

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030



WORLD
RUGBY



SECURING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

As an organisation dedicated to championing and enhancing the wellbeing and interests of its global family, World Rugby believes that rugby has an essential role to play in the advancement of modern society.

While we have been active advocates of positive change, harnessing the power of a universal movement to promote and implement initiatives that have future generations of rugby players and supporters at heart, the clock is ticking. We must do more. We must act now with greater conviction.

The science is clear – climate change is upon us, and it is affecting all aspects of society. In the rugby world, we see this particularly sharply given that several of our member unions are from the Pacific Islands, which are among the most vulnerable communities on earth to the impacts of climate change. There are more frequent examples of rugby grounds being unplayable because of flood or drought, and instances where games must be cancelled because of smog from bush fires, or extreme heat or storm events.

To be true to our values of solidarity and respect, we must take strong action on behalf of our global rugby community and play our part in addressing the climate crisis and related environmental issues.

These are not simply isolated environmental concerns, they have profound economic and social consequences too. We have all seen the devastating effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on sport.

Yet climate change is already affecting people's lives, their health, their prosperity and general wellbeing. Acting on climate change and protecting our natural resources are, therefore, among the most socially progressive initiatives an organisation can undertake.

Some may fear that a heightened focus on environmental sustainability will divert precious resources from developing our sport. In fact, by taking a robust and systematic approach to this subject we can achieve important efficiencies and cost savings along the way – it is about doing things better. Furthermore, this is an area of increasing concern to all current and future stakeholders, including players, fans, media, commercial partners and public authorities.

As a growing global family of 128 national federations, six regional associations, millions of participants, hundreds of millions of fans, and globally popular competitions, we have a unique and powerful opportunity to affect positive, impactful and lasting change.

This environmental sustainability plan is a commitment for the game, by the game. By living our values, acting with conviction, we can collectively harness the passion and power of rugby to secure a bright and sustainable future for everyone.

Sir Bill Beaumont CBE DL
World Rugby Chairman

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A ROADMAP FOR THE SPORT



INTRODUCTION

We have developed this plan as both a statement of intent and a tangible roadmap for tackling environmental sustainability issues that both affect our sport and/or are affected by our sport.

Although on a global scale the sport of rugby has a relatively small environmental footprint compared with other sectors, we do not accept this as an excuse for inaction – like all successful teams, everyone has an important part to play.

Through this plan we set out what we believe rugby can and should be doing to contribute to a healthier planet and a more sustainable society. We are doing this because we believe it is the right thing to do, it is our responsibility to players and fans around the globe, and it is essential for the long-term sustainability and prosperity of rugby itself.

As a responsible values-driven organisation, we recognise the vital importance for the sport of rugby to have a voice in the field of sustainability and to be taking relevant and credible steps to minimise negative impacts while adopting positive actions to secure a better future for all.

Following a wide-ranging process of stakeholder consultation, we are confident that many of our members, partners and fans feel the same way and we look forward to combining our efforts to achieve a sustainable future for the sport in all senses of the term.

The commitments we present here apply across our three spheres of responsibility:

1. WORLD RUGBY AS AN ORGANISATION

2. WORLD RUGBY AS AN OWNER OF MAJOR EVENTS

3. WORLD RUGBY AS AN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

1. WORLD RUGBY AS AN ORGANISATION

Our day-to-day activities at our offices and the work of our staff wherever they operate.



2. WORLD RUGBY AS AN OWNER OF MAJOR EVENTS

The driving force behind the sport's significant growth has been our portfolio of major events, including:

RUGBY WORLD CUP

(our flagship men's and women's events)

RUGBY WORLD CUP SEVENS

HSBC WORLD RUGBY SEVENS SERIES

We also host a variety of other tournaments, including repechage and U20 events which, as well as being exciting and competitive, can be great vehicles for testing new initiatives and engaging youth audiences.



3. WORLD RUGBY AS AN INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

We are the governing body for a global movement comprising more than 500 million fans and 10 million players within 128 national member federations affiliated through six regional associations.

500M+
GLOBAL FANS

10M+
RUGBY PLAYERS

128
NATIONAL MEMBER
FEDERATIONS

In June 2019 we were among the first sports organisations to sign up to the [United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework](#).

This important framework initiated by UN Climate (UNFCCC) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) sets out five key principles to which signatories are expected to adhere:

1. Undertake systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility
2. Reduce overall climate impact
3. Educate for climate action
4. Promote sustainable and responsible consumption
5. Advocate for climate action through communication

This plan represents the application of these principles across our portfolio of activities. In doing so, we will also be contributing to the broader [United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#) – widely known as the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).



OUR APPROACH

Since 2017 we have been operating an internal cross-departmental working group to consolidate our approach to environmental issues, identify areas for improvement and implement change.

The scope of this group has since expanded given the increasing importance of environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues and the opportunities for rugby these bring if addressed properly and in a strategic manner.

In 2020, we decided to boost this initiative with the formal development of an environmental sustainability plan by the end of 2021, as outlined in the new [World Rugby Strategic Plan](#).

Over six months in 2021, together with specialist external advisers, we undertook a series of internal workshops and reviews, and embarked upon a wide-ranging consultation exercise with World Rugby stakeholders. This included:

- Online survey of staff – 58 per cent response
- Online survey of unions and regions – 45 per cent response
- Online survey of fans' panel – 22 per cent response (survey distributed in three languages – English, French and Spanish)
- Direct one-to-one interviews with a selection of World Rugby executive management, tournament organisers, unions, regions, commercial partners, suppliers and high-performance players from both 15s and sevens.

The outputs of this exercise, together with expert analysis of sustainability in sport, were discussed at regular ESG group meetings and fed into the drafting of this plan.

Initial drafts were reviewed by World Rugby senior management and revised before being presented to the World Rugby General Assembly in November 2021.



WORLD RUGBY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030



STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

Our three Priority Themes provide the overarching purpose for this plan. They will be addressed through four Pillars of Activity, which in turn are underpinned by Strategic Goals, Targets and Actions defining what we will do. They are illustrated in this table.

PRIORITY THEMES			
CLIMATE ACTION	CIRCULAR ECONOMY (MANAGING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES)	PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	
PILLARS OF ACTIVITY			
PILLAR 1 GOVERNANCE	PILLAR 2 ADDRESSING OUR DIRECT IMPACTS	PILLAR 3 DELIVERING AND SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE RUGBY EVENTS	PILLAR 4 PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN RUGBY THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING
STRATEGIC GOALS The general direction of action with wide, overarching goals that address or support our priority themes.			
TARGETS Our ambition by 2030.			
WHAT WE WILL DO Practical and specific actions to achieve our targets within stated timeframes. For Pillars 2 and 3 these are presented under two categories.			
Management Approach General measures to facilitate delivery of our targets.		Thematic Actions Specific actions related to our priority themes.	



TIMELINES

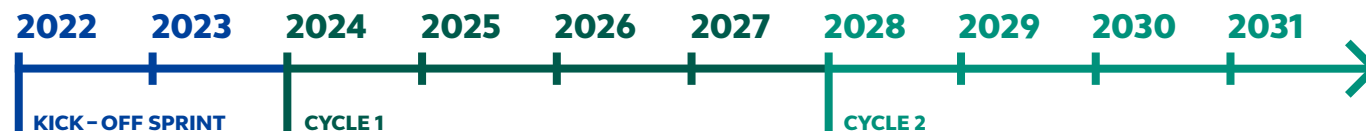
As part of the roll out of this plan, we will be developing a detailed implementation plan as one of the first steps to take in early 2022.

There are many actions, especially linked to the governance pillar, that need to be put in place early to enable the wider plan to be implemented and we consider these immediate actions for the first half of 2022.

We view the timeline to 2030 across three broad phases. The first period 2022 and 2023 is a foundational phase, or “kick-off sprint”, which we consider important for several short-term measures to get the plan fully established. The plan will then follow the Rugby World Cup cycles of 2024-27 (medium-term) and 2028-31 (long-term).

It is too early to give a detailed breakdown of the latter two phases, as much will depend on outcomes of the first two years of implementation. This plan will go through periodic refinements, as we evaluate progress and respond to new situations and priorities.

In the following sections, we indicate where possible the actions that are considered short-term, medium-term or long-term. Many of those identified as long-term will in fact be initiated in the first phase but only become fully operational in subsequent years.



PRIORITY THEMES

Our research and surveys have given us a clear indication as to the three key environmental themes that we should be addressing in this plan:



CLIMATE ACTION



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

(MANAGING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES)



PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT





CLIMATE ACTION

This is clearly the most urgent and pressing – and in some cases existential – issue at a global level and is the top public and political concern.

Although the climate impact of rugby and all its associated activities is relatively minor in an absolute sense compared with other sectors and nations, the cumulative effect of multiple actions in this field will be an important contribution to global efforts to reduce emissions.

Furthermore, as starkly presented in the [Sixth Assessment Report](#) of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC) the impacts of climate change are being experienced with increased severity across all parts of the world.

While vital efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions still have the potential to limit the extent of global temperature rises, the rugby community is already experiencing impacts of extreme temperatures, storms, floods, droughts, air pollution and sea level rise.

According to the IPCC report, a combination of these impacts are already severely affecting Pacific islands, which make up such a vital part of the rugby family and its heritage. Continued global warming above 2°C from pre-industrial levels could within a few decades render many low-lying island nations in the region uninhabitable.



**IN JUNE 2019 WE WERE AMONG THE
FIRST SPORTS ORGANISATIONS TO SIGN
UP TO THE UNITED NATIONS SPORTS
FOR CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK.**

The principal ways in which we
must act to address this theme are:

Reducing the
carbon footprint of
the sport of rugby.

Introducing climate
adaptation measures
across rugby
facilities and events.

Using our global
platform to spread
awareness, educate
and advocate
for climate action.





CIRCULAR ECONOMY

(MANAGING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES)

In each of our online surveys, this theme came out as a top priority. We believe this is because many of our stakeholders recognise that the practice of sport and staging of events can be hugely wasteful of materials and resources.

There are many practical and visible ways of reducing waste and improving efficiency.

This theme also addresses the issues of single-use and short-life materials and the impact of plastic pollution which have attracted massive public attention in recent years and complements our efforts to reduce plastic waste in support of UN Environment's and the IOC's [Clean Seas Campaign](#).

There are many items, particularly associated with events, that have very short-term uses. These include pitch-side signage, winners' boards, qualifier paraphernalia, physical tickets, ribbons, try/run on/trophy lift fire throwers and various other forms of signage and displays.

While they add some entertainment value, their impacts may outweigh this, and it is important that we thoroughly assess such items in the context of sustainability.

Likewise, uniforms present significant challenges as they are often branded and dated, making them unusable for other events and often unsuitable for passing on to the public via donations and charity shops.

The circular economy approach is one whereby materials and equipment have extended lifecycles and high value end of use options, rather than the linear model of buying, using and then disposing as waste.

This requires a conscious effort to re-evaluate the lifetime cost of goods, but if done effectively, we can expect to achieve considerable cost savings and reduce waste.

This is also an area where actions can have significant impact in terms of raising awareness and achieving visibility, even if the quantitative benefits are limited.



The principal ways in which we must act to address this theme are:

Sourcing policies to reflect whole life costing.

Reassessing the need, quantities and types of materials.

Eliminating single-use and short-life items.

Extending the useful life of materials and equipment.

Engaging with the wider rugby community to spread awareness and disseminate best practice.

The benefits of this approach will also contribute to our climate action goals.





PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Closely linked to climate change, the global loss of biodiversity and threat of mass extinctions are widely regarded as the next great environmental crisis.

Degradation of natural ecosystems impacts us all; from disruption of food production and supplies of raw materials to the profound health and wellbeing benefits of a rich natural environment.

As an outdoor sport played on a variety of surfaces including grass, sand and snow, rugby has a close affinity with nature, and it is important that we do our utmost to sustain ecosystems and promote healthier environments wherever we operate.

Imagine the total land area occupied by rugby facilities. That is a large area, spread across many thousands of sites across the world. Many of these are in urban settings, forming vital green spaces within their local communities.

There are huge opportunities within the management of these sites to create more space for nature, whether through setting aside marginal areas for wildlife, tree planting, more nature-friendly landscaping and introducing green features on buildings, or erecting nest boxes or feeding stations.

Such measures are simple and low cost, and they are great ways to improve enjoyment, demonstrate leadership and stewardship, create pride and build relations with neighbouring communities.

There is also a responsibility for the managers of rugby facilities to ensure they avoid causing environmental harm. It is important to be aware of environmental risks and to take measures to avoid pollution from inappropriate use of chemicals, fuels, green waste and lighting etc.



The principal ways in which we must act to address this theme are:

Integrating biodiversity and environmental quality into the design, construction and management of sport facilities.

Creating space for nature around where rugby is played.

Ensuring biodiversity impacts are assessed in our sourcing policies.
(e.g. in relation to timber, cotton, food and turfgrass management)

Engaging with the wider rugby community to spread awareness and disseminate best practice.

The benefits of this approach will also contribute to our climate action goals.

FOUR PILLARS OF ACTIVITY



PILLAR 1

GOVERNANCE

STRATEGIC GOAL

To ensure that sustainability is systematically embedded in our day-to-day operations and in all major decision-making processes.

We recognise that sustainability can only be effective at an organisational level if it becomes an integral part of the normal ways of working. First, we will ensure that environmental and wider sustainability issues are fully aligned with our global strategy and vision.

Through a combination of leadership commitment, policies and procedures, capacity building and a systematic approach to addressing these issues, we will ensure that sustainability is considered in every major decision taken by World Rugby.

TARGET

Sustainability to be a material consideration in all World Rugby decision-making and organisational processes.



WHAT WE WILL DO

To ensure that sustainability is systematically embedded in our day-to-day operations and in all major decision-making processes.

Immediate actions – first half of 2022

- Develop a detailed implementation plan, including roles, responsibilities and timelines
- Secure resources for implementing the plan (internal budgeting, capacity building, training and communications)
- Appoint an in-house sustainability lead and assign responsibility for sustainability within the Management Team and across the organisation.

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- Develop and implement a Sustainability Management System for World Rugby in accordance with the international standard ISO 20121:2012, including mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and improve performance and to report on progress
- Develop and implement an organisational procurement strategy which reflects the IOC's guide to [Sustainable Sourcing in Sport](#) to ensure environmental and social sustainability considerations are incorporated in processes for tenders, selection of suppliers and monitoring sustainability performance of contract delivery
- Establish a sustainability working group with commercial partners to leverage technical expertise, clean technology and innovations
- Align all new partnership and broadcasting contracts with our environmental sustainability plan.

Medium- and long-term actions – to be fully actioned between 2024-30

- Align all existing partnership and broadcasting contracts with our environmental sustainability plan¹
- Incorporate sustainability criteria in grant and other funding allocations
- Transparently share our successes, challenges and lessons learned through public reporting (first sustainability report to be issued early 2024 and every two years thereafter)
- Review and adjust the plan every four years (starting at beginning of 2026)
- Introduce sustainability commitment and KPIs into the governance of the relationship with unions and regional associations.

PILLAR 1 TIMELINE

	KICK-OFF SPRINT		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
WORLD RUGBY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
GOVERNANCE										
Develop a detailed implementation plan, review and adjust the plan										
Secure resources for sustainability, appoint a Sustainability lead, assign responsibilities										
Integrate sustainability criteria in decision-making ; introduce sustainability KPIs into World Rugby governance										
Establish a sustainability management system ISO 20121										
Develop and implement a sustainable procurement strategy (processes and tools)										
Align all global partnership and broadcasting contracts with environmental targets										
Publish a public sustainability report										
Incorporate sustainability criteria in grant and other funding allocations										
Introduce commitments into governance relationships with unions and regions										



PILLAR 2

ADDRESSING OUR DIRECT IMPACTS

STRATEGIC GOAL

To reduce the environmental impact of our own activities, with a focus on climate action, circular economy and protecting the natural environment.

This pillar focuses on World Rugby as an organisation and how we can reduce the environmental impact of our own activities and be exemplary as an organisation.



PILLAR 2



TARGET – CLIMATE ACTION

Reduce our carbon footprint by at least 50 per cent by 2030, without relying on offsetting, as per the UN's Sport for Climate Action Framework requirements.

Our principal sources of greenhouse gas emissions are likely to be the travel and operational activities related to our portfolio of major events.

A further related impact is from digital streaming, which has grown significantly in recent years. While this is an emerging area of study, there is as yet no reliable information to provide an accurate estimate of related GHG emissions. However, we anticipate this could be a considerable figure when multiplied across millions of consumers.

Our largest events are Rugby World Cups that work on a quadrennial cycle, each time in a different host territory. This makes it impractical to set a baseline for our carbon footprint using a single year's data. Therefore, we will establish our carbon footprint baseline as an annual average for the period 2016-19 (the last full four-year cycle pre-COVID).

The scope of our footprint will cover all activities undertaken by and paid for by World Rugby. In the case of our events, where there is a shared responsibility among different entities, we will ensure that the full carbon footprint is calculated, so that we have a complete picture of the impact of the events.

For mitigation activities, we will take responsibility for the travel and operational activities managed by ourselves, while the overall operation of the events will be accounted for by the local organising committees and hosting authorities (see Pillar 3).





TARGETS – CIRCULAR ECONOMY

All sourcing of goods to be justified on basis of need, lifetime cost of ownership and end-of-life reuse options.

Identify single-use and short-life items used by World Rugby and reduce by 80 per cent by 2030.

Prolong use of electronic devices to twice their current average lifespan.

We will introduce sustainable sourcing processes to ensure that goods and materials we procure are assessed on basis of need, lifetime cost and eventual disposal options. This approach will cut down on waste and maximise the useful life of products given that best practice is to reuse or repurpose items rather than recycle² them.

Single-use and short-life materials are items (including packaging) produced or purchased for a one-off or temporary purpose e.g. pitch-side signage, winners' boards, printed tickets, ribbons, try/run on/trophy lift flame cannons/streamers, and other signs and paraphernalia. Uniforms are also often in use for short periods due to changes in branding and sponsors from event to event.

It is unlikely we will be able to establish reliable data on quantities of single-use and short-life items used in pre-COVID years, so we will start to measure this from 2022. We will assess progress on a rolling four-year cycle, as we plan to do for carbon footprinting.



TARGET – PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Zero use of forest-risk commodities and products or food derived from endangered species.

As an office-based organisation our main potential impacts on biodiversity are through our supply chain. Other material impacts and opportunities linked to this theme will relate to our operational activities at events and the support we provide to the development and management of rugby facilities throughout the world. These aspects are treated under Pillars 3 and 4.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Across our three priority themes there are several common approaches to set the foundation for meeting our targets.

We have grouped these here under the heading of management approach. Thematic actions are measures related to meeting our thematic targets, these are listed separately on the following page.

Management Approach

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- Establish quantitative baselines for World Rugby as an organisation, based on data for the quadrennium 2016-19:
 - Carbon footprint (using the IOC's [Carbon Footprint Methodology for the Olympic Games](#) as our reference)
 - Single-use and short-life materials (signage and branding, marketing materials, decoration and furniture, displays, packaging, catering consumables, uniforms, merchandising)
 - Electronic devices (current average length of use of the top five electronic devices used by World Rugby - smartphones, tablets, laptops, screens and printers)
 - Forest-risk commodities³ and products from endangered species
- Produce reduction/elimination plans for each of the above.

Medium- and long-term actions – to be fully actioned between 2024-30

- Develop monitoring programme to evaluate progress towards our targets on a rolling four-year cycle (i.e. 2022-25, 2023-26, etc / 2028-31 cycle, and with the stretch target of achieving our goals by the end of the 2027-30 quadrennium).

Thematic Actions

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- Revise business air travel policy to ensure optimal use of virtual meetings, clustering of physical meetings, strict justification for need to travel, reduce number of personnel travelling to meetings/events and select optimal routes and carriers
- Revise ground transportation policies to ensure use of walking and cycling, public transports, rail, coaches, car share and other sustainable alternatives
- Maximise energy efficiency and source or produce renewable energy for office needs
- Revise branding, signage and decoration concepts to eliminate short-life materials (marketing materials, uniforms, institutional event signage etc.) and reduce single-use packaging in deliveries (reuse bubble wrap and cardboard boxes, use blankets instead of bubble wraps etc).
- Revise catering policies: prioritise local, seasonal, organic and an increased share of plant-based food, and ensure menus are free from high impact items from regions at risk of deforestation; free from endangered species products; and integrate a maximum of products with relevant recognised sustainability labels (e.g. Fairtrade, Rain Forest Alliance, Marine Stewardship Council); reduce single-use packaging (reusable cutlery, water dispensers)
- Elaborate a plan for sustainable use of electronic devices and IT services
- Adopt sourcing requirements across specific product categories:
 - **Clothing and textiles** – specify products from certified sources (such as the Better Cotton Initiative), or specify artificial fibres derived from recycled or reclaimed materials
 - **Paper and other wood products** – specify from sources certified by FSC or PEFC.



PILLAR 2 TIMELINE

	KICK-OFF SPRINT		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
WORLD RUGBY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
ADDRESSING OUR DIRECT IMPACTS										
Management Approach										
Establish quantitative baselines for World Rugby as an organisation (carbon footprint, short-life materials, electronic devices, forest-risk commodities, products from endangered species) for 2016-19										
Produce the related reduction/elimination plans										
Evaluate progress towards our targets on a rolling four-year cycle										
Thematic Actions										
Revise business air travel policy										
Revise ground transportation policies										
Revise catering policies										
Elaborate a plan for sustainable use of electronic devices and IT services										
Revise branding, signage, decoration concept to eliminate short-life materials										
Revise energy efficiency and renewable energy sourcing/production concepts										
Adopt sourcing requirements across specific product categories (clothing/textile, wood products)										

PILLAR 3

DELIVERING AND SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE RUGBY EVENTS

STRATEGIC GOAL

To ensure that all World Rugby events are delivered to the best international standards of sustainability, with a focus on climate action, circular economy and protecting the natural environment.

There are two angles to this pillar:

First, as the rights-holder for a portfolio of major events we have the decision-making powers to choose when and where they are held, and we can set contractual sustainability requirements for the organisers to follow and monitor their implementation.

Secondly, we need to ensure that event elements we control ourselves (e.g. team services regulations/terms of participation, ticketing, broadcasting services, and hospitality) likewise comply with our sustainability standards (see Pillar 2) and that we are aligned with the local organisers on our approach to sustainable event delivery.

Our portfolio of events, including the men's and women's Rugby World Cups in 15s and sevens and the HSBC World Rugby Sevens Series among others, are high profile opportunities where we can make a significant difference in terms of sustainability and raising awareness.

We have already set out certain guidelines and minimum sustainability requirements for Rugby World Cups, encouraging initiatives in this area to be developed and led by local organising committees. In this respect, the organisers of Rugby World Cup 2023 in France have been leading the way, committed to delivering the most sustainable Rugby World Cup to date.

The event will inspire and help raise the standard of sustainable event hosting and provide important experience and lessons to be shared with all stakeholders.

Going forward, we intend to build on this and ensure that all our events are chosen and delivered with full regard to sustainability. This means respecting the universality of rugby as a global sport, fostering the development of the game, and making it accessible to all, as well as ensuring we limit environmental impacts and foster positive environmental, social and economic legacies.

We are also learning much from our involvement as an Olympic sport, where our sevens competition must be delivered in compliance with the specific sustainability requirements defined by the IOC and the local Organising Committee.



TARGETS – CLIMATE ACTION

Collaborate with local organisers to reduce the carbon footprint of events by 50 per cent by 2030, without relying on offsetting.

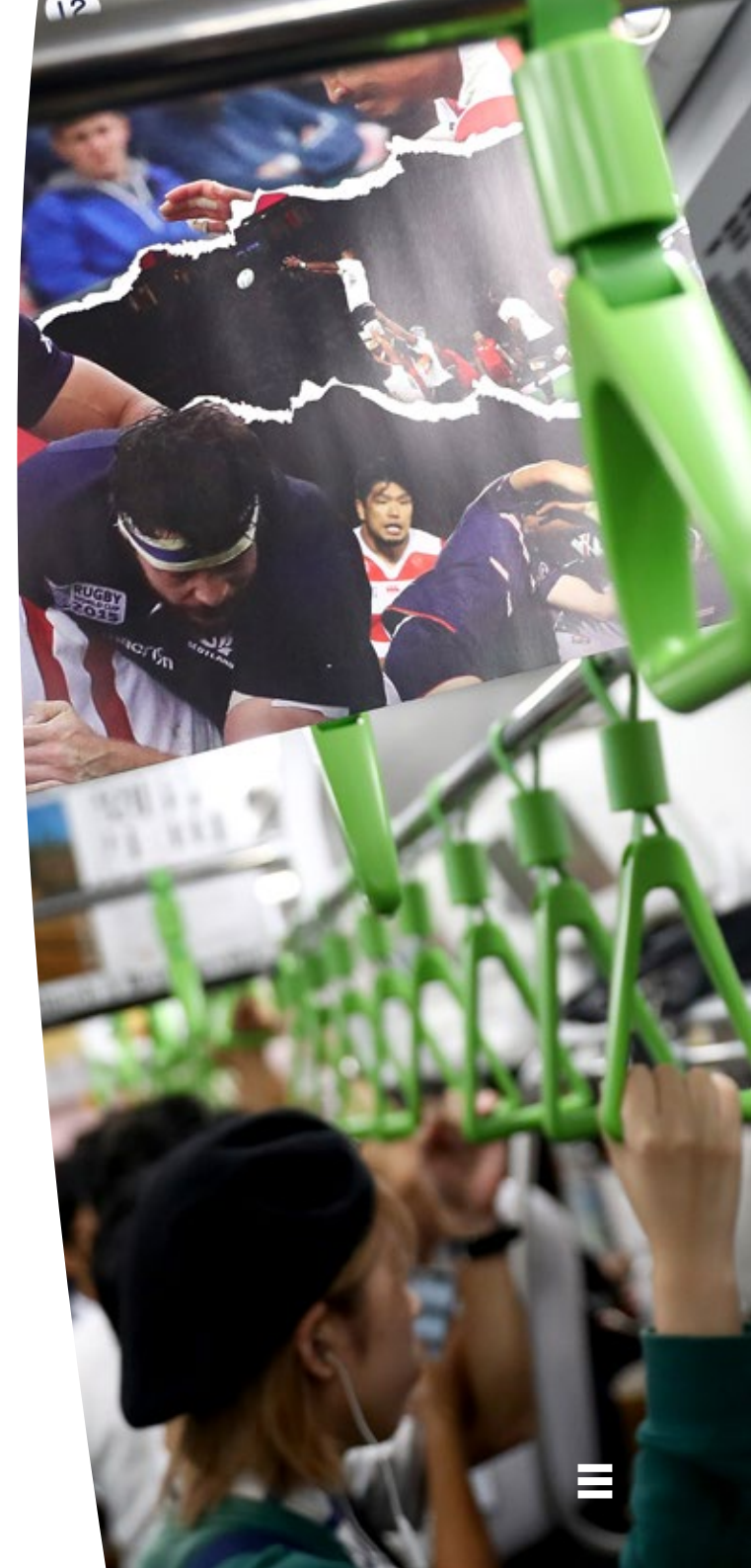
Ensure Rugby World Cups and Sevens Series are climate positive events by 2030.

Given the scale and profile of our major events, it is imperative that we can demonstrate a robust and credible approach to climate action consistent with globally accepted best practices.

This means using the concept of science-based targets to determine a carbon budget for the events in question. Such carbon budgets will help drive minimum reductions of 50 per cent of GHG emissions compared with a realistic baseline within the host country.

The concept of a climate positive event means that the residual carbon footprint of delivering the event will be over-compensated by low/zero-carbon initiatives in the host territory that have been inspired and instigated by the event being held.

Examples could include upgrading local energy and transport infrastructure, introducing new low carbon practices to local sports facilities, and creating or enhancing greenspaces. In this way, World Rugby events can be catalysts for accelerating the transition to low-carbon economies.





TARGETS – CIRCULAR ECONOMY

By 2030, all World Rugby event organisers to apply circular economy principles in the conceptual planning and design of the event and sourcing of goods and materials.

Collaborate with event organisers to reduce single-use and short-life items used for events by 50 per cent by 2023 and by 80 per cent by 2027 from a 2019 baseline (e.g. merchandising, signage, packaging, furniture, look and feel elements).

Require all working or repairable electronic equipment to be reused after World Rugby events from 2025.

Sports events typically generate large amounts of waste. This arises both from front-of-house food and beverage disposables and from back-of-house operations where unused stock, excess packaging and end of use materials are destined for disposal.

Too often items are procured for short-term use at an event without consideration of what they can be used for afterwards. There is also a common tendency to over-order items to avoid the risk of running out on the day. We recognise that these issues often stem from structural problems in the way events are organised, and we are committed to finding more sustainable solutions in this regard.





TARGET – PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Ensure all major World Rugby competitions have a measurable positive effect on the natural environment and biodiversity within the host territory by 2030.

Our goal is for World Rugby events to be a springboard for inspiring local urban greening initiatives that provide important environmental and social legacies in the host territory. These actions can contribute important recreational and wellbeing benefits, as well as contributing to climate action.

Much of our focus here will be on venues: the competition venues as well as training grounds and, in some cases, pre-competition training camps to ensure that negative impacts are avoided and opportunities for urban greening optimised.

Biodiversity may not immediately appear as a consideration for stadium venues in urban centres, but around the world there are increasing numbers of examples of stadium managers introducing ecologically beneficial measures, including green walls/roofs, sustainable drainage systems, landscape planting, bird and bat boxes, flower gardens and beehives to name but a few initiatives.



WHAT WE WILL DO

As with addressing our own direct impacts, we have divided this section into a general management approach that includes actions relevant to all three priority themes. This is followed by specific actions designed to support our thematic targets.

Management Approach

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- Establish quantitative baselines for Rugby World Cups and Sevens Series, based on data for the quadrennium 2016-19:
 - Carbon footprint (using the IOC's [Carbon Footprint Methodology for the Olympic Games](#) as our reference)
 - Single-use and short-life materials (signage and branding, marketing materials, decoration and furniture, displays, packaging, catering consumables, uniforms, merchandising)
 - Electronic devices (current average length of use of the top five electronic devices used by World Rugby - smartphones, tablets, laptops, screens and printers)
 - Forest-risk commodities⁴ and products from endangered species
- Review requirements for numbers of accredited persons and workforce, including technicians, contractors, officials, Tournament Guest Programme and commercial hospitality guests to be on site
- Ensure sustainability requirements on climate action, circular economy and biodiversity are fully integrated into the awarding of all major World Rugby events
- Set clear and robust operational sustainability requirements in all areas covered by the event delivery guides for local organisers and make these contractually binding
- Require future Rugby World Cup organising committees to operate a sustainability management system that is independently certified to ISO 20121.

Medium- and long-term actions – to be fully actioned between 2024-30

- Support and monitor implementation of events' sustainability programmes and evaluate progress towards the targets on a rolling four-year cycle (i.e. 2022-25, 2023-26 etc., through to the 2028-31 cycle, and with the stretch target of achieving our goals by the end of the 2027-30 quadrennium)
- Move towards a combined delivery model in which sustainability is a fully shared responsibility
- Support local organisers to integrate relevant sustainability obligations into partner and supplier selection
- Provide direct technical guidance and performance monitoring to evaluate progress on implementation of events' sustainability programmes
- Organise knowledge capture and knowledge sharing on sustainability between local organising committees.

OUR APPROACH TO EVALUATING FUTURE HOSTS

Based on the requirements and targets set out under this pillar, we will apply the following principles:

- Attribute World Rugby competitions to hosts that are credibly committed to:
 - low-carbon event concepts (without relying on offsetting)
 - circular economy principles and minimising waste
 - protecting the natural environment
- Not accept without detailed, evidence-based justification any proposals for constructing new stadiums, or other new permanent infrastructure that are directly dependent on hosting a World Rugby event
- Only accept proposals for modifications and upgrades to existing venues and infrastructure that are specifically required for hosting a World Rugby event, where there are detailed plans for low/zero carbon construction, environmental protection and long-term legacy
- Prioritise existing venues that already operate to high sustainability standards (e.g. energy management systems and water conservation measures in place)
- Ensure natural environment issues, risks and opportunities linked to event venues, their location and related operational activities are fully assessed, and measures to avoid risks of pollution or other impacts on environmental quality or nature protected areas are adopted.

Thematic Actions

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- In collaboration with organising committees use science-based targets to confirm a carbon budget for event delivery and define a GHG emissions reduction plan considering each operational area, without relying on offsetting
- Support local organisers to develop a sustainable sourcing code/policy
- Review signage and look and feel concepts for World Rugby events and find innovative solutions such as renting, storing, reusing, repurposing, selecting smaller, lighter and thinner items etc.
- Collaborate with broadcasters to optimise use of remote production
- Collaborate with commercial partners to leverage use of low carbon technologies and innovations.

Medium and long-term actions – to be fully actioned between 2024-30

- Ensure that goods and materials we and/or our partners bring to use at events align with the resource management policies of the local organisers
- Define a reduction plan for fan travel and transport, through developing alternative event engagement opportunities
- Apply the recommendations of the IUCN guide: 'Mitigating biodiversity impacts of sports events'.



PILLAR 3 TIMELINE

	KICK-OFF SPRINT		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
WORLD RUGBY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
DELIVERING AND SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE EVENTS										
Management Approach										
Establish quantitative baselines for RWCs and sevens (carbon footprint, short-life materials, electronic devices, forest-risk commodities, products from endangered species) for 2016-19										
Integrate sustainability requirements into the awarding of all major events										
Set operational sustainability requirements for local organisers including ISO 20121										
Review World Rugby event requirements to facilitate sustainability objectives										
Monitor the implementation of the requirements and assess progress on a rolling four-year basis										
Support local organisers to integrate sustainability obligations into partners and suppliers' selection										
Provide direct technical guidance to local organising committees										
Organise knowledge capture and sharing on sustainability between local organising committees										
Thematic Actions										
For major events, confirm a carbon budget for delivery and define a GHG emissions reduction plan										
Support local organisers to develop a sustainable sourcing code/policy										
Review signage and look and feel concepts for World Rugby events										
Collaborate with broadcasters to optimise use of remote production										
Collaborate with commercial partners to leverage use of low carbon technologies and innovations										
Define a reduction plan for fans travel and transport, through alternative event opportunities										
Align materials we and/or our partners bring to events with the resource management policies										
Apply the recommendations of the IUCN guide: "Mitigating biodiversity impacts of sports events"										



PILLAR 4

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN RUGBY THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

STRATEGIC GOAL

To use our position as a global organisation to support, promote and encourage the uptake of sustainability practices across the global rugby family.

In our role as an international sport federation, we have a responsibility to help our member unions and regions, and those affiliated to them, to understand and to know how best to address the environmental and wider sustainability challenges they face and to meet stakeholder expectations.

This pillar is therefore about developing materials and tools to encourage uptake of sustainability practices across the global rugby family, and to represent the rugby community in international sustainability forums.

Through our research and stakeholder consultations we have heard from national unions whose governments or regulatory authorities are increasingly seeking evidence of sustainability policies and plans, as prerequisites for funding and development support.

Similar pressures are coming from potential commercial partners, who are increasingly factoring sustainability criteria into their due diligence assessments before committing to sponsorship engagements.

We also recognise the huge opportunity to promote sustainability through the global network that is grassroots rugby: from amateur clubs to the millions of fans worldwide. It is through these channels that rugby can be a global force for good in environmental sustainability.



TARGETS

All high-performance rugby unions to have developed their own sustainability plans and be monitoring and reporting on progress by 2025.

All affiliated World Rugby unions and regions to have developed their own sustainability plans and be monitoring and reporting on progress by 2030.

All affiliated World Rugby unions and regions to have signed up to the UN's Sport for Climate Action Framework by 2025 and be actively implementing the framework's principles by 2030.

Stakeholder surveys show year-on-year measurable increase in recognition of World Rugby's environmental sustainability ambition and results.



WHAT WE WILL DO

Short-term actions – to be initiated and fully established in period 2022-23

- Actively participate at international level in discussions on the future model of sport events, compatible with the world's current sustainability challenges
- Integrate sustainability questions into regular stakeholder surveys
- Engage with other sports organisations (IOC, international federations, unions...) to share best practices and key lessons learned
- Establish World Rugby Sustainability Award(s)
- Create an ambassadors' programme using high-profile current and former players to advocate and promote sustainability initiatives.

Medium - and long-term actions – to be fully actioned between 2024-30

- Develop guidance, templates and tools on sustainability for use by national unions and their affiliated clubs and associations
- Monitor union and region progress towards developing the own sustainability plan and committing to the UN's Sport for Climate Action Framework
- Develop and animate a platform for the global rugby community to share knowledge, best practices, case studies and raise awareness on sustainability
- Create a mentoring programme for more advanced unions to help others get started on addressing sustainability
- Develop promotional and awareness raising initiatives and campaigns on sustainability and rugby.



PILLAR 4 TIMELINE

	KICK-OFF SPRINT		CYCLE 1				CYCLE 2			
WORLD RUGBY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2030	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY IN RUGBY THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, KNOWLEDGE SHARING										
Actively participate at international level in discussions on the future model of sport events										
Engage with other sports organisations (IOC, IFs, unions...) to share best practices										
Integrate sustainability questions into regular stakeholder surveys										
Create a mentoring programme for more advanced unions to help others get started										
Establish World Rugby Sustainability Award(s)										
Create an ambassadors' programme using players to advocate and promote sustainability initiatives										
Monitor union and region progress towards developing their own sustainability plan										
Develop guidance, templates and tools on sustainability for unions and the rugby ecosystem										
Develop promotional and awareness raising initiatives and campaigns on sustainability										
Develop and animate a platform to share knowledge										



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