



Green Games Certification Protocol

Requirements and procedures for the certification of sustainable sport events

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What this Scheme is

Green Games is a free, voluntary certification for sport events. It is designed to be completed by the people who actually organise events — including volunteers running small events with no sustainability staff — in hours rather than weeks.

It is built on three commitments. First, we ask only for what an organiser can reasonably know and would plausibly have anyway. Second, we trust what organisers tell us — and we audit one event in ten to make sure that trust is warranted. Third, we say only what we can prove: the Green Games Seal certifies what an event did, and nothing more.

DISCLAIMER

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PROJECT CONSORTIUM

Delivered by the Green Games partnership



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Purpose, scope and how to read this document

1.1 Purpose

This protocol sets out what a sport event shall do to be certified under the Green Games Certification Scheme, how the Scheme verifies it, who decides, and how the Green Games Seal may be used.

1.2 Scope

The Scheme is open to sport events of any type and size: competitive events, mass-participation events, multi-sport events and spectator-driven events, whether indoor or outdoor, one-off or recurring.

The Scheme is open to events in every country of the world. It is not restricted to the European Union, to the Erasmus+ programme countries or to the countries of the project consortium. Where this protocol refers to legal requirements — accessibility law in particular — it means the law applicable in the country where the event takes place.

Certification is granted to a specific event edition, never to an organising body. Each edition requires a new application; a streamlined renewal applies to events already certified (Section 8.4).

1.3 Companion documents

This protocol says what shall be done. It does not repeat how to do it, because the project has already produced that guidance:

- **The Green Games Playbook** (Intellectual Output 2) — practical guidance, recommendations and examples for each of the five stakeholder groups. Every essential in this protocol carries a pointer to the Playbook section that explains how to meet it (Section 5), and Annex D maps the two documents to each other in full.
- **The Green Games online course (MOOC)** — a short, free online course covering the Playbook and this protocol. Organisers applying for certification are strongly encouraged to complete it before they apply: it is the fastest route to understanding what the essentials ask for and why.

- **The Green Games platform** — where the application is made. The platform form is the operative version of Annexes A and B.

1.4 Frameworks this Scheme serves

The Scheme is the certification instrument of the Green Games project, and it is designed to advance the frameworks the project committed to:

- **The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.** The Playbook maps each of its recommendations to the SDGs it serves; Annex D of this protocol carries that mapping through to the essentials, so that an organiser can see which SDGs its certified event contributes to.
- **The UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action Framework.** The travel requirement (E2) and the carbon requirement (L2-1) are the operational expression of that commitment in this Scheme.
- **ISO 20121** (event sustainability management systems) is a structural reference for Level 2. Certification to ISO 20121 is neither required nor a substitute for Green Games certification.

1.5 Normative language

Term	Meaning
shall	A requirement. An event that fails a "shall" is not certified.
should	A recommendation. Deviation is permitted and need not be justified.
may	A permission or an option.

Table 1 — Normative language.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Certifier Panel	The body that ratifies certification decisions, reviews the audit sample, decides appeals and calibrates the reviewers. Composed of at least one member from each partner organisation; meets quarterly (Section 8.1).
Reviewer	A member of the Certifier Panel acting on rotating duty, who takes certification decisions on a rolling basis between Panel meetings. Reviewers are drawn from the Panel; they are not a separate body.
Declaration	The organiser's statement, made by a named person, that each essential has been met. The declaration is the primary basis of certification and is subject to audit.
Essential	One of the requirements in Section 5 (Level 1) or Section 6 (Level 2). Each is passed or failed. There is no score and no percentage.
Event	A sport activity with defined start and end dates, location(s), and participant structure.
Event edition	A single occurrence of an event, and the subject of certification.
Green Games Seal	The mark awarded to a certified event edition. Its use is governed by Section 9.
Local area	The territory around the principal venue of the event, used for the community benefit requirement (L2-4). The organiser states the boundary it has applied — for example the host municipality, the surrounding province or region, or a stated radius — and applies that boundary consistently. The Scheme does not impose a single distance, because what counts as “local” for a village trail race and for a capital-city marathon is not the same. The boundary declared is auditable.
Organiser	The entity responsible for delivering the event, and the applicant.
Participant	A person taking part in the sport activity itself: an athlete or competitor, including registered team personnel. Participants are not spectators, volunteers, workforce or media.

Term	Definition
Post-event confirmation	The short form an organiser submits after the event to confirm that what was declared beforehand actually happened, and to report the travel data. Required at both levels (Section 5.2). At Level 2 it is accompanied by the post-event report (L2-5).
Audit	Verification, by a human reviewer, of the records behind a declaration. Applied to at least 10 % of certified events, selected on a risk basis and at random (Section 7.3).
Sport Go Green	The free carbon footprint calculator for sport events developed under the Erasmus+ Green Flame project, led by the Spanish Olympic Committee. Verified by Bureau Veritas and based on the GHG Protocol. The calculator endorsed by this Scheme (Section 6, E9).
Spectator	A person attending the event to watch it. Spectators are counted and reported separately from participants.
Sustainability Coordinator	The individual designated with primary responsibility for sustainability planning and implementation within the event organisation.
Trigger	A characteristic of an event (for example, taking place in a protected area) that makes an otherwise inapplicable essential apply. Triggers are determined by the platform from the event profile, not by the organiser.
Volunteer	A person contributing unpaid work to the delivery of the event. One of the five stakeholder groups of the Green Games Playbook.
Workforce	The paid staff and contractors engaged in delivering the event, whether employed by the organiser or by a supplier. Workforce are neither participants, spectators nor volunteers.

Table 2 — Definitions.

The event profile

At registration the organiser answers nine questions. The platform uses the answers to work out which essentials apply, which level the event is eligible for, and when the application is due. The organiser cannot switch an essential off by answering inaccurately: the answers are part of the declaration and are auditable.

No.	Question	What it determines
1	Event name, dates, venue or course.	Identification of the edition.
2	First edition, or recurring? If recurring, was the previous edition certified?	Streamlined renewal; carbon comparison at Level 2.
3	How many participants (athletes/competitors) do you expect?	Size band (Table 4); application deadline; Coordinator requirement.
4	How many spectators do you expect, and on what basis?	Whether spectator essentials apply; carbon boundary.
5	How many volunteers and paid staff?	Volunteer essentials.
6	Indoor, outdoor or mixed? Permanent venue, temporary infrastructure, or both?	Energy, water and materials essentials.
7	Does any part of the event take place in a natural, rural or protected area? Which?	Triggers E8 (site protection).
8	Do most people travel from the local area, from elsewhere in the country, or from abroad?	Carbon boundary at Level 2.
9	Which level are you applying for?	Level 1 or Level 2.

Table 3 — The nine profile questions.

3.1 Size bands

Band	Participants	Consequence
Micro	Under 100	Level 1. Declaration only. Application 30 days before the event.
Small	100–500	Level 1. Declaration only. Application 30 days before.
Medium	501–5 000	Level 1 or Level 2. Application 60 days before.
Large	5 001–50 000	Level 1 or Level 2. Application 90 days before.
Very Large	Over 50 000	Level 1 or Level 2. Application 180 days before.

Table 4 — Size bands. The bands are a working convention adopted by the consortium to scale expectations proportionately; they are not derived from an external standard.

Spectators are counted separately from participants and are never added to the participant figure. Where an event has more than 5 000 spectators, the spectator essentials (E2, E3) and, at Level 2, the spectator element of the carbon boundary apply, whatever the participant band.

From the answers to questions 3 and 4, the platform derives the audience profile of the event, which is recorded on the certificate:

- **Participant-driven** — the field of play is the principal source of impact; spectators are few or incidental.
- **Spectator-driven** — the audience is the principal source of impact (football matches, arena sports).
- **Hybrid** — both are material (marathons, cycling classics, multi-sport games).

The Scheme does not classify events by budget size, and shall not do so. Sustainability expectations are independent of an organiser's financial capacity or self-reported budget. Proportionality is achieved instead through participant numbers, spectator numbers, venue type and the sensitivity of the location — all of which are verifiable.

How certification works

4.1 Two levels, one list

	Level 1 — Green Games Recognised	Level 2 — Green Games Certified
Requirements	The ten essentials (Section 5).	The ten essentials, plus five additional requirements (Section 6).
Basis of assessment	Pass or fail on each essential. All applicable essentials shall be passed.	As Level 1, plus all five additional requirements.
Evidence	Declaration, with a link or photograph uploaded for six essentials (E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, E9). Most are photographs the organiser already has.	Declaration, plus the carbon result, the action plan and the post-event report.
Verification	Automated completeness check; risk-based and random audit; reviewer decision.	As Level 1, plus reviewer examination of the carbon result and action plan.
Typical effort	3–5 hours (Micro/Small); up to 15 hours (Medium/Large).	20–30 hours.
Sustainability lead	A named person with allocated time. No paid position required.	A named person with allocated time; for Large and Very Large events, a paid position.
Post-event	Post-event confirmation within 30 days (Section 5.2).	Post-event confirmation, carbon result and published report (L2-5).
Fee	None. Certification is free of charge.	None. Certification is free of charge.

Table 5 — The two levels.

4.2 Pass or fail — there is no score

An event either meets an essential or it does not. There is no percentage threshold, no weighting and no score. This is deliberate. A percentage invites an organiser to trade a strong result in one area against nothing at all in another, and it produces a number (“74 % sustainable”) that means nothing to anybody who reads it.

Where an essential does not apply to an event — because the platform has determined from the profile that it cannot apply — it is marked “not applicable” and is neither passed nor failed. The organiser cannot make this determination.

4.3 Declaration, not documentation

The organiser declares, through a named person, that each essential has been met. A light item of evidence — a link or a photograph — is uploaded for six essentials (E2, E3, E4, E5, E7 and E9). These are things an organiser already has on a phone or a web page; none is created for certification. Everything else rests on the declaration.

The Scheme takes the declaration seriously, and it verifies it: one certified event in ten is audited, and an audit examines the records behind the declaration, not the declaration itself (Section 7.3). A false declaration is a ground for withdrawal of the certificate and for removal from the register (Section 8.5).

NOTE — This is the central design choice of the Scheme. Requiring every organiser to upload evidence for every criterion, in order to verify a fraction of them, taxes the honest majority to catch nobody: an uploaded document that no one reads is not verification. Credibility comes from the audit. The audit is therefore the one element of this protocol that shall not be weakened.

4.4 Records

The organiser shall be able to produce, for 12 months after the certification decision, the records behind its declaration — the photographs, the supplier confirmations, the waste figures, the published pages. These are records an organiser would hold in any event. Nothing in this protocol requires a document to be created solely for certification.

Level 1 — the ten essentials

All applicable essentials shall be passed. Essentials marked “triggered” apply only where the event profile makes them apply. The “How to meet this” column points to the Green Games Playbook (Intellectual Output 2), which explains how each essential is achieved in practice; Annex D maps the essentials to the Playbook in full.

Ref	Essential	What shall be done	How to meet this	Evidence
E1	Someone is responsible	A named person is responsible for sustainability at the event, with an email address and a one-line description of the responsibility. A volunteer or an existing staff member with allocated time is acceptable at every event size. No paid position is required at Level 1.	Playbook, Organisers — Recommendation 3 (Empower green teams with real authority). MOOC, module on sustainability governance.	Declaration (name, email, role)
E2	Sustainable travel	Public transport, cycling, walking and shared-travel options are published to participants — and to spectators where there are more than 5 000 — before the event. The travel question (Annex C) is included in the registration or ticketing form.	Playbook, Participants — Recommendation 2 (Promote sustainable mobility choices) and Recommendation 1 (Embed sustainability into registration and the pre-event process).	Link or screenshot of the published information
E3	Waste	Separate waste collection is provided both in public areas and behind the scenes. Avoidable single-use plastic items are removed or replaced.	Playbook, Participants — Recommendation 3 (Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption); Organisers — Recommendation 1 (Embed circularity in procurement and resource management).	Two photographs

Ref	Essential	What shall be done	How to meet this	Evidence
E4	Water	Free drinking water refill points are provided and signposted.	Playbook, Participants — Recommendation 3 (Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption).	One photograph
E5	Food	Where catering is provided, plant-based options are available. <i>Triggered: catering provided.</i>	Playbook, Participants — Recommendation 3; Organisers — Recommendation 1 (procurement).	One photograph
E6	Materials	Signage, branding and event kit are reusable — that is, not dated to a single edition — or a route for reuse, donation or recycling after the event is identified before it.	Playbook, Organisers — Recommendation 2 (Design for legacy and second life) and Recommendation 1 (circularity).	Declaration (state the route)
E7	Accessibility	The venue, the services and the event communications comply with the accessibility law applicable in the country of the event. A contact point is published for accessibility requests.	Playbook, Local Community — Recommendation 1 (Co-create the event with local stakeholders); Volunteers — Recommendation 1 (Recruit locally and diversify profiles).	A one-page accessibility statement
E8	Site protection	Where any part of the event takes place in a natural, rural or protected area: the site manager or competent authority has been consulted, mitigation measures are agreed in writing, and the site is restored after the event. <i>Triggered: natural / protected site.</i>	Playbook, Local Community — Recommendation 5 (Promote local culture, natural heritage and environmental awareness); Participants — Recommendation 4 (Foster environmental awareness and cultural respect during the event).	Declaration; the written agreement is produced on audit

Ref	Essential	What shall be done	How to meet this	Evidence
E9	Neighbours	A contact point is published through which local residents can raise a concern, with a named owner and a commitment to respond. Concerns received are logged.	Playbook, Local Community — Recommendation 3 (Minimise disruption and address community concerns) and Recommendation 1 (Co-create the event with local stakeholders).	Link to the published contact point
E10	Volunteers	Volunteers receive a briefing or training on the sustainability aspects of their role before the event — what the event is doing, what their part in it is, and what to tell participants who ask. Wellbeing provisions (drinking water, food, rest, shelter, safety information) are in place. <i>Triggered: the event uses volunteers.</i>	Playbook, Volunteers — Recommendation 2 (Provide training and capacity building) and Recommendation 3 (Ensure volunteer wellbeing, safety and recognition). The Green Games MOOC may be used as the training itself.	Declaration (state how volunteers were briefed)

Table 6 — The ten Level 1 essentials. Six require a simple upload: E2 (link), E3, E4 and E5 (photographs), E7 (statement) and E9 (link).

5.1 Why these ten

Each essential earns its place by one of two tests: it addresses a material environmental impact of sport events, or it is a condition of the Seal being lawful and credible. Together they cover all five stakeholder groups of the Green Games Playbook.

- **E2** is the highest-impact requirement in the Scheme. Travel is the dominant source of emissions at almost every sport event. It costs an organiser nothing to publish transport options and to add one question to a form they already run — and that question is the only source of travel data the Scheme needs at either level.
- **E3, E4, E5 and E6** are the operational decisions that visibly change an event: what is thrown away, what is drunk from, what is eaten, and what happens to the materials afterwards.
- **E8** is triggered rather than universal, because habitat damage is catastrophic where it applies and irrelevant where it does not.

- **E10** recognises that volunteers are the people who actually deliver most of the above on the day. A volunteer who has not been told why the bins are separated cannot keep them separated, and cannot answer a participant who asks. Briefing volunteers is the cheapest high-leverage act available to an organiser.
- **E1, E7 and E9** are the accountability essentials: a person answerable for sustainability, compliance with accessibility law, and a route for the community to be heard.

Requirements present in earlier drafts have been removed where they generated work without changing outcomes: the percentage of authority recommendations adopted, permits (which an event needs regardless of this Scheme), supplier credentials as a percentage of contract value, circularity measured by weight of materials, procurement clauses, and the volunteer, participant and community satisfaction surveys. Their removal is recorded in Section 11.

5.2 The post-event confirmation

Certification is granted provisionally before the event, on the strength of the declaration. It is confirmed afterwards, on the strength of what actually happened. The post-event confirmation is how the organiser closes that loop. It shall be submitted within 30 days of the end of the event, at both levels.

It is a short form on the platform. It asks six things:

No.	The organiser confirms or reports	Why
1	The actual number of participants and, separately, of spectators.	Confirms the event profile; feeds the carbon calculation at Level 2.
2	That each essential declared before the event was in fact delivered — or, where one was not, which one and why.	This is the confirmation. An honest “we could not deliver E4 because the water supply failed” is an acceptable answer; a false confirmation is not.
3	The results of the travel question (Annex C), in full.	The single most useful datum the Scheme collects.
4	Any concern raised by the local community, and what was done about it.	Closes E9.
5	One thing the event will do better next time.	Closes the learning loop, and takes one sentence.
6	Optional — a small number of outcome figures, where the organiser has them: the share of waste separately collected; the share of participants who travelled sustainably (from the travel question); an estimate of single-use plastic avoided; or any comparable figure. Reported if held; never required at Level 1.	Moves the Scheme from what was done towards what was achieved, without obliging a small event to measure what it cannot.

Table 7 — The post-event confirmation (both levels).

- At Level 1 the post-event confirmation is the whole of the post-event requirement. There is no report.
- At Level 2 it is submitted alongside the post-event sustainability report (L2-5) and the carbon result (L2-1).
- The reviewer confirms the certificate on receipt. Until it is received, the certificate remains provisional (Section 7.4).
- A provisional certificate that is not confirmed within 30 days of the event is withdrawn and removed from the public register (Section 8.5).

Level 2 — five additional requirements

A Level 2 event shall pass all applicable Level 1 essentials and, in addition, the following. At Level 2, Large and Very Large events shall in addition make the sustainability lead required by E1 a paid position: at that scale, and at that level of commitment, the role cannot credibly be carried by someone doing it in the margins of another job.

Ref	Requirement	What shall be done	Evidence
L2-1	Carbon footprint	The emissions of the event edition shall be calculated using the Sport Go Green calculator (Annex C). The boundary shall include participant travel, spectator travel, workforce and volunteer travel, energy, waste, and — where most attendees travel from abroad — accommodation and air travel. The organiser shall state one reduction target for the next edition.	The calculator result and the stated target
L2-2	Action plan	A one-page plan setting out three sustainability objectives for the edition, with a named owner and a date for each. Not a management system; no policy manual is required.	The one-page plan
L2-3	Accessibility	The accessibility checklist provided by the platform shall be completed. For events in permanent venues with more than 5 000 spectators, the checklist shall be completed by, or with, a person with demonstrable competence in accessibility, or a representative organisation of persons with disabilities.	Completed checklist
L2-4	Community benefit	A short statement of what the local area gained from the event. For Large and Very Large events, this shall include the value of goods and services purchased locally — a figure the organiser already holds in its accounts.	One paragraph; the figure for Large/Very Large
L2-5	Post-event report	A report on the platform template, of no more than two pages, published or sent to participants within 90 days of the event. It shall state what was achieved against the three objectives, including any that were not met.	The published report

Table 8 — The five Level 2 requirements.

How to meet these: the Playbook chapters on Organisers (Recommendation 5, Measure and communicate sustainability outcomes) and Local Community (Recommendation 2, Generate tangible benefits for the territory) address L2-1, L2-4 and L2-5 directly. The Green Games MOOC covers carbon measurement and reporting. Annex D maps every requirement to its Playbook source.

6.1 The carbon calculation

The Scheme endorses one calculator and does not permit a free choice of methodology. Comparability between events, and between successive editions of the same event, is impossible if every organiser chooses its own tool and its own boundary.

- Sport Go Green was developed under the Erasmus+ Green Flame project, led by the Spanish Olympic Committee. It is free of charge, available in English and Spanish, based on the GHG Protocol, and independently verified by Bureau Veritas.
- The travel data needed by the calculator comes from the registration or ticketing travel question required by E2. An organiser that has complied with E2 already holds the inputs.
- For a recurring event, the second and subsequent editions shall report the change in emissions against the previous edition and explain it — that is, describe the main factors behind the change, whether the total rose or fell. A reduction driven by lower attendance is not the same achievement as one driven by a switch to rail travel or renewable power, and the explanation shall make clear which it was. An honest account of an increase is an acceptable answer; a fabricated reduction is not.
- This is what “continuous improvement” means in the Scheme: not a reduction every year regardless of circumstances, but an organiser that measures its footprint, understands what moves it, and acts on that understanding edition after edition.

Verification

7.1 What the Scheme does with a submission

Method	What it is
Declaration	The organiser states that each essential is met. The primary basis of certification.
Completeness check	An automated check that the form is complete and the three required items of evidence are present and legible. It raises questions; it decides nothing.
Reviewer decision	A person designated by the Certifier Panel reviews the submission and any flags, and issues the decision.
Audit	At least 10 % of certified events are audited, chosen on a risk basis and at random: a human examines the records behind the declaration (Section 7.3).
Post-certification verification	The Scheme may verify any certified event at any time where evidence of misstatement or of a misleading claim emerges (Section 8.5).

Table 9 — Verification methods.

7.2 The automated check: what it may and may not do

- It checks that the form is complete and the evidence is present and legible. That is all.
- It does not grant, refuse, downgrade or withdraw certification. Every question it raises goes to a human, who decides.
- The form may compute an internal completeness score to help reviewers prioritise their attention. That score is not a certification threshold, is not disclosed to the applicant, and no certificate is granted or refused on the basis of it. The decision is pass or fail on the essentials, taken by a person (Section 4.2).
- The Scheme owner shall publish how the automated check works, and shall keep an audit trail of every gap it flags and of the human decision taken on it.

7.3 The audit

The audit is what makes a declaration-based scheme credible. It shall not be reduced or suspended. It has two parts: a risk-based selection that concentrates scrutiny where the consequences of a false declaration are greatest, and a random selection that keeps every organiser aware that any event may be checked.

The Certifier Panel shall audit at least 10 % of certified events each year. Within that sample:

- The following events shall always be audited (risk-based selection): any event about which a complaint has been received; any event whose declaration includes the protected-area essential (E8); any first-time Level 2 applicant; and any organiser previously found to have made an inaccurate declaration or subject to an outstanding corrective action.
- Among the remaining events, priority is weighted towards larger events, because a false claim by a large event reaches more people and does more reputational damage to the Seal. Very Large and Large events therefore carry a higher probability of selection than Micro and Small events.
- The balance of the 10 % is drawn at random across all certified events, so that a small, low-risk event still knows it may be audited.

The rest of the audit operates as follows:

- An audit is a documentary review of the records behind the declaration. The organiser shall produce them within 15 working days of a request. For Large and Very Large events, and for any event in a protected area, the Panel may in addition visit the event.
- A Panel member shall not take part in an audit of an event connected to their own organisation (Section 8.1).
- Where an audit finds that a declaration was materially inaccurate, Section 8.5 applies. Where it finds an honest error, the organiser is given the opportunity to correct it.

7.4 The process, end to end

Step	Stage	What happens
1	Register	The organiser registers free of charge and answers the nine profile questions. The platform returns the applicable essentials and the deadline.
2	Declare	The organiser completes the declaration and uploads the three items of evidence (and, at Level 2, the carbon result and action plan).
3	Check	The automated completeness check runs. Anything flagged is sent to the organiser and to a reviewer.
4	Provisional decision	A reviewer issues a provisional decision within 15 working days. If it is positive, the organiser may use the Seal for the edition from that date (Section 9.3).
5	Hold the event	—
6	Confirm	Within 30 days of the event the organiser submits the post-event confirmation (Section 5.2) and, at Level 2, the carbon result and the published report. The reviewer confirms the certificate. A provisional certificate not confirmed within 30 days is withdrawn.
7	Ratify	The Certifier Panel ratifies the batch of decisions at its next quarterly meeting, examines the audit sample, and decides any appeals (Section 8.1).

Table 10 — The certification process.

NOTE — The Seal is awarded provisionally before the event so that it can be used to promote the event, which is when it is worth something to an organiser. It becomes final on the post-event confirmation. A provisional Seal that is not confirmed is withdrawn and removed from the register.

Governance, decisions and appeals

8.1 Who decides

Body	Role
Scheme owner	Owns the protocol, the Seal and the platform. During the project, the Green Games consortium; thereafter, the body designated to maintain the Scheme.
Certifier Panel	At least one member from each partner organisation. Meets quarterly. Ratifies the decisions taken since the last meeting, examines the 10 % audit sample, decides appeals, and calibrates the reviewers by comparing how similar cases were judged. May invite independent external experts to reinforce selected reviews and audits.
Reviewers	Members of the Panel, on rotating duty. Take certification decisions on a rolling basis between meetings, within 15 working days.
Independent external experts	Specialists — for example in carbon accounting, accessibility or protected-area management — whom the Panel may invite to take part in selected reviews or audits. They advise; the Panel decides. Their occasional involvement reinforces the independence and technical credibility of the Scheme (Section 8.1).

Table 11 — Governance.

- Decisions are taken by reviewers on a rolling basis so that no organiser waits for a quarterly meeting. Ratification by the Panel is a check on the reviewers, not a further gate for the applicant: a certificate is live from the reviewer's decision.
- Where the Panel, on ratification, finds a decision was wrong, it may correct it. The organiser shall be notified with reasons and may appeal.
- Recusal: a Panel member shall take no part in a decision, audit or appeal concerning an event connected to their own organisation, and shall record the conflict.
- The Panel shall adopt a quorum rule so that a poorly attended meeting cannot strand a batch of decisions.

- The Panel may invite one or more independent external experts to take part in a review or an audit where specialist judgement would strengthen it — for instance, a carbon specialist for a large Level 2 event, or a protected-area specialist for an event in a sensitive habitat. External experts advise the Panel; they do not replace it, and the certification decision remains the Panel's. Their involvement is occasional and at the Panel's discretion, so it adds robustness without adding a standing cost.

8.2 Decisions

Outcome	Meaning
Granted (provisional)	All applicable essentials are declared met. The Seal may be used for the edition. Confirmed on the post-event submission.
Granted with conditions	Certification is granted subject to a specified correction, with a deadline. Failure to correct results in withdrawal.
Downgraded	A Level 2 application that meets Level 1 is offered Level 1.
Declined	The application fails an applicable essential. The decision states which one, and what would be needed to pass it.

Table 12 — Outcomes.

8.3 Appeals

- An organiser may appeal within 30 days. Appeals are free.
- Appeals are decided by the Certifier Panel at its next quarterly meeting, excluding the reviewer who took the decision under appeal.
- Where the next meeting is more than eight weeks away, the Panel chair shall convene the appeal by written procedure.

8.4 Validity and renewal

- A certificate covers the edition for which it was granted, and no other.
- A recurring event previously certified may use the streamlined renewal: it re-declares, and only what has changed is re-evidenced. The travel data, the carbon result (Level 2) and the post-event submission are provided each edition afresh.

8.5 Suspension and withdrawal

The Scheme owner may suspend or withdraw a certificate, at any time and including after the event, where:

- a declaration is found to have been materially inaccurate;
- an audit finds that the records do not support what was declared;
- the organiser makes a claim in breach of Section 9;
- a condition is not met by its deadline, or the post-event confirmation is not submitted within 30 days of the event;
- a serious incident occurs that contradicts the certified claims.

A withdrawal is recorded in the public register, the organiser shall cease all use of the Seal immediately, and reasons shall be given in writing. A withdrawal may be appealed.

8.6 The public register

The Scheme owner shall maintain a public register of certified editions, showing the event, the edition, the level, the date and — importantly — whether the certificate is provisional or confirmed. It shall also record certificates that have been suspended or withdrawn.

The distinction between provisional and confirmed matters. A provisional Seal may be used to promote an event that has not yet happened; anyone checking the register can see that the event has promised, not yet delivered. Once the post-event confirmation is accepted, the entry becomes confirmed. If it is never submitted, the entry is removed, and the Seal shall no longer be used. The register is a condition of the Seal being lawful as a sustainability label (Section 9.4), and it is the reason a member of the public can tell a real Seal from a claimed one.

Each confirmed entry shall carry a short public summary — no more than a few sentences — of the main sustainability measures the event put in place and, where the organiser reported them, the principal outcomes achieved. The summary is drawn by the platform from the declaration and the post-event confirmation, so it creates no separate reporting task for the organiser. Its purpose is to let anyone reading the register see what a certified event actually did, not merely that it was certified.

Claims and use of the Seal

9.1 The rule

An organiser may say what it did. It may not say more than it did.

9.2 Prohibited

- Claiming that the event is “carbon neutral”, “climate neutral”, “net zero” or “climate positive”, where the claim rests wholly or partly on offsetting. This is prohibited whatever the event’s footprint.
- Generic claims — “green event”, “eco-friendly”, “sustainable event”, “zero impact” — that are not substantiated by what was declared and verified.
- Presenting Level 1 as Level 2.
- Presenting certification of one edition as certification of the event in general, of a future edition, or of the organising body.
- Extending the Seal to a sponsor, a supplier, a product or a service.
- Presenting the Seal as an endorsement by the European Union, the European Commission or EACEA.

9.3 Permitted

- The Seal shall be used in the form issued by the Scheme owner and shall always carry the level, the event name and the year — for example: “Green Games Certified — [Event] 2027”.
- It may be used from the date of the provisional decision until the end of the calendar year following the certified edition.
- An organiser may state what it did and measured — the emissions calculated, the reduction target set, the waste separated, what was purchased locally — provided the statement matches the declaration.
- Where a certificate is suspended or withdrawn, all use ceases immediately.

9.4 The law

- The Green Games Seal is a voluntary sustainability label. As such it is subject to consumer-protection law wherever a certified event makes a claim. The most demanding such law is that of the European Union, and the Scheme is designed to meet it in full; an organiser certifying an event outside the EU shall in addition comply with any equivalent law in the country of the event.
- Directive (EU) 2024/825 (Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition) applies from 27 September 2026. It prohibits generic environmental claims that cannot be demonstrated, prohibits offset-based climate-neutrality claims, and requires that a sustainability label rest on a certification scheme with published criteria, transparent methodology and independent monitoring.
- This Scheme meets each of those conditions: the criteria are the essentials in Sections 5 and 6, published in this protocol; the methodology, including the automated completeness check and the human decision, is published under Section 10; the monitoring is the risk-based and random audit (Section 7.3), independent of the applicant; and the public register (Section 8.6) makes every certified claim checkable. These are not optional features of the Scheme. They are the conditions of its lawfulness, and none of them may be removed without breaking it.
- Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair commercial practices continues to apply and is enforced by national consumer authorities.
- The proposed Green Claims Directive is not in force; the legislative process was suspended in June 2025. The Scheme owner shall review this protocol if it is adopted.

Platform, support and data protection

- Certification is free of charge. The platform, the application, the automated completeness check, the human review, the audit and the appeal carry no fee, at either level, for any event, in any country. This is a commitment of the Scheme and not a temporary promotional arrangement.
- Support available to organisers: the Green Games Playbook, the online course, the platform templates (accessibility checklist, action plan, post-event confirmation and report), the Sport Go Green calculator, and the Green Games peer network. Organisers new to sustainability certification should start with the course: it is short, free to complete for project participants, and it explains the reasoning behind every essential in this protocol.
- Every decision carries written feedback saying what, if anything, would be needed to reach the next level.
- Personal data is processed under Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Travel-question responses are collected on the basis of data minimisation and are reported in aggregate. Individual responses are not disclosed in identifiable form.
- The Scheme owner shall publish: this protocol, the essentials and their triggers, the composition and recusal rules of the Certifier Panel, the nature of the automated check, the audit rate, and the register.

The Level 1 declaration

This is the form. The platform version is the operative one. Each item is answered Yes / No / Not applicable, where “not applicable” is available only if the platform has determined that the essential does not apply. Four items require an upload.

Ref	Declaration	Upload
E1	A named person is responsible for sustainability at this event. I give their name, email and one-line responsibility.	—
E2a	Public transport, cycling, walking and shared-travel information was published to participants before the event — and to spectators, if more than 5 000.	Link or screenshot
E2b	The travel question (Annex C) was included in the registration or ticketing form.	—
E3a	Separate waste collection was provided in public areas and behind the scenes.	Photograph
E3b	Avoidable single-use plastic items were removed or replaced.	Photograph
E4	Free drinking water refill points were provided and signposted.	Photograph
E5	Where catering was provided, plant-based options were available.	Photograph
E6	Signage, branding and kit are reusable, or a reuse/donation/recycling route was identified before the event. I state the route.	—
E7	The venue, services and communications comply with the accessibility law of the country of the event, and an accessibility contact point is published.	One-page accessibility statement
E8	Where any part of the event is in a natural, rural or protected area: the site manager or authority was consulted, mitigation was agreed in writing, and the site will be restored. (The written agreement is produced on audit.)	—
E9	A contact point for local residents to raise concerns is published, with a named owner and a response commitment. Concerns received are logged.	Link
E10	Volunteers were briefed or trained on the sustainability aspects of their role before the event, and wellbeing provisions (water, food, rest, shelter, safety information) were in place. I state how they were briefed.	—
—	I declare that the above is true, that I hold the records behind it and will produce them for 12 months, and that this event may be audited.	Signature

Table 15 — Level 1 declaration (12 items, 4 uploads).

A.1 The post-event confirmation

Submitted within 30 days of the event, at both levels. It converts a provisional certificate into a confirmed one (Section 5.2).

No.	Item
1	Actual number of participants, and separately, of spectators.
2	For each essential declared: was it delivered? If not, which one, and why?
3	The full results of the travel question (Annex C).
4	Any community concern raised, and what was done about it.
5	One thing the event will do better next time.
6	Optional outcome figures, if held: share of waste separately collected; share of participants travelling sustainably; single-use plastic avoided; or similar. Never required at Level 1.

Table 16 — The post-event confirmation.

The Level 2 additions

Ref	Declaration	Upload
L2-1a	The emissions of this edition were calculated using the Sport Go Green calculator, with the boundary required by Section 6.	Calculator result
L2-1b	I state one emissions reduction target for the next edition. (Recurring events: I report the change against the previous edition and explain the main factors behind it.)	—
L2-2	A one-page action plan sets out three objectives, each with an owner and a date.	The plan
L2-3	The platform accessibility checklist is complete. (Permanent venues over 5 000 spectators: completed by or with a competent person or a representative organisation of persons with disabilities.)	Checklist
L2-4	I state what the local area gained from the event. (Large and Very Large: including the value of goods and services purchased locally.)	—
L2-5	A post-event report of no more than two pages was published or sent to participants within 90 days, stating results against the three objectives, including any not met.	The report

Table 17 — Level 2 additions (6 items).

The travel question and the calculator

C.1 The travel question

This question shall be included in the registration or ticketing form (E2). It is the only survey instrument in the Scheme. It replaces the three separate surveys required by Version 1.0, and it supplies the travel data needed by the carbon calculator at Level 2.

Question	
Q1	How will you travel to the event? — On foot / Bicycle / Public transport / Coach or shuttle / Car, alone / Car, shared / Train (long distance) / Air / Other
Q2	Roughly how far will you travel, one way? — Under 10 km / 10–50 km / 50–200 km / 200–1000 km / Over 1000 km
Q3	Will you stay overnight for the event? — No / Yes, 1 night / Yes, 2–3 nights / Yes, more than 3 nights

Table 18 — The travel question.

- Q3 is required only where the event profile indicates that most attendees travel from elsewhere in the country or from abroad.
- There is no minimum response rate and no minimum score. The organiser reports what came back, in full. Selective reporting is a material misstatement (Section 8.5).
- Where the event sells tickets, the same question shall be put to spectators.

C.2 The calculator

- [Sport Go Green](#) — developed under the Erasmus+ Green Flame project, led by the Spanish Olympic Committee. Free of charge; available in English and Spanish; based on the GHG Protocol; independently verified by Bureau Veritas; covers Scopes 1, 2 and 3, including event attendees.
- It is the only calculator endorsed by this Scheme. Free choice of methodology is not permitted, because results that cannot be compared between events or between editions are not worth collecting.

- Access is arranged through the Spanish Olympic Committee. The current access route is published on the Green Games platform.

Traceability to the Green Games Playbook

This protocol is the certification instrument of the Green Games project. The Playbook (Intellectual Output 2) is its guidance instrument. The two are designed to be used together: the Playbook explains how to organise a sustainable sport event; this protocol certifies that it was done.

The table below maps every requirement of this protocol to the Playbook stakeholder group and recommendation it derives from, and to the Sustainable Development Goals associated with that recommendation in the Playbook. An organiser can therefore see, for any essential, where to read about it and which SDGs a certified event contributes to.

Ref	Requirement	Dim.	Stakeholder group	Playbook recommendation	SDGs
E1	Someone is responsible	SO	Organisers	R3 — Empower green teams with real authority	8, 12, 13, 17
E2	Sustainable travel	EN, SO	Participants	R2 — Promote sustainable mobility choices; R1 — Embed sustainability into registration and the pre-event process	11, 12, 13, 15, 17
E3	Waste	EN	Participants; Organisers	R3 — Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption; R1 — Embed circularity in procurement and resource management	11, 12, 13, 15, 17
E4	Water	EN	Participants	R3 — Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption	11, 12, 13, 15, 17
E5	Food	EN, SO	Participants; Organisers	R3 — Reduce single-use and promote responsible consumption; R1 — circular procurement	11, 12, 13, 15, 17
E6	Materials	EN, EC	Organisers	R2 — Design for legacy and second life; R1 — Embed circularity in procurement and resource management	8, 11, 12

Ref	Requirement	Dim.	Stakeholder group	Playbook recommendation	SDGs
E7	Accessibility	SO	Local Community; Volunteers	R1 — Co-create the event with local stakeholders; R1 — Recruit locally and diversify profiles	5, 10, 11, 16, 17
E8	Site protection	EN	Local Community; Participants	R5 — Promote local culture, natural heritage and environmental awareness; R4 — Foster environmental awareness and cultural respect during the event	4, 11, 13, 15, 17
E9	Neighbours	SO	Local Community	R3 — Minimise disruption and address community concerns	3, 11, 15, 16
E10	Volunteers	SO	Volunteers	R2 — Provide training and capacity building; R3 — Ensure volunteer wellbeing, safety and recognition	3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16
5.2	Post-event confirmation	EN, SO	Organisers; Administration	R5 — Measure and communicate sustainability outcomes; R5 — Measure, evaluate and communicate results	12, 13, 16, 17
L2-1	Carbon footprint	EN	Organisers	R5 — Measure and communicate sustainability outcomes	12, 13, 16, 17
L2-2	Action plan	EN, SO, EC	Organisers	R3 — Empower green teams with real authority; R4 — Create space for innovation and experimentation	8, 12, 13, 17
L2-3	Accessibility audit	SO	Local Community	R1 — Co-create the event with local stakeholders	11, 16, 17
L2-4	Community benefit	EC, SO	Local Community	R2 — Generate tangible benefits for the territory; R4 — Build long-term partnerships with the community	8, 11, 12, 13, 15
L2-5	Post-event report	EN, SO, EC	Organisers; Administration	R5 — Measure and communicate sustainability outcomes	12, 13, 16, 17

Table 19 — Traceability of the essentials to the Green Games Playbook and the SDGs. Dim. = sustainability dimension: EN environmental, SO social, EC economic. SDG associations are those given in the Playbook, “Overview of recommendations and their associated SDG”.

The dimension column responds to the reviewers' observation that a stakeholder-based requirement set gives no assurance of balanced coverage across the environmental, social and economic dimensions. Reading down the column:

- **Environmental** — E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E8, and L2-1. Strongly represented at both levels.
- **Social** — E1, E2, E5, E7, E9, E10, and L2-3. Strongly represented at both levels.
- **Economic** — E6 at Level 1; L2-2, L2-4 and L2-5 at Level 2. Lightly represented at Level 1, and deliberately so: local procurement value and legacy accounting require records a small volunteer-run event does not keep. The economic dimension is carried at Level 2, where the organiser already holds the figures in its accounts.

The dimension tags are descriptive. They do not create a separate test, and an organiser is not assessed against them.

D.1 The Playbook principles

The Playbook sets out ten basic principles of sustainability in events. The table shows where each is given effect in this protocol.

Playbook principle	Where it is given effect
1. Sustainability as a foundational commitment	E1 (a named person, before the event); L2-2 (objectives set in advance)
2. Knowledge-based decision-making through early impact assessment	E8 (site assessment where triggered); L2-1 (carbon measurement); L2-2
3. Circular economy and resource stewardship	E3, E4, E5, E6
4. Climate responsibility and carbon consciousness	E2 (travel — the dominant emissions source); L2-1 (Scopes 1, 2 and 3 via Sport Go Green); Section 9 (no offset-based neutrality claims)
5. Equity, inclusion and participatory governance	E7 (accessibility); E9 (community voice); L2-3
6. Respect for natural and cultural systems	E8
7. Regenerative local development	L2-4 (community benefit and local procurement value)
8. Collective culture of sustainability	E10 (volunteer briefing and training); the MOOC; the Green Games peer network
9. Evaluation, learning and legacy	Section 5.2 (post-event confirmation, both levels); L2-5 (published report)
10. Innovation, collaboration and knowledge sharing	The public register; the peer network; the reuse of the Sport Go Green calculator developed by another Erasmus+ project

Table 20 — The Playbook principles and their expression in this protocol.



Green Games Certification Protocol

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