

**Research Project: Sustainability Indicators & Impacts: Leisure – Sports & Arts.**

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**Background:** Although food, personal transport and household management account for the majority of the environmental impacts linked to household consumption, there is increasing interest in the relationship between the leisure economy and sustainability. This includes concerns about the sustainability impacts of leisure activities including tourism (see also A24), and major arts festivals, concert tours, and sporting events (see also A25). Although major arts and sports events and festivals have enjoyed sustained growth in recent years, and national, regional and local governments are keen to attract and establish such events for their economic benefits, their broader sustainability impacts have often been overlooked. This research also concerns the role that organisations from the worlds of sports or the arts can play in communicating about sustainability issues to social groups not usually engaged with that agenda.

**Aims & objectives:**

- To develop and test new indicators for economic activities in the sports and arts sectors that add sustainability dimensions to conventional economic indicators;
- To explore the role that arts and sports organisations can play in contributing to more sustainable communities and in communicating with key stakeholder groups about sustainability issues.

**About the research:** There were several dimensions to this research project as follows:

- Evaluations of major sporting events: This began with work that extended BRASS's eco-footprinting experience (see A23) to assess the impact of the 2004 FA Cup Final. BRASS Researcher experience in assessing the economic impacts of sporting events was then combined to assess the economic and environmental impacts of the 2006 RBS Rugby Six Nations Championships and the Tour de France Le Grande Depart in 2007. BRASS went on to work in collaboration with the Sports Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, Stirling University and the Substance Co-Op to develop an evaluative framework to assess and measure the impact and benefits of hosting major events. BRASS researchers have been centrally involved in developing and measures of the environmental impact of events including the Junior World Rugby Championships (2008), London Freewheel (2008), Great Yorkshire Run (2008) & the World Rally Championship (2004).
- Evaluations of arts events: The collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University was extended to develop a carbon footprint for the Isle of Wight Music Festival and the Edinburgh Film Festival (both in 2008) and BRASS worked with the National Theatre of Scotland to collect and analyse data on the sustainability impacts of their activities.
- Environmental indicators for sport: BRASS worked with UK Sport to develop environmental indicators for major sporting events and made an ongoing contribution to the Technical Advisory Group on Carbon Management for the London Organising Committee of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Sustainability for arts tours: BRASS undertook work sponsored by the Arts Council of Wales involving a sustainability impact of the rural and community touring scheme for theatre productions, and for the National Theatre of Wales on the sustainability of their community tour, with a particular focus on social impacts.
- Changing sustainable behaviours in and through the Arts: BRASS worked with Creu Cymru, Cynnal Cymru and Julie's Bicycle in London on work funded via the Welsh Sustainable Living Fund to change behaviour in relation to climate change in and through the Arts. The project sought to change practices within arts centre and theatres and to look at how they can act as a catalyst for other stakeholders such as suppliers, performers and audiences. It involved a

baseline survey of venues who are members of Creu Cymru, which led to a wider online survey of venues and focus groups exploring best practice.

- BBC Drama Village Sustainability Strategy: BRASS worked with the new BBC Drama Village on the development and implementation of a sustainable travel plan; on an analysis of alternative technologies to achieve a sustainable administrative hub for the project; and on the role of BREEAM (the *Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method*) in the development of major infrastructure projects.

**Results and outputs:** BRASS was among the pioneers in seeking to counterbalance the conventional economic and cultural benefits of sporting and cultural events by considering environmental performance in more than qualitative, procedural terms. BRASS research has explored how economic and environmental pressures will provide an increasing challenge to their ability to provide important social, economic and cultural benefits in times of austerity.

- Collins, A., Munday, M., and Roberts, R. (2012), [Environmental consequences of tourism consumption at major events: An analysis of the UK stages of the 2007 Tour de France](#), *Journal of Travel Research*, 51 (5), 577-590.
- Jones, C. (2012), [Festivals and events in emergent economies: A sea change, and for whom?](#), *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 3 (1), 9-11
- Jones, C. (2012), [Events and festivals: fit for the future?](#) *Event Management* 16 (2), 107-118
- Collins A, Jones C and Munday, M. (2009), [Assessing the environmental impacts of mega sporting events: Two options?](#) *Tourism Management*, (30), 828-837
- Jones, C. and Munday, M. (2008), [Assessing the impact of a major sporting event: The role of environmental accounting](#), *Tourism Economics*, 14 (2), 343-360
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#### **Impacts achieved/potential for impact:**

The methodological framework for assessing the local and global environmental impact of major events, which has been utilised by UK Sport and the London Organising Committee of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The work for SportUK provided the foundation for their sporting impact assessment system that is available via their website at [www.eventimpacts.com](http://www.eventimpacts.com). BRASS also developed some educational contributions from the work, including delivering a 'Discover Workshop' for Year 9 Female Pupils on 'Events, their Impacts and Ecological Footprints', organised by Careers Wales. 'The environmental impacts of major sporting events' reflecting BRASS work is also being contributed as part of a HEA Learning and Teaching Fund sponsored project to develop links with FE Schools and Colleges through the post 16 Geography curriculum. Work on sustainability impacts of the Arts has had a very direct impact on the planning and management of arts organisations in Wales, England and Scotland and led to the foundation of a network of arts organisations interested in sustainability (originally set up by BRASS to cover Wales but later extended due to wider interest and demand).