benefits would be fairly insignificant. The average, annual impact on the country's GDP for this scenario would be 1.20% in 2004 and 0.29% for 2005-2010.

The third is the best-case scenario, whereby the Games would be staged successfully, with a significant net benefit for the country. In this optimistic scenario, GDP would increase by an additional 1.34% in 2004 and 0.5% between 2005 and 2010 because of the Games. However, given the state of the national and international economic environment, and the extent to which both the state and individuals have taken advantage of the opportunities presented, the best-case scenario seems unlikely, while scenarios 1 and 2 seem more likely. However, since the final assessment of the Games is not yet possible, in either costs or benefits, any attempt at accurate prediction would be inherently flawed.

In the summer of 2003, the Research Institute for Tourism (ITEP) published a study focusing on the Greek economy. According to the report, 2004 would most likely be a strong financial year for the Greek economy overall, as well as for business. The international climate and the Olympic Games would contribute decisively in making 2004 exceptional in terms of tourism, while investments were expected to bring higher yields than in 2003. According to the study, the Olympic Games would significantly reinforce business activity in sectors such as transport, telecommunications, postal services, food and beverages, publishing, as well as mining, metallurgy, plastics, machinery, electrical energy, agriculture, and commerce. Tourism was expected to benefit most, experiencing an annual increase of 5% in tourist arrivals through 2010.

Another study, conducted by the National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (ESEE), took a comparative look at the experience and economic benefits the cities hosting the past four Olympic Games had gained. The study found that the most direct and short-term effects applied to tourism and commerce, while the real estate market experienced a variety of significant effects that were indirect and long lasting. The short-term effects of a major event on a local market, are lesser or greater, depending on the size and maturity of the market; the smaller and less mature, the greater the impact. Accordingly, the Athens Olympics are expected to have a more powerful and immediate impact on real estate, tourism, and commerce than the previous Games had on respective sectors in Sydney and Atlanta. In any case, the key to long-lasting benefits resulting from the staging of a major event is the host-city's ability to maximize on the impressions created during the event and to maintain these effects for as long as possible.

Each host city is characterised by a series of variables —geography, timing, technology, type and size of the local economy—that do not allow for a direct comparison. Therefore, an

-depth understanding of real estate market conditions is necessary in order to assess the ames' impact on the sector. While there were noteworthy differences among previous host ties, they did have one element in common: the desire to enhance their worldwide image. For xample, the Korean government used the 1988 Seoul Games to open its doors to the world. s a result, tourism and manufacturing were the prime beneficiaries of this strategy, serving s an indication of the Korean economy's maturity level at the time.

When Barcelona bid for the 1992 Games, its primary motive was to find a catalyst that ould drive the Catalan economy and would contribute to an urban rejuvenation. The scalating, negative economic climate had crippled the city's infrastructure and Barcelona eeded an economic boost following the country's EU accession in 1986.

For Atlanta, national pride was not the incentive behind the bid for the 1996 Games. nstead, the major motivating factor was the expected economic growth the Games would ring to the city (if the 1984 Los Angeles Games were anything to go by). A services-based conomy, the objective of the Atlanta Games was to attract business activity in the form of ne-off events (ie., conferences, sporting events, etc.), and to bring corporate offices back to ne area. Whereas Seoul and Barcelona had mainly targeted foreign business activity, Atlanta's nain target was American companies.

Bidding for the 2000 Olympics, Sydney—like other host cities before it—believed that the Games would revitalise the nation's economy. Australia's key economic sectors were nternational tourism and regional (Asia Pacific) business activity based on services, elements hich serve as an indication of the country's economic maturity and its relatively small size. ust like Seoul had done in 1988, Sydney looked to improve its international positioning nrough the Games.

Another study, conducted by Kapa Research, took a different approach, no less significant, n an attempt to gauge the Greek business community's expectations and concerns regarding ne effect the Athens Olympics would have on the country's economy overall, and on businesses pecifically. Of those surveyed, 25.9% believe that after 2004 the Greek economy will go into ecession, 25.1% that the economy will probably be worse after 2004, while 21.5% are ptimistic that it will be better.

Asked which sectors will benefit most from the Olympics, Greek entrepreneurs responded s follows: 74.7% said tourism, 28.7% said services, and 25.1% commerce, followed by onstruction, shipping, financial services, transport, etc.

The majority (68.5%) agreed Greece's position post-2004 in Europe and worldwide, will e improved, while 20.6% expect it to remain unchanged, and 6.9% predict it will be worse.

When asked to describe Greece's image after 2004, 40.3% of Greek businesspeople called it modern and in line with other developed EU countries; 35.6% said it would remain fairly unchanged; and 21.4% predicted it would be fatigued and incapable of keeping pace with the growth rate of other developed European countries.

In terms of changes witnessed within their businesses, 43.3% of those surveyed said they had seen no significant changes in the past four years as a result of Olympic preparations, 22.3% believed things had changed for the worse, and 32% claimed things were better as a result of the Olympics.

Regarding the growth potential of businesses, the majority (48%) did not expect any change, while 35.8% believed growth potential to be strengthened because of the Games, and 11.9% were pessimistic, predicting a reduction in growth potential.

Finally, in terms of employment opportunities, 66.3% foresaw no change in the number of staff employed at their company, 19% expected new jobs to be created, and 12.2% predicted a decline in job positions.

All studies came to the conclusion that the Olympic Games' impact on the economy will depend greatly on how businesses respond to the challenges the Athens 2004 Games present. For example, the general consensus is that investments in new and modern technology, new methodology, and a specialized workforce, are all required if productivity, competitiveness and quality of products and services are to improve—a prerequisite for further economic growth beyond 2004.

Initial Results

Despite pessimistic forecasts of numerous studies regarding the exploitation of business opportunities, the actual results achieved between 1999 and 2002 are quite positive. During this period, Greek companies fared better than their foreign competitors in Olympic Games tenders: in 211 bids, 325 Greek firms were awarded projects, and another 104 Greek companies participated as subcontractors.

The construction sector, as well as related industries, reaped greater benefits, with 84 Greek contracting companies being awarded projects and approximately 150 Greek engineering firms being tasked with carrying out various studies (ie., architectural, electrical, landscaping, etc.). The advertising and IT sector also gained considerable benefits. Specifically, the Games' communications programme paid out €44,270,514 in nine tenders which involved eight local advertising firms. From the IT sector, seven Greek companies became involved in major IT projects, with a total budget of €27,615,000. Finally, the 27 Greek companies that were licensed