



Strategic Gears
Management Consultancy



FIFA World Cup Special



Economic Impact
on Host Countries

26.417

31.012

46.991

6.417

31.012

12.002



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Summary



As the 2022 World Cup in Qatar draws closer, there is increasing interest in the insights and data surrounding this global event, the countries that have hosted it, and what it has meant overall for host countries.

This report contributes to this discussion by reviewing comparative statistics that can serve to inform, update, and enrich the discussion around World Cup hosting and its importance for host countries.

We focus on case study experiences from Brazil (a developing country host), Germany (a developed nation host) and Japan/South Korea's joint hosting of the event in 2002 (in light of the multi-nation World Cup 2026 hosting and the collaborative bids put up for the World Cup 2030).

Quick Facts

3.5

Billion people
tuned in to
watch



The World Cup in
Russia in 2018¹

Commonly used estimates indicate that the past three World Cups have injected the following into each country's economy²:



South Africa
2010



USD 12B

3.2% of GDP



Brazil
2014



USD 15B

0.6% of GDP



Russia
2018



USD 14B

1.1% of GDP

- According to the CEO of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, this year's World Cup could have a total impact on the Qatari economy of nearly USD 17B, representing about 7.5% of projected 2022 Qatari GDP (with positive spillover effects in neighbouring GCC countries).

- More than 1.5 million new jobs will be created, according to the CEO of FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, from hosting the World Cup in important industries including construction, real estate, and hospitality.

































- The FIFA World Cup generates the most revenue for the governing body itself. FIFA is expecting World Cup 2022 to generate USD 4.6B for the organisation (Russia 2018 World Cup generated USD 5.3B).

- FIFA revenue from the World Cup is mainly driven by the sale of television broadcasting rights and sponsorship income which represent ~70% of the total (the rest include income from hospitality rights & ticket sales, licensing rights and other revenue).



Overview of FIFA World Cup Host Countries 1930–2026

- The very first World Cup event was hosted in Uruguay in 1930. Some countries have hosted it more than once including Brazil, Germany (1st time as West Germany), Italy, France and Mexico (jointly hosting with US & Canada for 3rd time in 2026).
- The majority of World Cups have been held by European countries, although FIFA is in more recent years, dispersing the competition across the world.
- The 2022 World Cup in Qatar in November will mark the first time the Middle East has hosted a World Cup.
- The first multi-nation World Cup was in 2002, with the joint hosting by Japan and South Korea. This trend/format seems to be picking up again with future World Cups being planned across several neighbouring host countries.
 - The 2026 World Cup held across the US, Mexico, and Canada will be the second such joint hosting event, and the first trio.
 - 2030 Bids: Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay joint bid, Spain and Portugal, as well as Saudi Arabia, Egypt & Greece.

<div>1930</div> <div></div> <div>Uruguay</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1934</div> <div></div> <div>Italy</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1938</div> <div></div> <div>France</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1950</div> <div></div> <div>Brazil</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1954</div> <div></div> <div>Switzerland</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1958</div> <div></div> <div>Sweden</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>1962</div> <div></div> <div>Chile</div> <div></div> <div></div>												
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<div>2022</div> <div></div> <div>Qatar</div> <div></div> <div></div>	<div>No. of World Cups Hosted by Region³</div> <table><tr><td>9</td><td>Europe</td><td>5</td><td>South America</td><td>4</td><td>North America*</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Asia**</td><td>1</td><td>Africa</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>						9	Europe	5	South America	4	North America*	2	Asia**	1	Africa		
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2	Asia**	1	Africa															
<div>*Including the 2026 World Cup scheduled to be hosted jointly by the US, Canada & Mexico.</div> <div>**Including the the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.</div>																		

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**Including the the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

How are World Cup Host Countries Chosen?



- A country that wants to host the World Cup must first submit an application, explaining why it would be the ideal venue and laying out its plans for stadiums, transportation, and accommodations for soccer fans.
- The host nation must fulfil minimum requirements to be eligible, and if they do, a vote is held to choose the subsequent host.

These minimum requirements include:



Stadiums

- FIFA stipulates that a host country needs to have at least 12 stadiums, each with a minimum seating capacity of 80,000–40,000 depending on the type of matches that will be held there.



Transportation

- FIFA mandates that every stadium be near an airport, and that each airport has a minimum hourly capacity of 1,450 passengers.



Accommodation

- FIFA mandates the availability of:
 - 4 hotels per stadium location, as well as 72 base camp hotels for teams and officials.
 - 1,760 and 8,080 hotel rooms for spectators (depending on the match that will be played there).









FIFA World Cup Economics

FIFA World Cup Costs⁴

The cost of hosting the World Cup games has expanded along with the events' scope and size over the years. The ultimate cost has varied significantly from city to city throughout the years, with the bulk of costs associated with new infrastructure. Below is a comparison between prior World Cup hosting costs among various countries. For additional perspective, we have compared it to past hosting costs of the Olympic games (which has been an even costlier affair).

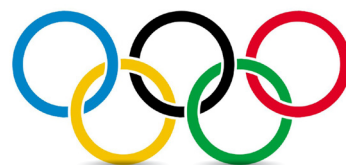
The World Cups Cost (USD,B)



1990		Italy	4.0
1994		USA*	0.5
1998		France	2.3
2002		South Korea/ Japan	7.0
2006		Germany	5.0
2010		South Africa	3.6
2014		Brazil	11.6
2018		Russia	11.7

*The US already had stadiums to host the events, hence why costs were lower.

The Olympics Cost (USD,B)



2006	Turin	5.3
2008	Beijing	52.7
2010	Vancouver	8.9
2012	London	13.3
2014	Sochi	59.7
2016	Rio de Jenerio	13.0
2018	Pyeongchang	15.4
2020	Tokyo	35
2022	Beijing	38.5

FIFA World Cup Attendance⁵

A total of **3 million** people watched the 64 games of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Russia live in the stadium. This meant that the average attendance per game was **47,371**, lower than the 2014 World Cup average attendance per game in Brazil which posted the highest average (**53,772**) since the 1994 World Cup in the US (**68,626**).

1930



Uruguay

434,000

24,111

1934



Italy

395,000

23,235

1938



France

483,000

26,833

1950



Brazil

1,337,000

60,772

1954



Switzerland

943,000

36,269

1958



Sweden

868,000

24,800

1962



Chile

776,000

24,250

1966



England

1,614,677

50,458

1970



Mexico

1,673,975

52,311

1974



West Germany

1,774,022

46,684

1978



Argentina

1,610,215

42,374

1982



Spain

1,856,277

35,697

1986



Mexico

2,407,431

46,296

1990



Italy

2,527,348

48,602

1994



USA

3,568,567

68,626

1998



France

2,859,234

44,675

2002



South Korea /
Japan

2,724,604

42,571

2006



Germany

3,367,000

52,609

2010



South Africa

3,167,984

49,499

2014



Brazil

3,441,450

53,772

2018



Russia

3,031,768

47,371

■ Total Attendance

■ Avg. Attendance Per Game



FIFA World Cup Ticket Sales

Ticket sale amounts for the World Cup have increased along with the events' scope and size over the years. Below is a comparison of ticket revenue amounts of prior World Cups.



Costs & Direct Revenue Relative to Event Size

Costs and direct event-related revenue (Ticket Sales + Broadcasting Rights + Marketing Rights + Hospitality Rights + Licensing Rights + Other) have grown proportionately more than the size of the event as measured by total attendance per tournament.

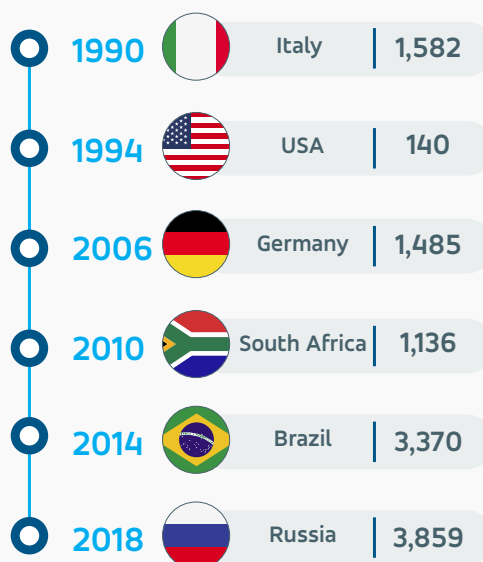
The cost per total attendance is at least two to three times as high for the Winter Olympics compared with the World Cup and Summer Olympics.

Direct revenue per total attendance is also higher for the Winter Olympics compared with the World Cup and Summer Olympics.

The World Cups



Costs Per Total Attendance of Past World Cups (USD)⁷



The Olympics



Winter Olympics



Summer Olympics

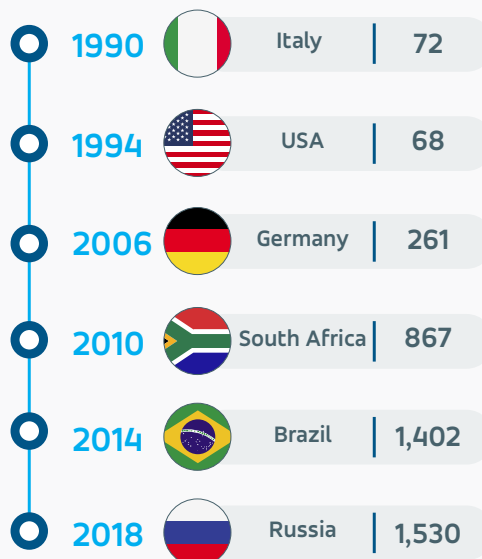


Costs & Direct Revenue Relative to Event Size

The World Cups



Direct Revenue Per Total Attendance of Past World Cups (USD)⁷



The Olympics



Winter Olympics



Summer Olympics



Impact of World Cup Hosting

The FIFA World Cup is a sporting event that draws massive crowds of spectators from all around the world, with billions of people tuning in to watch. Hosting the matches has a number of pros and cons, related to economic, social, and environmental aspects.

Besides FIFA itself, the more immediate ecosystem that benefits positively, especially in the run up to and during the event include:

- Events, functions, and activities
- Marketing and promotion
- Hospitality & tourism
- Transportation, both into and around the country
- Water, electricity, sewerage
- Construction and infrastructure
- Retail
- Media
- Food & beverage
- Manufacturing
- All relevant supply chains
- Other service providers (health & safety, security, project management, other logistics, etc)

Notwithstanding the short-term economic activity boost that the event creates, the impact on the host country as a whole, including post-event, is important to consider.

Various studies have been conducted to analyze the impact of hosting the World Cup. Event promoters have especially forecast economic benefits from hosting the World Cup in past and present future economic impact evaluations. Public subsidies for mega-event infrastructure have also been justified by the prospect of significant economic benefit.

For a variety of reasons, some have questioned the impact studies conducted and the impact itself that hosting the World Cup has on a country. Two opposing schools of thought eventually emerged, one arguing in favour of hosting the World Cup and the other arguing against it. Instead of arguing for or against either school, our objective was to examine the economic literature and highlight both sides.

Additionally, we examined case study examples to understand the experiences of host nations from both a developed economy (such as Germany) and a developing country perspective (Brazil). In addition, since joint-hosting has previously occurred once and has been chosen as a model for 2026 and maybe beyond, it is crucial to understand the experience of the joint hosts (South Korea/Japan); and the lessons that can be drawn from all of the aforementioned experiences.

Arguments For & Against Hosting

There are a variety of benefits and drawbacks to hosting the World Cup. While some have advocated against hosting, others have made the opposite case. Based on a review of economic literature that has tackled this topic, we present the key arguments for and against it in the sections below⁸.

Arguments For

Greater and multiple revenue streams (ticket & merchandise sales, TV rights, sponsorships).

Attract thousands of sports fans/tourists

Consumer spending rises, driven by both domestic and tourist spending.

Create jobs.

Short-term boost for stock market of host & country that wins.

Increase in trade.

“Feel-good” factor + inspiring success stories for future generations + encourage greater sports participation, especially among children.

Arguments Against

“White elephant” argument – stadiums & other infrastructure left unused (some adding maintenance cost burdens on the host).

Disrupt other tourist flows/drive traffic away from popular/established sites & attractions – deterred by the potential of overcrowding, disruption & price increases.

Changes the type of tourists in the country and not necessarily the number.

Domestic spending does not necessarily rise but switches to Cup-related expenditures.

Prices rise but wages in the country do not necessarily go up in tandem.

Opportunity cost involved – the opportunity cost of capital may be particularly high in developing nations.

FIFA mostly benefits and the body’s income from the World Cup is tax-free meaning the host government misses out on tax revenue that would have been earned if people spent the same money on other consumption in the country.

Can incur rising government debt levels/fall into debt traps.

Case Study 1

Developing Nation – Brazil

2014



Brazil



The 2014 FIFA World Cup, which was held in Brazil between June and July 2014, represented the second time that Brazil had hosted it (the previous being in 1950). It was also the sixth time that the tournament had taken place in South America.



Overall Economic Impact

- For Brazil, the cost of hosting the World Cup was estimated at around USD 11B, with some estimates going as high as USD 15B. Brazilian National Court of Auditors estimated that such expenses would have covered the nation's yearly “Bolsa Familia” social welfare expenditure (which reaches almost 25% of the total population of over 200 million) twice over.
- The Economic Research Institute Foundation and the Brazilian Tourism Board estimated that the World Cup contributed between USD 13.4B and USD 15B to the Brazilian economy – equivalent to between 0.5% of GDP and 0.6% of GDP.
- In terms of overall economic growth, on average, the Brazilian economy grew by 3.9% since 2007 when they were given the hosting rights. According to the IMF, in 2014 (the year of the event), growth was disappointing at 0.5% compared with 3% the year prior. The World Cup, which reduced working days and triggered protests that lowered overall investor sentiment (along with continued drought) were both cited by the IMF as additional challenges in 2014. By 2015, growth declined by 3.5%. Brazil's economy is thought to have benefited from the World Cup, although this boost was not strong enough to upswing the economy.



Tourism

- According to Embratur (the Brazilian Tourist Board), 1 million international tourists visited Brazil during the World Cup and 3 million were domestic tourists. The estimates also indicate that 2.5% of Brazil's total World Cup expenditures were recovered through tourism.
- According to the World Tourism and Trade Council, the Brazilian tourism sector's contribution to the country's GDP in 2014 was 3.5%.



Infrastructure

- FIFA requires that a host country has between 8 and 12 stadiums; Brazil chose to have 12 stadiums, which came at a significant cost (estimated at USD 3.5B).
- Many of the 12 stadiums that Brazil renovated/built for the World Cup were apparently abandoned after the tournament. Some stadiums were built in remote locations where there were no popular local professional teams to support them. Some stadiums remain unused today, others are losing money. The most expensive stadium -- the USD 550M Estadio Nacional in Brasilia -- is reportedly being used as a bus parking lot and does not support a top-division club⁹.
- In addition to stadiums, numerous infrastructure upgrades and modernizations -- including those made to telecom, ports, airports, and associated facilities -- have undoubtedly left a favourable legacy for the nation.



Social Impact

- The Brazilian administration believed that hosting the event would boost the nation's standing abroad. In the years running up to the World Cup, Brazil's standings in some international indices increased. Additionally, there were more events including conferences and conventions organized across the nation. All the above were also the outcome of a decentralization strategy used to attract foreign events.
- However, riots and strikes broke out across the nation both before and during the World Cup. Many of these turned violent and resulted in altercations with the police, injuring some. The peoples' demands for more spending directed to healthcare, education, and public transportation were at the heart of the demonstrations. Protesters bemoaned government corruption and World Cup-related spending. Their primary complaint was the disparity in spending between the expenditures on the mega-event and those on health and education.
 - Although spending on health and education grew in 2014, they accounted for 8.4% of all state budgetary spending in Brazil. Brazilians were of the view that the opportunity cost was significant even though spending on health and education was larger (over USD 60B combined) than that associated with the World Cup. The argument was that prior to being able to afford soccer infrastructure, the nation still needed to make fundamental expenditures on health and education¹⁰.
- Building stadiums, accommodation and other infrastructure all came at significant societal costs to Brazilian residents. According to estimates, between 250,000 and 1.5 million individuals were evicted or forced to leave their homes, with just a small number obtaining significant financial support or relocation help.

Case Study 2

Developed Nation – Germany

2006



Germany



The 2006 FIFA World Cup hosted in Germany represented the second time the country staged the event, and the first as a unified country; the first time was as West Germany in 1974. It also marked the tournament's tenth hosting in Europe.



Overall Economic Impact



Tourism



Infrastructure¹¹



Social Impact¹¹

- In terms of overall economic growth, on average, the German economy grew by 0.9% since 2000 when they were given the hosting rights. According to the IMF, in 2006 (the year of the event), growth was strong at 3.8% compared with 0.7% the year prior. According to the IMF, 2006's strong growth was attributed to benefits from the World Cup, temporary fiscal incentives, and a pickup in consumption ahead of the VAT increase in January 2007. By 2007, growth slowed to 3%.
- Data from both the IMF and government point to a boost for the service industry. For instance, the government noted that sectors like hotel and catering, which had been in a contraction mode in the four years before the event, had recovered by the second quarter of 2006.
- According to the German National Tourist Board, throughout the month-long event, over 2 million international visitors arrived in the country, double the initial figure anticipated, spending over USD 700M.
- The German central bank also estimated that GDP growth in the second quarter included some 1/4 percentage point in one-time demand from the World Cup soccer tournament (mainly tourism exports).
- Unlike the issue faced by Brazil, developed economies like Germany typically have well-developed professional sports leagues, which means that after an event, many new facilities may be put to good use and much of the current sports infrastructure can be used. For instance, the Bundesliga soccer teams that have moved in as permanent tenants typically fill all 12 of the stadiums that were utilized in Germany for the World Cup to capacity.
- Over EUR 3.7B was also invested in upgrading current transport/road infrastructure and IT systems.
- One University of Marburg research indicated a small increase in national pride.
- Artistic and cultural programmes related to football were initiated which later spread to a number of neighbouring countries.
- The World Cup in Germany was held as a climate-neutral event for the first time in its history. German investments in South Africa and India helped offset CO2 emissions.

Case Study 3

Joint Hosting – South Korea/Japan

2002



When South Korea and Japan jointly hosted the 2002 FIFA World Cup, it was the first time a World Cup had ever been co-hosted by two countries, and it was also the first time the tournament had ever been held in Asia.



Overall Economic Impact

- The Dentsu Institute for Human Studies initially estimated a USD 25B impact from the World Cup for Japan and USD 9B impact for South Korea. As a percentage of total national income, these figures represented 0.6% and 2.2% of the total Japanese and South Korean economies, respectively. However, while the economic literature did not yield results of the actual impact, it suggested that the impact was much lower than anticipated.
- In terms of overall economic growth, on average, the South Korean economy grew by 5.7% since 1996 when they were given the hosting rights, while the Japanese economy grew by 1% (following several years of sluggish growth). According to the IMF, in 2002 (the year of the event), South Korea's growth was 7.7% while that of Japan was flat, compared with 4.9% and 0.4% respectively the year prior. By 2003, South Korean growth slowed to 3.3% and Japan's growth picked up slightly (1.5%).
 - Rapid growth in South Korea was also driven by a number of structural changes stipulated by the IMF.
 - It is worth noting that neither the economic literature nor data from institutions like the IMF made the case that the World Cup contributed negatively to Japan's economic situation; the reality was that Japan was already undergoing economic difficulties throughout the prior decade.



Tourism

- The overall number of international tourists to South Korea for the 2002 World Cup was estimated at 460,000, matching the number of foreign visitors during the same time period the year before. In addition, inflows of Japanese tourists, who generally made up 40% of all foreign visitors to Korea, fell by 44% during the World Cup as many chose to remain home and watch the games.
- For Japan, available data on foreign tourist inflows point to 9.3% year-on-year growth during June of that year (the month of the World Cup), but even higher growth in the months prior and months after.



Infrastructure

- South Korea and Japan each provided ten stadiums. Since neither nation had a sizable soccer infrastructure prior to the World Cup, South Korea spent approximately USD 2B building ten new stadiums, while Japan spent at least USD 4B building seven new stadiums and renovating three others.
- Similar to the situation in Brazil, some newly built stadiums remain unused post-event, and those in use by local professional clubs only draw limited crowds relative to stadium capacity. For instance, the Saitama Prefecture stadium in Japan, which has 63,700 seats, often draws a crowd that is just one-third as large as the stadium's capacity¹². Local games are also not enough to cover the maintenance costs of the stadiums, which is another challenge.



Social Impact

- According to economic literature, hosting the World Cup benefited natural resources, cultural expansion, and cross-cultural interactions. Undoubtedly, the event also brought South Korea to the attention of the world, increasing interest in the nation and its economic prospects. Importantly, the joint hosting of the World Cup was seen by many as a sign of how sport can unite people across cultures and countries.





Conclusion

Based on the literature review and data, as well as the experiences of Brazil, Germany and the joint-hosting by South Korea/Japan, there are several points to note when thinking about World Cup hosting overall and its importance for host countries.

- When assessing the overall impact on a host country, it is important to consider:



Pre, during and post-event analysis and impact to provide more conclusive results.



Choosing the right assessments/ methods to measure true impact.



Intangible costs and benefits.



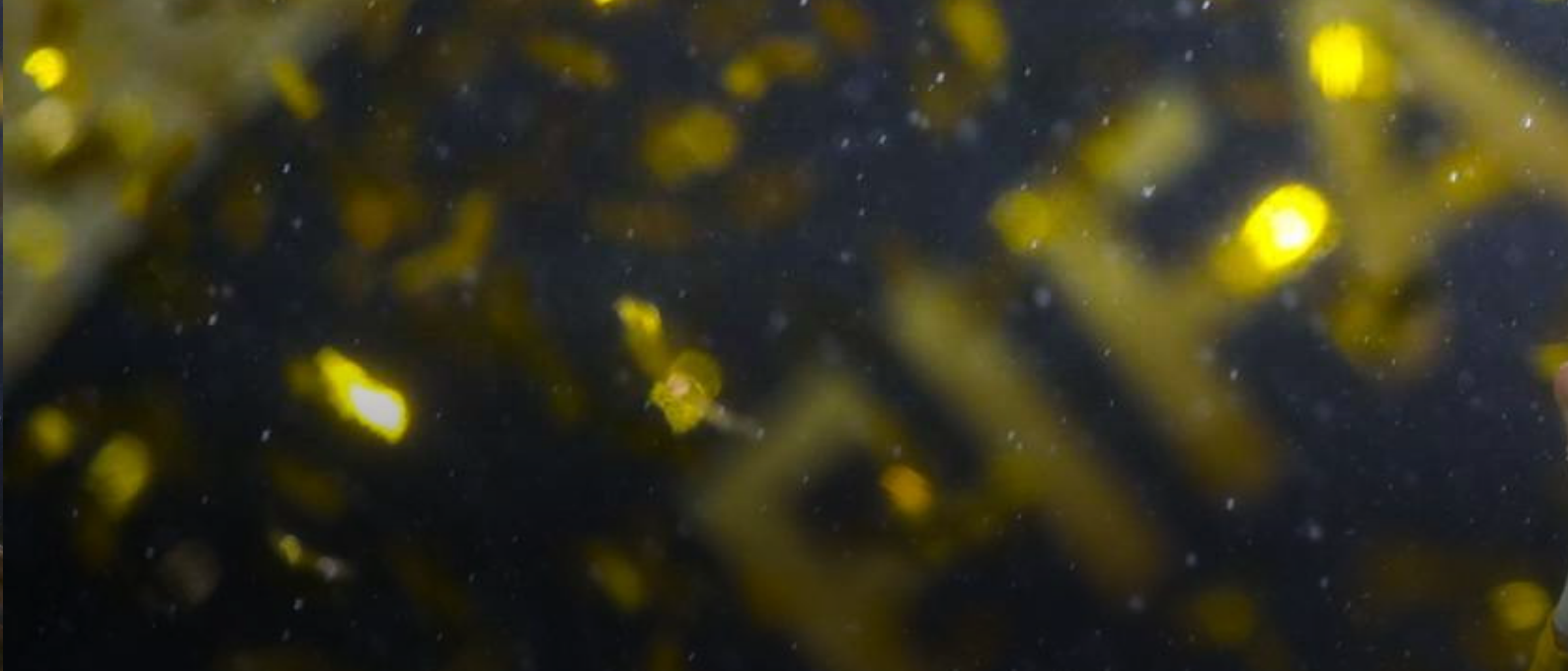
Long-run legacy and what it means for the sports industry and ecosystem in the host country.



Net impact (not only gross).



The opportunity cost involved.



- Arguments against hosting the World Cup, such as the "white elephant" problem (stadiums left empty/unused), may not always apply to nations that already lack adequate infrastructure and where it would provide an instant return on investment for such necessary (and late) investments. The same might be said about the claim that hosting the World Cup could change the type of tourist inflows to a country, but not necessarily the quantity, which cannot always be true for those nations looking to significantly increase tourism.
- Since most essential infrastructure is usually already in place in developed countries (in turn lowering over expenses), it appears easier and less risky for developed economies to host. On the other hand, hosting can have a considerable overall influence on developing countries as a proportion of total GDP and other metrics, despite the fact that the risks and costs are often greater.
- Joint bids share the hosting advantages while lowering the risks, especially in terms of finances and infrastructure. There are indications that this pattern of joint hosting may continue.
 - The US, Canada, and Mexico will jointly host the 2026 World Cup, while proposals for the 2030 event have included combined bids from Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay, as well as reportedly from Saudi Arabia, Greece, and Egypt.
 - Even the Olympic games could eventually adopt such a structure; in 2019, the International Olympic Committee authorized a reform that would allow for the games to be hosted by many nations or even an entire area of the world.
- Joint hosting and its impact on host countries as a whole and individually can be impacted by several factors including:
 - Brand and political synchronization between the hosts.
 - The number of World Cup teams based in each country (can influence team, travel and tourist spending).
 - Whether hosts are from developed or developing nations since each has unique considerations (many of which have multiplier impacts on other issues), including:
 - Current economic climate and risks.
 - Safety, security and political situation.
 - Quality of accommodation and other infrastructure.
 - Per capita income.
 - Employment/unemployment and the cost of labour.
 - Availability of infrastructure (influencing overall costs).



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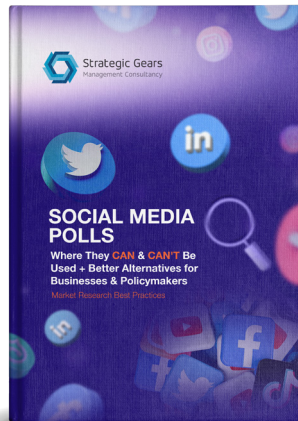
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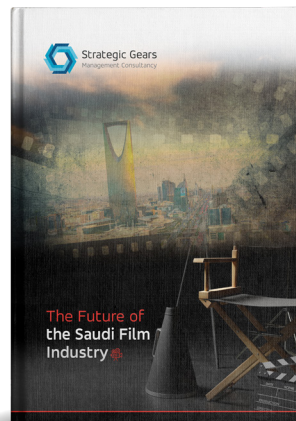
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Other Publications

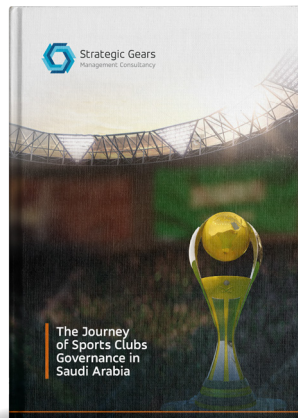
Strategic Gears prides itself in its ability to be a knowledge hub for the Saudi market. We release a range of reports on the current state of the Kingdom's economy as well as hot topics in both the public and private sectors. Below is a sample of our latest publications.



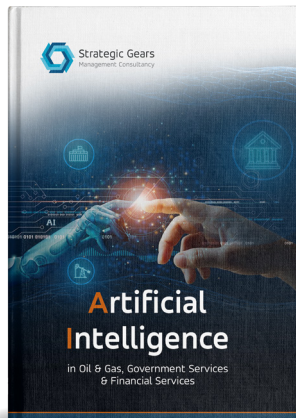
Social Media Polls



The Future of the Saudi Film Industry



The Journey of Sport Clubs Governance in Saudi Arabia



Artificial Intelligence in Oil & Gas, Government & Financial Services

