

# 3 Event Portfolio Leveraging

## Chapter outline

- ❑ The difference between impacts and leverage of events;
- ❑ The rationale of the event leverage concept;
- ❑ The approaches of event-led and event-themed leveraging;
- ❑ The mechanics of event leverage situating the event portfolio as a leverageable resource;
- ❑ The foundations of portfolio leveraging for tourism;
- ❑ The foundations of social leverage for portfolios underpinned by the concept of event dramaturgy;
- ❑ Major issues with implementation of portfolio leverage;
- ❑ The logics of cross-leverage and its basic types;
- ❑ The potential for cross-leveraging event portfolios and mega-events.

In order to exploit the strategic value of an event portfolio, a set of leveraging activities should be designed and implemented by event portfolio managers (Ziakas, 2014a). Such activities could be focused on the relationships among different events and their stakeholders. They can synergise events with one another and with the host destination's overall product and service mix (Ziakas, 2010, 2014a; Ziakas & Costa, 2011). This chapter thoroughly considers the concepts of leveraging and cross-leveraging and their application.

## Introducing the concept of leveraging

The concept of leveraging shifts the focus from the mere analysis of event impacts and their ad-hoc effects towards the development of an analytical framework to understand how events can be leveraged in a long term perspective and what strategies can be implemented to achieve and increase positive outcomes from events (Chalip, 2004, 2006; O'Brien, 2007; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008). Chalip (2006) argues that, although impact studies provide useful

information about the positive or negative impacts of events on economic and social development, tourism promotion or environmental sustainability, they do not explain why these outcomes occur. Thus, impact studies are insufficient for strategic event planning and management (Bramwell, 1997).

The term *leveraging* is derived from business literature and refers to the long-term strategies through which corporations seek to achieve the highest return to their investments (VanWynsberghe, Derom, & Maurer, 2012). Leveraging involves the identification of the existing assets of a corporation and the further creation and enhancement of the value of these assets to benefit the business (Boulton, Libert, & Samek, 2000). The analogy between the business leveraging approach and events can be briefly described as follows: leverage initiatives are “those activities which need to be undertaken around the event itself, and those which seek to maximise the long-term benefits from events” (Chalip, 2004, p. 228). The concept of event leveraging can be viewed, first, as a knowledge of the potential that events can generate for the host destination and its residents and, second, as an intention to realise this potential on different levels of community operations (Quinn, 2013). This approach emphasises the necessity of pre-event planning as well as during- and after-event analysis and evaluation.

Smith (2014, p. 21) argues that in order to achieve expected positive results from leveraging initiatives, a leveraging approach needs to be “...an integral part of the decision-making process in the early stages of event planning...”. In other words, it is essential for city event managers to design, implement and evaluate tactics that employ all the opportunities that events offer to the community. Traditionally, events have been used in an ‘ad-hoc’ manner and the shift towards the leverage concept leads to a wider integration of events into the public policy domain (Richards & Palmer, 2010; Smith, 2014).

## **Impacts vs leveraged outcomes**

To understand the core idea of the event leverage concept, it is essential to emphasise the difference between event impacts and leveraged outcomes. The impacts of events can be defined as the automatic effects of event projects (Smith, 2014). Preuss (2007a) argues that event impacts are often caused by a short-term impulse and affect the event environment (e.g., city economy, social wellbeing, local business development), directly through the event. For example, mega-events are capable of generating new jobs, business opportunities, enhancing the destination image and increasing tourist flows. Because of the substantial investment in event-related infrastructure, such effects can be materialised only due to the results of a particular event staged in a city (Smith, 2014). Negative impacts such as increased prices for services, inappropriate development, noise, crime and a tarnished destination brand can also occur (Jago, Dwyer, Lipman, Lill, & Vorster, 2010). All these impacts differ from leveraged outcomes that

have been deliberately planned and undertaken around an event to maximise the long-term benefits from staging this event. An event itself is not the intervention. It represents a temporally limited set of assets. The main task for the event managers is to identify these assets and utilise them in order to achieve positive results (O'Brien, 2006).

## Event-led and event-themed leveraging

Smith (2014) distinguishes between event-led and event-themed leveraging. When event-led leverage projects are closely linked to events and try to expand positive impacts that are normally expected from staging of events, event-themed leverage activities, in their turn, can be defined as general initiatives, which are planned to capitalise on and maximise the opportunities derived from hosting an event. In the latter case, an event is used as a hook to achieve more benefits which are not related directly to its hosting. The main advantage of event-themed initiatives is that they can help to extend the reach of events and benefit “a wider group of beneficiaries in a wider set of policy fields” (Smith, 2014, p. 27). Although these suggestions have been related, in the first instance, to the staging of large-scale international sporting events, it is possible to assume that the leveraging tactics could be also implemented while planning small community events with such leverage objectives as, for example, fund raising, charity or community members support.

The current literature demonstrates the potential of small-scale events in generating an array of leveraging opportunities for the host communities (e.g., Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; O'Brien, 2007; Ritchie, 2004; Ritchie, Mosedale, & King, 2002). For example, tourism seasonality can be overcome by running a rugby season in off-tourism periods (Higham & Hinch, 2002). Ritchie (2005) and Wilson (2006) argue that small-scale sport events are capable of generating substantial benefits for the local economy through using available infrastructure and providing secondary expenditure opportunities. Overall, leveraging implicates strategic thinking and decision-making where both outcomes and the ways to achieve them are planned in advance (Smith, 2014).

## Event portfolio as a leverageable resource

To sustain and enhance benefits through event leveraging, the concept of a strategically developed event portfolio should be employed (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013). Chalip (2004) has developed a general framework (Figure 3.1) where an event portfolio is envisaged as a leverageable resource for the economic development of a host city. Chalip (2004) distinguishes between the immediate and long term leveraging activities of a portfolio. The former are designed to increase visitor spending, lengthen visitors' stays, retain events expenditures and enhance local and regional business relationships by building new markets and supply