

Is South Africa Ready to Host the 2010 FIFA World Cup?

Steve Madue

South Africa is in the midst of preparations to host the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) World Cup in 2010. The large-scale construction projects may be inconvenient right now, but soon enough the country will reap the benefits. This article argues that South Africa has made considerable progress in its preparations and will be ready to welcome the world in 2010 to the first Soccer World Cup hosted on the African continent.

Introduction

South Africa has successfully hosted major international sporting events, including the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2003 Cricket World Cup. On 15 May 2004, FIFA president Sepp Blatter announced: "The 2010 World Cup will be organised by South Africa." This will be the first FIFA World Cup ever to be hosted in Africa since the competition began in 1934.¹

The world's biggest sporting event after the Olympic Games in terms of television audience, the Football World Cup is in a class of its own. For four weeks in 2010, South Africa will be the centre of the world. The eyes of billions of television viewers, an estimated three million spectators and the cream of the world's sporting media will be focused on South Africa's public management in general and the management of the World Cup in particular. While there may still be doubts regarding South Africa's ability to host such a mega-event, this article argues that South Africa is progressing

well towards successfully hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup – which will also be of economic benefit to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African continent at large.

On 15 September 2008, former South African president Thabo Mbeki stated:

[I]t is ordinary South Africans and Africans that are making the World Cup a reality. All of us – construction workers, engineers, educators, volunteers, business people, government officials – are transforming our country and continent as we prepare to host the world in 2010 and we are on course to meet all FIFA's commitments.²

Yet, there are still uncertainties regarding South Africa's readiness to host an event of this magnitude. Numerous articles have been published and debates conducted on talk shows, but while these are continuing, South Africa's Local Organising Committee (LOC), host cities and provinces are forging ahead with the preparations.

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This article aims to trace the managerial readiness of South Africa in implementing its FIFA mandate. Various governing structures have been set up by both the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the South African government to oversee the overall preparations. The starting point of this article is therefore to identify and analyse the governance structures that are tasked with managing the organisational processes of hosting a tournament of this magnitude.

Governance Structures

The FIFA Executive Committee designated SAFA as the preferred host for the 2010 FIFA World Cup on 15 May 2004.³ The LOC is responsible for organising, hosting and staging the competition, as well as the security for the duration thereof on behalf of FIFA. The responsibilities of the LOC are enlisted and explained in Article 2 of the FIFA Regulations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Although the agreement to host the World Cup is between SAFA and FIFA, the South African government is also considered part of the agreement as it provides the funding and guarantees for the event. It is for this reason that the LOC is bringing together officials from SAFA, government, labour and the business community towards realising the long awaited goal.

The South African government's involvement in the management of the 2010 FIFA World Cup is done through various government organs, including the Inter-ministerial Committee, the Technical Coordinating Committee and a 2010 Project Management Unit within the Department of Sports and Recreation. The government's overall 2010 FIFA World Cup effort is driven by the Inter-ministerial Committee while the provincial government is involved through contributions towards the improving of the infrastructure and the restructuring or building of the stadia in the host cities. In addition, every government department is playing a part in ensuring South Africa successfully hosts a tournament that promotes the country's growth and development.

Governance is also filtered down to the Host Cities Forum that brings together government and the LOC. The state segment of the forum is chaired by the Minister of Provincial and Local Government – whose department is also responsible for coordinating work for 2010 across the three spheres of government (local, provincial and national) and for providing technical assistance to the host cities.

In order to strengthen the governance structures, communication systems have to be

well coordinated. With regard to communication, the government (through the Department of Communications) and agencies such as the International Marketing Council and South African Tourism are working together for integrated communication, as well as working closely with the LOC. All the governance structures are geared towards the professional management of the infrastructural developments that are currently taking place. In terms of the formal implementation of the preparation phase, the countdown for the 2010 FIFA World Cup was officially launched on 14 September 2007 by the LOC Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr Danny Jordaan when he proudly announced that “the 1 000-day countdown marks the beginning of the operational phase of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. We are running within time and budget, and we are confident that the tournament will be a success.”⁴

Infrastructure

If management is about running a business, governance is about seeing that it is run properly.⁵ In choosing South Africa to bring the World Cup to Africa for the first time, FIFA was not only looking at what the country already offers: world-class transport, telecommunications, tourism and sporting infrastructure, and a people renowned for their hospitality and passion for the game. They were also concerned with the success with which the tournament will be hosted.

In 2010, football fans will enjoy the benefits of a host of multi-billion rand infrastructure projects recently announced by government and the LOC. The government's total contribution to infrastructure and stadia stands at R17.4 billion. Between now and 2010, South Africa will build and renovate 10 World Cup stadia, upgrade the country's airports, and improve the road and rail network. For the current financial year the road system is receiving over R70 billion worth of investment, airports are receiving R19 billion and commuter rail is being allocated R16 billion, while specific interventions for the 2010 World Cup event have been allocated a total of R13.6 billion.⁶

With each passing week, South Africa comes closer to the World Cup. This is especially evident in Gauteng where construction companies are working under tight deadlines to ensure that the Gautrain, a high-speed rail link between Johannesburg, Pretoria and OR Tambo Airport, will be up and running in time. Other transport projects include the Nasrec link, a strategic project that links two key 2010 venues, namely the Soccer

City stadium, in Nasrec, Johannesburg (the venue for the opening and final matches of the 2010 FIFA World Cup) and Orlando stadium, in Soweto (which will be used as a training venue for the Confederations Cup and the 2010 World Cup).⁷ The Orlando stadium has just been completed and is currently used as the homeground of one of the country's soccer giants, Orlando Pirates. South Africa's Minister of Transport, Mr Jeff Radebe, believes that the Nasrec link project will leave a significant and lasting legacy in providing direct and rapid access to the Nasrec sports precinct. It will also transform Soweto by providing the much-needed northern ramps to the N1 freeway, improving access between Soweto and areas such as Randburg and Sandton.⁸

The R2 billion Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system is another transport initiative adopted by government to improve the much needed access to the Nasrec and Ellis Park precincts, and will be able to transport large volumes of fans for the 2010 FIFA World Cup on match days. However, it should be noted that the improvement of the transport infrastructure is not just concentrated in the Gauteng province, but is spread across South Africa. Road maintenance and construction is evident on most major roads – such as the N4 that links Botswana, South Africa and Mozambique, the N3 that links the Durban harbour with Gauteng province, as well as the N1 that runs from Cape Town to Zimbabwe. The renovation of the N8 between Bloemfontein and Lesotho is almost complete.

On the governance side, current South African President Kgalema Motlanthe briefed FIFA President Sepp Blatter on the composition of his new cabinet and also expressed his satisfaction with the infrastructural preparations.⁹ Motlanthe's input is one of the reassurance statements that the government officials are expressing whenever they visit infrastructural development places for inspection, monitoring and evaluation.

Upgrading and Building of Stadia

One of the criteria against which South Africa's readiness to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup is measured is the state of the stadia. Since May 2004, South Africa has been busy upgrading existing stadia and building five new stadia to be used during the 2010 FIFA World Cup and beyond. It is therefore necessary to trace the progress registered to date on the upgrading and building of the stadia.

The LOC deemed it necessary to refurbish five existing stadia and build five new ones to enable

South Africa to deliver on its promise. The choice of taking this route is economical and developmental in nature. Five of South Africa's football stadia are currently undergoing major renovations for 2010:

- Soccer City in Johannesburg, Gauteng
- Ellis Park in Johannesburg, Gauteng
- Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria, Gauteng
- the Royal Bafokeng stadium in Rustenburg, North West province
- Vodacom Park in Bloemfontein, Free State province.

The five stadia listed above are currently being used by SAFA for its national and international competitions. Loftus Versfeld stadium in Pretoria and the Royal Bafokeng stadium in Rustenburg are completely ready for use, while Ellis Park and the Vodacom Park stadia are almost completed.

In terms of provincial development, three new stadia are currently being constructed in:

- Nelspruit, Mpumalanga province
- Nelson Mandela Metro (encompassing Port Elizabeth), Eastern Cape
- Peter Mokaba stadium in Polokwane, Limpopo province.

The following two stadia are also being upgraded:

- Kings Park stadium in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal
- Cape Town's Green Point stadium in the Western Cape province.

Kings Park and Green Point stadia are both being reconstructed into new multi-sport facilities, while Green Point will have a retractable dome to protect fans and players from the Cape's unpredictable winter weather. There are about 20 000 workers involved in building South Africa's ten World Cup stadia.

The new stadia under construction made a great impression on the inspection tour group, with Nelson Mandela Bay stadium well on course to becoming the first new FIFA World Cup stadium to be completed. Over 90% of the stadium's construction work is already complete, with over 20 000 seats installed.¹⁰ Cape Town Mayor Helen Zille confirmed that Green Point stadium is four days ahead of schedule, despite Cape Town having had one of its wettest winters ever.¹¹ Green Point stadium also reached a significant milestone in September when it began construction on its roof. The stadium is expected to be completed by its deadline in December 2009. With reference to the Gauteng province's progress, Danny Jordaan confirms that according to the LOC's evaluation, the province is ahead of schedule with the

Since May 2004, South Africa has been busy upgrading existing stadia and building five new stadia to be used during the 2010 FIFA World Cup and beyond

construction of all host stadia ahead of the 2009 Confederations Cup.¹² It can therefore be argued that by 2010, South Africa will be ready to welcome the world.

Reassurance of South Africa's Readiness

The FIFA president paid the country a courtesy visit in September 2008 and left "truly impressed with the way South Africa is dealing with its 2010 preparations."¹³ Particularly, Blatter was reported to have been 'amazed' by the Green Point stadium and to have compared Soweto's Soccer City to a temple. The recent 10-day inspection tour of all ten 2010 FIFA World Cup stadia by FIFA and the LOC experts provided evidence that South Africa is on course to delivering a memorable tournament, if the creative, eye-catching 2010 stadia are anything to go by.¹⁴

Furthermore, then South African government spokesperson, Tiyani Rikhotso, argued that:

[A]s government we remain optimistic that South Africa will host a successful World Cup in 2010... the political changes will not have any negative implications for next year's Confederations Cup and the 2010 World Cup.¹⁵

The support of the government has been formalised by the Second 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa Special Measures Act, 2006.¹⁶ The Act has been drafted to facilitate the hosting and staging of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in accordance with the Organising Association Agreement between FIFA and SAFA and the guarantees issued by the government to FIFA.

The Confederation of African Football president Issa Hayatou also stated that he is convinced that South Africa will be up to the task, not least because it has abundant potential and resources. The experience acquired during the hosting of the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 stands the country in good stead.¹⁷

Defusing Scepticism

The preparations for the 2010 FIFA World Cup have not come without challenges. The media reported general scepticism on South Africa's ability to successfully host the World Cup. While there were some concerns about South Africa's ability to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, especially among

white South Africans, a recent survey conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)¹⁸ suggests that the idea that whites are sceptical about the success of the event is misguided. The findings include the fact that over the past three years "at least 95% of white South Africans (aged 16 years and older) have consistently perceived (to be) some form of benefit accruing to South Africa from the hosting of the World Cup." This was similar to the percentage of Indians and Asians who expected South Africa to benefit from the World Cup and slightly lower than the number of coloureds who expected the country to benefit. Black South Africans were most optimistic.

The HSRC is not alone in trying to defuse scepticism. Former South African president Mr FW de Klerk, for example, recently stressed that regardless of language, culture or political affiliation, South Africans are united in making a success of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and that the tournament should recapture the spirit of 1994, when South Africa's democracy was born.¹⁹

When asked about the much-publicised 'Plan B' for the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which according to media reports may include England or Brazil, Blatter said that he had been misrepresented by the media and that the only Plan B for the tournament was "Africa South" – in other words, South Africa was Plan A and Plan B for 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Benefits of Hosting the World Cup

The economic realities of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup were highlighted by former South African president Thabo Mbeki in his 2006 State of the Nation address, when he said the World Cup would make a huge contribution, not only to South Africa's socio-economic growth, but to the development of the continent as a whole.²⁰ Mbeki argued that in return for these irreplaceable benefits, the country owes it to FIFA and the rest of the soccer world to prepare properly for 2010. This he said as a challenge to South Africans to work together to ensure that the country hosts "the best Soccer World Cup ever."

The economic benefits of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup should not only be enjoyed by South Africa, but by the African continent at large. As soon as FIFA reported that countries such as Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe were expected to benefit from the global showcase, the national tourism organisations from Zimbabwe, Zambia and South Africa quickly signed an agreement that should see the three

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countries fully tapping the potential earnings of the world's biggest soccer extravaganza.

The economic benefits of the 2010 FIFA World Cup have been highlighted by economists and consulting firms alike. According to consulting firm Grant Thornton, the World Cup will pump around R21.3 billion into South Africa's economy, generating an estimated R12.7 billion in direct spending and creating an estimated 159 000 new jobs.²¹ The country's tourism industry will benefit from the estimated three million visitors expected for the tournament, while construction and engineering companies will benefit from the billions of Rands spent on infrastructure development in the build up to the event.

Hopefully, the indirect spin-offs of an improved image abroad will have an even greater impact on the economy. After FIFA announced the 2010 host, Standard Bank economist Goolam Ballim predicted that there will be a big direct injection for the economy, but the indirect impact may be more meaningful for a sustainable economic lift in subsequent years. It is believed that successfully hosting the World Cup will help change the perceptions that a large number of foreign investors hold of Africa in general and South Africa in particular.

The HSRC, however, reveals that the nature of the benefits that were expected to come from hosting the World Cup differed across racial groups.²² Black South Africans felt that economic growth, job creation and international recognition would be the most significant benefits, whereas coloured respondents thought that the prospect of South Africa gaining international recognition was the most significant potential benefit. Indian, Asian and white respondents listed economic growth as the main benefit of hosting the event. Black South Africans were also more optimistic than other groups that the World Cup would have lasting benefits for the country, as opposed to short term benefits only.

Conclusion

This article posited that South Africa is on course and ready to successfully host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the first of its kind to be held on the African continent. It has also been argued that setting up the LOC, the various committees in the host cities as well as the South African government's involvement in the management of processes and provision of funding have contributed towards the country's readiness for 2010. The widespread development of infrastructure and engagement from the cities also proves that South Africa is on the

right track. In successfully hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, South Africa will serve as reference for other African countries in their attempt to bring future FIFA World Cup tournaments and other mega sporting events to Africa.

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Hopefully, the indirect spin-offs of an improved image abroad will have an even greater impact on the economy

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22 For a detailed report, see HSRC 2008.



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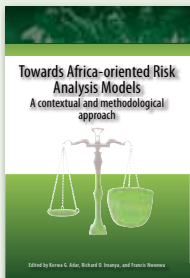
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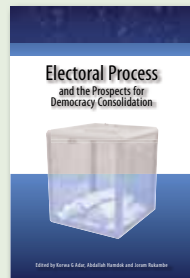
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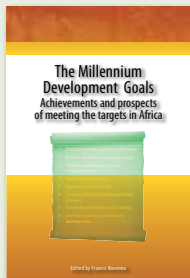
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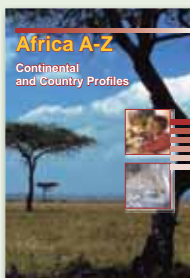
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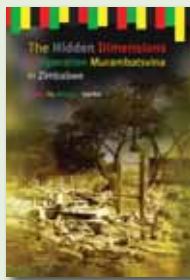
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