

Risks Associated with Further use of Stadiums Built for the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia

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ABSTRACT

Many sports projects, such as the construction of multifunctional sports complexes, have been carried out in Russia in the past few years. The stadiums built for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, designed for world-class football matches, athlete training, sports, and sports cultural events, turned out to be the largest and most iconic facilities. Each stadium has been designed, taking into account individual regional features. Technical complexity gives a shape-forming effect and allows creating an expressive architectural appearance. All the cities (11 cities of the Russian Federation) were not chosen by chance – they are the largest cities in Russia with a rich history, their original architectural style.

Based on the experience of previous World Cups in other countries, it is safe to say that the regions received not only modern multifunctional sports complexes but also a complex of developed infrastructure. One of the key problems of the construction of large stadiums is the problem of their functioning and rates of return after a championship. The Russian Government instructed the Ministry of Sport to develop a concept for further use of built stadiums, taking into account the specifics of cities and possible risks associated with the further use of the stadiums built for the World Cup, even before construction began. The development of this concept of "heritage" began because all newly built stadiums and training bases for the matches, for which about 149 billion rubles were allocated, will be unclaimed, abandoned, or will cause damage to the owners after the World Cup.

Having studied the world experience, it can be noted that this problem is international. After the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and 2010 in South Africa, stadiums that were unclaimed after the end of the championship are now called "white elephants." Due to the lack of big and stable football clubs that could gather tens of thousands of viewers, many stadiums that hosted World Cup matches in these countries are used as schools, commercial premises, warehouses, and parking lots for private and public transport. A bright example is the Manu Garrinci National Stadium in the city of Brasilia, Brazil. The total amount of construction of the giant stadium for 72,000 viewers for the 2014 FIFA World Cup cost 900 million dollars. The stadium was abandoned after the end of the championship: the football club that got this stadium plays in the fourth-strongest division, collecting no more than 2,000 viewers for the matches. As a result, the arena occasionally hosts concerts of popular bands and performers, the administration of the city moved in the sub-tribune rooms, the stadium area is used as a parking lot for cars and trucks.

It is necessary to ensure that in the future, stadiums are not only a venue for football matches of international and national levels but also for other mass events. These activities should cover the costs of operating and maintaining the stadiums and their territory. The multifunctionality of the stadiums was taken into account even at the design stage, which allows for the commercial side of the building to be quickly activated after the World Cup. Different options of how to create a multifunctional center based on stadiums, which will give a boost to the development of the economy of cities, were considered.



In the world and even Russian practice, there are examples when cities have found a private investor, such as, for instance, rich football clubs, or a company capable of turning the stadium into a multifunctional complex. One of such examples was a project in the south of Moscow. That was a residential development project with the obligation to renovate the stadium named after Eduard Streltsov (also known as "Torpedo" Stadium) and integrate it into a residential quarter. At the same time, the existing stadium will take away part of the territory for residential development, thanks to the skilled reconstruction, the sports area purposes will be increased 10 times, due to the premises for sports sections, training bases, etc.

The issue of "heritage" is most challenging for those cities that do not have football clubs playing in the major leagues, or matches of their basic teams are not popular. According to the Russian Football Union, the average attendance of the "Rostov" club's matches in Rostov-on-Don was 10,000, while the "Mordovia" club in Saransk only gathered about 5,000. Almost all stadiums built in Russia for the championship matches, after the football tournament, the number of viewers' seats is planned to be reduced.

Additionally, adaptation of a stadium for commercial purposes can be achieved through modern technological solutions, when the football field is transformed into an arena for the event by laying a special coating on the lawn or by application of the unique field rolling technology, as it is arranged at the "Zenit Arena" in the city of St. Petersburg. It is recommended to owners of stadiums to attract commercial tenants (trading companies, sports, and medical services, catering companies (restaurants and cafes), office space tenants).

It is also possible to use free stadiums space for non-commercial purposes with the provision of facilities for children's sports schools and clubs, especially football-oriented, to accommodate urban and district football associations, museums of sports and museums of football, the placement of the executive city and district authorities, performing the functions of management and regulation in the sports field. After the 2018 FIFA World Cup, all newly built stadiums are used as multifunctional complexes. Fitness and spa centers, gyms and cardio halls, adult and children's sports sections, fan clubs, events, and conference rooms, cafes and restaurants, sports and clubs merchandise shops, are now placed at the stadiums.

Nonetheless, there are real risks of actually introducing the possibilities of multifunctional use of sports facilities and their introduction to self-sufficiency. Even with sufficient capacity, this cannot happen quickly and will be implemented in stages. Stadium managers need to determine the funding sources, and the amount of resource support for their activities before the stadiums are self-sufficient. This problem is currently relevant nowadays and must be addressed jointly at the level of world experts in architecture, construction, and sports.