

# IF SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT ATHLETICS FOR A BETTER WORLD



# NOC AND IF SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES

The world faces significant challenges across a wide spectrum of economic, social and environmental matters. The Olympic Movement has both an opportunity and a duty to actively contribute to the global sustainability debate in line with its vision of “building a better world through sport”.

With this in mind, and in response to Olympic Agenda 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC)

launched the International Federation (IF) Sustainability Project in 2016 to obtain an overview of IFs’ sustainability initiatives – identifying

common topics, challenges and good practices while also sharing information among the IFs. One outcome of the project was a series of case studies illustrating how IFs are actively contributing towards a more sustainable world.

As part of the IOC’s objective to “profile the role of the Olympic Movement in sustainability through the aggregation of information and collective reporting”, it was agreed that the identification and sharing of information contribute to the holistic integration of sustainability and should be continued.

These case studies, which now also showcase the best practices of National Olympic Committees (NOCs), form part of a strategic support system made available to the Olympic Movement through the IOC Sustainability Strategy. Each case study is aligned with one or more of the IOC’s five sustainability focus areas: infrastructure & natural sites; sourcing & resource management; mobility; workforce; and climate. They are also aligned

with one or more of the United Nations (UN) framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a common framework for

organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle the key global sustainability challenges.

This framework is pivotal for the Olympic Movement – in September 2015, the UN General Assembly confirmed the important role that sport can play in supporting the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The IOC provides support to NOCs and IFs in establishing, designing and developing their sustainability strategies.



*“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognise the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”*

**PARAGRAPH 37, UN 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Each NOC/IF sustainability project contributes to one or more of the IOC's sustainability focus areas and one or more of the UN SDGs.

## IOC FOCUS AREAS



INFRASTRUCTURE  
& NATURAL SITES



SOURCING &  
RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT



MOBILITY



WORKFORCE



CLIMATE

## UN SDGs



International  
Olympic  
Committee

# PROMOTING PROJECTS THAT USE ATHLETICS AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL GOOD

World Athletics' vision is to use the power and accessibility of athletics and its athletes to create a healthier and fitter world. This sustainability vision is guided by the [Athletics for a Better World \(ABW\) programme](#), which harnesses the commitment and energy of the worldwide athletics family to inspire lasting change across all segments of the sport and the society that embraces it. Propelled by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and united under a common brand, the ABW platform promotes all World Athletics projects that seek to use athletics as a tool for social, economic and environmental good.

In recent years, these have included:

- the World Athletics [Sustainability Strategy](#), designed to balance the economic, social and environmental impact of the Federation's activities to ensure it meets the needs of today's generation without compromising the needs of future generations;
- the World Athletics [Air Quality project](#), a broad campaign to raise awareness about air pollution around the world and the impact it has on elite athletes and recreational runners; and
- support for the world's only year-round [Athlete Refugee Team](#), providing high-level training and competitive opportunities to athletes who have fled violence, conflict and injustice at home.

World Athletics launched its Sustainability Strategy in April 2020. This ten-year road map is composed of six pillars and addresses global issues that pose a threat to the quality of our

lives, including climate change, air pollution and inequality. The aim is to use the power of sport and athletics to accelerate athletics towards a sustainable future, contributing to a better world. Through the Strategy, which was designed to deliver tangible benefits across environmental, social and economic sustainability and promote diversity and well-being, World Athletics committed to embracing sustainability principles and practices within its operations, its member federations and the organisation of future World Athletics events. These are some of the key components implemented:

### Competitions and events:

World Athletics aims to embed sustainability principles into the sanctioning process for all the events that it owns, such as its seven World Championship events, and those it licenses, including the Wanda Diamond League, the World Athletics Continental Tour, the World Athletics Indoor Tour, the World Athletics Cross Country Tour, the Combined Events Tour, the Race Walking Tour and the World Athletics Label Road Races.



To help guide the process, two tools were developed and shared with local event organisers in 2021:

- a Sustainable Events Management System (SEMS), which provides best-practice guidance across 15 event delivery areas for organisers to incorporate into their event planning and implementation; and
- the Athletics for a Better World Standard, a scorecard based upon the SEMS guidance that will measure an event's level of achievement in sustainable delivery.

## OBJECTIVES

- Promote a worldwide network of member federations, local organising committees, athletes, volunteers, sponsors and other public institutions, to share best practices in social responsibility.
- Carry out mass athletics participation activities which contribute to creating a healthier, more active and fitter society.
- Support environmentally friendly events and advocate eco-effective competition guidelines.
- Use athletics to bring people together, help overcome the challenges caused by social inequality and bring peace to areas of conflict.



The programme was piloted at more than 50 events in 2022. Pilots will continue in 2023 with the aim of implementing the programme the following year. Moving forward, sustainability requirements are also being embedded into the bidding process, giving sustainability an even more prominent role in the selection of host cities.

#### Air quality and carbon:

The World Athletics Air Quality project collects data that supports research into the correlation between air quality and performance and helps determine the best times to schedule competitions or exercise in sites whose air is being monitored. For communities that host World Athletics events and championships, it's an important environmental legacy that the organisation can create. It's also a way for World Athletics to best use the influence it

has to advocate and impact clean air policy in communities around the world.

#### Athlete engagement:

World Athletics recently launched its "Champions for a Better World" programme, which encourages athletes to take on a stronger role in promoting World Athletics global campaigns and to lead sustainability efforts at continental and national level. Athletes are



also surveyed extensively on attitudes and concerns about climate change and sustainability.

#### Diversity, inclusion and well-being:

World Athletics launched a Safeguarding Policy in 2021 which defined the specific roles and responsibilities of member federations, area associations and the global governing body in protecting athletes and other participants in the sport. That same year, it published the findings of an online abuse study conducted during the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 to identify and address targeted, abusive messages sent to athletes via social media. To coincide with International Women's Day in 2021, World Athletics launched #WeGrowAthletics, a campaign designed to build on the strides the sport has taken towards gender equity.

*"When we launched our Strategy, I said that our ambition was to be a leader in organising sustainable events as we go forward. That ambition already began to bear fruit in 2022. The sustainable events management system that we are putting in place, working in tandem with our Athletics for a Better World event certification, will be embedded into our bidding and sanctioning process and will make a measurable difference in the environmental and social impact of our events."*

**SEBASTIAN COE, WORLD ATHLETICS PRESIDENT**



## BENEFITS

- Create and support valuable initiatives by providing the necessary leadership to stakeholders and concentrating synergies of projects in the fields of health, the environment, social inclusion and peace.
- Use the great potential that athletics and sports in general have to increase awareness and advocate a more sustainable and healthier society.
- Inspire other organisations to transition towards more sustainable activities, show respect for the world's natural resources and challenge some "business as usual"