AN ATPI CASE STUDY

Sochi 2014
A Winter Olympic Experience
"ATPI Sports Events has proven to fully understand the requirements of our athletes, federations, sponsors and supporters. Since 1997 we have grown our Olympic expertise and international network together."

Gerard Dielessen – Secretary General
Dutch Olympic Committee

BACKGROUND

The Netherlands Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF) is the umbrella body for organised sports in the Netherlands. The 95 member organisations, including 76 sport federations, account for around 27,700 sport clubs with almost 6 million members, who make up almost a third of the Dutch population.

ATPI Sports Events has been the Official Ticket & Travel Agent for the Dutch Olympic Committee since 1997, holding responsibility for ticketing, flights, accommodation, local transport and social programmes around Olympic and Paralympic Games.

THE CHALLENGE

The primary task for ATPI Sports Events was to deliver the Netherlands Olympic Committee Events during the Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games, which took place from February 7 to February 23, 2014 Russia.

The Dutch delegation around Olympic events consists of a wide variety of stakeholders, including athletes, sponsors, sports federations, athlete families, supporters, dignitaries and press. All these groups have their individual needs and requirements. At the same time the strict regime and scarcity of assets around Olympic events make it a very complex project to manage.

In addition, the location of the Sochi Olympics had some challenges which are as follows:

- Doing business in Russia. The Games are different every time - on each occasion they are held in a different country with its own culture and customs. This was the case for the Winter Olympics in Russia, where business is conducted according to different standards and values from those in other countries.
- Contracting hotel rooms. Many hotels had yet to be built, or did not meet the requirements of international guests, or the rooms were not yet available.
- No direct scheduled flights from Sochi to Amsterdam, where the majority of the guest originated from. Therefore, journey times were lengthy for a relatively short distance.
Uncertainty regarding safety. The negative reporting in the media about Russia, and the increased threat of attacks, gave rise to questions and uncertainty among Olympic guests before the Games.

THE SOLUTION
For ATPI Sports Events the world is literally its workplace and this has resulted in long-standing expertise in doing business in other countries and cultures. Moreover ATPI Sports Events has had experience with the Olympic Games since 1997 as an Official Ticket & Travel Agent of NOC*NSF. Once the International Olympic Committee (IOC) opted for Sochi as a host city, the ATPI Sports Events team visited the city many times and established a local network. These visits, many years prior to the Opening Ceremony, were essential in order to attain the objectives and be able to offer the best Olympic service in response to the wishes of the various target groups.

Investing in good relations with hotel owners proved to be an absolute requirement in order to contract rooms. Regular visits to Sochi were supported by colleagues from the ATPI office in Moscow, illustrating to Russian hotel owners that ATPI Sports Events was the preferred agent to work with during the Olympic Games.

In order to bring about a comprehensive and flexible offering for all those travelling to the Olympic Games, ATPI Sports Events co-ordinated direct charter flights between Amsterdam and Sochi. These flights, of just four hours duration, were scheduled for the early morning and evening in order so as to give guests as much time as possible to explore Sochi. Before the start of the Games, ATPI Sports Events communicated directly with clients about the safety situation in Sochi and surrounding areas. During the Olympic period ATPI Sports Events formed part of the ‘Co-operating Crisis Team’, which included all relevant stakeholders of the Dutch Olympic delegation in Sochi. This ensured that the finger was kept on the pulse constantly.

THE RESULT
Through careful planning, preparation and understanding of our clients’ needs ATPI Sports Events successfully promoted the interests of NOC*NSF and the entire Olympic contingent. A good mix of quality local and international hotels was contracted, providing a varied offering to meet the specific preferences of the different target groups.

Due to the direct charter flights, offered in cooperation with the airline transavia.com, guests could get the most out of their Olympic trip. Thanks to the exceptionally good sporting atmosphere and the fact that no unsafe situations arose, clients were very pleased with the Olympic or Paralympic experience that ATPI organised for them.