In addition to this online publication, The Expo Book is available in print in issues of InPark Magazine (IPM). To request a hard copy, send an email to editor@InParkMagazine.com.

A Guide to the Planning, Organization, Design & Operation of World Expositions

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Feasibility, Legacy Planning, Site Selection and Getting BIE Approval

Thinking Long-Term: Feasibility and Legacy Planning

Why host an international exposition?

As any visitor can attest, international expositions are educational and entertaining. An expo has the potential to attract large numbers of people and generate demand for on- and off-site purchases of goods and services, benefiting the region through tourism and retail revenues. But apart from these obvious attractions, the city that seeks to develop an expo should have its eye on a much bigger and more enduring prize. The substantial, long-term local and regional benefits that are the legacy of a well-planned event are the true measure of its value to the host community. Such benefits include:

• Positioning or repositioning the image of a community, region and/or country
• Developing or redeveloping a major parcel or parcels of land
• Creating jobs and economic opportunities
• Accelerating the implementation of infrastructure and other improvements which, under ordinary circumstances, may take many years

In other words, the expo is not an end in itself; it is a catalyst. An expo’s planning and the vision of its organizers should and must include mapping out not only the years leading up to opening day and the three- to six-month period of the expo itself, but also the years beyond closing day during which long-term goals can be realized. Exactly what those goals and objectives are will vary depending on the needs and aspirations of the community. It is the expo organizers’ job to shape those goals and determine how they will be attained with the expo as their genesis. Ideally, starting the very day after an expo is concluded, a well-planned effort will take place to dismantle temporary improvements and facilities, while those planned to serve long-term needs will be transferred to the entity or entities that will operate them in future years.

Some quick examples: New exhibition halls built for the Hanover 2000 Expo were easily utilized within months after the event closed, as part of the inventory of buildings on the trade fair campus. Aichi’s Expo 2005 was quickly transformed into a public park and most of the exhibition buildings, including some of the signature corporate pavilions, were quickly dismantled, according to plan, and the materials recycled into other building projects elsewhere in Japan. Coming up: Zaragoza Expo 2008 will run June 14–Sept 14. After closing day, the Zaragoza expo pavilions and site will be converted into a 160,000-square-meter business park. Two years later, Shanghai Expo 2010 will be the instrument of regenerating a rundown industrial waterfront site as a component of the Huangpu Riverside Regeneration Program. "The expo will not only give the area a complete facelift, but also turn it into a pilot for new urban living, a firm testament to the very theme of Expo 2010: “Better City, Better Life,”” say organizers. Looking further ahead to the recently confirmed Expo 2012 in Yeosu, Korea, organizers forecast that “the biggest beneficiary of the Expo is no doubt Yeosu itself. After vibrant interactions with 80 nations over three months, the place will be successfully transformed into a global marine city, adding more strength to Korea’s ambition to become the world’s fifth largest sea power.” Yeosu’s plans encompass new links to modern land, sea and air transport including a high-speed train connection to Seoul, five-star hotels and other tourism-related development.

Expo Locations: Past and Future

In the post WWII era, beginning with Brussels in 1958, expositions have been held in Europe, Asia and North America. While there is some evidence of a given region having a string of events, in fact, the BIE does not have a regional agenda wherein one region or area is favored over another. In fact, just the opposite is true in that locations for expositions are selected on the merits of the proposals of local organizers. Thus, with international interest in promoting new tourist destinations at an all-time high, it is quite conceivable that future expositions could be sanctioned in regions and countries which have never hosted prior expositions. For example, the large-scale investments in the Middle East in tourism infrastructure including airports, highways and hotels, could easily be a platform for a future expo. Likewise, one or more locations in the former Soviet Union, Africa and Latin America, while facing economic and social challenges, could be well-advised to host an expo as a means of generating international attention and attracting visitors.
Your Feasibility Data
The feasibility analyst will develop the necessary information on such topics and questions as the following:

**Market.** From where will the attendees come, how many of them will there be, what are their socio-economic and demographic characteristics and how much will they spend?

**Physical facility requirements.** What and where are the physical facility requirements?

**Management.** how will it perform economically? What are the operations and attractions, furniture, furnishings, and equipment; what are the costs for buildings and structures, rides and attractions, food/beverage services, and merchandise outlets are to be provided; what particular themes or imagery will the project contain?

Relevance to the community. How does the Expo relate to other projects and goals of the community in terms of its potential to be a strategic instrument in guiding future development of the area?

**Location and site.** What is the location of the project and how is this location responsive to marketing, access, land costs, and surrounding land use?

**Physical plant.** What are the physical facility requirements?

**Cost.** How much will the project cost to build? What are the costs associated with site development, including roads and utilities; what are the costs for buildings and structures, rides and attractions, furniture, furnishings, and equipment; what are the related "soft" costs, such as design, management, financing, etc?

**Operations and income.** How will the project operate and how will it perform economically? What are the operations and maintenance requirements? What is the anticipated return on investment?

**Management.** How will the project be developed from an organizational and management perspective?

New Expo Categories and the Role of the BIE
The Paris-based Bureau of International Expositions (BIE) is the international organization that officially regulates and sanctions these events. Making an effective presentation to the BIE is crucial for a would-be expo host. In past decades, there have been some expo-type events staged without BIE sanction, such as New York’s World’s Fair of 1964-65, but there are numerous pitfalls to this route, including the possibility that BIE member countries will boycott the event.) This chapter focuses on how to achieve BIE sanction for an expo by identifying a site, preparing a professional feasibility study, assembling a competent team, understanding the business plan of the project, and presenting a post-plan that is compatible with the site and with the parameters of the expo format, and conforming to concerns and priorities that drive BIE decisions.

At the present time, the BIE recognizes two types of international expositions: the Registered and the Recognized. (A third option exists: the Flower Expo, which can get BIE sanction through the BIE’s connection to the International Association of Horticultural Producers – AIPH - comprised of some 25 member organizations. Most AIPH expos take place in Europe, although Expo 90 in Osaka, Japan was an AIPH event.)

A little background is in order on the matter of types of expos: Up until Aichi’s Expo 2005 which was the first Registered event, expos were classified as either Universal (Category I) or Specialized (Category II). Universal expos were larger in area and content, of the two categories of events with correspondingly higher attendance. A Universal expo was hosted roughly every 10 years and participating countries were expected to build their own pavilions; the themes for Universal events were intended to be very broad, encompassing a range of possibilities for participants. Examples of Universal expos include Montreal 1967 and Seville 1992. The Specialized (Category II) events were intended to be hosted in between the years of the Universal events, and so took place every five years. The themes were focused on narrower topics and the host country/city was required to provide exhibit space to participants. With some exceptions, the duration of both Universal and Specialized expos was about six months.

With the shift to the Registered and Recognized categories, some important changes in the approach to hosting an expo have been made. First, the size of the sites for the Recognized events has been limited to a maximum of 62 acres. There is no restriction on the size of the site for the Registered event. Next, the Recognized event is limited to three months’ duration, while the Registered event can be up to six months.

These category changes are an attempt on the part of the BIE to help minimize the costs of hosting and participating in an expo - concerns often expressed by host cities as well as participants. The forthcoming Zaragoza 2008 Expo will be the first official Recognized event. How it will play out and how the host city handles it will bear close watching. We will report on it in a future issue and provide some insights as to how the new changes are likely to affect future expos and their planning.

[Note: See Chapter I for additional background on the BIE.]

Getting to Feasibility: The Project Development Approach
As with any project that requires a large capital investment, the successful international exposition meets and achieves established economic performance criteria. Educational and entertainment value notwithstanding, an international expo is a business and should be approached with the same attention to careful planning as one might approach any worthy industrial or commercial venture. Outlined here is a step-wise, logical process for preparing the feasibility study – an essential document that will play a key role in applying to the BIE, and guide the subsequent creation of the expo and the all-important legal plan. It is broken down into three basic parts: 1) Project Development Plan (PDP), 2) Design Development, and 3) Construction.

The PDP provides the basic framework for the implementation of the project and describes, in some detail, its physical, operational, and financial characteristics. Once the PDP is complete, sufficient information is available for the organizers to make informed decisions about the overall feasibility of the project, including equity and debt requirements and the project development timeframe. In most cases, before a final PDP is prepared, discussions with potential financial institutions can be initiated. Potential sponsors and exhibitors can be identified and, if timely, long-term reuse agreements can be negotiated and signed. The regulatory process, including any environmental reviews that may be necessary, can be initiated.

Design Development begins upon completion of the PDP and is based on the architectural and engineering concepts prepared in that first phase. Detailed design and construction documents are prepared and bids for quantities are used to develop a definitive estimate of capital requirements. The project is subsequently divided into construction packages, prospective bidders are qualified, bids solicited and evaluated, and award recommendations made. The Construction phase involves the physical realization of the project, initiating with site clearing and grading, placement of basic infrastructure and foundations, construction of building shells and other structures, finish work, installation of operating furniture and fixtures, and finally, start-up testing and project close-out.

It is necessary to coordinate the design and development of the project with government entities and agencies at the local, regional, and, possibly, national levels. Topics likely to come under discussion include the location, design

![Expo 2005's Mexico Pavilion](image)
characteristics, and schedule of regional highways and infrastructure improvements. In some cases, governmental assistance may be available to the project, for such things as provision of infrastructure and facilities, financial incentives such as tax holidays, and training programs for employees. The findings of the feasibility study, should they be positive and reinforce the initial local enthusiasm for the idea, will be a powerful tool for gaining community support and, in turn, obtaining serious consideration from the BIE.

The issues and matters to be studied and resolved in producing the PDP and the feasibility study encompass five general categories: 1) Market Definition, 2) Project Concept, 3) Site Concept, 4) Master Plan and 5) Economics/Finance. To accomplish this study, expo organizers should engage a professional, qualified team including individuals and firms with in-depth experience in feasibility analysis and market/economics research, preferably having a track record in international expos and/or comparable mega-events, and with a thorough understanding of the dynamics of these unique events. Without an understanding of the fundamentals of an expo, people who are otherwise highly qualified to prepare feasibility studies for commercial or industrial ventures encounter a relatively barren bookshelf when seeking to quickly acquire the knowledge needed to make crucial judgments about the potentials for a future event of this kind. Due to the changing dynamics of the events themselves, only by keeping abreast of the actual experience of expos can one be fully informed as to the challenges and requirements ahead.

A Comparison of Expo Themes

The application of the BIE expo classification system requires organizers to identify and select an appropriate theme for their individual events. The experience of previous expos demonstrates widely divergent approaches to selecting and implementing themes. Because each event presents a unique set of political, socioeconomic and cultural circumstances, the selection of a theme must be approached through a consideration of many factors.

### Expo New Orleans 1984
- **Theme:** The World of Rivers — Fresh Water as a Source of Life
- **Concept:** Expo site with a major waterfront redevelopment. It was hoped other exhibitors might share relevant development examples.
- **Interpretation:** Followed by most local, city, and state exhibitors, but not by many national pavilions.
- **Evaluation:** Considered limited and even irrelevant to countries where rivers do not play a major role in their economy and culture.

### Expo Tsukuba 1985
- **Theme:** Dwellings and Surrounds — Science and Technology for Man at Home
- **Concept:** Intended to give international exposure to the expo and Tsukuba science city, a cornerstone project in Japan’s national "Technopolis" program.
- **Interpretation:** Virtually all participants developed exhibits of technology, with particularly strong representation by Japanese corporations specializing in household consumer electronics.
- **Evaluation:** Effective theme for Japan and Tsukuba. Posed challenges to exhibiting countries with inferior or less-developed technology.

### Expo Vancouver 1986
- **Theme:** World in Motion, World in Touch
- **Concept:** Theme was originally "Transportation" and name of event "Transpo 86." Market research indicated this was confusing and lacked broad interest.
- **Interpretation:** Exhibitors embraced the theme with displays of transportation technology. New Vancouver rapid transit system itself became an important element of the fair.
- **Evaluation:** Adoption of modified theme allowed the greater flexibility needed by exhibitors. The fair was considered a great success and has had a strong local legacy.

### Expo Brisbane 1988
- **Theme:** Leisure in the Age of Technology
- **Concept:** A major purpose of the expo was to promote Australia as a tourist destination. Many exhibits stressed leisure and recreation opportunities.
- **Interpretation:** Exhibitors found plenty of diverse ways to explore the theme.
- **Evaluation:** In terms of Australia’s known appeal to the rest of the world, the "leisure" theme was well-considered.

### Expo Seville 1992
- **Theme:** The Age of Discovery
- **Concept:** Celebrating Columbus’ discovery of the Americas was particularly important to Seville because the expedition began there. Officially, the theme explored three eras: pre-1492, 1492-1992, and the future.
- **Interpretation:** Theme allowed interpretation of both Old and New Worlds. Spain presented several large exhibits. European countries were well-represented with historical themes within futuristic, modern structures.
- **Evaluation:** First international expo held in Europe since Brussels 1958 and media interest was very high. The broad theme allowed a wide range of presentations yet felt specific to Seville.

### Expo Lisbon 1998
- **Theme:** The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future
- **Concept:** Government of Portugal enlisted UNESCO in broadening the expo message, through UNESCO’s declaring 1998 International Year of the Oceans. Organizers presented the theme in a variety of substantial pavilion exhibits, live performances and shows. The expo drew record international participation.

### Financial Modeling

The financial model for an expo is structured around the two distinct, yet highly interrelated, phases of the overall undertaking: first, the event proper, factoring in all of the costs and revenues associated with its development and operations - and second, the post-expo legacy period. It is important that organizers envision the two phases together for the complete planning picture. From a short-term view, focusing exclusively on the expo costs and revenues, the project may produce some significant losses. But, when the long-term redevelopment of the site is included in the picture, the economic benefits of the overall project can be outstanding.

That said, the legacy of an expo is unique to its location and can be almost anything from a municipal park to a trade fair campus to a resort development. The economics of land assembly and long term development and operations tend to vary radically from case to case, and therefore each expo legacy plan necessitates a unique financial model. We can, however, provide general guidelines here for modeling the first phase: the expo period.

As previously stated, as with other types of projects the expo financial model is based on costs and revenues. On the cost side are all of the expenses involved in securing a site, providing the necessary facilities, equipment, services and attractions to accommodate a large visitor-based event; on the revenue side are all of the various streams of income. We have broken down these cost components into three basic categories: 1) Construction, 2) Capital Equipment and 3) Operations.

### Capital Equipment

In addition to the construction budget requirements, there is also a substantial inventory of furnishings, fixtures, and equipment that is required in order to organize and host an expo. These items include...
Expo Risk Analysis
An event of the magnitude and complexity of an international exposition carries with it various elements of risk, some of which are identified here.

Theme. A theme that may be perceived as controversial may deter potential exhibitors from participating. Likewise, a theme that is unclear or confusing in its message could deter the public from attending.

Timing. If an expo is in operation during a time period when other major events are taking place, particularly nearby, if an expo is in operation during a time period when other major events are taking place, particularly nearby, might deter potential exhibitors from participating. Likewise, a timing conflict may have a negative impact on attendance.

Political and Economic Conditions. Although completely beyond the control of organizers, economic and political situations such as recession, armed conflict, national tragedies and other events can dramatically affect an expo. For example, the San Antonio HemisFair of 1968 opened on the day that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, and the marketing program was delayed for approximately 30 days, which organizers believed had a significant impact on attendance.

Financial Risk. There are numerous areas of financial risk associated with the operation of an expo. The following diagram describes a process for the reduction of risk in the planning and execution of an Expo project. The basic concept embodied here is that, for the organizers of an expo, there is a series of events or milestones which, taken in an approximate sequence, can signiﬁcantly reduce the degree of risk. On the vertical axis is the degree of risk while the horizontal axis indicates a progression from the start to the end of the milestones. Without achieving a single milestone, the risk to the would-be organizer is 100%. In other words, the would-be organizer, at the beginning of the process, has no assets and therefore are 100% at risk of not having the event.

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Although season tickets and some merchandising sales can be initiated prior to opening, most of this revenue accrues to the expo organizers, although through tradition and standard practice, some of the income – and risk – is shared with suppliers. The presence of large numbers of people is a major inducement for corporations to provide some financial support to the expo. Some corporate sponsors cannot afford to provide support in the form of supplies or in-kind donations, but there is also revenue through corporations’ developing and operating exhibits as well as sponsorship of entertainment and other on-site activities. (See Expo Revenue Sources sidebar for more information.)

The BIE Approval Process

There are several steps in the process that expo organizers must pursue in order to receive a sanction from the BIE.

First and foremost, in order for the BIE to recognize a proposal to host an expo, the proponent must be able to demonstrate, to the BIE, by its government, and its country must be a member of the BIE. Without the approval and support of the proponent’s government, a would-be expo host has no official stance with the BIE. The existence of this process, indeed the role of the BIE, is often unknown to would-be organizers who expend some effort, not to mention money, on pursuing the idea of hosting an expo before these requirements come to light. For example, in the early 1990s, a group was formed in Hong Kong to explore the feasibility of hosting an expo. After considerable study, local debate and discussion, the promoters learned that Hong Kong, prior to the handover to China, had status as a Special Territory and did not have standing, directly with the BIE, therefore, the organizing effort was dropped.

Because the steps required to secure the support and approval of a government differ from country to country, it is not possible, in this discussion, to outline all of the possible requirements which might be faced. However, it is possible to observe, based on the authors’ previous experiences in North America, Europe and Asia, that the process typically begins with initial economic development. These initiatives are usually developed at the city level either through local governmental authorities or through business organizations or some combination thereof. Because an expo needs a specific site, an initial step in the local initiatives is the identification of a suitable location for the event. Although the site configuration and sometimes location may change as events develop, it is often the case that a prime motivation for the local community to host an expo is the opportunity or need to significantly renovate a part of the city.

Another key component in the process of promoting the idea of an expo for a given city, is the preparation of a feasibility study as outlined above.

One of the major considerations at this early stage is the proposed timing of the event. As discussed in Chapter 6 of this book, the BIE has attempted, over the years, to maintain certain intervals of time between events; in reality, a look at the schedule shows that the pattern is quite the opposite. Part of the reason for this variation is the ideal that is that, unlike the Olympic Games which in format and timing are quite well-established, expos arise out of a combination of local initiatives which create unique windows of opportunity. For example, in 1992, Hosted the Summer Olympic Games and a Category 1 Expo; the timing of the Olympics is established by international agreements on the interval between Summer Games, but the premise of the expo was to recognize the 500 years since Columbus discovered the New World. Thus, the window of opportunity was the end of 1992 setting the timing of the expo. The BIE will, no doubt, on occasion continue to make scheduling exceptions of this kind. But at the early stages, local promoters will need to deal with the proposed dates officially set by the BIE, and with any other cities that are in competition to secure those dates.

The BIE will carry out a multifaceted inquiry process for cities under official consideration to host an expo. The first step is a formal announcement by the government of the prospective expo host of its intention to seek BIE sanction for a specific year. If the BIE is receptive to this initial declaration of intent, the next step is for the proposing city to assemble a dossier of information about the proposed event, which is then formally presented to the BIE. Assuming the response is positive, a team is assembled to

The Expo Legacy

Seattle 1962

Near perimeter of downtown

Theme: Century 21

Regional context:

City is a part of the Pacific Northwest Washington state, on the US west coast. Relatively close to locations of several other large US cities, as well as cities in Canada, wet winter and warm summers.

Expo site conditions:

Major city park with educational, cultural and commercial facilities including convention center, science museum, college campus, and sports venues. Land area is 508 acres.

Post-expo site experience:

From the outset, the event was viewed as an ongoing long-term urban development plan. A temporary board of city officials was given responsibility for the post-expo needs. Further development on the site continued.

Experience gained:

Considered a success with some constraints. Too many expo buildings initially remained on site. Building orientation for an expo is different from that for an urban development. Lag time between fair and post-use could have been shortened.

Spokane 1974

Downtown riverfront

Theme: Celebrating Tomorrow’s Fresh, New Environment

Regional context:

Located in large city in the northern US region in Spain, on largest central island of Hawaii. Proximity for growth and development. Wet winters and summers.

Expo site conditions:

Undeveloped agricultural land adjacent to Spokane Science City, a planned technology research community.

Post-expo site experience:

Saw site transformed into a major city park combining entertainment facilities, open space and cultural business facilities such as an opera house and a convention center. Many pavilions sold for re-use locally.

Experience gained:

Site Development Committee of city officials worked with a major expo theme developer to identify long-term opportunities. City Public Works was responsible for maintaining the site, which added additional cost to increase size of certain water mains and added costs to provide for long-term demand.

Tsukuba 1985

Downtown waterfront

Theme: Man and Technology

Regional context:

Located in large city in Asia, in Spain, far from Canada’s eastern ports. Far from the US west coast. Hosted Expo ’70. Summer host of Expo ’70. Summer host of Expo ‘86. Summer host of Expo ‘86.

Expo site conditions:

Older, declining industrial and residential parcels of land and the demolition of older industrial buildings.

Post-expo site experience:

Industrial park connected with Tsukuba Science City, a planned science city, a cornerstone of the local economy and culture.

Experience gained:

15-year mixed-use development plan for BC Plaza went into effect on site producing an area which included commercial and major facilities; previously existing to develop in a decentralized manner.

Vancouver 1986

Downtown waterfront

Theme: World in Motion, World in Touch

Regional context:

Located in large city in Asia, in Spain, far from Canada’s eastern ports. Far from the US west coast. Hosted Expo ’70. Summer host of Expo ’70. Summer host of Expo ‘86. Summer host of Expo ‘86.

Expo site conditions:

Older industrial area and adjacent waterfront comprising mainly two areas: east Asian waterfront (Tsukuba Science City) and west Asian waterfront.

Post-expo site experience:

Site was expanded by three new administrative buildings.

Experience gained:

15-year mixed-use development plan for BC Plaza went into effect on site producing an area which included commercial and major facilities; previously existing to develop in a decentralized manner.

Tokyo 1995

Downtown waterfront

Theme: Transportation

Regional context:


Expo site conditions:

Major city in NW Germany, near Wolfsburg (volkswagen headquarters). Site has a long history of hosting expos, but not by many.

Post-expo site experience:

The post-expo use of the site mirrors the expo installations with little change. There are ongoing plans for additional development and has had a strong influence on the site.

Experience gained:

Major success story in post-expo planning.

Hanover 2000

Downtown waterfront

Theme: Man, Nature and Technology

Regional context:


Expo site conditions:

Major city in NW Germany, near Wolfsburg (volkswagen headquarters). Site has a long history of hosting expos, but not by many.

Post-expo site experience:

Experiences with both the exhibition and the Hanover trade fairs were already a well-established, long-term demand.

Experience gained:

Major success story in post-expo planning.

Aichi 2005

Site of an aging, and polluting refinery with some heavy summer rain, due to proximity of the Sea of Japan. Toyota is headquartered in the site.

Expo site conditions:

The site was an undeveloped piece of land. No previous urban, industrial or other uses. Site is about 2,000 acres.

Post-expo site experience:

Site is now a large park, although substantial parts remain undeveloped.

Experience gained:

The post-expo use of the site was significant, long-term development plans and most pavilions and structures were removed to restore the natural state of the area.

Tokyo 2025

Urban renewal

Expo site conditions:

City of Tokyo, capital of the Aichi province and 6th largest city in Japan. Toyota is headquartered nearby.

Post-expo site experience:

The site is now a large park, although substantial parts remain undeveloped.

Experience gained:

The post-expo use of the site was significant, long-term development plans and most pavilions and structures were removed to restore the natural state of the area.

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Expo site conditions:

City of Tokyo, capital of the Aichi province and 6th largest city in Japan. Toyota is headquartered nearby.

Post-expo site experience:

The site is now a large park, although substantial parts remain undeveloped.

Experience gained:

The post-expo use of the site was significant, long-term development plans and most pavilions and structures were removed to restore the natural state of the area.
make an official BIE site visit. The team is made up of representatives of at least three of the member governments, plus the BIE Secretary. This part of the inquiry lasts about three days and provides an opportunity for local proponents to make their case for the proposed event, responding to a variety of questions about the availability of a suitable site, the degree of local political, business, and community support, the financial plan, etc. Upon the completion of the inquiry visit, the team members prepare a report of findings which is submitted to the Executive Committee of the BIE which, in turn, makes its recommendation to the General Assembly during one of its two annual meetings in Paris, France.

If all has gone well to this point, without local controversy or the emergence of a rival proposal, the BIE will reserve the date for the proposed event. Once sanction has been received, further steps in the process of moving from sanction to planning and implementation deal with the invitations to international participants, the drafting of General and Special Regulations which will govern the hosting and operations of the Expo, and a host of more administrative and operational activities.

Other factors may be cited as contributing to and influencing the location of these events. As already alluded to, governmental support is one. Proponents of an expo need to demonstrate considerable government support at the highest levels. Site development or redevelopment is another. Many of the sites where expos have been held have been urban locations where local communities have sought to host an expo as a means of achieving a higher and better use for underutilized, unsightly or depressed properties. The BIE will take the post-use intentions into account—particularly in today’s political environment in which “sustainability” is no longer just a fashionable phrase, but a mandate—as well as the community’s goals for generating tourism and economic development. However, it is important to not overlook the plans and goals of the host city, to the BIE members. After all, like athletes at the Olympics, the “stars” of an expo are the international participants and their presence must not be overshadowed by the local aims.

An advantage of our electronic age is the candidates as well as the confirmed future hosts of international expos will have a public Internet presence. Their websites reveal useful material and direction for others considering getting into the game.