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PLAYBOOK

How to make sport events more sustainable

A guide for responsible organisers

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW AS ORGANISER



Generalitat
de Catalunya



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About this Playbook

This Playbook for Sustainable Sport Events has been developed as part of the Green Games Project (co-funded by the European Union - Project ID:101181048) to support the transition toward more environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, and economically resilient sport events across Europe and beyond.

While sustainability in sport events involves a broad range of stakeholders, this guide is primarily addressed to public authorities—at national, regional, and local levels—and to event organisers, including federations, clubs, private companies, associations, and NGOs. These two groups are the main drivers of change: they define the strategic direction of events, establish the regulatory and operational frameworks, and make key decisions that determine environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

From their perspective, all other stakeholders—such as volunteers, service providers, local communities, landowners, and protected area managers—are essential partners in achieving sustainability objectives. Throughout the Playbook, these groups are addressed in terms of how administrations and organisers can engage, support, and coordinate with them to deliver a coherent and impactful sustainability strategy.

The Playbook provides administrations and organisers with concrete guidance, actionable tips, and inspiring examples to integrate sustainability principles across all phases of an event—before, during, and after its celebration. Drawing from scientific research, grey literature, field experience, and interviews with experts, it offers a practical roadmap for transforming sport events into powerful tools for sustainability, education, and local development.

This guide is not only about reducing environmental impact—it is about maximising positive legacy, empowering communities, and mainstreaming sustainability as a shared value and standard of excellence in the world of sport.

Target Groups

This Playbook is primarily designed for:

- Decision-makers from public authorities (national, regional, local) involved in the authorisation, funding, and strategic planning of sport events.
- Event organisers, including federations, clubs, private companies, associations, and NGOs responsible for planning and delivering events of any scale.
- It also offers complementary guidance—always from the perspective of administrations and organisers—for: Stakeholders involved in event delivery, such as volunteers, local communities, and participant

Objectives

- To strengthen the capacity of administrations and organisers to understand and address the environmental, social, and economic impacts of sport events, identifying both risks (e.g., carbon emissions, waste, exclusion, resource overuse) and opportunities (e.g., education, inclusion, regeneration, community pride) throughout the event lifecycle.
- To promote a sustainability mindset within planning, regulation, and operational management, emphasising shared responsibility, inter-sectoral coordination, and long-term legacy.
- To integrate sustainability criteria into all operational dimensions of sport events, including procurement, mobility, energy, food systems, communication, venue use, community engagement, and post-event evaluation.
- To foster meaningful participation and co-creation, enabling administrations and organisers to empower local communities and diverse stakeholders as active agents of change.
- To inspire practical action by sharing recommendations, checklists, and real-world examples that demonstrate how sustainability in sport is achievable, scalable, and impactful, regardless of event size or location.

Section

01

Starting
Points

Section 1.

Starting Points

Sport events, from small-scale local races to international competitions, have an undeniable capacity to bring people together, promote healthy lifestyles, and activate territories. Yet, their planning and execution often involve significant environmental impacts, resource consumption, social tensions, and logistical complexity. If not carefully managed, sport events can generate waste, emissions, noise, overcrowding, exclusion, or even degradation of natural and cultural heritage.

The growing climate emergency, biodiversity loss, and widening inequalities call for a transformation in how events are conceived and delivered. This Handbook for Sustainable Sport Events emerges from the conviction that sport can be a powerful vector of positive change—not only by reducing its own footprint, but by leading by example, empowering people and places, and leaving meaningful legacies.

A sustainable sport event is one that is planned, managed, and evaluated with a holistic perspective—considering environmental, social, and economic dimensions. It is not limited to compliance or “greenwashing,” but integrates sustainability into the very purpose and DNA of the event.

This means:

- Respecting and enhancing natural and cultural heritage.
- Minimising emissions, waste, and resource consumption through smart design and circular economy practices.
- Promoting diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and shared value creation.
- Generating long-term benefits for the host community.
- Ensuring coherence between the event’s message and its practices (leading by example).

They also align with global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—in particular:

- ✓ SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being
- ✓ SDG 4: Quality Education
- ✓ SDG 5: Gender Equality
- ✓ SDG 8: Decent Work and Growth
- ✓ SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities Within and Among Countries
- ✓ SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- ✓ SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- ✓ SDG 13: Climate Action
- ✓ SDG 15. Life and Land
- ✓ SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Sustainable Institutions
- ✓ SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals



Figure 1. Sustainable Development Goals (Source:)UN Office for Sustainable Development

At the European level, sustainable sport events contribute to priorities such as the European Green Deal, the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the New European Bauhaus and the EU Sport Policy. They are also aligned with national and regional climate action plans and protected area management strategies.

More than a response to global challenges, sustainable events represent an opportunity:

- to lead through action,
- to connect people with nature and each other,
- and to build a better, more inclusive and resilient future through sport.

In essence, a sustainable sport event inspires, educates, and leaves a tangible legacy, positioning sport as a genuine agent of change towards a fairer, greener, and more resilient future.

Section

02

Basic Principles of
Sustainability in Events

Section 2.

Basic Principles of Sustainability in Events

Sustainability is not an optional add-on—it must be embedded in the core strategy, values and practices of sport events. The following principles provide the foundational lens through which all actions should be designed and evaluated. They guide how decisions are made, how stakeholders interact, and how impacts are anticipated and managed. These principles are interconnected and apply across all event types, scales and contexts.

PRINCIPLE 1

Sustainability as a Foundational Commitment

Sustainability must be a guiding force from the earliest stages of event planning, not a last-minute adjustment. This involves aligning the event with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and with national and regional strategies on climate, biodiversity and equity.

Planning should define clear objectives and indicators across environmental, social and economic dimensions, and ensure that sustainability commitments are embedded into governance, procurement, communication and logistics from the beginning.

PRINCIPLE 2

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making through Early Impact Assessment

Comprehensive understanding of potential impacts—both positive and negative—is essential for guiding responsible choices. Early sustainability assessments and baseline studies enable data-driven planning, foster transparency, and lay the groundwork for continuous improvement. This principle recognises knowledge as the basis of legitimacy and adaptive management.

PRINCIPLE 3

Circular Economy and Resource Stewardship

Transitioning from extractive, linear models to circular practices is critical for reducing the environmental footprint of sport events. This principle is grounded in the ethical imperative of minimising waste, preserving resources, and promoting systemic efficiency through reuse, repurposing, and lifecycle thinking.

PRINCIPLE 4

Climate Responsibility and Carbon Consciousness

Sport events contribute significantly to global emissions—particularly through energy use, infrastructure, and mobility. This principle affirms the duty to act in line with climate science and the Paris Agreement, reducing emissions at the source and integrating low-carbon strategies into all event operations.

It encourages the identification and monitoring of emissions across Scopes 1, 2, and 3—from direct emissions to those related to energy supply and transport of people and goods. Priority should be given to renewable energy, efficient infrastructure, sustainable logistics, and accessible low-emission mobility. Carbon offsetting may be used cautiously, only when emissions cannot be otherwise avoided.

PRINCIPLE 6

Respect for Natural and Cultural Systems

Sport events must operate within the ecological and cultural limits of the territories they inhabit. This principle demands that organisers recognise the intrinsic value of ecosystems and heritage, actively protect them, and ensure that events do not compromise, but rather reinforce, these assets.

PRINCIPLE 5

Equity, Inclusion, and Participatory Governance

A sustainable event must be equitable and socially just. This principle emphasises the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that all voices—especially those of local communities and underrepresented groups—are heard and respected. Transparent and participatory planning fosters legitimacy, cohesion, and shared ownership.

PRINCIPLE 7

Regenerative Local Development

Sport events should not merely minimise harm but generate net positive outcomes for host communities. This principle supports the creation of long-term value through local procurement, job creation, social economy engagement, and post-event legacies that enhance territorial resilience and wellbeing.

PRINCIPLE 8

Collective Culture of Sustainability

Transformative change in sport events requires more than technical adjustments—it demands a cultural shift. This principle underscores the importance of shared values, education, leadership, and ongoing dialogue to cultivate a community of practice committed to sustainability.

All stakeholders—organisers, volunteers, sponsors, participants, landowners, residents—must feel ownership over the sustainability mission. Events should function as role models, setting visible examples of responsibility and coherence between values and actions. Fostering a culture of sustainability means activating peer learning, storytelling, and inclusive governance that reinforces collective commitment over time.

PRINCIPLE 10

Innovation, Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

Sustainable sport events require constant adaptation to emerging challenges and opportunities. This principle calls for fostering innovation—both technological and social—to develop solutions that reduce impacts, enhance inclusivity, and create value for communities.

Collaboration across sectors and territories enables organisers to access expertise, pool resources, and replicate successful practices. Open data, case studies, and peer-to-peer networks multiply the reach of good practices and ensure that sustainability advances collectively, not in isolation. By embedding innovation and collaboration into the DNA of events, sport becomes a driver of systemic change, continuously raising the standard for what is possible.

PRINCIPLE 9

Evaluation, Learning and Legacy

Sustainability is a continuous process that does not end when the event is over. This principle promotes the integration of evaluation and legacy planning as core elements from the earliest stages of event design. Systematic assessment—covering environmental, social, and economic dimensions—should be carried out before, during, and after the event, using clear indicators and transparent reporting to ensure accountability and inform future improvements.

Learning from results is essential for building institutional memory, refining practices, and sharing knowledge across the sport community. Legacy management ensures that the event generates lasting positive impacts—such as improved infrastructure, community engagement, environmental restoration, or enhanced local capacities—while avoiding long-term harm. By embedding evaluation, learning, and legacy into the event lifecycle, organisers can transform one-off experiences into enduring benefits for people and places.

Section

03

Building policies and
programs to achieve
sustainability in sport
events

Section 3.

Building policies and programs to achieve sustainability in sport events

Transitioning towards truly sustainable sport events requires more than isolated good practices—it demands structural changes in how events are conceived, authorised, funded, and delivered. This part of the Playbook focuses on the policies and programmes that different stakeholder can adopt to embed sustainability across all dimensions and phases of sport events.

Raising Awareness and Fostering a Shared Vision

A sustainable event begins with a shared understanding of what sustainability means and why it matters. This initial awareness must go beyond environmental rhetoric and embrace the full complexity of sustainability—balancing ecological integrity, social justice and economic viability.

Raising awareness among all stakeholders—including public authorities, organisers, participants, volunteers and communities—is the foundation for consistent and aligned action. It allows actors to recognise their specific roles and responsibilities, and to understand how their decisions and behaviours shape the event’s footprint and legacy.

This playbook proposes that each actor integrates sustainability not as an external requirement, but as a core value guiding their decisions before, during and after the event. This cultural shift is the first—and perhaps the most important—step toward systemic change.

Key Challenges Identified Across Stakeholders

Despite growing interest in sustainable sport events, several persistent challenges have been identified through the Green Games project, including scientific and grey literature, and interviews with practitioners and decision-makers:

Lack of clear criteria and shared standards

There is no widely adopted framework for what makes an event “sustainable.” Evaluation depends heavily on the willingness and knowledge of individual organisers or authorities. Scientific literature warns of the risk of “greenwashing” and fragmented action.

✓ Fragmentation of responsibilities

Sport events often require collaboration across departments (sport, environment, mobility, tourism, health), levels of government, and sectors. Misalignment between these actors creates implementation gaps. Several interviews highlight that “nobody really feels responsible for sustainability; it’s always someone else’s job.”

✓ **Short planning horizons and lack of legacy thinking**

Many events are planned with a focus on short-term success (logistics, attendance, safety), leaving sustainability and legacy considerations as secondary or reactive. As noted in the EUROPAC Manual, this limits long-term territorial benefits and undermines trust.

✓ **Insufficient tools and capacities**

Local authorities, small organisers and volunteers often lack the technical, financial or human resources to apply sustainability frameworks. Grey literature emphasises the importance of support mechanisms, training and shared tools.

✓ **Limited participation and community engagement**

Even when local communities are affected by events (through noise, congestion, or restricted access), they are rarely involved in decision-making. This undermines social legitimacy and increases resistance or conflict.

By addressing these challenges and fostering cross-cutting collaboration, sustainability can become a realistic and shared objective, not an abstract ideal. The following sections provide stakeholder-specific guidance, illustrated with practical examples and supported by real-world experiences from small and large events in different territorial contexts.

HOW TO READ THIS SECTION

The following recommendations are organized grouped by stakeholder type:

Administration — : strategic planning, regulation, funding, governance, oversight.

Organisers — : operational delivery and management (logistics, suppliers, venues, communications).

Other Stakeholders — : residents, clubs, federations, sponsors, NGOs, service providers and partners—framed from the organisers' perspective to guide engagement and support.

Color-coding helps readers quickly identify the actions linked to each role—or the roles they wish to activate— while also highlighting the importance of coordination and synergy across all actors involved.

Each group of recommendation were elaborated based on evidence from scientific and grey literature, and organisers and specialist interviews conducted in the framework of the Green Games Project. For more information check out the project website at green-games.eu

Administration

Building
compromises

Administration

Building compromises

Public authorities—at national, regional, and local levels—play a decisive role in shaping the sustainability of sport events. From the organiser’s perspective, they are both gatekeepers and enablers: setting the regulatory framework, aligning event planning with territorial strategies, and providing critical support in funding, infrastructure, and cross-sector coordination.

Their decisions influence everything from site selection and permitting to transport systems, environmental safeguards, and post-event legacy. When administrations integrate sustainability criteria into these processes, they not only ensure compliance but also create a fertile ground for innovation, collaboration, and lasting positive impact. For organisers, understanding how to work effectively with public authorities is essential to achieving both operational success and meaningful sustainability outcomes.

“In many parts of Europe, including South-eastern Europe, sustainability is still seen as a nice to have rather than a core value so there’s also a lack of standardised guidelines and support system from public institutions as well and as insufficient education of both the participants and volunteers on sustainable behaviour, so this is the things that us from Belvedere Marathon they’re struggling with the standardized procedures and the legislative”. — Event Organisers (Serbia).

Key Roles and Challenges

✓ Regulatory frameworks and sustainability standards

Public authorities are responsible for ensuring that sport events comply with legal and planning regulations—particularly in sensitive environments such as protected areas or rural landscapes. However, few jurisdictions have binding sustainability criteria for sport events, which can leave organisers without clear guidance or minimum requirements to follow.

✓ Navigating cross-sectoral coordination

Events often intersect with multiple administrative departments—sport, environment, land use, mobility, tourism—each with its own priorities and timelines. For organisers, navigating this complexity requires clear points of contact, consistent information, and mechanisms for joint decision-making.

✓ Balancing support and enforcement

Authorities may be tasked with both promoting events for tourism and economic benefits while also enforcing environmental or social safeguards. This dual role can create conflicting expectations for organisers, who must meet compliance obligations while delivering on development goals.

“Well then for the sport events also we have a regulatory challenge because they are inconsistent with regulations across European countries. Every country has a different regulation they are not centralised and that is a big problem.” National Olympic Committee of Slovenia (Slovenia).

Recommendations for Action

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

Embed sustainability into event authorisation processes

Integrate clear sustainability requirements into the official permitting process for sport events.

The authorisation stage offers public authorities a strategic opportunity to make sustainability a non-negotiable part of event planning. By requiring organisers to address environmental, social, and economic aspects—such as carbon reduction measures, waste management plans, stakeholder engagement, and prioritisation of existing infrastructure—authorities set a consistent baseline for responsible event delivery. Standardised templates and guidance can make compliance straightforward, while linking permit approval to the fulfilment of these commitments ensures that sustainability is not only planned but also effectively implemented.

GOOD PRACTICE

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

Integrating Sustainability in Event Authorisation.

Each Organising Committee must submit a Sustainability Plan as part of the Games delivery requirements. This plan is reviewed and approved by the IOC, covering priority themes such as climate, biodiversity, mobility, waste management, sourcing, accessibility and legacy.

Why it matters

The IOC makes sustainability a mandatory condition for event approval. Organising Committees cannot advance without an IOC-approved Sustainability Plan. This ensures sustainability is not optional but an authorisation requirement.

In practice

- ➔ Reuse of existing venues must be prioritised before authorising new construction.
- ➔ Carbon reduction measures (energy, transport, offsetting) are required and reviewed.
- ➔ Waste management and circular procurement are contractual obligations.
- ➔ Stakeholder engagement must be demonstrated before approval.

Useful resource

IOC – Sustainability Essentials (guidance for event organisers):

https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/IOC/What-We-Do/celebrate-olympic-games/Sustainability/sustainability-essentials/IOC-Sustain-Essentials_v7.pdf

GOOD PRACTICE

Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

Embedding Sustainability into Event Authorisation.

The FIA's environmental initiatives follow the guidelines of the international standards of ISO 20121, ISO 14001, and ISO 26000... The event organisers shall establish, implement, maintain, and continually improve an event sustainability management system..

Why it matters

The FIA makes sustainability a mandatory condition for event authorisation by requiring organisers to adopt a formal sustainability management system aligned with ISO standards.

In practice

The FIA guide provides a structured list of recommendations across all phases of an event (before, during, after). These cover practical areas such as:

- ➔ Reducing water and energy consumption,
- ➔ Improving waste management and circular procurement,
- ➔ Promoting sustainable mobility,
- ➔ Enhancing stakeholder engagement, and
- ➔ Ensuring legacy and transparency through post-event reporting.
- ➔ Organisers must demonstrate how these recommendations are addressed in their sustainability plan as part of the event authorisation process.

Useful resource

FIA Introductory Guide for Sustainable Events – includes detailed recommendations for organisers:

https://atcn.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FIA_guide_for_sustainable_events_2021_opt.pdf

Contribution to SDGs



2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Use public funding as leverage for sustainable innovation

Condition financial support on compliance with sustainability principles (climate, circularity, inclusion). Create or adapt calls for funding to promote innovation and knowledge transfer.

Public funding—whether through direct grants, subsidies, or in-kind support—can be a powerful tool to drive sustainable practices. By making funding conditional on meeting specific environmental, social, and economic targets, authorities can encourage organisers to adopt more ambitious and innovative approaches. These targets might include a percentage of local suppliers, minimum waste diversion rates, accessible infrastructure, or verified carbon reduction measures. Additional incentives, such as bonus funding for surpassing baseline requirements, can reward leadership and set positive examples for other events. This approach ensures that public resources actively contribute to long-term environmental protection, social inclusion, and local economic development.

GOOD PRACTICE

French Charter of 15 Eco-Responsible Commitments

Using Public Funding as Leverage for Sustainable Innovation

Initiated in 2017 by the French Ministry of Sport and WWF France, the Charter of 15 Eco-Responsible Commitments requires event organisers to sign the Charter and submit a sustainability plan in order to access institutional and financial support.

Why it matters

This Charter transforms public support into a lever for sustainability. Organisers must demonstrate compliance with 15 eco-responsible commitments before becoming eligible for institutional or financial backing, ensuring that public resources actively contribute to ecological transition, social inclusion, and circular economy practices.

In practice

The Charter establishes 15 commitments covering areas such as energy, water, waste, mobility, procurement, accessibility, and awareness-raising.

Event organisers are required to submit a sustainability plan detailing how these commitments will be met.

Institutional support and funding are conditioned on adherence, creating a national baseline for sustainability in sport events.

Priority areas:

- ➔ Provide organisers and regions with tools for ecological transition.
- ➔ Raise fan awareness for sustainable behaviours during and beyond events.
- ➔ Promote low-impact temporary mobility solutions for sport events.

Useful resource

French Charter of 15 Eco-Responsible Commitments (2024 update):

https://www.wwf.fr/sites/default/files/doc-2024-04/15-pledge-charter-for-eco-responsability_.pdf

Complementary information

French Charter – 15 Eco-Responsible Commitments for Sport Event Organisers

- ➔ Complementary information
- ➔ French Charter – 15 Eco-Responsible Commitments for Sport Event Organisers
- ➔ Measure and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of the event.
- ➔ Promote sustainable mobility for participants, spectators, and staff.
- ➔ Optimise energy consumption and increase the share of renewable energy.
- ➔ Preserve water resources and limit water consumption.
- ➔ Reduce and recycle waste, aiming for zero single-use plastics.
- ➔ Encourage responsible food supply, favouring local and seasonal products.
- ➔ Adopt eco-responsible procurement practices (sourcing and materials).
- ➔ Promote biodiversity conservation and protect natural areas.
- ➔ Ensure accessibility and inclusion for all audiences.
- ➔ Raise awareness among spectators and participants about sustainable behaviours.
- ➔ Educate and involve volunteers and staff in sustainability practices.
- ➔ Promote gender equality and diversity in the organisation of events.
- ➔ Engage and collaborate with local stakeholders (authorities, NGOs, businesses).
- ➔ Evaluate and report on sustainability results and legacy.
- ➔ Share experiences and good practices to inspire other organisers.

Contribution to SDGs



3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Strengthen cross-sectoral coordination

Create integrated governance frameworks to align event planning across multiple sectors.

Sustainable event delivery often requires collaboration between different government departments—such as sport, environment, transport, culture, and tourism—each with its own regulations and priorities. Public authorities can facilitate coordination through joint working groups, shared decision-making platforms, and regular inter-agency meetings. This integrated approach ensures that sustainability measures—like mobility planning, environmental protection, and community engagement—are consistent, mutually reinforcing, and aligned with broader policy goals. Improved coordination also streamlines processes, reduces administrative duplication, and allows events to maximise positive territorial and social impacts.

“Increased Transparency: Clear communication about sustainability goals and achievements. More discussions on activities. Building awareness from all sides. Timely planning. Finding synergies between stakeholders: (sponsors, organisers, local community, etc.)” — European Volleyball Championship.

GOOD PRACTICE

Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Strengthening Cross-Sectoral Coordination.

The Social Charter Monitoring Committee, composed of trade unions, employers, Paris 2024 and SOLIDEO, meets regularly to oversee the implementation of social commitments.

Why it matters

Paris 2024 demonstrates how cross-sectoral governance structures can ensure sustainability is embedded in event delivery. By involving multiple actors—public institutions, organisers, employers, unions, and local authorities—the Games created platforms for shared decision-making, guaranteeing that social, economic, and environmental commitments were consistently monitored and enforced.

In practice

Creation of specialised committees, such as the Social Charter Monitoring Committee, with representatives from employers, unions, organisers, and SOLIDEO (delivery authority).

A Legacy and Sustainability Plan developed as a collaborative effort from the earliest stages, aligning priorities across government levels and policy areas (sport, environment, transport, culture, labour).

Regular coordination meetings and joint working groups to ensure coherence between infrastructure planning, mobility strategies, environmental safeguards, and social commitments.

Impact

This governance model helped Paris 2024 maximise its positive impact on jobs, local businesses, social inclusion, and environmental performance, while reducing administrative duplication and strengthening accountability.

Useful resources

OECD – Boosting local jobs and businesses through a Social Charter (Paris 2024):

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/providing-local-actors-with-case-studies-evidence-and-solutions-places_eb108047-en/the-paris-2024-olympic-and-paralympic-games-boosting-local-jobs-and-businesses-through-a-social-charter_ecf7efec-en.html

Paris 2024 – Legacy and Sustainability Plan:

<https://parisolympics2024.relayto.com/e/paris-2024-the-legacy-and-sustainability-plan-namma0dr4q93n/6EMYFiIB1>

Contribution to SDGs



4

RECOMMENDATION 4

Strengthen cross-sectoral coordination

Provide organisers with tools, training, and technical guidance to improve sustainability performance.

Many event organisers, particularly at the local and regional level, may lack the resources or expertise to design and implement robust sustainability measures. Public authorities can close this gap by offering accessible training programmes, practical toolkits, and advisory services tailored to different event types and scales. Sharing case studies, facilitating peer learning sessions, and creating a repository of best practices can help organisers learn from successful experiences and avoid common mistakes. By investing in capacity building, authorities not only improve the quality of individual events but also strengthen the overall culture of sustainability in the sport sector.

“The main challenge is communication with the team and all event stakeholders. We need to educate them and share knowledge, so they become independent and understand the benefits...sustainability it is not due to a lack of willingness but rather a lack of knowledge. People may have heard about sustainability but do not know how to implement it. Leading by example is crucial.” — Triathlon Federation (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

Green Trail Concept (EU Project)

Supporting Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building.

The Green Trail Concept develops and promotes a sustainability certification scheme to plan, analyse, monitor, and evaluate trail running events, providing an assessment of their sustainability performance and guidance for their improvement.

Why it matters

Many trail running events take place in protected or sensitive natural areas, where organisers often lack technical expertise in sustainability. The Green Trail Concept provides a structured framework and capacity-building tools that help event managers integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions into their planning.

In practice

- ➔ Development of an EU-wide sustainability certification scheme for trail running events.
- ➔ Provision of technical guidance and practical tools to help organisers measure and reduce impacts.
- ➔ Engagement of a broad range of stakeholders (participants, sport organisations, local authorities, and communities).
- ➔ Focus on environmental protection, inclusion, and social justice as core principles.
- ➔ Creation of a knowledge-sharing platform with case studies, training, and continuous monitoring.

Impact

By equipping organisers with knowledge and certification tools, the project strengthens the culture of sustainability in trail running and inspires similar approaches in other sports disciplines.

Useful resources

Green Trail Concept official website:

<https://greentrailconcept.eu/>

GOOD PRACTICE

Federación Española de Deportes de Montaña y Escalada (Spanish Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, FEDME)

Supporting Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

The Green CXM Trail FEDME environmental quality certificate accredits good environmental practices in the organization of trail running events. Its evaluation is based on clear, measurable criteria derived from the EUROPARC Federation's guide for sustainable sports events.

Why it matters

The initiative helps organisers of mountain and trail races integrate sustainability by offering a certification scheme with recognised standards. Instead of creating requirements from scratch, FEDME builds on the EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Sport Events, ensuring that evaluation criteria are aligned with international good practices..

In practice

- ➔ Environmental Quality Certificate: Organisers can apply to have their race assessed and certified as a Green CXM Trail FEDME event.
- ➔ Based on EUROPARC guidance: The certificate uses criteria adapted from the EUROPARC Guide on Sustainable Sports Events.
- ➔ Expert Evaluation: A committee of environmental referees, scientific advisors, and EUROPARC representatives evaluates events.
- ➔ Capacity building: Organisers receive feedback reports to identify strengths and areas for improvement in future editions.
- ➔ Progressive adoption: The long-term objective is to make certification a standard benchmark for inclusion in FEDME's calendar, but for now it remains voluntary.

Impact

- ➔ Structured sustainability: Clear criteria and an environmental referee guide organisers in professional race management.
- ➔ Environmental protection: Less waste, controlled trail use, and stronger alignment with protected area plans.
- ➔ Capacity building & knowledge sharing: Expert feedback and checklists help organisers learn and improve, spreading good practices.
- ➔ Recognition & cultural change: Certification endorsed by FEDME and EUROPARC builds credibility and drives a long-term shift towards sustainability in Spanish trail running.

Useful resource

FEDME – Green CXM Trail environmental certification:

<https://fedme.es/green-cxm-trail-fedme/>

EUROPARC Federation – Guide on Sustainable Sports Events (English version):

<https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-sports-events-guide>

Complementary information

Green CXM Trail FEDME – Checklist & Rules of the Game

Checklist (FEDME & EUROPARC-based system)

The certification is based on a list of mandatory and optional requirements, included in the official System for the recognition of environmental quality in mountain races and its checklist.

- 64 requirements in total
- 40 mandatories

To be certified: organisers must comply with all 40 mandatories + at least 7 optional (minimum 47 in total).

Organise into 3 event phases and 5 steps:

Phases

- ➔ Planning & Design: avoid fragile zones, use existing trails, secure permits, waste management plans, carbon footprint reduction, environmental briefing, participant behaviour rules.
- ➔ Implementation & Delivery: presence of an environmental referee, selective waste collection points, non-invasive signage, crowd control, accessibility, sustainable mobility.
- ➔ Closure & Evaluation: post-event environmental report, dismantling signage within 24h, complete waste removal, improvement plan for next editions.

Key resource:

FEDME Regulations – Environmental Quality Certificate (ENG/ESP):

https://fedme.es/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/FEDME_Normativa_Green_Label_CAS-TEGL_WEB.pdf

Complementary information

Steps included:

➔ Step 1. Apply

- Submit official form, technical dossier, and declaration of responsibility.
- At least 30 days before the event.
- Pay 25% of the certification fee at submission.

➔ Step 2. Environmental Referee

- An accredited FEDME Environmental Referee supervises the event.
- Evaluates before, during, and after the race.
- Completes the official Environmental Report & Checklist.

➔ Step 3. Evaluation Committee

- Composed of referee, scientific advisor (FEDME), experienced organiser, and EUROPARC representative.
- Reviews the checklist and report.
- Issues a decision within 30 days.

➔ Step 4. Certification Granted

- Certificate valid for 3 years.
- Organisers receive official recognition and can use the Green CXM label.

➔ Step 5. Renewal or Follow-up

- Simplified renewal for FEDME-homologated events (maintenance fee).
- Non-homologated events must undergo full re-evaluation.
- Annual monitoring by an Environmental Referee.

Contribution to SDGs



5

RECOMMENDATION 5

Measure, evaluate, and communicate results

Establish transparent monitoring systems to track and share event sustainability outcomes.

Public authorities should require and support systematic monitoring of sustainability indicators for all authorised or publicly funded sport events. This can include both quantitative metrics—such as waste diverted from landfill, emissions reduced, or local suppliers engaged—and qualitative assessments like community satisfaction or legacy perceptions. Standardised reporting formats make results easier to compare and aggregate, while public communication of findings builds trust and accountability. Highlighting successes can inspire other organisers, while openly addressing challenges encourages continuous improvement and innovation. This also means working across levels of governance and engaging with other territories to share knowledge and build common standards.

“Through online courses and pilot events where we invite organisers and show them how to implement sustainability practices. We will also monitor progress and collect feedback from both participants and organisers.” — Triathlon Federation (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

World Athletics “Athletics for a Better World Standard”

Measuring, Evaluating and Communicating Results

World Athletics evaluates its official competitions through the “Athletics for a Better World Standard,” measuring sustainability performance across six thematic areas. Results are published annually in a public report, showcasing achievements and challenges of each event.

Why it matters

This standard provides a transparent and comparable framework for assessing sustainability in athletics events worldwide. By requiring event organisers to measure their performance in defined areas and by publishing annual results, World Athletics ensures accountability, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement.

In practice

Six thematic areas evaluated, covering:

- ➔ Waste and circularity
- ➔ Mobility and transport
- ➔ Procurement and resources
- ➔ Inclusion and accessibility
- ➔ Legacy and community impact

Standardised evaluation tools provided to organisers.

Results from all certified events are compiled in an annual public report, highlighting best practices and identifying recurring challenges.

Outcomes are used to build common standards across countries and to engage with other territories and governing bodies.

Impact

- ➔ Creates a global benchmark for sustainability in athletics.
- ➔ Builds trust and accountability by communicating results openly.
- ➔ Facilitates knowledge transfer between events, helping organisers learn from successes and shortcomings.
- ➔ Encourages national federations and local authorities to align with shared reporting standards.

Useful resource

World Athletics – Athletics for a Better World Standard

<https://worldathletics.org/athletics-better-world //>

<https://abwyear1.worldathletics.org/2024/12-1 //>

<https://worldathletics.org/athletics-better-world/sustainability/athletics-for-a-better-world-standard>

Contribution to SDGs



Quick Action Checklist (From the Organiser's Perspective)

- ✓ Identify all relevant public authorities (local, regional, national) and establish early contact.
- ✓ Review and comply with all applicable land-use, environmental, and planning regulations before event design.
- ✓ Submit event plans including sustainability measures required by local regulations and funding calls.
- ✓ Invite authority representatives to coordination meetings to ensure alignment.
- ✓ Provide post-event reports to authorities highlighting environmental and social outcomes.

Suggested Indicators

- Number of coordination meetings held with public authorities.
- Percentage of authority recommendations integrated into final event plan.
- Approval obtained without major compliance issues (yes/no).

NOTES

Checklist to Make Sport Events More Sustainable

ADMINISTRATION

Before the event

- ✓ Work with public authorities: Integrate sustainability conditions into permits and funding calls.
- ✓ Ask for access to official tools: Check guidelines, checklists, model clauses, and certification schemes.
- ✓ Encourage coordination: Organise meeting between departments (environment, transport, tourism, culture, sport) to streamline approvals.
- ✓ Agree early on a legacy plan: Include materials, infrastructure, and community benefits.
- ✓ Explore opportunities: Explore pilot projects and innovative sustainable solutions with administrative support.

During the event

- ✓ Facilitate on-site monitoring: Verify that agreed sustainability measures are applied.
- ✓ Use established coordination: Create channels with designated contact persons for each relevant department.
- ✓ Seek quick administrative support: Create relationship to resolve incidents affecting sustainability or community wellbeing.
- ✓ Collaborate with authorities: Work to give public visibility to good practices implemented during the event.

After the event

- ✓ Share results: Include socio-environmental and economic outcomes using agreed indicators.
- ✓ Communicate results: Ensure that results are included in publicly accessible databases or open data platforms.
- ✓ Join post-event reviews: Use lessons learned to improve future regulations and criteria.
- ✓ Work with authorities: Work to maintain or expand infrastructures, materials, and community benefits generated.
- ✓ Join or strengthen collaboration: Create networks with the community, institutions, and other organisers for future sustainable editions.

Organisers

Leading by
Example

Organisers

Leading by Example

Event organisers hold the greatest direct influence over how sustainability is embedded in the lifecycle of a sport event. From strategic decisions on site design, procurement, and logistics, to the values communicated through branding, hospitality, and on-site experiences, their choices set the tone for all other actors involved.

When organisers lead by example—aligning operations with environmental and social goals, empowering their teams, and demonstrating transparency—they become catalysts for change, inspiring participants, volunteers, sponsors, and public authorities alike. Strong sustainability leadership within the organising body not only improves event performance but also builds credibility, strengthens partnerships, and leaves a legacy that extends far beyond the event itself.

KEY ROLES AND CHALLENGES

- ✓ **Embedding sustainability strategically**

In many events, sustainability is introduced late in the planning process or assigned to communication teams, limiting its impact. Effective leadership means integrating sustainability from the outset across all areas—logistics, infrastructure, transport, hospitality, procurement, and marketing—ensuring it is part of core decision-making rather than an add-on.

- ✓ **Overcoming “D-day” focus**

Event planning often prioritises operational delivery over long-term considerations. Without the right tools, incentives, or support, organisers may overlook legacy opportunities, from infrastructure reuse to community benefits and environmental restoration.

- ✓ **Shifting procurement practices**

Tendering processes frequently prioritise the lowest cost over environmental and social value, making it harder to engage sustainable suppliers. Revising criteria and building supplier capacity can help break this inertia.

- ✓ **Addressing isolation and resource constraints**

For small and medium-sized organisers, implementing sustainability can feel overwhelming due to limited budgets, technical expertise, or institutional support. Partnerships, shared tools, and capacity-building initiatives are essential to bridge this gap.

Recommendations for Action

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

Embed circularity in procurement and resource management

Select and manage resources to minimise environmental impact throughout their lifecycle.

Integrate sustainability criteria into all procurement processes, selecting suppliers and partners based on environmental and social performance, and embedding clear sustainability clauses in all contracts. Prioritise materials and products that are reusable, recyclable, or compostable, and plan for their second life or responsible disposal from the outset.

Adopt measures to prevent waste generation, extend the lifespan of products, and ensure that any residual waste is sorted, recovered, and recycled. This combined approach reduces the event’s environmental footprint, supports local and sustainable supply chains, and aligns operations with circular economy principles.

“Additional sustainability measures include banning balloons from sponsors, reusing advertising banners and other products.” Skopje Marathon (Macedonia).
““We are the first major mass participation event to make the official T-shirt optional and to employ a fleet of electric and hybrid vehicles during the event. Our ambition is to lead the way in sustainability for mass participation events.” — Bucharest International Marathon (Romania).

Our main focus is on energy consumption reduction. We are working on establishing a photovoltaic power plant to generate renewable energy. In addition, we have changed our energy supplier to one that uses renewable sources to further decrease our environmental impact.

GOOD PRACTICE

Serbia Business Run (Zero Waste Approach)

Embedding Circularity in Procurement and Resource Management

Why it matters

SBR shows how large-scale corporate running events can embed sustainability systematically moving beyond ad-hoc measures to strategic commitments. By linking procurement and operations to measurable results, they reduce their footprint while educating thousands of employees and companies involved.

In practice

- ➔ Recycling Stations: Partnered with Ekostar Pak to install selective waste bins, track waste flows, and coordinate collection with city sanitation

The Serbia Business Run (SBR) integrates a comprehensive Recycling and Zero Waste approach into its mass-participation events, embedding sustainability as a strategic priority in its OKRs (Objectives and Key Results) since 2022. The series aims to become the largest sustainable mass sports event in Serbia by 2025, applying circular economy principles across event delivery.

- ➔ Elimination of Plastics: Water served in 100% recyclable aluminium cans; no plastic bottles allowed; wooden utensils only when necessary
- ➔ Circular Medals: Produced from MDF and exploring new materials like sawdust and bioplastics
- ➔ Digitalisation: Registrations, promotions, and coupons moved to digital formats, cutting paper use; plan to integrate QR codes into bibs by 2024
- ➔ Second Life for Materials: Signage and banners reused across editions, minimising waste streams
- ➔ Green Energy: Solar panels generated 100 KW during four races; solar benches provided Wi-Fi and charging stations

Impact

- ➔ Recycled 30,000 cans (~0.5 tons of aluminium) at 2023 races.
- ➔ Reduction in unnecessary T-shirt production through opt-in policy; plan to eliminate T-shirts entirely by 2024.
- ➔ Increased participant and partner awareness through the #Ozele-niSport campaign, linking each runner with tree-planting commitments ("1 colleague, 1 tree") – 2,300 trees planted in 2023.
- ➔ Publication of the first Sustainability Report (2023) to ensure accountability and transparency.

Contribution to SDGs



2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Design for legacy and second life

Incorporate legacy thinking from the start. Define clear plans for the reuse, donation, or transformation of materials and infrastructure.

Planning for legacy from the earliest stages ensures that investments made for an event continue to benefit the community, environment, and local economy long after it has ended. Organisers should map all materials, equipment, and infrastructure to identify opportunities for reuse in future events, donation to local organisations, or transformation into new purposes. This approach minimises waste, reduces costs for future activities, and strengthens relationships with community stakeholders. Legacy planning should be documented in writing, with clear responsibilities and timelines, and coordinated with local authorities to ensure alignment with long-term development goals. Transparent communication about the legacy plan also enhances public trust and demonstrates that the event's impact goes beyond its duration.

GOOD PRACTICE

UTMB Mont-Blanc (Trail Restoration Programme)

Designing for Legacy and
Second Life

Since 2006, the UTMB Mont-Blanc has run a Trail Restoration Programme led by the Environmental Commission of the Friends of the UTMB Mont-Blanc association. The initiative has not only restored but also built trails, leaving a tangible legacy for local communities and ecosystems.

Why it matters

UTMB demonstrates how a sport event can embed legacy into its DNA: rather than focusing only on reducing impacts during the event, it actively invests in long-term infrastructure and community benefit. By restoring and building trails, it ensures that resources mobilised for the event continue to serve hikers, local residents, and visitors for years to come.

In practice

- ➔ Trail Restoration Programme launched in 2006, funded by the UTMB and supported by local authorities.
- ➔ Led by the Environmental Commission of Friends of the UTMB Mont-Blanc, involving volunteers and partner organisations.
- ➔ Activities include restoring eroded sections, creating new sustainable trails, and reinforcing infrastructures to prevent future degradation.
- ➔ Coordination with local municipalities and park managers to ensure alignment with regional development and conservation goals.
- ➔ Transparent communication: the programme is promoted publicly, showcasing achievements and encouraging participant involvement.

Impact

- ➔ Over 20 km of trails restored or built in the Mont-Blanc region.
- ➔ Long-term benefit for communities and visitors, reducing maintenance costs for local authorities.

- ➔ Reinforces the social licence of the UTMB, showing tangible contributions beyond the event.
- ➔ Serves as a replicable model for other large-scale trail running events worldwide.

Useful resource

UTMB Mont-Blanc – Trail Restoration Programme:

https://montblanc.utmb.world/get-involved/take-action/rehabilitation-des-sentiers?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Complementary information

UTMB Mont-Blanc – Practical Legacy Actions (from Trail Restoration Programme)

- ➔ Collaborate with local authorities: All trail restoration projects are carried out in partnership with communes and protected area managers to ensure long-term relevance.
- ➔ Prioritise ecological restoration: Focus on repairing eroded trails, reinforcing fragile zones, and building sustainable paths that prevent future degradation.
- ➔ Mobilise volunteers and partners: The initiative is coordinated by the Environmental Commission of Friends of the UTMB Mont-Blanc, combining event resources with volunteer labour.
- ➔ Secure dedicated funding: Part of UTMB revenues and donations are earmarked each year to finance trail restoration projects.
- ➔ Communicate and involve participants: Runners and the wider community are encouraged to support and follow the projects, creating visibility and reinforcing the idea that the race “gives back” to the territory.

Key resources:

https://montblanc.utmb.world/get-involved/take-action/rehabilitation-des-sentiers?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Contribution to SDGs



3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Empower green teams with real authority

Assign a dedicated sustainability team with decision-making power and integrate it into all organisational areas.

Creating a “green team” is not enough if it is only symbolic or relegated to side tasks. For sustainability measures to be effective, this team must be part of the core decision-making structure, with the authority to influence procurement, logistics, communication, and legacy planning. Members should have a clear mandate, allocated resources, and access to training on environmental and social good practices. Involving volunteers, staff, and external experts can strengthen their scope and legitimacy. Embedding the team in operational meetings ensures that sustainability criteria are applied consistently and not as an afterthought.

GOOD PRACTICE

Trail Valle de Tena (Environmental Manager & Protocol)

Empowering Green Teams with
Real Authority

The Trail Valle de Tena (Spain) has an Environmental Manager responsible for executing and evaluating the event’s Environmental Protocol. It is also the first trail running event certified by EUROPARC-Spain.

Why it matters

The event shows how sustainability can move beyond symbolic actions when a dedicated role is institutionalised and supported by a clear protocol. By assigning real authority to an Environmental Manager and making the rules public, Trail Valle de Tena ensures accountability, builds trust, and sets a replicable benchmark for other mountain races.

In practice

Environmental Manager: empowered with decision-making capacity, reporting directly to the organisation’s core team.

Key actions include:

- ➔ Waste management: runners must use their own reusable cup; recycling points at all aid stations.
- ➔ Natural protection: no littering (penalty of disqualification); race routes avoid sensitive areas; limited participant numbers.
- ➔ Trail restoration: removal of signage within 24h, collection of waste, repairing any damage.
- ➔ Sustainable mobility: promotion of carpooling and reduced-impact logistics.
- ➔ Awareness: communication of rules to runners and volunteers, plus post-event reporting.
- ➔ Certification: first Spanish trail event certified by EUROPARC, reinforcing credibility.

Impact

- ➔ Credibility and trust: transparent rules and external certification build legitimacy with authorities and sponsors.

- ➔ Better environmental outcomes: reduced waste, controlled trail impact, restored routes.
- ➔ Capacity building: volunteers and staff trained on sustainability, reinforcing culture shift.
- ➔ Replicable model: shows how even small trail events can formalise environmental governance with authority and accountability.

Useful resources:

Trail Valle de Tena – Environmental Protocol:

<https://trailvalledetena.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Protocolo-MEDIO-AMBI-ENTE-21.pdf>

Trail Valle de Tena – Environment Page:

<https://trailvalledetena.com/medioambiente/>

Contribution to SDGs



4 RECOMMENDATION 4

Create space for innovation and experimentation

Encourage pilots and novel ideas, even on a small scale. Innovation does not require massive budgets—it thrives on creativity and freedom to try.

Allowing room for experimentation enables organisers to test novel solutions, adapt global best practices to the local context, and discover approaches that can later be scaled up. This can mean piloting zero-waste initiatives in a single venue before expanding event-wide, testing alternative energy sources for temporary infrastructure, or introducing new engagement formats for participants and spectators. Small-scale pilots often carry lower risk, making it easier to secure stakeholder approval while still generating valuable data and lessons learned. Documenting both successes and failures is essential to refine ideas and share them across the sector, building collective knowledge and accelerating the adoption of effective sustainability measures.

“Another thing is the meetings and travel we did with the organizing team. All of this, well, we have switched to doing it virtually, as much as possible, so we no longer spend on travel, and it is something that also reduces expenses, whether you like it or not.” — Correcaminos (Spain).

“The distribution of recycled cotton tote bags with a sustainability message are also creative practices that promote environmental awareness and responsible behaviour” — Liberty Marathon Rasp (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

GOOD PRACTICE

SailGP (Impact League)

Creating Space for Innovation and Experimentation

SailGP has pioneered the Impact League, a competition within the competition that rewards teams not only for sporting results but also for sustainability and social impact performance. Known as “the podium for the planet,” it encourages experimentation, innovation, and accountability in reducing environmental footprints and advancing inclusion in sailing.

Why it matters

The Impact League demonstrates how organisers can embed innovation into the DNA of competition. By gamifying sustainability and linking it directly to athlete performance, SailGP transforms environmental and social action into a driver of creativity, experimentation, and prestige.

Why it matters

In practice

- ➔ Dual competition model: alongside the sports results, teams are scored on sustainability and inclusion performance.
- ➔ Independent auditors track metrics such as waste reduction, clean energy use, diversity actions, and community engagement.
- ➔ Teams are incentivised to experiment with innovative solutions—from innovative reuse systems to low-emission logistics—because success improves both their environmental score and reputation.
- ➔ Public visibility: results are shared after each event, raising awareness among fans and sponsors.
- ➔ Funding incentive: prize money from the Impact League is donated to the teams’ purpose partners, ensuring benefits extend to wider communities.

Impact

- ➔ Cultural shift: turns sustainability into a core element of sporting rivalry.
- ➔ Innovation catalyst: promotes small- and large-scale pilots, from renewable energy trials to new diversity programmes.
- ➔ Transparency and accountability: public scoring and independent auditing ensure credibility.
- ➔ Replication potential: shows other sports that sustainability can be integrated into competition formats, not just side projects.

Useful resources:

SailGP – Impact League:

<https://sailgp.com/general/purpose/impact-league>

GOOD PRACTICE

GOOD PRACTICE

Spanish Olympic Committee (Green Flame Project)

Creating space for innovation with digital carbon footprint tools

Through the Erasmus+ Green Flame project, the Spanish Olympic Committee has piloted innovative approaches to embed carbon awareness in sport by developing Sport Go Green—a free app and desktop tool that allows both participants and organisers to measure, understand, and reduce their carbon footprint.

Why it matters

Innovation in sustainability does not always require large infrastructure changes. By testing digital solutions, organisers can experiment with new ways of engaging participants, collecting data, and guiding decisions, all at relatively low cost. These pilots generate valuable insights that can later be scaled to other events and contexts.

In practice

- ➔ Mobile App Pilot: Designed for athletes, spectators, and fans to measure their individual carbon footprint across travel, accommodation, catering, merchandising, and equipment.
- ➔ Desktop Tool: Developed for organisations to calculate emissions across Scopes 1, 2, and 3, supporting more strategic planning for sport events of any scale.
- ➔ Educational Innovation: MOOCs (basic and advanced) complement the tools, providing capacity building for managers, organisers, and athletes.
- ➔ Third-party verification: The calculator is certified by Bureau Veritas, ensuring credibility and setting a benchmark for other digital sustainability tools.

Impact

By testing and deploying Sport Go Green, the Spanish Olympic Committee has introduced a scalable innovation that helps events worldwide integrate climate responsibility into their planning. This small-scale digital pilot has quickly become a transferable best practice, showing how innovation can strengthen credibility, empower organisers, and accelerate the adoption of sustainable solutions across the sector.

Useful resources:

Green Flame project:

<https://www.coe.es/sostenibilidad/green-flame/>

Contribution to SDGs



5

RECOMMENDATION 5

Measure and communicate sustainability outcomes

Track, evaluate, and openly share the sustainability performance of the event to foster trust, learning, and lasting impact.

Integrate systematic measurement and transparent communication of sustainability results as a core component of event management. This involves defining clear environmental, social, and economic indicators aligned with the event's sustainability objectives, collecting data before, during, and after the event, and using these findings to inform decision-making and continuous improvement. Measurements should cover key impact areas such as carbon emissions, waste generation and diversion, resource consumption, inclusion and accessibility, local economic benefits, and stakeholder satisfaction. Where possible, data collection methods should be standardised to allow year-on-year comparisons and benchmarking across events. Results should be shared openly with participants, sponsors, local communities, public authorities, and the wider public. This can be achieved through sustainability dashboards, summary reports, infographics, or public presentations.

"The necessity of implementing promotional plans for sustainable practices to increase the willingness of stakeholders to offer solutions." — European Week of sport and other (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

Global Climate Initiatives Carbon Management Platform (UCI)

Measuring and Communicating Sustainability Outcomes

The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) offers cycling federations, teams, and race organisers access to the GCI Carbon Management Platform. This tool provides a framework to measure, monitor, and report carbon emissions, helping stakeholders set reduction targets, implement strategies, and benchmark progress across events.

Why it matters

The platform demonstrates how systematic measurement tools can be embedded into sport governance. By providing a common framework, the UCI enables organisers not only to calculate and reduce their emissions but also to communicate results transparently, creating a culture of accountability and shared learning across the cycling community.

In practice

- ➔ Carbon accounting framework: guidance on calculating greenhouse gas emissions across event operations, logistics, travel, and infrastructure.
- ➔ Target setting: supports organisers in defining realistic emission reduction goals.
- ➔ Action planning: offers strategies to implement eco-friendly practices (mobility, energy, resource use).
- ➔ Benchmarking: enables comparison across events, teams, and federations.
- ➔ Reporting: provides templates and dashboards to communicate progress to stakeholders.

Impact

- ➔ Greater transparency: organisers share data on emissions and reduction efforts with fans, sponsors, and authorities.
- ➔ Knowledge sharing: promotes exchange of best practices across cycling organisations.
- ➔ Accountability and credibility: measurable results increase trust with communities and partners.
- ➔ Continuous improvement: systematic tracking allows progress year on year, strengthening sustainability performance.

Useful resources:

UCI Sustainability Impact Tracker:

<https://uci-sustainability-impact-tracker.com/en/>

Complementary information

Practical Tip – Using the UCI Carbon Calculator

To use the GCI Carbon Management Platform, organisers need to collect some basic event data:

Steps included:

- ➔ **Travel & transport**
 - Number of participants, staff, and spectators.
 - Modes of transport used (car, bus, train, flight).
 - Travel distances (approximate or exact)
- ➔ **Energy use**
 - Electricity and fuel consumption for event operations (generators, venues, temporary structures).
 - Share of renewable vs. conventional energy sources.
- ➔ **Accommodation & catering**
 - Nights spent in hotels or other lodging.
 - Meals served and type (meat, vegetarian, vegan).
- ➔ **Materials & waste**
 - Volume of purchased materials (signage, tents, infrastructure).
 - Waste generated, separated, recycled, or composted.

Once entered, the platform:

- ➔ Calculates the event's carbon footprint using online resources
- ➔ Provides reduction scenarios (e.g. switch transport modes, improve energy mix).
- ➔ Generates dashboards and reports to communicate results to stakeholders.

Key resources: UCI Sustainability Impact Tracker

<https://uci-sustainability-impact-tracker.com/en/>

Contribution to SDGs



Quick Action Checklist (From the Organiser's Perspective)

- ✓ Include sustainability criteria in supplier tenders and contracts.
- ✓ Set up a waste measurement system during the event.
- ✓ Provide sustainability training to all organizing team members.
- ✓ Implement emission offset actions if the event exceeds X tonnes of CO₂.

Suggested Indicators

- Percentage of suppliers with environmental certification.
- Percentage of participants using sustainable transport.
- Kg of recycled waste vs. total waste generated.

NOTES

Checklist to Make Sport Events More Sustainable

Before the event

- ✓ Integrate sustainability in procurement: Select suppliers and partners using clear environmental, social, and ethical criteria, and include them in all contracts.
- ✓ Plan for legacy and second life: Define how materials and infrastructure will be reused, donated, or transformed after the event.
- ✓ Empower green teams: Appoint a sustainability team with real decision-making power and embed it across all operational areas.
- ✓ Design waste and circularity strategies: Avoid single-use items, prioritise reusable materials, and prepare prevention and recycling systems.
- ✓ Create space for innovation: Pilot creative solutions that can improve sustainability performance

During the event

- ✓ Ensure suppliers meet sustainability commitments: Monitor delivery of goods and services according to agreed standards.
- ✓ Begin legacy implementation: Start reuse or redistribution of materials and infrastructure where feasible.
- ✓ Activate green teams: Give them visibility and authority to oversee sustainability actions and solve issues in real time.
- ✓ Operate circular systems: Manage waste stations with clear signage, trained staff, and participant guidance.
- ✓ Document innovations: Collect data and feedback to evaluate potential for broader adoption.

After the event

- ✓ Assess supplier performance: Review compliance with sustainability clauses and provide feedback for improvement.
- ✓ Complete legacy actions: Finalise reuse, donation, or repurposing of materials and infrastructure.
- ✓ Evaluate green team impact: Record lessons learned to strengthen the next edition.
- ✓ Report circularity outcomes: Publish transparent data on waste reduction, diversion rates, and material reuse.
- ✓ Scale successful innovations: Integrate proven solutions into standard event practices.

Volunteers

Empowering Sustainability
Ambassadors

Volunteers

Empowering Sustainability Ambassadors

Volunteers are the human face of the sustainability efforts of a sport event. They welcome participants, guide spectators, and carry out many of the actions that translate sustainability commitments into visible results—from sorting waste and supporting reusable systems to promoting responsible behaviours on-site.

For organisers, volunteers are not only operational support—they are ambassadors whose enthusiasm, knowledge, and interactions shape how sustainability is perceived and experienced by others. Empowering them through training, recognition, and meaningful engagement ensures that they deliver quality service during the event and carry the event's values back into their communities, multiplying its impact long after the closing ceremony.

KEY ROLES AND CHALLENGES

- ✓ **Frontline implementation of sustainability**

Volunteers are often the visible face of sustainability during the event, taking on critical tasks such as waste separation, reusable cup systems, and guiding mobility flows. Without proper training, supervision, and clear instructions, these measures can fail, undermining overall sustainability goals.

- ✓ **Motivation, retention, and knowledge transfer**

High turnover between events can lead to the loss of valuable skills and institutional memory, forcing organisers to repeatedly invest in recruitment and training. Establishing pathways for returning volunteers and documenting best practices can help reduce this challenge.

- ✓ **Recognition and long-term legacy**

Volunteers who feel valued and see the lasting impact of their work are more likely to stay engaged and become sustainability champions in their communities. Public recognition, certificates, or involvement in post-event initiatives can strengthen this legacy effect.

"The absence of a nationwide waste separation system and the lack of budget for proper waste bins prevent the event from fully implementing structured waste education programs for volunteers." — Skopje Marathon (Macedonia).

Recommendations for Action

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

Recruit locally and diversify profiles

Prioritise local recruitment and ensure a mix of ages, backgrounds, and skills.

Recruiting volunteers from the host community strengthens the sense of ownership, reduces travel-related impacts, and builds local capacity for future events. A diverse volunteer base—representing different ages, genders, abilities, and cultural backgrounds—brings a variety of skills and perspectives, making teams more adaptable and creative. Organisers should actively reach out to underrepresented groups, collaborate with local schools, universities, and associations, and ensure that recruitment channels are accessible to all. Clear role descriptions, flexible time commitments, and a welcoming environment help attract and retain volunteers with diverse needs and motivations.

GOOD PRACTICE

Penyagolosa Trails (Volunteer Force)

Recruit Locally and Diversify Profiles

Penyagolosa Trails (Country) relies on a volunteer network of around 800 people, many from local clubs and communities, with a wide variety of ages and profiles. Their dedication is considered the true strength of the event.

Why it matters

Penyagolosa Trails illustrates how recruiting locally builds community ownership and pride, while reducing travel impacts. At the same time, involving volunteers across different ages, skills, and backgrounds ensures the event has the adaptability and creativity needed to manage complex logistics in a mountain environment.

In practice

- ➔ Large-scale volunteer base: approx. 800 volunteers engaged each year.
- ➔ Strong local roots: many come from hiking clubs, cultural associations, and communities around Penyagolosa.
- ➔ Diverse profiles: includes young people, experienced mountaineers, retirees, and residents with different skills.
- ➔ Community engagement: local associations not only provide workforce but also transmit traditions and values to participants.
- ➔ Visibility and recognition: the organisation publicly acknowledge volunteers as the “true force” of the event, boosting motivation and retention.

Impact

Recruiting around 800 local volunteers each year minimises travel impacts, strengthens community clubs and associations, and fosters pride and cultural identity. The diversity of ages and skills—from young people to retirees—enhances adaptability and resilience, making volunteers true ambassadors of the territory and a key factor in the success of Penyagolosa Trails.

Useful resources:

Penaygolosa web page:

<https://www.penyagolosatrails.com/el-voluntariado-la-fuerza-de-asics-penyagolosa-trails/>

Contribution to SDGs



2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Provide training and capacity building

Offer tailored training to prepare volunteers for their specific roles and to strengthen transferable skills.

Well-designed training programmes improve volunteer performance, enhance safety, and ensure that sustainability measures are applied consistently across the event. Training should combine practical skills—such as waste sorting, crowd management, or emergency procedures—with broader topics like environmental awareness and inclusive practices. Using interactive formats, site visits, and role-specific simulations helps volunteers gain confidence and adapt to real event conditions. Capacity building not only benefits the event but also provides volunteers with transferable skills they can apply in future jobs or community initiatives, increasing the long-term value of their engagement.

“A team of volunteers with an interest in environmental issues is created, capable of exploring the grounds, conducting cleanups, identifying points of interest and precautions, and, at the same time, being able to disseminate and explain all this information to the runners.” — Salomon UltraPirineu (Spain).

GOOD PRACTICE

Guía del Voluntariado Deportivo (Sports Volunteering Guide) – La Liga & Plataforma de Voluntariado (Spanish Volunteer Platform)

Provide Training and Capacity Building

La Guía del Voluntariado Deportivo (Sport Volunteering Guide) offers organisers practical methods to recruit, train, and evaluate volunteers, ensuring sustainability, inclusion, and motivation are embedded across programmes.

Why it matters

This tool provides a structured framework that helps organisers prepare volunteers effectively, standardising training while embedding sustainability and inclusivity principles.

In practice

- ➔ Covers recruitment processes, role descriptions, and training content.
- ➔ Offers guidance on environmental awareness and inclusive practices.
- ➔ Includes strategies for motivation and recognition to retain volunteers.

Impact

Strengthens volunteer preparedness, ensures sustainability measures are consistently applied, and equips volunteers with transferable skills valuable beyond the event.

Useful resources:

Guide of volunteers:

<https://plataformavoluntariado.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/guia-voluntariado-deportivo.pdf?>

Complementary information

According to the Sports Volunteering Guide (La Liga & Plataforma de Voluntariado, 2018), a balanced volunteer programme requires recognising both the rights of volunteers and the duties of the organisations that host them.

Rights of Volunteers

- ➔ To formalise an incorporation agreement and have commitments honoured.
- ➔ To receive information, guidance, support, and the material resources needed to carry out their work.
- ➔ To receive training adapted to their personal conditions for the proper performance of assigned activities.
- ➔ To be treated equally, without discrimination, and with respect for their identity, dignity, and fundamental rights.
- ➔ To participate actively in the organisation, contributing to the development, design, execution, and evaluation of programmes or projects and, when possible, in the governance and administration of the entity.

Duties of Volunteer Organisations

- ➔ To formalise the incorporation agreement and fulfil the commitments made.
- ➔ To establish internal systems of information and guidance about the organisation's goals, operating structure, assigned tasks for volunteers, and the distinction between these tasks and those of paid staff.
- ➔ To provide basic and specific training on a regular basis, adapted to the personal conditions of volunteers.
- ➔ To select volunteers without discrimination based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, racial or ethnic origin, religion, ideological or union beliefs, disability, age, or any other personal or social condition.
- ➔ To facilitate volunteer participation in the development, design, execution, and evaluation of the programmes in which they are involved and, as far as possible, in the organisation's management and decision-making processes.

Key resources:

<https://plataformavoluntariado.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/guia-voluntariado-deportivo.pdf?>

Contribution to SDGs



3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Ensure volunteer wellbeing, safety and recognition

Protect, support, and value volunteers to strengthen their commitment and impact.

A positive volunteer experience is essential for sustained engagement in sustainable sport events. Ensuring wellbeing and safety—through adequate equipment, clear role definitions, rest areas, meals, health coverage, and accessible support channels—fosters trust in the organisation and encourages deeper involvement. Recognition, whether through certificates, public acknowledgements, or appreciation events, reinforces motivation and pride in their contribution. Research shows that volunteers who feel supported are more likely to remain engaged, take initiative, and promote sustainability values during and beyond the event.

GOOD PRACTICE

Commonwealth Games 2022 (Commonwealth Collective)

Ensure Volunteer Wellbeing, Safety and Recognition

The 14,000 volunteers of the Commonwealth Collective were publicly recognised with the Spirit of Birmingham award during the Pride of Birmingham ceremony, celebrating their extraordinary contribution to the Games.

Why it matters

The example highlights how large-scale events can build volunteer loyalty and pride by valuing their contributions not only during the event but also in the public arena. Recognition strengthens motivation and ensures volunteers remain engaged beyond a single edition.

In practice

- ➔ Massive engagement: 14,000 volunteers recruited across roles and backgrounds.
- ➔ Wellbeing focus: training, clear roles, equipment, meals, and support systems in place during the Games.
- ➔ Public recognition: the “Spirit of Birmingham” award positioned volunteers as central to the Games’ legacy.
- ➔ Long-term vision: the Commonwealth Collective framework was designed to safeguard ongoing volunteering opportunities in Birmingham.

Impact

Volunteers felt valued, safe, and supported, which increased trust in the organisers. Public recognition reinforced their pride and created a long-term legacy of civic engagement, ensuring many continued contributing to community initiatives after the Games.

Useful resources:

Commonwealth Collective:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/news/article/1343/volunteers_collective_launch_safeguards_legacy_of_birmingham_2022_commonwealth_games_volunteers

Contribution to SDGs



4

RECOMMENDATION 4

Involve volunteers in sustainability delivery

Assign volunteers specific roles to implement and monitor environmental and social measures during the event.

Volunteers can play a key role in ensuring sustainability commitments are met on the ground. Assigning them to tasks such as managing waste sorting stations, guiding participants on sustainable transport options, monitoring sensitive natural areas, or supporting accessibility services maximises their contribution and increases visibility of the event's sustainability efforts. Clear role descriptions, appropriate training, and visible identifiers—such as vests or badges—help volunteers carry out these responsibilities effectively. Integrating them into operational teams rather than treating them as separate support ensures sustainability is embedded across all event functions.

GOOD PRACTICE

UTMB Mont-Blanc (Environmental Ambassadors)

Involve Volunteers in
Sustainability Delivery

UTMB Mont-Blanc deploys Environmental Ambassadors—volunteers assigned specific roles to raise awareness, monitor behaviour, and ensure environmental protection along the race routes.

Why it matters

This case shows how volunteers can go beyond logistics and become the visible face of sustainability. By taking active responsibility for awareness, monitoring, and environmental care, they make sustainability tangible for participants and spectators.

In practice

- ➔ Dedicated roles: Environmental Ambassadors positioned at aid stations, trails, and start/finish areas.
- ➔ Awareness raising volunteers remind runners of rules (e.g. no littering, reusable cups) and share best practices with the public.
- ➔ Monitoring: ensure respect for natural areas and intervene in case of non-compliance.
- ➔ Visible identifiers: vests and badges that make their role clear and authoritative.
- ➔ Integration: ambassadors are part of the operational structure, not a separate group, ensuring sustainability is embedded in all event functions.

Impact

Enhances compliance with environmental rules, strengthens participant awareness, and makes sustainability efforts visible to audiences and communities. Volunteers gain ownership and pride in contributing directly to environmental protection.

Useful resources:

UTM Montblanc:

<https://montblanc.utmb.world/get-involved/take-action/environment?utm>

Contribution to SDGs



5

RECOMMENDATION 5

Maintain engagement beyond the event

Keep volunteers connected year-round to build loyalty and long-term commitment.

Sustaining volunteer engagement between editions helps preserve experience, reduces recruitment costs, and strengthens the event's community base. Organisers can maintain contact through newsletters, social media groups, or seasonal meetups, as well as by involving volunteers in other community projects or smaller events. Offering opportunities for continued learning or involvement in sustainability initiatives keeps motivation high and reinforces the event's role as a shared project rather than a once-a-year occasion. Recognising volunteers' ongoing contributions beyond event day builds a sense of belonging and loyalty.

GOOD PRACTICE

Valencia Sports Volunteering Office (Fundación Deportiva Municipal)

Maintain Engagement Beyond the Event

The Governing Board of the Fundación Deportiva Municipal (XX – Translation in English) approved the registration of the F.D.M. as a Sports Volunteering entity. With the aim of coordinating all actions related to this field in the city of Valencia, the programme was launched, with its main achievement being the creation of the Municipal Sports Volunteering Office, attached to the Communication and Documentation Section of the Sports Service of the Fundación Deportiva Municipal.

Why it matters

The creation of a permanent municipal office ensures continuity, co-ordination, and institutional support for sports volunteers. Instead of treating volunteering as event-specific, Valencia embeds it into the city's sports governance, building loyalty and stronger community ties.

In practice

- ➔ Institutional framework: Formal registration of the FDM as a recognised sports volunteering entity.
- ➔ Permanent structure: Establishment of the Municipal Sports Volunteering Office, integrated into the city's Sports Service.
- ➔ Year-round engagement: Volunteers coordinated across multiple events throughout the year, not only major competitions.
- ➔ Centralised support: The office provides communication, training, and coordination resources for both volunteers and organisers.

Impact

By institutionalising sports volunteering, Valencia ensures long-term engagement, recognition, and benefits for its volunteers. The programme strengthens loyalty, enhances volunteer skills, and promotes an active community that contributes to multiple events across the city.

Useful resources:

Valencia Volunteers:

<https://www.fdmvalencia.es/es/valencia-en-deporte/voluntariado-deportivo-de-valencia/>

Complementary information

The Valencia Sports Volunteering Office (Fundación Deportiva Municipal), created by the Fundación Deportiva Municipal, provides a permanent structure to coordinate and support sports volunteering in the city.

Key elements include:

- ➔ Centralised registration system: Volunteers sign up once and can participate in multiple events year-round.
- ➔ Role allocation: Profiles are matched with specific tasks such as logistics, participant support, or sustainability actions.
- ➔ Continuous communication: Volunteers receive newsletters, training opportunities, and event invitations.
- ➔ Recognition and belonging: A visible, structured programme that connects citizens with the city's sports ecosystem.

What volunteers receive:

- ➔ Official sports uniform for identification.
- ➔ Training opportunities (courses and conferences).
- ➔ On-site catering/refreshments.
- ➔ Civil liability and accident insurance.
- ➔ Social gatherings and networking activities with other volunteers.
- ➔ Discounts at municipal sports facilities.
- ➔ Additional benefits, such as official academic credits for students of the Universitat de València through a collaboration agreement with FDM.

Key resources:

<https://www.fdmvalencia.es/es/valencia-en-deporte/voluntariado-deportivo-de-valencia/>

GOOD PRACTICE

Guía del Voluntariado Deportivo (Sports Volunteering Guide) – La Liga & Plataforma de Voluntariado (Spanish Volunteer Platform).

Maintain Engagement Beyond the Event The Guía del Voluntariado Deportivo highlights that sustaining volunteer commitment requires not only recognition during the event but also ongoing communication, training, and opportunities for involvement throughout the year.

Why it matters

Volunteer loyalty is strengthened when organisers maintain contact and offer opportunities for continued participation. The end of a formal volunteering programme does not necessarily mean the end of the relationship with the organisation. There are different ways to remain engaged after the programme:

- ➔ Join the organisation as a member or collaborator.
- ➔ Take part in occasional events or celebrations organised by the entity.
- ➔ Become an ambassador, promoting the organisation's work and achievements.
- ➔ Support activities through financial contributions.
- ➔ Collaborate in networking with other organisations or public administrations.
- ➔ Continue receiving newsletters and publications from the organisation.

Impact

By offering pathways beyond formal volunteering, organisations avoid a “full break” when programmes end. Former volunteers can remain engaged as members, ambassadors, donors, or occasional participants, ensuring continuity of the relationship even if their active volunteer role concludes.

Useful resources:

La Liga platform:

<https://plataformavoluntariado.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/guia-voluntariado-deportivo.pdf?>

Contribution to SDGs



Quick Action Checklist (From the Organiser's Perspective)

- ✓ Define clear sustainability-related roles and responsibilities for volunteers before recruitment.
- ✓ Provide easy-to-use tools (signage, collection bins, communication scripts) for volunteers to support sustainable actions during the event.
- ✓ Assign volunteers to key areas such as waste stations, mobility hubs, and sensitive environmental zones.
- ✓ Recognise and reward volunteer contributions to sustainability (e.g., certificates, public acknowledgments).
- ✓ Collect feedback from volunteers post-event to improve sustainability actions in future editions.

Suggested Indicators

- Percentage of volunteers receiving sustainability training.
- Number of sustainability-related incidents managed by volunteers.
- Volunteer satisfaction rate regarding sustainability role clarity.

NOTES

Checklist to Make Sport Events More Sustainable

Before the event

- ✓ Recruit locally and ensure diversity: Prioritise local recruitment while balancing ages, backgrounds, and skills.
- ✓ Provide role-specific and sustainability training: Cover safety, accessibility, environmental awareness, and event-specific sustainability measures.
- ✓ Assign sustainability-focused tasks: Prepare volunteers for key roles such as managing waste stations, guiding sustainable mobility, or supporting accessibility.

During the event

- ✓ Deploy volunteers strategically: Place trained volunteers in visible sustainability roles (waste sorting, guiding participants, monitoring sensitive areas).
- ✓ Integrate into operational teams: Avoid isolating volunteers by ensuring smooth coordination with other event staff.
- ✓ Safeguard wellbeing and safety: Apply health and safety protocols, rotate tasks in demanding roles, and provide rest areas, hydration, and medical support.
- ✓ Recognise contributions in real time: Offer public acknowledgements and visible appreciation during the event.

After the event

- ✓ Celebrate contributions: Organise post-event gatherings, provide certificates, or offer personalised thank-you messages.
- ✓ Collect and apply feedback: Use volunteer insights to improve training, coordination, and the overall experience.
- ✓ Maintain engagement: Keep communication channels open year-round, involve volunteers in other initiatives, and prepare them for future editions.

Participants

Spreading behaviour
and compromises

Participants

Spreading behaviour and compromises

Participants are central to the sustainability outcomes of a sport event. Their decisions—how they travel, what they consume, how they manage waste, and how they interact with the environment—directly shape the event’s environmental and social footprint. Well-informed and engaged participants can become powerful multipliers of sustainable practices, both during and beyond the event. They are also messengers: what they learn, experience, and share can inspire wider change in their communities and networks.

From the organiser’s perspective, every interaction with participants is a chance to model and encourage responsible behaviours, to make sustainable options the most attractive and accessible, and to connect personal achievement with collective responsibility. When participants leave an event not only with memories but also with a renewed commitment to sustainability, the legacy of the event grows far beyond its original boundaries.

KEY ROLES AND CHALLENGES

- ✓ **Managing participant impact as a major sustainability factor**

From an organiser’s standpoint, participant behaviour—especially in areas like transport, accommodation, and on-site consumption—can represent the largest share of the event’s environmental footprint. This requires proactive strategies to guide choices toward low-impact options.

- ✓ **Bridging the information–action gap**

Organisers face the challenge of turning participant goodwill into concrete action. Even when attendees express support for sustainability, they may not follow through without clear guidance, tangible incentives, and visible infrastructure that makes the desired behaviour easy and attractive.

- ✓ **Addressing cultural and contextual diversity**

Events often attract participants from different countries or regions, each with distinct habits, expectations, and norms regarding environmental practices. Organisers must anticipate these differences, adapt communication, and ensure that sustainability measures are accessible and relevant to all audiences.

Recommendations for Action

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

Embed sustainability into the registration and pre-event process

Use registration platforms and pre-event communications to inform participants about sustainability measures, expected behaviours, and available incentives.

The first point of contact with participants is a critical opportunity to set expectations and influence behaviours. The registration form, confirmation emails, and pre-event information packs should explicitly outline the sustainability commitments of the event, explain the role participants play in achieving them, and invite them to make active pledges. This can include “eco-choice” options such as bringing a reusable bottle, opting for low-impact travel, and committing to proper waste sorting. These commitments should not just be symbolic participants can be rewarded through recognition, priority services, or discounts for future events. Visual, easy-to-read materials, such as infographics or short videos, can clarify what is expected and why it matters, helping bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

“The main lesson learned is that today’s generations are highly visual (perhaps due to communication technologies)! They look for symbols and short phrases! They do not have the patience to read! Therefore, sustainability messages must be strong, concise, and direct.” —
AJSPT (Romania)

GOOD PRACTICE

Outdoor Friendly Alliance (Kilian Jornet Foundation)

Embedding sustainability into registration

The Outdoor Friendly Alliance highlights how registration platforms can become a powerful tool to activate participants’ commitment to sustainability before the event even begins. By integrating eco-choices and carbon compensation options, organisers make sustainability visible, actionable, and measurable from the very first contact.

In practice

The registration process is not only administrative—it sets the tone for the event. Providing participants with clear sustainability choices creates awareness, fosters accountability, and empowers them to take direct climate action linked to their participation.

How it works:

- ➔ Eco-choice pledges: At registration, participants can commit to behaviours such as bringing a reusable bottle, using low-impact transport, or sorting waste correctly.
- ➔ Carbon travel compensation: Runners are given the option to offset their travel emissions—either through average event estimates or personalised calculators—directing contributions to certified climate projects (e.g. MyClimate, CeroCO2, CarbonFootprint, Clime-works).
- ➔ Positive incentives: Organisers can reward early commitments with benefits such as priority bib collection, recognition in event communications, or discounts for future editions.

- ➔ Clear communication: Short videos, infographics, or confirmation emails explain why these choices matter, making sustainability part of the event's identity.

Impact

By embedding sustainability into registration, organisers transform a routine process into a climate-conscious act. This approach not only reduces the event's footprint but also empowers participants to take responsibility for their travel and behaviour, reinforcing a culture of sustainability that extends beyond race day.

Useful resources:

Outdoor Friendly Alliance:

<https://outdoorfriendly.org/event/>

Contribution to SDGs



2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Promote sustainable mobility choices

Incentivise participants to choose low-carbon transport modes through rewards, infrastructure, and logistical support.

Participant travel is often the single largest contributor to an event’s carbon footprint, particularly for large-scale competitions. Events can reduce this impact by offering clear alternatives to private car use, making sustainable options convenient, affordable, and appealing. Measures may include negotiated discounts for public transport, organised shuttle services from key hubs, safe bike parking with additional services (lockers, showers), and coordinated carpool systems. Communication is crucial: routes, schedules, and benefits of these options should be shared well in advance. Incentives, such as reduced entry fees or exclusive race-day benefits for those using low-carbon transport, can further shift behaviour. Partnering with transport operators or cycling advocacy groups can also expand reach and credibility.

“We strategically positioned our Expo Zone and Start/Finish area next to a major subway station and an electric tram station. Additionally, we actively encourage participants to use these mass transportation options, thereby reducing the reliance on gasoline-powered vehicles and minimising traffic congestion.” — Bucharest International Half Marathon (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

Outdoor Friendly Alliance (Athlete Goals)

Promoting sustainable mobility through carbon travel limits

Why it matters

Athlete and participant travel is consistently identified as the largest contributor to sport event emissions. Setting a measurable limit, combined with practical travel planning, turns an abstract challenge into a clear, actionable goal that individuals can follow.

In practice

- ➔ Annual travel targets: Participants are encouraged to keep their travel footprint under 3 tonnes of CO₂ e per year, with a long-term goal of 2.5 tonnes by 2050.
- ➔ Carbon calculators: Tools like MyClimate, CeroCO2, Carbon Footprint, and Protect Our Winters help athletes calculate emissions for each journey and choose the greenest transport option.
- ➔ Practical travel advice: Plan fewer but longer trips, avoid short-haul flights or multiple stopovers, fill vehicles to capacity when driving, and prioritise trains, buses, carpooling, or cycling whenever possible.

The Outdoor Friendly Alliance encourages athletes and participants to actively reduce the carbon footprint of their travel, setting a clear annual target of staying under 3 tonnes of CO₂e per year. By combining awareness, planning tools, and low-carbon alternatives, the initiative shows that sport can align with global climate goals while maintaining accessibility and fairness.

- ➔ Behavioural change: Encouraging athletes to extend stays instead of making multiple short trips, and to use low-carbon transport not only for competition but also for daily training.

Impact

By linking participation in sport events to a transparent carbon budget, the Outdoor Friendly Alliance reframes mobility as a collective responsibility. Athletes and fans alike become more conscious of their travel choices, reducing overall emissions while setting a benchmark for sustainable sport lifestyles.

Useful Resources

Calculate the footprint of your journeys:

<https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

<https://www.myco2.fr>

<https://www.ceroco2.org/>

<https://www.myclimate.org>

Contribution to SDGs



3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption

Encourage participants to bring their own reusable containers and make sustainable choices in accommodation and food.

On-course waste is one of the most visible and impactful sustainability challenges. Events should eliminate single-use plastic bottles and cups, replacing them with reusable alternatives. This requires clear pre-event communication so participants can come prepared with their own containers, as well as on-site infrastructure such as refill points and designated waste sorting areas. Collaboration with local food providers can help ensure that nutrition stations offer unpackaged, locally sourced items, reducing both packaging waste and the event's food footprint. Accommodation guidance can also be integrated into the sustainability strategy—participants should be encouraged to stay in eco-certified lodgings or with local hosts committed to sustainable practices. Post-event follow-up can include reminders to keep using reusable gear beyond the event, reinforcing behaviour change.

GOOD PRACTICE

TCS London Marathon (Comprehensive Sustainability Programme)

Reducing single-use and promoting responsible consumption

The TCS London Marathon has implemented one of the most ambitious sustainability programmes in the running world, addressing environmental impact at every stage of the event—from registration and the Running Show to race day and beyond.

Why it matters

As one of the world's largest marathons, with over 40,000 participants and a global audience, London demonstrates that even mega-events can lead the way in eliminating single-use items, promoting responsible consumption, and embedding circular economy practices.

Key measures include:

- ➔ Eco-choice registration options: planting a tree instead of receiving a finisher T-shirt, or opting out of a medal.
- ➔ Smart mobility tool (You.Smart.Thing) guiding runners to low-carbon travel alternatives.
- ➔ Official T-shirts made from 100% recycled polyester and on-demand bib printing.
- ➔ Water refill stations throughout the course and bioplastic kit bags made from sugarcane.
- ➔ Medals produced from recycled zinc and logistics powered by electric vehicles and biofuels (HVO).
- ➔ Free public transport for participants and volunteers on race day.
- ➔ Clothing reuse (Salvation Army) and trainer donation (JogOn initiative).
- ➔ Recycling stations and zones along the route to ensure correct waste separation.

Impact

By embedding sustainability across all phases, the TCS London Marathon sets a benchmark for large-scale events. It reduces waste generation, promotes circular resource use, and demonstrates that environmental responsibility is compatible with mass participation sport. This integrated approach inspires participants, sponsors, and other organisers to adopt similar measures.

Useful Resources

London Marathon:

<https://www.londonmarathonevents.co.uk/london-marathon/environment>

Contribution to SDGs



4

RECOMMENDATION 4

Foster environmental awareness and cultural respect during the event

Use the participant journey as a platform to promote environmental stewardship and appreciation of local heritage.

Sport events provide a unique moment to connect participants with the natural and cultural values of the host territory. Integrating environmental education and cultural respect into the participant experience can turn the event into a catalyst for behavioural change. This may include educational signage along the route, short talks or videos during bib collection, guided tours of cultural sites, and interactive activities that invite reflection on conservation and local identity. Messages should be concise, visual, and integrated into the flow of the event so that they are engaging without disrupting the sporting experience.

“Technology, particularly smartphones, facilitated real-time communication with participants. This allowed us to share environmental sustainability messages via social media, using positive and negative examples.” — ASSPT Suceava (Romania)

GOOD PRACTICE

Heritage Trail Series (UK)

Fostering environmental awareness and cultural respect through running

The Heritage Trail Series offers participants a unique opportunity to run across historic sites and landscapes not usually accessible for sporting events. By integrating cultural heritage and environmental values into the race experience, the event creates a direct connection between physical activity, history, and nature.

Why it matters

Sporting events can be powerful platforms for education and awareness. The Heritage Trail Series demonstrates how participants can be immersed in local heritage and natural beauty while competing, reinforcing respect for the host territory and inspiring stewardship. This approach also benefits local communities by increasing visibility and appreciation of their cultural and natural assets.

Key measures include:

- ➔ Running routes designed to highlight historic monuments, gardens, lakes, and woodlands.
- ➔ Seasonal events showcasing changing landscapes and biodiversity across the year.
- ➔ Discounted venue tickets for friends and family, encouraging broader cultural engagement.
- ➔ Integration of cultural experiences such as wildlife encounters, sculpture trails, vineyards, and historic architecture.
- ➔ Promotion of sustainable visitor practices (e.g., pre-booking parking, exploring by foot).

Impact

By turning the race into a cultural and environmental journey, the Heritage Trail Series goes beyond sport. Participants leave with an enriched understanding of the host site's heritage and ecology, while families and spectators engage with local attractions, creating shared value for both community and environment.

Useful Resources

Trail series UK:

<https://www.heritagetrailseries.co.uk/how-it-works>

Contribution to SDGs



5

RECOMMENDATION 5

Engage participants as sustainability advocates

Empower participants to share sustainability messages with peers, online, and in their communities.

Participants can act as credible and influential messengers for sustainability, inspiring peers and amplifying the event's message well beyond its physical footprint. Creating a "Sustainability Ambassador" programme allows organisers to select and equip participants with storytelling tools, eco-tips, and behind-the-scenes insights to share on social media. This peer-to-peer approach normalises sustainable behaviours, particularly when ambassadors show practical, relatable actions like travelling by bike, using a zero-waste race kit, or joining post-event restoration days. Encouraging participants to volunteer in environmental or community initiatives after the event not only strengthens their personal connection to the cause but also reinforces the event's legacy. Recognition, such as featuring ambassadors in post-event communications or offering free entry to future editions, sustains their motivation and turns them into long-term allies.

GOOD PRACTICE

GreenSportFlag (Ecoembajadores Programme)

Engaging athletes as sustainability advocates

The GreenSportFlag platform, led by the Spanish Sports Association (ADESP), has launched the eco-ambassador's initiative: a network of elite athletes (Participants are central to the sustainability outcomes of a sport event. Their decisions—how they travel, what they consume, how they manage waste, and how they interact with the environment—directly shape the event's environmental and social footprint. Well-informed and engaged participants can become powerful multipliers of sustainable practices, both during and beyond

Why it matters

Participants, especially recognised athletes, are powerful messengers who can inspire behavioural change among peers, fans, and younger generations. By empowering them to act as ambassadors, sustainability becomes visible, relatable, and aspirational extending the event's impact well beyond its duration.

In practice

- ➔ Role models: Elite athletes lend their image and voice to raise awareness of environmental care, acting as visible examples for society.
- ➔ Community engagement: eco-ambassadors inspire younger generations to adopt sustainable behaviours through campaigns, events, and educational initiatives.
- ➔ Open network: Any athlete can register as an eco-ambassador, creating a growing movement that amplifies sustainability messages across sports.
- ➔ Digital presence: Profiles are displayed on the GreenSportFlag platform, giving visibility to their commitment and linking them to approved sustainable events.

Impact

By connecting athletes directly with sustainability advocacy, GreenSportFlag multiplies the reach of its message, positioning athletes as credible voices for environmental responsibility. The programme creates a ripple effect—shaping values among fans, strengthening the image of sustainable sport, and reinforcing the long-term legacy of green events.

the event. They are also messengers: what they learn, experience, and share can inspire wider change in their communities and networks.) who use their public profile to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility in sport.

Useful Resources

Green sport Flag:

<https://greensportflag.com/ecoembajadores/>

Complementary information

Complementary Information – Becoming an ecoambassador (GreenSportFlag)

Athletes who wish to join the ecoambassadors initiative must provide personal and sporting details to ensure credibility, traceability, and alignment with the programme's goals. The registration process highlights both the identity of the athlete and their experience in sustainable or sporting activities.

Key information required for registration includes:

- ➔ Personal details: Full name, surname, ID number, telephone, postal code, city, and Autonomous Community.
- ➔ Profile picture: A digital photo (minimum size 150×150 pixels).
- ➔ Sporting affiliation: Indication of the athlete's federation, club, or association (e.g. regional federation, Spanish federation, Consejo Superior de Deportes).
- ➔ Athlete category: Classification as High-Performance Athlete or other relevant status.
- ➔ Experience and background: Description of previous collaborations with sport entities (clubs, regional or national federations).
- ➔ Activities undertaken: Participation in sustainable sport events, awareness campaigns, or community initiatives linked to sport and the environment.

Key resources:

<https://greensportflag.com/registro-ecoembajador/>

Contribution to SDGs



Quick Action Checklist (From the Organiser's Perspective)

- ✓ Communicate sustainability guidelines clearly to participants before the event (e.g., registration packs, website, social media).
- ✓ Provide incentives for sustainable behaviours, such as using public transport, carpooling, or bringing reusable bottles.
- ✓ Offer clear on-site signage and instructions for waste sorting, mobility, and respect for sensitive areas.
- ✓ Use digital tools (apps, QR codes) to reduce printed materials and provide real-time updates.
- ✓ Encourage participants to share sustainability messages during the event via social media.

Suggested Indicators

- Percentage of participants reached with sustainability communications before the event.
- Percentage of participants using sustainable transport options.
- Kg of waste per participant diverted from landfill.

NOTES

Checklist to Make Sport Events More Sustainable

Before the event

- ✓ Promote sustainable travel and accommodation: Provide participants with clear information, booking links, and incentives for public transport, carpooling, or eco-certified lodging.
- ✓ Communicate sustainability commitments: Include clear rules on waste, equipment, mobility, and respectful conduct in registration materials and pre-event briefings.
- ✓ Prepare participants for low-impact behaviour: Share tips and resources on reusable gear, environmental stewardship, and cultural respect.

During the event

- ✓ Reinforce sustainability guidelines: Use signage, staff guidance, and announcements to remind participants of expected behaviours.
- ✓ Facilitate respectful cultural engagement: Create opportunities to experience local traditions and heritage with appropriate context and interpretation.
- ✓ Embed environmental education in the experience: Integrate messages, activities, or installations along the course or in event spaces to inspire reflection and action.
- ✓ Encourage peer influence: Highlight role models and ambassadors among participants who demonstrate exemplary sustainable behaviour.

After the event

- ✓ Collect participant feedback on sustainability: Use surveys or interviews to capture experiences and suggestions for improvement.
- ✓ Involve participants in legacy actions: Invite them to join post-event restoration activities, community projects, or ongoing sustainability initiatives.
- ✓ Maintain post-event engagement: Share impact results and tips to help participants carry sustainable habits into their daily lives and future events.

Local Community

Fostering Territorial
Belonging and Shared
Responsibility

Local Community

Fostering Territorial Belonging and Shared Responsibility

Local communities are more than the backdrop to a sport event—they are its hosts, its stewards, and often its most enduring storytellers. Their knowledge of the land, cultural heritage, and environmental sensitivities can enrich the event experience while ensuring it aligns with the territory's identity and long-term wellbeing.

For organisers, engaging communities is both a strategic investment and a moral responsibility. If done well, it builds trust, fosters pride, and generates shared benefits that extend well beyond the finish line. If done poorly, it can trigger resistance, erode local support, and compromise the event's legacy. Viewing the community as a partner—rather than just a stakeholder—opens the door to co-creation, mutual learning, and a shared vision for sustainability.

KEY ROLES AND CHALLENGE

(from the
organiser's
perspective)

✓ **Harnessing local knowledge and cultural heritage**

Communities often hold valuable insights into local traditions, heritage, and environmental sensitivities that can enhance the event's authenticity and minimise impacts. Yet, this knowledge is frequently underused due to insufficient engagement or consultation.

✓ **Balancing benefits and disruptions**

Events can bring economic opportunities, visibility, and community pride, but also noise, congestion, and restricted access to certain areas. If perceived benefits are unclear or unevenly distributed, resistance and conflict are more likely to arise.

✓ **Ensuring meaningful participation**

In many rural or protected areas, communities lack formal mechanisms to influence event planning. Without accessible participation channels, decisions may overlook local priorities and risk undermining trust.

✓ **Addressing capacity gaps**

Small communities may have limited infrastructure, staffing, or organizational skills to fully capture event-related benefits—such as providing services, hosting visitors, or managing environmental impacts. Organisers must anticipate these gaps and offer targeted support or partnerships.

Recommendations for Action

1

RECOMMENDATION 1

Co-create the event with local stakeholders

Involve residents, associations, and local businesses in planning and decision-making to build ownership and trust.

When local communities are engaged from the start, events are more likely to be welcomed, supported, and integrated into the territorial fabric. Co-creation processes can include participatory workshops, open forums, and joint planning committees where residents, associations, and local businesses can voice concerns, propose ideas, and identify opportunities. This dialogue helps align event goals with community priorities—such as protecting sensitive areas, supporting local traditions, or boosting the local economy—while anticipating and mitigating potential conflicts.

“Sourcing local products and materials, giving opportunities, enchant and chances to disadvantage groups and so on and so forth. So that’s where environments and social sustainability or you know considerations are very closely intertwined with economic ones for that matter as well. For this, it is really important that you as even organiser consult and involve the local community.” — International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. (UICN)

“So healthy waters, healthy ecosystems, connection, more connection to biodiversity. So, what can we do? To involve our communities. To not only to protect, but to restore and regenerate. So, this new pilot will allow us to have this. Biodiversity focus through a new compass that we are utilising with a service provider that will help us, and the organising committee measure their biodiversity levels and. Analyse different ways to improve those levels.” — World Rowing

GOOD PRACTICE

LA28 Olympic & Paralympic Games (USA)

Co-creating with local communities

The organising committee of the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games is embedding community collaboration into its planning process. Through advisory groups, creative storytelling, youth programmes, and open participation channels, LA28 ensures that the Games reflect the diverse values of Los Angeles and generate lasting benefits.

Why it matters

Mega-events like the Olympics can disrupt local life but also serve as powerful engines for inclusion and regeneration. The initiative works to ensure that co-creation with residents, local businesses, and community organisations fosters trust, ownership, and opportunities that extend far beyond the event itself.

In practice

- ➔ Community advisory groups: Quarterly meetings with civic organisations, NGOs, and local government guide procurement, workforce development, and sustainability policies.
- ➔ Inclusive identity: The dynamic LA28 emblem (“A”) evolves to reflect the stories of athletes, creators, and activists—symbolising diversity and community voices.
- ➔ Youth engagement (PlayLA): A \$160 million programme, co-funded with the IOC, delivers year-round, low-to-no-cost sports programmes for children of all abilities across Los Angeles.
- ➔ Economic participation: A supplier registration portal opens opportunities for small, local, and minority-owned businesses to contribute to the Games. Employment and legacy: LA28 offer career pathways that allow individuals to join the organising team and contribute to a once-in-a-generation legacy for the city.

Impact

By weaving co-creation into branding, youth sport access, procurement, and governance, LA28 sets a benchmark for mega-events as community-driven projects. The Games are not only a sporting spectacle but also a shared city-building effort, ensuring long-term social, cultural, and economic benefits for Los Angeles.

Useful Resources

LA28 Olympic & Paralympic Games:

<https://la28.org/en/newsroom/LA28-Collaborates-With-Local-Community-Leaders-to-Plan-For-the-2028-Olympic-and-Paralympic-Games.html>

Contribution to SDGs



2

RECOMMENDATION 2

Generate tangible benefits for the territory

Ensure that the event creates lasting economic, social, and environmental value for the host area.

Events can leave a positive legacy when they are designed to strengthen the local economy, enhance community wellbeing, and protect natural and cultural assets. Organisers should prioritise hiring local staff, sourcing products and services from local suppliers, and highlighting regional culture and traditions within the event programme. Environmental benefits can be generated through restoration projects, biodiversity protection, or infrastructure improvements that remain after the event.

"Our type of event is very much connected to the environment; therefore, we are working a lot with the local community – how to include them, give them economic opportunities, opportunities to present their products, prolonging events activities to have longer stays, collecting donations and participating in local actions,..." — Julian Alpes Trail Run (Romania).

GOOD PRACTICE

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 (Australia & New Zealand)

Generating tangible benefits for the territory

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand, was conceived not only as a sporting spectacle but as a catalyst for long-term impact. Football Australia's Legacy '23 plan defined five pillars to ensure the tournament created tangible benefits for communities and the sport.

In practice

By structuring legacy planning around clear areas of impact, the tournament helped address pressing needs in facilities, participation, and leadership, while also strengthening Australia and New Zealand's position in global sport and tourism.

How it works – Legacy '23 pillars:

- ➔ Facilities: Investments focused on upgrading and creating inclusive football infrastructure so that women and girls have safe and accessible places to play.
- ➔ High Performance: The success of national teams inspired greater support for elite player pathways, ensuring stronger foundations for future generations of athletes.
- ➔ Leadership & Development: Education and training initiatives promoted more women as coaches, referees, and administrators, helping to close gender gaps in football leadership.
- ➔ Participation: Grassroots initiatives encouraged more women and girls to take up football, reinforcing its role as the most inclusive and multicultural sport in Australia.

- ➔ **Tourism & International Engagement:** The event elevated the global visibility of women's football, positioning Australia and New Zealand as trusted hosts for future tournaments and strengthening international connections through sport diplomacy.

Impact

The FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 shows how a major event can be a vehicle for positive transformation when legacy pillars are embedded from the outset. Communities benefit from improved facilities, more inclusive opportunities, stronger pathways for women, and a reinforced global sporting reputation.

Useful Resources

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023:

https://www.footballaustralia.com.au/sites/ffa/files/2024-02/Legacy%20Post%20Tournament%20Report_A4_FA_%4096ppi_FINAL_22FEB2024.pdf?utm

Contribution to SDGs



3

RECOMMENDATION 3

Minimise disruption and address community concerns

Identify potential negative impacts early and work with residents to find acceptable solutions.

Even well-intentioned events can generate disruptions such as traffic congestion, noise, restricted access to services, or environmental pressures. Anticipating these challenges through early dialogue with residents allows organisers to adjust plans, implement mitigation measures, and communicate changes clearly.

"Community Engagement is Key: Involving local communities ensures better acceptance and success of sustainable initiatives."
— European Volleyball Championship

GOOD PRACTICE

La Vuelta 2019 (Spain)

Minimise disruption by acting on what residents actually report

Why it matters

Large, itinerant road events can create perceived nuisances. In 2019, La Vuelta commissioned a social & tourism study (pre / in-situ / post) to understand local concerns and address them with evidence.

What the study found (nuisance impacts):

- ➔ Traffic & parking are the main friction points: residents most often flagged congestion and parking difficulty across all periods, peaking during the race day.
- ➔ Noise, litter and security concerns remain low: residents generally did not perceive notable increases in noise, waste or insecurity associated with the event.
- ➔ Perceived negatives drop after the event: scores for traffic, parking, noise, litter and security improve in the post-event phase compared with pre-event.

How organisers can use this evidence:

- ➔ Prioritise mobility mitigation where it matters most (detours, timed closures, park-&-ride, clear wayfinding), since traffic/parking drive most complaints.
- ➔ Maintain strong cleaning and safety operations (areas perceived as adequate) to avoid creating new pain points.
- ➔ Repeat the pre / in-situ / post tracking to verify improvements and fine-tune measures in future stages and host towns.

Useful Resources

La Vuelta 2019 – Impacto social y turístico (Universidad de Murcia)
https://netstorage.lequipe.fr/ASO/cycling_vue/la-vuelta-19-informe-de-impacto-social-y-turistico-universidad-de-murcia-eng.pdf

Contribution to SDGs



4

RECOMMENDATION 4

Build long-term partnerships with the community

Maintain relationships beyond the event to create trust, continuity, and shared goals.

Strong, ongoing partnerships between organisers and local communities ensure that the benefits of hosting an event are not limited to a single occasion. This involves maintaining communication channels year-round, collaborating on joint initiatives, and involving community representatives in post-event evaluations and future planning.

GOOD PRACTICE

Tour de France (Cycle City Label)

Building long-term partnerships with host communities

Under its Riding into the Future programme, the Tour de France runs the Cycle City Label to maintain year-round relationships with municipalities. The label recognises towns—on past or present routes—that sustain concrete, local plans to promote every day and leisure cycling, keeping collaboration alive well beyond race week.

Why it matters

Partnerships endure when there is a shared agenda after the finish line. The label turns the Tour's visibility into an ongoing framework where cities present short- and medium-term development plans (infrastructure, safety, school training like "Savoir rouler à vélo" (Learn to Ride a Bike programme), parking/anti-theft, maintenance), and are publicly recognised for progress. This approach reinforces trust, continuity, and common goals between organisers and communities.

In practice

- ➔ Annual recognition cycle: Now in its 5th edition (2025), nearly 190 cities across 11 countries hold the label—evidence of a maturing, long-term network.
- ➔ Clear criteria & tiers: Applications highlight existing measures and near-term plans; four label levels (shown as yellow bicycles) reward advancement over time. Cities can re-apply and improve their rating (e.g., Vitré moving from 1 to 3 bikes).
- ➔ Broad, inclusive jury & timing: A multi-stakeholder jury (Tour organisers, NGOs, public leaders, sponsors) awards labels, often announced during "Mai à Vélo," France's national cycling month—keeping momentum and dialogue active every year.

Impact

By asking municipalities to plan, report and re-apply, the label institutionalises a long-term partnership: cities commit to safe, everyday cycling; organisers provide recognition, a common benchmark, and regular touchpoints. The result is a stable platform for co-planning mobility, health and environment outcomes that last well beyond the event.

Useful Resource

Cycle City France:

https://www.letour.fr/en/our-commitments/riding-into-the-future/cycling-cities?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Contribution to SDGs



5

RECOMMENDATION 5

Promote local culture, natural heritage, and environmental awareness

Use the event as a platform to celebrate identity, foster pride, and inspire stewardship of local resources.

Sport events can strengthen community bonds by integrating local traditions, heritage, and identity into the event experience. At the same time, their visibility and convening power make them ideal platforms for environmental education and awareness. Organisers can combine cultural celebration with practical learning opportunities—such as guided tours, interpretive signage, interactive workshops, or school partnerships—that highlight the importance of conserving both natural and cultural assets.

This dual approach fosters respect for the host territory, deepens participants' and residents' connection to place, and encourages long-term pro-environmental behaviour.

GOOD PRACTICE

Rugby World Cup France 2023 (World Rugby & France 2023)

Promoting local culture, inclusion, and environmental awareness

The Rugby World Cup 2023 uses its visibility to run community programmes in host cities, linking sport with citizenship and environmental education for young people.

Why it matters

Major events can reach kids and families who do not usually access sports or cultural offers. Bringing learning into the event experience—on topics like environmental preservation—builds pride in place and encourages long-term stewardship.

How it works (programme highlight):

- ➔ National neighbourhood tournament: Children aged 8–13 from Priority neighbourhoods in the 10 host cities take part in a dedicated tournament.
- ➔ resources.worldrugby-rims.pulselive.com
- ➔ Citizen workshops: Alongside play, sessions raise awareness of environmental preservation (and other civic topics such as road safety), turning the event into a practical learning platform.
- ➔ resources.worldrugby-rims.pulselive.com
- ➔ Inspiration & access: The most assiduous participants are invited to attend a Rugby World Cup match—connecting classroom lessons, local pride, and the live event.

Impact

By combining sport, culture, and environmental education for young residents—especially in priority areas—the tournament strengthens community bonds and equips children with concrete pro-environmental attitudes that can outlast the event.

Useful Resources

Rugby World Cup France 2023:

<https://resources.worldrugby-rims.pulselive.com/worldrugby/document/2024/05/22/af4914cd-06d8-4a80-b0cb-a8abb8914d20/RWC2023-Impact-Report-EN-.pdf>

Contribution to SDGs



Quick Action Checklist (From the Organiser's Perspective)

- ✓ Engage local residents, associations, and businesses early in the planning process through forums or advisory boards.
- ✓ Align event routes, schedules, and activities with local needs and sensitivities (e.g., avoiding peak traffic hours or sensitive areas).
- ✓ Offer tangible benefits to the community, such as promoting local products, culture, and services within the event.
- ✓ Integrate educational activities that connect visitors with local culture, heritage, and environmental values.
- ✓ Monitor and address community concerns during and after the event.

Suggested Indicators

- Number of local stakeholders actively involved in planning.
- Percentage of event suppliers and service providers from the local area.
- Number of community concerns received and resolved.

NOTES

Checklist to Make Sport Events More Sustainable

Before the event

- ✓ Co-create the event with local stakeholders: Engage residents, associations, and businesses through forums, advisory boards, or consultations.
- ✓ Identify and respect community priorities: Align routes, schedules, and activities with local needs and environmental sensitivities.
- ✓ Plan tangible local benefits: Define how the event will support the economy, culture, and environment.
- ✓ Integrate and promote local identity: Include traditional music, crafts, gastronomy, and heritage in the programme.

During the event

- ✓ Implement agreed community measures: Apply route adjustments, quiet zones, or protections for sensitive areas as planned with residents.
- ✓ Facilitate local participation: Provide spaces for producers, artists, and associations to showcase their work.
- ✓ Offer educational activities for residents and visitors: Set up information points or participatory actions promoting good environmental practices and cultural respect.
- ✓ Monitor and address disruption: Manage issues such as traffic, waste, or restricted access in real time.
- ✓ Highlight local culture: Feature heritage, gastronomy, and traditions through performances, exhibitions, or guided tours.

After the event

- ✓ Evaluate community impact: Collect feedback from residents and stakeholders on both benefits and disruptions.
- ✓ Share results locally: Communicate outcomes in accessible formats to maintain transparency.
- ✓ Maintain long-term partnerships: Continue collaboration through community projects or environmental initiatives.
- ✓ Preserve and enhance the legacy: Ensure the upkeep of infrastructure, cultural promotion, and environmental benefits initiated by the event

Part

04

Key Sustainability
Resources for Sport Events

Part 4.

Key Sustainability Resources for Sport Events

Overview of recommendations and their associated SDG

Stakeholder	Recommendation	SDG includes
Administration	1. Embed sustainability into event authorisation processes	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
	2. Use public funding as leverage for sustainable innovation	SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 17
	3. Strengthen cross-sectoral coordination	SDG 11, SDG 16, SDG 17
	4. Support knowledge sharing and capacity building	SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 12, SDG 17
	5. Measure, evaluate, and communicate results	SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 16, SDG 17
Organisers	1. Embed sustainability into event authorisation processes	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
	2. Design for legacy and second life	SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12,
	3. Empower green teams with real authority	SDG 8, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 17
	4. Create space for innovation and experimentation	SDG 8, SDG 12, SDG 17
	5. Measure and Communicate Sustainability Outcomes	SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 16, SDG 17

Local Community	1. Co-create the event with local stakeholders	SDG 11, SDG 16, SDG 17
	2. Generate tangible benefits for the territory	SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15
	3. Minimise disruption and address community concerns	SDG 3, SDG 11, SDG 15, SDG 16
	4. Build long-term partnerships with the community	SDG 11, SDG 16, SDG 17
	5. Promote Local Culture, Natural Heritage, and Environmental Awareness	SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
Volunteers	1. Embed sustainability into event authorisation processes	SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 17
	2. Design for legacy and second life	SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 12
	3. Empower green teams with real authority	SDG 3, SDG 8, SDG 10, SDG 16
	4. Create space for innovation and experimentation	SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15
	5. Measure and Communicate Sustainability Outcomes	SDG 4, SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 17
Participants	1. Embed sustainability into the registration and pre-event process	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
	2. Promote sustainable mobility choices	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 17
	3. Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
	4. Foster environmental awareness and cultural respect during the event	SDG 4, SDG 11, SDG 13, SDG 15, SDG 17
	5. Engage participants as sustainability advocates	SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 17

Data source to measure suggested Indicators by Stakeholder Group

Stakeholder Group	Suggested Indicators	Data Source
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of authority recommendations integrated into the event plan. Number of coordination meetings held with public authorities. Approval obtained without major compliance issues (Yes/No). 	Meeting minutes, planning documents, approval letters
Organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of suppliers with environmental certification. Percentage of participants using sustainable transport. Kg of waste recycled vs. total waste generated. 	Supplier records, participant survey, waste audit reports
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of volunteers receiving sustainability training. Number of sustainability-related incidents managed by volunteers. Volunteer satisfaction rate regarding sustainability role clarity. 	Training attendance logs, incident reports, volunteer feedback survey
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of participants reached with sustainability communications before the event. Percentage of participants using sustainable transport options. Kg of waste per participant diverted from landfill. 	Communication analytics, participant survey, waste audit reports
Local Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of local stakeholders actively involved in planning. Percentage of event suppliers and service providers from the local area. Number of community concerns received and resolved. 	Stakeholder engagement records, supplier database, community feedback log

Practical Tools and Enabling Measures for Organisers

- ✓ Pre-event sustainability briefing templates – Ready-to-use outlines for delivering concise, engaging sustainability briefings to staff, volunteers, and participants before the event.
- ✓ Eco-choice modules for registration platforms – Features that allow participants to select sustainable options (e.g., reusable race packs, low-carbon meals) during registration, encouraging early adoption of responsible behaviours.
- ✓ Mobility incentive schemes for low-carbon travel – Frameworks for offering rewards, discounts, or recognition to participants who choose sustainable transport modes.
- ✓ Guidelines for zero-waste participant kits – Checklists for designing kits with minimal packaging and reusable, durable contents, aligned with circular economy principles.
- ✓ Templates for sustainability clauses in tenders and sponsorships – Model text to ensure all procurement and partnership agreements include clear environmental and social commitments.
- ✓ Carbon and waste footprint calculators adapted to sport events – Tools to estimate and monitor environmental impacts before, during, and after the event.
- ✓ Volunteer sustainability handbook templates – Customisable guides outlining expected environmental and social practices, plus checklists for role-specific sustainability actions.
- ✓ Codes of conduct for natural and cultural sites (with icons) – Easy-to-understand, illustrated guidelines to communicate rules and respectful behaviour in sensitive locations.

Networks and Platforms

- ✓ **UN Sports for Climate Action**

UN-led global framework supporting sports organisations to achieve climate goals and promote sustainability.

Link: <https://unfccc.int/Sports-for-Climate-Action>

- ✓ **Global Destination Sustainability Movement (GDS-Movement)**

A network offering tools, certifications, and research to make destinations and events more sustainable.

Link: <https://www.gds.earth/>

- ✓ **Green Sports Alliance**

International network providing case studies, events, and resources to advance sustainability in sports.

Link: <https://greensportsalliance.org/>

- ✓ **Sport Environment Alliance (SEA)**

Asia-Pacific network promoting environmental leadership in sport.

Link: <https://www.sportenvironmentalliance.org/>

- ✓ **Global Sustainable Sport (GSS)**

A digital platform providing data, frameworks, and resources to define and assess sustainability in sport at multiple levels: sports organisations, events, infrastructure, suppliers, and more.

Serves as an observatory with a global network of sustainable sports organisations.

Link: globalsustainablesport.com

- ✓ **Sports for Nature**

An initiative by the IOC, IUCN, UNEP, CBD, and Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy. Promotes measurable actions to protect and restore nature through sport, based on four principles: protecting nature, restoring nature, adopting green procurement, and enhancing education/communication.

Link: sportsfornature.org

Guides and Standards

- ✓ IOC Sustainability Essentials:
https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/IOC/What-We-Do/celebrate-olympic-games/Sustainability/sustainability-essentials/IOC-Sustain-Essentials_v7.pdf
- ✓ UEFA Football Sustainability Strategy 2030:
https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0270-13f888ffa3e5-931c597968cb-1000/uefa_football_sustainability_strategy.pdf
- ✓ UEFA Circular Economy Guidelines:
https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0287-19687e946432-280d53c9ac66-1000/uefa_circular_economy_guidelines_low_res.pdf
- ✓ UEFA Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines:
https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/027b-168e898b309b-c76f49dada9e-1000/the_uefa_sustainable_infrastructure_guidelines.pdf
- ✓ TACKLE Guidelines – Environmental Management of Football Matches:
<https://www.greensportsalliance.org/media/new-guide-seeks-to-improve-environmental-management-of-football-matches>
- ✓ The Toolbox – ANOC Sustainability Handbook:
<https://www.anocolympic.org/downloads/sustainability/The%20Toolbox/Sustainability%20Handbook%20-%20How%20to%20Guides%20-%20The%20Toolbox-ANOC%20-%20ENG.pdf>
- ✓ ISO 20121 – Sustainable Event Management Systems:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO_20121
- ✓ Guidance for Sustainable Events – World Athletics:
<https://assets.aws.worldathletics.org/document/6230a9797c6f973a01756918.pdf>
- ✓ FIA Introductory Guide for Sustainable Events:
https://atcn.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/FIA_guide_for_sustainable_events_2021_opt.pdf
- ✓ FIFA Stadium Guidelines:
<https://sustainability.sport/fifa-stadium-guidelines-set-global-benchmark-for-football-stadiums>
- ✓ Guide to Good Practices for Holding Mountain Races in Protected Natural Areas:
https://www.europarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Mountain-Races-in-Protected-Areas_EN-version.pdf



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