



Montjuïc esplanade prepared for the 1992 Olympic Games.

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2 The Universal Forum of Cultures 2004: a new concept event

CHARACTERISTICS

A new concept, local initiative cultural event, backed by an international organisation (UNESCO).

DATES

23 April to 24 September 2004 (5 months).

PREPARATION

First idea: October 1996.
Constitution of the Forum Council: 1998.
Approval of the definitive project: December 2000.

INITIATIVE

Mayor of Barcelona.

MANAGEMENT

Forum Universal de las Culturas – Barcelona 2004 public consortium, including the state (the Spanish government), the Generalitat de Catalunya (the Catalan government) and Barcelona city council (the municipal government) [copied from the 1992 Olympic Games].

PARTNERS

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the main non-funding partner; private sponsors.

ORGANISATION

The Universal Forum of Cultures Organising Committee (30 people have been working since 1997).

IMPLEMENTATION

Private limited company, *Fórum Universal de las Culturas – Barcelona 2004, SA*.

TOTAL COST

Cost of organising the event estimated at € 306.52 m (Pts51,500 m), of which the cost of outfitting and building the Forum site is estimated at € 195.32 m (Pts32,500 m), and contribution from the institutions at € 114.01 m (Pts195,000 m).
Investment in infrastructures connected with the Forum funded by public and private promoters estimated at € 1171.95 m.

CONTEXT

The initiative for the event was taken in very favourable economic (development of the new economy) and political (stability) conditions. Barcelona city council has undertaken to implement some very ambitious projects, so as to be even more competitive, in the South Llobregat area (airport extension, intermodal centre built around the future high-speed train, enlargement of the port) and the North Besòs area (extension of Diagonal Avenue to the seafront, new congress buildings, cleaning the river, etc.).

STRATEGY

Barcelona is pursuing a multiple strategy through the organisation of an event of this kind: a better international image, a competitive position vis-à-vis the capital, Madrid, and other European cities (Milan, Berlin, etc.), town-planning and economic strategy.

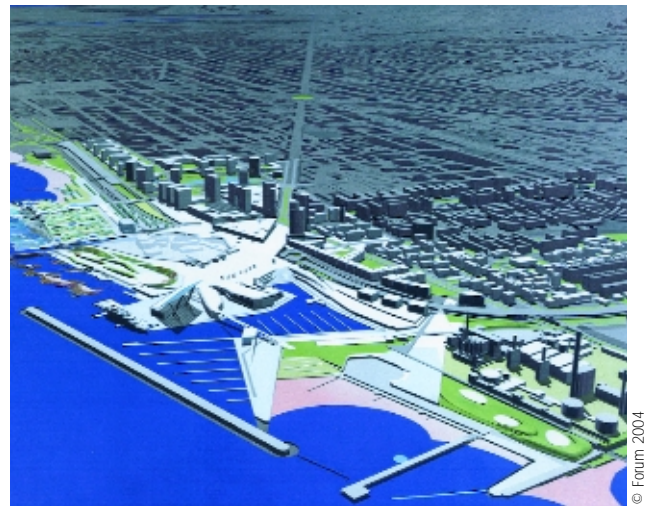
An international image strategy

With this event, Barcelona is breaking with the tradition of other major international events such as the Universal Exhibitions or the Olympic Games, which are based on sporting, economic or technical competition between nations. Barcelona intends to invent a new kind of international cultural event based on peace, solidarity between peoples, exchange and the cultural diversity of the world (UNESCO's support lends the project a certain credibility).

A national position strategy

Barcelona needs to strengthen its position in relation to other cities and to attract more investment (state and private).

Le projet urban Forum 2004.



A town-planning strategy

Organising this event gives Barcelona the opportunity to continue its ambitious project to open the city up to the sea, which began with the Olympic Games. The major works in progress will then be justified. The main aim is to renovate and plan a very rundown district at the mouth of the Besòs river, between Barcelona and Sant Adrià de Besòs, and to rehabilitate the neighbouring areas of La Mina and La Catalana. This is the area where most of the Forum activities are to be held.

An economic strategy

This event, and the urban developments linked with it, should encourage economic development, particularly by launching a new business area designed for new economy activities. The Distrito22@ project will transform about 110 hectares designed for "traditional industries" in a new production zone which can also accommodate economic activities linked to the new forms of production. It will also enable the development of economic activities linked to the new information technologies.

Forum 2004 should also encourage the development of the tourist sector.

STRONG POINTS

A new concept event

In the wake of the success of the 1992 Olympic Games, Barcelona can claim to be a dynamic, modern, supportive city. By being in on the start of a new type of event based on debates, conferences, summit meetings of inter-governmental organisations, exhibitions and festivals, it is taking up the various current debates and criticisms of globalisation, and reaping the benefits of events such as Seattle, the Davos Forum or Porto Alegre.

With this in mind, three themes have been selected: cultural diversity, sustainable development and the conditions for peace. Positioned like this, Barcelona can hope that in the future it will be at the centre of a network of metropolises and associations working for culture, peace and exchange between peoples.

An ambitious urban project

One of the main features of this event is the number of venues and facilities that will be built or modernised, mainly in the Besòs district, where a new centre will be created when the Forum is built: the Barcelona International Congress Centre (conferences and exhibitions).

The plan includes the building of hotels, a shopping centre, offices, a new university campus (university and installations linked to the new technologies), between 900 and 1,200 new housing units, major leisure facilities (zoo, sea zoo, a "water world" with beaches, pools and solariums, a marina and water sports centre, etc.) The sewage plants, waste incinerators and the whole of the energy sector will be transformed and modernised, and the public transport network will be extended.

All of that requires major investments from the public sector (the improvements to be carried out on the Besòs coastal sector on an area of 234 hectares requires a public and private investment of more than Pts195,000 m).

The recognised experience of the 1992 Olympic Games

One of Barcelona's undeniable assets is its success in organising the Olympic Games. On that occasion, it showed the whole world that it could organise a major international event, and now has a big vote of confidence. The city wants

to use that experience to organise and manage the Forum (creation of the same kinds of organisations and structures), but also to implement its urban development plan, which is a continuation of the Olympic Games one.

RISKS AND QUESTIONS

Uncertainties

Since this is an event of a new kind, many questions remain, notably its capacity to engage the interest of the international media and hence the potential visitors.

The building of a new centre is a challenge, even if major efforts are to be made in terms of transport services.

The support of all the local residents

Moreover, part of the city population may well feel excluded from the choice of investments, which will be concentrated in this particular district, quite possibly at the expense of their more everyday needs. The risk for the project, therefore, is that it will fail to obtain the support of residents and associations as a whole.

The association of other authorities

Moreover, the dossier submitted to the Commission gives no indication of the role played by authorities which are not members of the Consortium, such as the city community, the other local councils, etc., so there is a real question as to their support and the way in which they will mobilise.