# Table of contents

Acknowledgements 03

Foreword 05

Introduction 07

Chap. 1 Protection of the environment and sustainable development 09

1.1 Ecosystems and landscapes 09
1.2 Water 11
1.3 Soil 14
1.4 Air 16
1.5 Biodiversity 19
1.6 Energy 23
1.7 Pollutants and waste 26
1.8 Political 28
1.9 Social 30
1.10 Economic 34
1.11 Millennium Development Goals 35

Chap. 2 General conditions for sport that respects the environment and sustainable development 37

2.1 Acting through sport 37
2.2 Fields of action 37
2.3 Attitude 37
2.4 General rules 38

Chap. 3 Environment and sustainable development in the organisation of sport 41

3.1 Sports authorities 41
3.2 Sports associations 42
3.3 Individual conduct of athletes 47
3.4 Sports events 48
3.5 Buildings and other structures 51
3.6 Equipment manufacturers 54
3.7 Media 54
3.8 Adapted criteria for developing countries 54
3.9 Priorities depending on local conditions 56

Chap. 4 Environmental and sustainable development conditions specific to the various Olympic disciplines 57

4.1 Sports and environmental conditions 57
4.2 Summer land-based sports in the natural environment 57
   4.2.1 Cycling 58
   4.2.2 Equestrianism 62
4.3 Water sports in the natural environment 67
4.3.1 General 67  
4.3.2 Sailing 70  
4.3.3 Rowing 73  
4.3.4 Canoe-kayak 75  

4.4 Swimming sports 78  
4.4.1 Pool-based aquatic sports 78  
4.4.2 Open-water aquatic sports 82  

4.5 Land-based sports in open-air stadiums 86  
4.5.1 General 86  
4.5.2 Athletics 86  
4.5.3 Tennis 90  
4.5.4 Archery 92  
4.5.5 Shooting sport 95  
4.5.6 Football 97  
4.5.7 Baseball 101  
4.5.8 Hockey 103  
4.5.9 Modern pentathlon 105  
4.5.10 Triathlon 107  

4.6 Indoor land-based sports 108  
4.6.1 General 108  
4.6.2 Gymnastics 111  
4.6.3 Wrestling 113  
4.6.4 Judo 115  
4.6.5 Taekwondo 117  
4.6.6 Boxing 119  
4.6.7 Weightlifting 121  
4.6.8 Table tennis 123  
4.6.9 Badminton 125  
4.6.10 Fencing 127  
4.6.11 Basketball 129  
4.6.12 Volleyball 132  
4.6.13 Handball 135  
4.6.14 Softball 137  

4.7 Winter Sports 140  
4.7.1 General 141  
4.7.2 Snow sports: Skiing 142  
4.7.3 Snow sports: Biathlon 146  
4.7.4 Ice sports: Skating 147  
4.7.5 Ice sports: Ice hockey 150  
4.7.6 Ice sports: Curling 152  
4.7.7 Ice track sports: Bobsleigh & Skeleton 154  
4.7.8 Ice track sports: Luge 157  

Chap. 5 Think globally, act locally 161  

Photograph credits 162  

Bibliography, internet sites 163
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T.A. Ganda Sithole,
Director, IOC Department of International Cooperation & Development
Foreword

Environmental issues are a general concern all over the world, as they affect the daily lives of each and every one of us.

As sport, like recreation and physical education activities, is an integral part of society, it cannot ignore environmental and sustainable development issues.

This is why the International Olympic Committee considers the environment as the third dimension of the Olympic Movement, alongside sport and culture. Our objectives are to ensure the staging the Games does not have a negative impact on the environment, but instead develops and enhances it and leaves a green legacy, as well as generally promoting awareness on the importance of a healthy environment.

With the “IOC Guide on Sport, Environment and Sustainable Development”, we intend to provide guidance to the whole sports community by analysing the impact that the different parties involved in sport, and particularly the Olympic sports, have on the environment, and offer practical solutions and tips.

Through this Guide, the sports community will endeavour and be encouraged to adopt a responsible attitude towards the environmental and sustainable development issues related to the practice of sport, and thus continue to place sport everywhere at the service of the harmonious development of humanity and our environment, thereby contributing to our well-being.

Together, let us reaffirm the commitment of the Olympic Movement to sport, environment and sustainable development by implementing the Guide.

Jacques Rogge,
President of the International Olympic Committee
Introduction

The relationship between human beings and nature is a notion that has existed in all civilisations since time began. But the realisation that the protection of the environment was impossible without social and economic progress is the product of the end of the 20th century, and led to the notion of sustainable development.

Sport is not isolated from this. Be it as a basic physical activity during leisure time or a high-level competition, sport constitutes a central element of society. It gathers together millions of men and women, boys and girls, children and the elderly, in every corner of the planet and gives life to numerous clubs, associations and institutions of many kinds.

As any activity, sport both has an impact on the environment and is affected by it. Sport and sustainable development are deeply interlinked and increasingly need to be addressed jointly.

The Olympic Movement and the International Olympic Committee in particular therefore have a role to play in the field of environment protection and sustainable development, to ensure that present and future generations will be able to enjoy sports activities in a preserved socio-economic, healthy and natural environment.

It is in this framework that in 1999 the Olympic Movement adopted an Agenda 21 for the sports community, highlighting special issues and challenges that sportsmen and sportswomen can address to ensure the sustainable development of sport.

Following several conferences and seminars at international and regional level on sport and environment, the need arose for a guide which would further help the different members of the Olympic family to transform the Agenda 21 recommendations into concrete actions and programmes.

The “IOC Guide on Sport, Environment and Sustainable Development” was thus created with a view to offering methodological and practical tools to the sports community, based on the major principles of sustainable development. It provides an easy way to move from theory and concepts to practical initiatives and behavioural changes: an easy way to understand the global challenges and needs for environmental protection while considering local specificities coming from diverse geographical, socio-economic, cultural and sports contexts.

The Guide (see figure 1) is structured around five chapters. The first recalls the most important current knowledge on environment and sustainable development. A second chapter describes the environmental and sustainable development issues of special interest to the world of sport. The third concerns the application of these precepts in the organisation of sport. The fourth chapter describes these same issues in relation to each individual Olympic sport, and the final short chapter proposes motivations to take action.

The Guide also takes particularly into account:

- the different level of involvement of the individuals or groups concerned (athletes, participants in grassroots sport, coaches, clubs, federations, organizers of sports events, spectators, equipment manufacturers, constructors and managers of sports facilities, media);
- the different types of sport (summer or winter, indoor or outdoor, individual or team, aquatic or terrestrial, etc.).

With this Guide, we sincerely hope that members of the Olympic family will find additional and useful tools to further implement the motto: “think globally and act locally”.

Pál Schmitt,
Chairman, IOC Sport and Environment Commission
Figure 1: Structure of the guide.