

RIO 2016
BY MARK BISSON

RACE AGAINST TIME



With just over a year to go until South America hosts its first Olympic Games, **Stadia** examines how prepared Brazil's Rio de Janeiro is to host the Games of the XXXI Olympiad

Less than 18 months after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced it was considering a possible contingency plan to rescue the delay-hit Rio 2016 Olympic Games, things appear to be back on track – although concerns linger.

The IOC was forced to confront a tidal wave of worries and problems expressed by leaders of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) at the SportAccord Convention in Belek, Turkey. The oft-repeated phrase was that Rio 2016 organizers had “no time to lose”. The chorus of concerns mainly focused on timelines for venue construction, operational plans and organizational chaos. At the time, there was even talk of the IOC relocating the Games. Instead, it averted the crisis by implementing a package of special measures to greatly accelerate preparations in Rio de Janeiro, including creation of a construction taskforce and improved cooperation between the IOC, Rio 2016 and the three levels of government.



(Clockwise from bottom left) Rio's planned Olympic venues: canoe slalom; BMX track; youth arena at the Deodoro Olympic Complex; Olympic Way; the Olympic park; the Future Arena; aquatic stadium; tennis center; velodrome

A different picture emerged at this year's ASOIF annual assembly on the sidelines of the SportAccord Convention in Sochi, Russia. Rio 2016 chiefs were praised for the progress in venue construction, following a presentation by organizing committee president Carlos Nuzman, sport director Agberto Guimarães and communications director Mario Andrada.

"It is clear in the last year, that despite difficulties in the country – the elections, the political situation and the economic situation – the organizing committee has worked very hard," ASOIF president Francesco Ricci Bitti said at the April meeting. "The situation is totally changed; not all the problems are solved, but we are clearly at a stage so close to the Games that we have to work together and understand each other."

The international federations have been asked by the IOC to shoulder more responsibility than ever

before in Olympic preparations – and quickly. Under the IOC's package of Agenda 2020 reforms approved last December in Monaco, France, the international federations are now set to take a more active role in planning their Olympic competitions, harnessing their in-house events expertise, to aid local organizing committees in Games delivery.

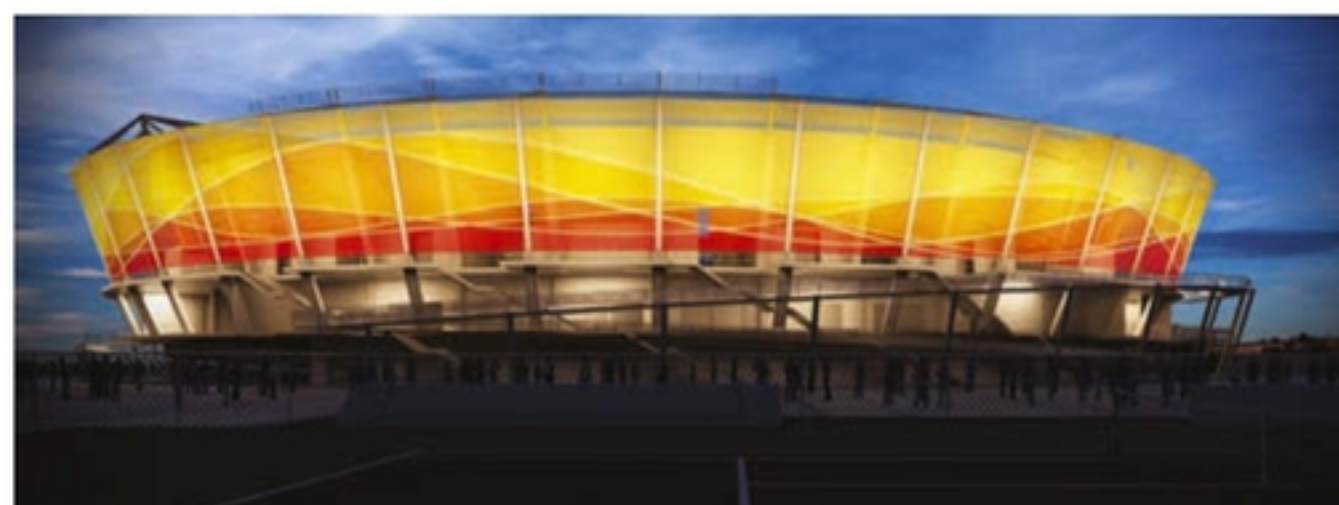
Tokyo 2020 will feel more benefits from these reforms than Rio 2016, however the federations' closer collaboration with Rio 2016 in the final 24 months of its seven-year preparation period is paying dividends to help deliver the first South American Olympic Games. That being said, time remains an issue.

Looking to London

The Rio 2016 venues are clustered in four Games zones – Barra, Deodoro, Maracanã and Copacabana. They

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are a mixture of new, existing and temporary facilities. Maracanã, built for the 1950 FIFA World Cup, was extensively renovated to host last year's international soccer showpiece in Brazil. It will host the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as some soccer games. The 46,931-seat Olympic Stadium, home of Botafogo FC, is being expanded to a capacity of more than 60,000 to host athletics events.

Following its role in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic masterplan, Aecom has provided the same services for the Rio 2016 park, with the addition of schematic design for seven competition venues and detailed design for the International Broadcasting Center (IBC). The city's Olympic authority, the Municipal Olympic Company (EOM), leads the masterplan process; the outline requirements were defined by the city, the Brazilian Institute of Architects and Rio 2016, with Aecom to undertake the project.

The masterplan embraced the three phases for the development of the Olympic Park – the Games, transition and legacy – with Aecom's proposals for venues incorporated within this. They responded to the desire "to deliver innovative designs and revenue strategies that are models in the industry and for Rio to maximize the return on investment and minimize operating costs," says Adam Williams, director of

10,500
athletes from 205 countries
will compete at the Games

306
medal events from 42 sports
will be contested over 17 days

112
years since golf was last
contested at the Games

92
years since rugby was last
contested at the Games

Aecom Global Sport. "There was a clear focus on efficiency in design to minimize cost and complexity."

He adds that one of the main challenges was the overall delivery program. "We were appointed five years out from the 2016 Olympic Games, whereas our appointment for London was seven years from the Games," he explains. "We delivered the designs for the venues and park in nine months."

Williams is confident the park will be ready and he talks of new venues nearing completion in readiness for test events, which will allow Rio 2016 to finalize event overlay and ensure the best operational efficiency. Williams says the main permanent venue, Carioca Arenas, which includes three arenas, is one of the most advanced, while the tennis center, comprising eight permanent courts and eight temporary courts, and aquatics complex are "progressing well" and the velodrome is "not far behind". The infrastructure budget for the Games is around US\$10.76bn.

The 15 competition venues in Barra will stage 23 Olympic sport disciplines, with the Olympic Village, Athletes' Park and International Broadcasting Centre/Main Press Centre complex also located in the zone. The Olympic Training Centre for high-performance athletes and the Olympic golf complex, which will become the city's first public course, together with the