The Olympic Games Rio 2016 delivered many inspiring athletic achievements that were witnessed and shared by a vast global audience through record-breaking media coverage and unprecedented levels of digital engagement. Against a backdrop of economic, political and social challenges, they also set new standards for legacy planning that have left an important heritage.

Planning for the legacy of the Olympic Games Rio 2016 did not start when the flame was extinguished on 21 August 2016, nor even did it start at the moment when Rio de Janeiro was awarded the Games in 2009. Rather, it was planned well in advance of the Olympic Games from the time the city first considered a candidature.

Once the city had made the decision to apply to host an edition of the Olympic Games, legacy figured prominently in all of its activities. In 2009, when the 121st IOC Session meeting in Copenhagen chose Rio de Janeiro as the host city for the 2016 Olympic Games, it did so on the basis of a sound candidature file in which legacy played an important role. Throughout the process, foremost in the minds of the candidature team was consideration both of what Rio could bring to the Games, but crucially also, what the Olympic Games could do for the city. The Games plan foresaw four zones, and the candidature team noted that two of these zones were in areas of the city that were expanding rapidly and in need of housing and infrastructure for which development associated with the Olympic Games could provide a catalyst.

In the Maracanã zone, there were plans to renovate the port and surrounding areas. And even before the Games were announced, there were plans for what would eventually become the Barra Olympic Park, to transform in an Olympic training centre after the end of the Games. Meanwhile, the candidature file did not neglect the social benefits associated with organising the Olympic Games and these too figured prominently in what was a solid candidature file.

Once the Games were awarded, throughout the seven years of their preparation, and even during the Games themselves, legacy planning continued. This was all the more remarkable given the unprecedented challenges facing the country during that period. Several months on, even if the flame is out, the Games promise to leave a shining legacy.
Youth & Sporting Legacy

At the heart of the Olympic Games Rio 2016 was a commitment to help children and young people connect to sport by focusing the world’s attention on sport’s greatest athletes and giving today’s young people more education on sport, better access to sport facilities, competition, coaching and sporting events.

► Among the greatest legacies of the Olympic Games was Transforma, Rio 2016’s education programme. Transforma sought to expand the sports offer in schools and promote the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship. After starting in 2013, it was rolled out to 8 million young students, almost 16,000 schools, 3,032 town and cities, and more than half of all Brazilian municipalities. It was present in 26 Brazilian states and the Federal District and was rolled out internationally to more than 20 countries. The programme was supported by TOP partners Bridgestone and Dow.

► Opened at the Maria Lenk Aquatic Park in 2012, the Time Brasil Training Centre is today accessible by young and talented athletes. It is devoted to coaching, athlete education and sport science. By January, 160 athletes from 13 sports/disciplines – athletics, aquatics, diving, synchronised swimming, snowboard, artistic gymnastics, judo, karate, tennis, sailing, beach volleyball and combat sports – and 10 National Federations had already used the facilities.

► The Olympic Laboratory was initiated by the Brazilian Olympic Committee in 2009 in partnership with nine Brazilian research and educational institutions, and with funding from the Studies and Projects Funding Agency (FINEP), subsidised by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI). It will open in March 2017.

► All the equipment used for the hockey tournaments is now the property of the Brazilian Hockey Federation as part of a legacy plan developed before the Games, while many of the volunteers who worked on the hockey competitions are now playing or working with the sport.

► Under a Rio 2016 donation programme, National Federations were able to apply for sports equipment—4,182 items were donated so far.

Sports Venues

After the Games, as part of the Venue Use Agreement, Rio 2016 began repurposing or dismantling some of the venues in the Barra Olympic Park. This is a long-term process and is currently ongoing. The Park was opened to the public in January 2017 with some new elements including a Wall of Champions, new plazas, landscaping and sporting arenas.

► Aquatic Stadium and training pools: built with public resources, these were intended as temporary facilities which would be disassembled and repurposed. The dismantling process is currently ongoing. The five temporary swimming pools were reallocated to other sports facilities in Brazil, including Manaus; Salvador; Palmas/Tocantins; and Guaratinguetá/São Paulo. A fifth pool has been transferred to the Army Physical Education School in Urca, Rio de Janeiro, a sport complex extensively used by National Federations and COB for training and preparation.

► Handball: this temporary arena was built to be disassembled. It will be dismantled and used for the construction of four new schools in areas defined by the City Hall.

► The training hockey pitches at a local university are now in use by students and clubs for local tournaments.

► The canoe slalom venue hosted the Latin American championships in September.

► Via Olímpica: privately financed and maintained by a private contractor, the roads in the Olympic Park linking the different sports venues are now open to the public.

► Velodrome: a publicly-funded installation, this venue is now managed and maintained by the Ministry of Sport; it is being opened to the public.

► Tennis Centre: a permanent sports venue, the centre staged a beach volleyball tournament in February 2017.

► Maria Lenk Aquatic Stadium: built for the Pan American games, City Hall funded its transformation. Since then, the Brazilian Olympic Committee has maintained and managed the venue where it runs a “High Yield Athletes” programme. Today, some 160 athletes train in the venue.

► Cariocas 1, 2 & 3 Arenas: funded using private resources, Arena 1 (basketball) and 2 (Olympic training centre) reverted to the Ministry of Sports in December 2016. Arena 3 now comes under City Hall and will become a public school with a strong emphasis on sport education.

► Rio Olympic Arena: built for the Pan-American Games, this venue was transformed using private funds. It has been privately managed since the end of the Pan American Games. It will host training for the Brazilian artistic gymnastics team.

► International Broadcasting Centre: a privately funded installation, the IBC reverted to private ownership immediately after the conclusion of the Games. The internal structures were dismantled and will be used by OBS in PyeongChang and Tokyo.

► MPC: also funded with private resources, this installation reverted back to private ownership after the Games. It is believed that it will be used for office space, however, this is a private decision.
Economic Legacy

Games-related projects generated thousands of jobs during one of the worst global recessions in more than 80 years, and economists expect continued economic benefits long after the Games.

► Rio 2016 created 70 new hotels and residences in Rio and invested BRL 5 billion in the tourism industry.

► The construction of hotels and other infrastructure for the Games was estimated to require some 16,000 staff to work in the new buildings and residences, creating training and employment opportunities.

► The Olympic Games helped the country to achieve record tourism figures in 2016. Over the 12 months, Brazil welcomed 6.6 million foreign tourists, which represents a 4.8% increase on the previous year. In terms of revenue generated by tourism in 2016, the total was US$ 6.2 billion, an increase of 6.2% on the previous year.

► Rio 2016 and SEBRAE, Brazil’s small business association, worked together to help SMEs to apply for and win supplier contracts by upgrading their certifications and qualifications. SEBRAE’s target was to generate 300 million BRL in revenues for SMEs through direct contracts with Rio 2016 suppliers.

► A survey conducted by the Social Policy Centre at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, headed by former Minister of Strategic Affairs and economist Marcelo Neri, concluded that “the Rio economy, from the point of view of people took […] off after the announcement of the Olympic venue, but once picked, the growth has not weakened”.

► Job creation accounted for 82% of Rio’s local economic growth. The base of the social pyramid in Rio mostly benefited from the increase in labour income during the pre-Olympic period. The income of the poorest 5% grew 29.3% against 19.96% of the richest 5%.

► The study also compared the changes in the services of the pre-announcement period of the Olympic Games (1992-2008) with the post-announcement period of the Games (2009-2016). The conclusion was that the seven years prior to the Games brought more progress than the previous period in areas such as public services, education, health and social development.

► For each BRL1 invested in sports facilities, another BRL5 have been invested in legacy projects, helping to improve the quality of life for people beyond the Games.
The Olympic Games Rio 2016 have the power to leave an important social legacy not just for the people of Rio de Janeiro, but further afield in Brazil, South America and internationally.

A new Volunteerism

Volunteers are a major contributing factor to the success of any Olympic Games. The enthusiasm that the Brazilians showed for volunteering was very positive and has helped to create a culture of volunteerism in the country.

► Rio 2016 was able to count on the services of some 50,000 volunteers.
► Over 240,000 people applied to become volunteers for the Olympic Games.
► Applications were received from 192 different countries, with 60% coming from Brazil.
► Applicants were aged from 16 to 80 years of age, with 50% of Brazilian applicants being 25 or younger.
► 50% of applicants were women.

► Applicants who were selected were offered a one-year online English course, as well as specific training for their roles.

A grassroots project

Local communities were involved in Games preparation and received training and skills that they will be able to use in their daily lives after the Games.

► New equipment was installed in community centres in Rio. Members of nine underprivileged communities were given free training by domestic partner Cisco enabling them to work as technology network professionals.
► At-risk women in poor communities in Rio were trained in design, quality control and basic managerial skills. They were hired to make the 22,000 cushions that decorated the athlete’s apartments.

► Rio 2016 held three dialogues with environmental and social NGOs during the preparation of the Games. Over 70% of the 200 suggestions received were implemented and Rio 2016 communicated openly about those that could not be implemented. The process was facilitated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
► Rio 2016’s sustainability programme received ISO 20121 certification, after a third party audit confirmed that the sustainability plan for the Games followed international best practices and had been fully implemented. This raised the bar for environmental practices throughout the supply chain.
► Rio climate change action went beyond the Opening Ceremony awareness building. Energy-efficient and low-carbon technologies were implemented in Brazil and other Latin American countries, reducing 2.2 million tons of carbon emissions and demonstrating the feasibility of low carbon production in agriculture and industry.
► In partnership with the FSC, MSC and ASC, Rio 2016 engaged and trained suppliers in obtaining timber (chain of custody), fish and sea food certifications. Some 70 tons of certified fish were served, stepping up from London 2012 that served 40 tons of certified fish, while 100% certified wood was used on Games Operations.
► New wastewater treatment stations and 2,100 km of collection system were established, while 10 new wastewater treatment stations and 2,100 km of collection system were established in the west of Rio.
► Some 1,450 young professionals were offered training and skills in technology and subsequently jobs with Olympic Broadcasting services (OBS).

► Rio’s last landfill was closed in 2012.
► 1,100 tons of waste were recycled during the Games, including by local cooperatives, creating income for the waste pickers. Before the start of the Games, 356.19 tons of recyclable waste was sent to cooperatives/recycling industry.