed by the organisation of such events. The overall aim of this paper is to address the need to develop a systematic approach to Government's involvement in international tourist events. The Portuguese strategy for international tourist events is presented and evaluated.

## Keywords

Tourism, International events, Impacts, Marketing, Portugal.

## Resumo

Pese embora o reconhecimento de que a captação e organização de eventos turísticos de âmbito internacional possa trazer inúmeros benefícios para os destinos turísticos, o que parece prevalecer é uma abordagem *ad-hoc* na utilização destes como instrumento de marketing turístico. A principal consequência da ausência de estratégia é a não maximização dos benefícios proporcionados pelos eventos. Nesse sentido, torna-se necessária uma abordagem mais planeada e sistemática em relação à captação e organização dos eventos, de forma a que se possa tirar o máximo partido das oportunidades subjacentes à organização de eventos de dimensão internacional. Assim, o objectivo deste artigo é o de abordar a necessidade dos Governos se envolverem de forma sistemática no apoio a eventos de índole internacional. No final, a estratégia portuguesa é apresentada e avaliada.

## Palavras-chave

Turismo, Eventos Internacionais, Impactos, Marketing, Portugal.

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## 1 Introduction

Although the Government's role in tourism development varies from country to country, there is a need for governments to influence the tourism industry in a way that economic, social and political objectives are met (Wanhill, 2000). This influence has usually been exercised through the generation of guidelines and objectives for the growth and management of tourism, both in the short and long term, and by defining strategies designed to achieve these objectives (Holloway, 2002). These guidelines and objectives are usually defined and implemented through national tourism boards whose main responsibility is marketing (Cooper et al, 1998; Wanhill, 2000). Other functions that may be under National Tourism Boards (NTB) or other tourism related public bodies are planning and control, financial assistance and coordination (Kelly and Nankervis, 2001). In order to achieve marketing goals, NTB have multiple tools at their disposal but limited availability of resources. Therefore, the challenge is to choose the best mix of actions that will maximise the results given the resources available. This is where tourist events come into focus.

Despite the existence of events in modern society for a long time, tourism just recently started to look at events as a pillar of tourism policy. Before this recent view, the rationale to hold events was purely sporting or cultural aims and impacts (Mules, 1998; McHone and Rungeling, 2000). The potential of events, notably those with an international dimension, in contributing to achieve tourism related goals is thought to be high, as they can substantially improve destination competitiveness in the international arena. This has been recognised by many destinations that now fiercely compete for hosting key international level events, as shown by the number of countries/cities candidating to host some of the main socio-professional (e.g. EIBTM – Exhibitions, Incentives and Business Travel Market, large conferences), sport (e.g. World or European Football championships, America's Cup) and cultural (e.g. World Fair) events. Additionally, destinations are also eager to develop destination-based events, often regular and smaller in size, such as cultural festivals.

Although there seems to exist a recognition that hosting events may bring many tourism benefits, what seems to prevail is an *ad-hoc* approach, resulting in a lack of strategic view for the role of

events within the tourism marketing strategy. This is mostly important in tourist events because usually the allocated public financial resources are high. The lack of planning is likely to result in less than full accomplishment of the benefits. A more planned and systematic approach to events is necessary in order to fully take advantage of the opportunity posed by the organisation of such events.

The overall aim of this paper is therefore to address the need to develop a systematic approach to Government's involvement in international tourist events. In doing so, it stresses the importance of incorporating the events as part of the global marketing strategy. The importance to have a financial plan to support the likely contributing events will be emphasised. The case of PIQTUR (Program for Quality Enhancement of Portuguese Tourism) will then be presented.

## 2 Events as a tool to achieve tourism marketing goals

Many authors (e.g. Mules and Faulkner, 1996; Goeldner et al, 2000) pointed out that when a destination plans to host a sporting or cultural event it hopes to attract visitors from elsewhere who will spend money in the host region and create income for local businesses and population. This is especially important if events can attract people during the low season. For example, EXPO'98 not only attracted to Lisbon 1,7 million visitors, with 800.000 using EXPO as the main reason for visiting the city (Silva, 1999) but also did it during the city's traditional low season.

Image is important for destination marketing success because it differentiates tourism destinations from each other, is an integral and influential part of one traveller's decision process (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997) and influences individual traveller's level of satisfaction with a travel purchase (Chon, 1990). Events can be important in creating and enhancing destination awareness and image. If successful, large events can project a new (or renewed) and, perhaps, persistent and positive image and identity for the host city (Roche, 1994). Image benefits are achieved not only through national and international media coverage, particularly TV, but also through word of mouth communication from actual visitors to the event, who spread within their peer group their travel experiences. Hall (1992) goes further and argues that a special type of events – hallmark events – are the image builders of modern tourism.



Events can also work as a catalyst for infrastructure and tourist equipment improvement. This is especially important in developing countries (Bhardwaj and Bhardwaj, 1999). Improvements in ease of access (airports, roads, public transport systems, etc.) and the renewal or building of new tourist attractions are examples of possible impacts of events. Pinho *et al.* (2002) documented that Porto2001 European Cultural Capital should leave behind not only a more dynamic cultural life, but also renovated spaces, improvements in streets, squares and gardens and new cultural equipment and structures.

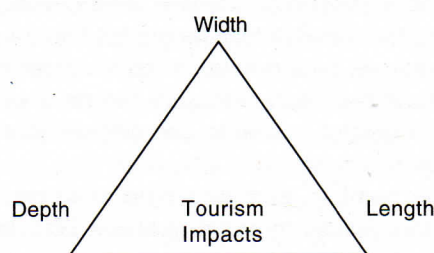
Events may also affect tourism organisational and marketing capabilities, either by raising industry's confidence in their organisational skills or by promoting change in organisational boards and networks that enhance their marketing efforts. Edwards *et al.* (2002) found that one of the perceived tourism impacts of EXPO'98 was an increased industry self-confidence in organising other (any) events. In similar vein, Brown (1999) noted that before the Sydney Olympics event, industry relationships seemed to be operating in a more co-operative and efficient manner.

Finally, tourism is competing with other industries for the Government's resources and attention. Often the tourism industry complains that the political importance given to tourism does not match its economic and social importance, and the industry must therefore find arguments to attract more resources and political support from governments. In what concern resources, events can assist by providing the industry with good reasons to request more resources for tourism related projects. There is some evidence that those events can motivate additional political support. Brown (1999) noted that one of the impacts of the Sydney Olympics was a higher level of political support which was given to tourism at both State and Federal levels. Although the potential impacts of events have been listed individually, events usually induce more than one type of impact.

Another important characteristic associated to international tourist events is their ability to foster impacts before, during and after the event. According to Brown (1999), three years before the Sydney Olympics some impacts could already be perceived. Holmes and Shamssudin (1997), in their study about the effects of EXPO'86 in Vancouver, also found that long-term or post-EXPO effects were large, notably larger in total than the short-term (i.e. during the event) economic benefits. These long-

term economic benefits of EXPO'86 resulted from the post-EXPO visitors who have returned to British Columbia as a result of the worldwide exposure of the Vancouver area by the fair. As emphasised by the above impacts, events can work both at the supply and demand levels. Possibly it is the width (the different types), the depth (intensity of each) and length (duration) of impacts that motivate a growing number of tourist destinations to use events as a marketing tool (Figure 1).

**Figure 1 - Nature of tourism impacts of international tourist events**



Some of the effects, however, are transitory. Although Ritchie and Smith (1991) found that the 1986 Calgary Olympic Games dramatically increased levels of awareness and substantially modified the image of the city of Calgary, they also concluded that there was a significant rate of awareness and image decay over time. Therefore, if destinations wish to use events to remain viable and competitive in the international marketplace, they need to take continuous action.

### 3 Event strategy

When a destination recognises the importance of events in contributing to the achievement of marketing goals, it needs to develop an event strategy as part of the general marketing strategy. Smith and Jenner (1998) argue that through appropriate planning and marketing destinations can benefit more fully from the unique possibility presented by special events and festivals.

There is no single model for an event tourism strategy, but there are some issues that the strategy should address (Getz, 1991) and that are thought to be critical to its success. The expected role of events within the overall tourism marketing strategy should be featured. Additionally, there is a need for a hierarchy of priorities, defining core and ancillary roles. For example, the main expected role of events may be to attract visitors, and, if

possible, they should attract those tourists in the low season and/or to specific areas (ancillary role). Attracting visitors specifically during the low season may be a primary role, while the geographical spread takes on a secondary role.

Of utmost importance is also the integration of events within other tourism marketing activities and/or strategies. Therefore, the strategy should also include coordination achievement. Additionally, the strategy should consider the nature of events to be developed and supported. Two approaches can be identified: (1) develop and promote existing events as tourist attractions and (2) give support to develop or assist in the creation of new events and bidding for events. It may be argued that the best approach will be a mixture of the aforementioned two, so that existing resources can be used and some degree of innovation and differentiation can also be achieved.

The number, size and type of events are important issues in event strategy. Should the strategy focus on few but major events or spread available resources through several smaller events? Should events be of a sport, cultural or business nature, or a combination? The acceptable costs associated with development, and who is to pay for them, should also be addressed.

Other areas to be covered include:

- the means to identify, prevent, ameliorate or remove negative impacts;
- the needs for organisational development at the level of interest groups, communities, destination areas, and Government Agencies/Departments to support event tourism;
- the duration of the strategy.

Having outlined the main aspects an event strategy must include, it is important to also emphasise the financial side of an event strategy.

Financial resource planning involves decisions concerning amounts of capital, sources of capital, the conditions under which it is obtained (Goeldner et al, 2000) and the type of financial incentives to be made available. These issues will be addressed in the remaining of this section.

The implementation of an event strategy requires large amounts of financial resources, either for the bidding (if bidding is involved) or for the organisation of the event. With the ever increasing competitiveness in the event market, together with the need to cover all organisational aspects of the event, bidding for proposals is becoming more and more complex and often requires teams of consultants to work for long

periods in preparing the proposal. If the bidding is successful, then major resources often need to be allocated to implement the event plan. These resources may be royalties or cash-prizes, building or renewal of facilities, human resources, technology and so forth.

Due to the high costs usually involved in organising events, they are often not profitable *per se*, that is, they cannot generate sufficient revenue to cover costs. Organisers, either private companies, regional tourism boards or non-profit associations (sport associations, cultural organisations, etc.), then turn to external sources, notably NTB, in order to cover the gap between revenue and expenditure in running the event (Mules and Faulkner, 1996; Tomljenovic and Weber, 2002). Justification for expenditure on underwriting the commercial viability of tourism events is given in terms of economic impacts that the events bring to their host region (Burgan and Mules, 2001), notably to the tourism sector. As the gap between cost and revenue is usually significant, event tourism strategy requires the allocation of important financial resources.

Finding the necessary resources to fund an event strategy is not an easy task. NTB budgets are not usually sufficient to release the necessary resources. Therefore, NTB need to find additional financial resources. This may be achieved by providing the Government with good reasons for granting additional resources and motivating sponsorship from the private sector. In fact, sponsorships have become an essential ingredient in festivals and events (Goeldner et al, 2000). Revenue from exceptional circumstances may also provide the necessary funding, as it will be shown later.

According to Wanhill (2000), investment incentives offered by governments to tourism development may be grouped in three categories – reduction of capital costs, reduction of operating costs and investment security. Incentives within an event tourism strategy may fall under the capital costs group (for example, supporting costs with infrastructure or venues) and operating costs (assisting in cash-prizes or supporting part of the general operation costs).

The decision to support an event must be as objective as possible. Objective evaluation is often not an easy task with a proliferation, both in terms of number and diversity, of these events. Consequently, it remains unclear as to how to evaluate the merits of these events and thus allocate



funds equitably and effectively (Tomljenovic and Weber, 2002). Furthermore, what is being evaluated are the real costs and potential benefits (since it is not common to make financial aid dependent on achievement of objectives). Despite these difficulties, an event strategy should make all the efforts to reduce the subjectivity in evaluation as much as possible. This may be achieved, for example, by making the process more technical rather than political.

Additionally, NTB should clearly define the goals of the plan and the importance of each goal within the global strategy. If possible, a grid with the importance of each criterion should be produced. Event organisations, on the other hand, should clearly state in their candidatures, which types of objectives the event is expected to achieve and how they intend to do it. Clearly defined criteria helps not only to avoid unfairness in financial aid but also to ensure that support is given to those events that really contribute to achieving the strategy goals.

#### 4 Tourism in Portugal

Portuguese tourism made a remarkable progress in the period 1998/2000, with both the number of international arrivals and revenue attributed to tourism increasing. Figure II shows the evolution of tourist numbers between 1996 and 2002.

After this flourishing period, Portuguese tourism faced a time characterised by the need to re-position itself on the ever-increasing international competitiveness arena. Moreover, the shortage of means that would support the achievement of the trinomial objectives defined by the Government – quality, differentiation and competitiveness – was a

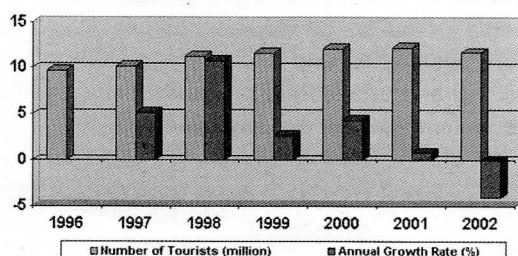
reality. At the international level, it was evident that there was an increase in competition among destinations, as the tourism products tend to achieve a certain standardisation. Similarly, the main market decisions tend to be concentrated on a few main large tour operators, who act globally. The risks associated with the uncertainty of the future – strengthened by the slow down of the world economy and aggravated by the 11<sup>th</sup> September events, required the reinforcement of the personality of Portugal as a tourism destination. The challenge lay in the enhancement of the regional diversity of products and the conciliation between traditional and emerging products.

Opposite to the strategic options of the past, where action was focused on demand, the Government recognised that it was also important to concentrate efforts on the adaptation of the tourism supply. Within this view, vital actions to the continuation of the success of Portuguese tourism included (1) the organisation and hierarchy of ordering products; (2) the definition of criteria and rules for environmental preservation and sustainability; (3) the creation of added value chains in the supply of products; (4) the encouragement of networks and partnerships between all partners and agents. Additionally, it was important to reduce some of the dominant features from the demand side. These features included average qualification, seasonality, dependence upon main international operators and diversification of origins.

As to the tourist events, national tourism development strategies in Portugal have neglected, in the past, the role that events can play in contributing to tourism success. Nonetheless, it can be said that Portugal entered the large international events market in the second half of the nineties, notably after the successful organisation of one of the largest cultural events in the world – The World Exposition EXPO'98 in Lisbon. In fact, this event has changed radically the image of tourist events as a tourism development tool. Previous research (Edwards *et al*, 2002) showed that key industry players recognised its success and attributed to EXPO'98 what has been called the 1998-2000 gold period of the tourism industry. As a consequence, many industry entrepreneurs, notably hotels, travel agencies and regional boards, demanded an event strategy.

Since 1998, there has been a whole series of successful bids for international events. In September 1999, Portugal was granted the

**Figure 2 - Number of Tourist Arrivals in Portugal and Annual Growth Rate between 1996 and 2002**



Source: DGT (2002, 2003)

Table 1 - Major events held and to be held in Portugal since 1998

Year	Event	Location	Relevant figures
1998	World Exposition EXPO'98	Lisbon	1.7 millions of foreign visitors
1999	World Junior Basketball Championship	National	Not available
2000	Bowling World Championship	Lisbon	Not available
2000	Masters Cup in Tennis	Lisbon	Accreditation of 500 journalists; 850 hours of worldwide TV coverage.
2001	Indoor Athletics World Championships	Lisbon	Not available
2001	Fencing World Championship	Lisbon	Not available
2001	Porto 2001 – European Cultural Capital	Oporto	Not available
2003	Handball World Championship	National	
2003	Gimnaestrada	Lisbon	27.000 participants
2004	Euro2004 – European Football Championship	National	350.000 to 500.000 additional international visitors, staying in average 4 days and spending in average (not including the match ticket) 100 EUR per day; 9 billion TV viewers; Accreditation of 8000 journalists.*

\*Forecast

organisation of one of the largest sport events – the European Football Championship – which will take place in 2004, along with the organisation of a series of other small, but highly visible events. Table I shows the major international events held, and to be held in Portugal after 1998. What characterises a major event is its ability to attract international tourists and/or to have international media exposure. Hence, these major events may be mega (such as the Expo'98 or the Euro2004) or smaller but still large events based on the above criteria (such as the Fencing World Championship).

One of the reasons why tourist destinations host events is their capacity to promote externalities. Externalities take place when companies/individuals promote costs or benefits to others outside the market (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 1999). From a tourist events point of view, externalities may be regarded as the costs and benefits associated to the post-event period (hence, the market is regarded here as the event). On the positive side (i.e. benefits), these externalities may be the infrastructure (airports, roads), attractions and organisational enhancement. Environmental damage and abandonment of event sites are examples of negative externalities. These externalities (both positive and negative) are more

likely to take place in the case of mega-events. For example, Edwards *et al.* (2002) found that the key industry players in Lisbon regarded the post-Expo'98 as more successful than the exposition period and this was due to the infrastructure, attractions and image arising from the Expo'98 process.

Despite this success in the bidding for international events, no specific programmes previously existed at the national level to support tourist event organisers and promoters. Furthermore, tourist event sponsorship by tourism authorities has been circumstantial, subjective and *ad-hoc* – as proposals or opportunities turned up, authorities assessed its merits and decided on sponsorship or not. The Portuguese Tourism Authorities, recognising the importance of these events for tourism development and the need to a more systematic and planned approach to the bidding and sponsoring processes, prepared a programme that will support these activities.

## 5 Portuguese event-tourism strategy

It was in this context that the Portuguese government approved in late 2001, early 2002, the



Plan for the Strengthening of Tourism, supported by three financial programmes. Two of them already existed and a third new one – PIQTUR: Actions Programme for the Qualification of Tourism – was created since then. PIQTUR is essentially a public investment programme, which aims to re-inforce the efforts of local, regional and national tourism boards in tourism competitiveness.

Of particular interest within PIQTUR is the second Sub-Programme (SP) – Promotion and Tourist Entertainment. Generally, this SP aims to implement an integrated and coherent strategy of Portugal's communication as a tourist destination, making available the necessary means to support innovative actions in terms of the re-positioning and assertion of the image and reputation in international markets of a tourist destination. With this integrated vision it is intended to differentiate and enhance Portuguese tourism products. This is where events play an important role: the hosting and heightening of major international events were considered anchors in this strategy.

The second SP, designated 'Promotion and Tourist Entertainment', includes four types of actions:

- Action 1: International promotion;
- Action 2: Support the increase in profile of, and the bidding for, international events;
- Action 3: Stimulation of the Broad Domestic Market (Portugal and Spain);
- Action 4: Support the diversification of tourism products, including tourist entertainment.

Bearing in mind the aims of this, action 2 will be discussed in more depth.

The aim of action 2 is to develop initiatives, based on reference criteria and requirements, that make viable a selection of events for which to bid, heighten or upgrade. As mentioned earlier, tourism policy makers have two choices: either support the bidding of new events, or to create conditions to maximise benefits from the existing ones. It was also argued that a mixture of both is probably the best approach, since the preference for the first one would not take advantage of the potential of existing events, while preference for the second one would not give opportunity for new ideas and concepts to be implemented.

The programme not only recognises the need to bring innovative features by bidding for new events or upgrading existing ones, but also that the results of some existing events have been limited due to lack of consistent financial structure and therefore their benefits could be heightened if

more support is given. For example, the Portuguese Open Golf may attract much more international media exposure if it can attract better players. One of the necessary conditions to attract better players is through higher prize-money. PIQTUR may provide the necessary financial resources.

Therefore, in order to re-inforce the image and reputation of Portugal and its Tourist Brands, action in two specific domains was considered to be necessary. First, the successful bidding of international size events. This aims to guarantee the successful bidding and hosting in Portugal of sport or cultural events, as well as tourism-related professional events, of large international size, measured either by the specific flows originated from other countries or by the media exposure in international markets. The second, benefit maximisation and upgrading of international size events, attempts to maximise the opportunity and increase the international media exposure, as well as to promote the upgrading of cultural and sporting events already being organised in Portugal and that are able to fit the positioning of the National Tourism Brands.

Maximise the opportunity means that it is possible to take more advantage of the events. For example, by organising an educational visit to Portugal for the most important golf journalists in the world and making their participation possible in the PRO AM (opening golf tournament with the participation of celebrities). Another example is the careful choice of the locations along the course which maximise TV coverage to place promotional adverts of Portugal. Although this is already in place, it is recognised that coordination between parties involved in the organisation of the events can be improved. However, the aim is to ensure that the national promotional interests are guaranteed along with regional and private sector ones. Upgrading, on the other hand, means to extend the financial involvement of the government in the event. Using the Golf Open example, the aim is to increase the prize money and therefore to make the event rise in the world ranking. With a tournament in a higher position in the ranking, it should be possible to attract more players and above all, better players. If better players are present, media coverage is expected to be wider.

As noted earlier, externalities may be one of the important consequences of hosting mega-events. The event plan does not explicitly regard them as a selection criterion. Yet as the selection of the event to sponsor remains mainly political,

the ability of the event to force benefits after the event is likely to be present when evaluating the merits of an event. Conversely, the environmental impacts of the event seem to be neither explicit nor implicit in the plan.

The government does not perform any role in the organisation of the events, but rather supports the initiatives of the organisers, mainly at the financial level but also at the administrative and political levels. The financial issues needed careful consideration, since the resources required for running such program were large. The approach used in terms of setting the budget of the whole PIQTUR program was the objective and task method (Heath and Wall, 1992). This approach involved clear identification of objectives and definition of specific measures to achieve them. Estimates of the costs were calculated and the required funding was sought. Having prepared a strategy to strengthen Portuguese Tourism, the Government lacked the financial resources to implement it.

In 2001, the Government negotiated with the Portuguese Casinos Association the extension of all the licences for another 15 years (varying slightly from casino to casino) in exchange for 256 million euros. This money was guaranteed to be fully invested in tourist related projects. The PIQTUR budget (180 million euros) is expected to be totally covered by the income resulting from the extension of term of the Gambling Areas Concession. The implementation of measures under SP 2 is expected to cost 70 million euros, out of which 22,5 million will be directed to support the increase in profile of, and the bidding for, international events. The beneficiaries of the grants are local, regional and national tourism boards. In exceptional cases, however, Boroughs within the Legal Gambling Areas and companies holding the rights to organise the event may also benefit from the programme. The financial assistance made available through this programme is based on a non-refundable grant. The contribution may be up to 75% of eligible expenses. In exceptional circumstances (mainly if the proposal is undoubtedly innovative and structuring for the tourism industry) the Government may decide to fully cover the eligible expenses.

#### **Current status**

The plan was prepared in late 2001 and expected to be fully operational during 2002. However, in March 2002 there were National Elections and the Government changed. Despite

the political change, both the current Ministry of Economics and the Assistant Minister for Tourism have publicly stated that the programme will continue, although some changes are expected. As at March 2003, the only change that has been acknowledged was the extension of the strategies duration since in 2002 the financial implementation was delayed.

Even if changes exist in terms of programmes and actions, there are some reasons to believe that the Action regarding events will not be affected given the importance the private sector gives to events, its innovative character and the proximity of EURO2004. The success of the EURO2004 organisation is largely dependent on its effects upon tourism industry. As the tourism benefits of this event are recognised to be highly dependent on the level of effort put into its promotion, the Government needs to allocate significant financial resources to fund promotion costs of the event. At a time when the Ministry of Finance struggles to control public expenditure, it would be difficult to get those resources from the national budget. The PIQTUR provide the necessary financial resources to comply with the Government's role in tourism promotion of EURO2004. Although candidatures to sponsorship have been open, to date there is no knowledge about the selection criteria or events already supported.

## **6 Discussion and conclusions**

This paper aimed to emphasise the need to develop a systematic approach to Government involvement in international tourism events. PIQTUR represents a move towards that and for the first time there is such an approach in Portugal. By developing a more systematic approach, the Government (and the tourism industry) is in a better position to capitalise from the benefits associated to the organisation of tourist events. More specifically, the government guarantees that, when sponsoring an event, the interests of the national tourism industry are not overtaken by those of the organisers. Additionally, the relationship between the government and the event organisers is clearer, since (for the first time) both parties know what they can expect from each other.

It is still a long way from knowing the impacts of the action 2 (support the increase in profile of, and the bidding for, international events) on the overall performance of PIQTUR Plan. These impacts,



however, are likely to be affected by a certain number of factors. The first one is at what may be called the political higher-level. Both marketing strategy and the allocation of resources for each component of the strategy is political and therefore a national tourist event plan is dependent on the importance it receives at the political level. In fact, the history of PIQTUR confirms this importance. The political changes in 2002 led to some uncertainty about the implementation of the original PIQTUR plan. While some parts of the plan are believed to have been dropped, the international tourist events part is expected to be implemented. The second factor that may influence the effects of the strategy is at the political lower-level and it is related to the assessment of events to support. The criteria for assessing candidatures can be partially objective. However, most of the process remains subjective and therefore it is dependent on political rather than technical analysis. The ability and sensibility of authorities to sponsor those events that really can contribute to the achievement of overall tourism marketing goals and maximise the investment is likely to influence the results of the plan. A third factor is at the operational level and is related to coordination among partners – tourism boards and event organisers. It is very important that both work together and in a coordinated manner to maximise the benefits offered by tourist events.

Finally, event sponsorship should be based on operational objectives and, because these objectives need to be quantifiable, it is essential that NTB are able to measure the extent to which desired results have or have not been attained. This implies that some explicit means of quantifying appropriate performance standards exists (Goeldner et al, 2000). However, as Hall (1992) pointed out, evaluation is often the forgotten element in an event. PIQTUR is no different and there are no references about assessment of impacts and this may pose a number of problems. First, the validity of the decision to include events within the tourism strategy may be permanently questioned by those who do not agree with such strategy. If the tourism industry believes that events have positive impacts and are a 'good investment' it should endeavour to prove it. Second, evaluation is the feedback channel for improving any planning model. By not doing evaluation, the Government is less likely to learn from the experience and this may pose a threat to the heightening of the results of this and future plans.

However, it must be recognised that the PIQTUR

is the first attempt to provide a systematic approach to Government involvement in international tourist events and hence, as a first experience, it should be seen in that context. The lack of previous experience in this field, coupled with the difficulties in measuring the effects of events (many of the benefits and costs are intangible) are likely to be the main motive for the lack of reference to evaluation. Yet, it can be expected that the learning resulting from the current experience will lead to the inclusion of evaluation in future plans.

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