



INTERNATIONAL
OLYMPIC
COMMITTEE

FACTSHEET

THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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THE ENVIRONMENT: AN INTEGRAL DIMENSION OF OLYMPISM

Recognising its responsibility to promote sustainable development, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) considers the environment as an integral dimension of Olympism, alongside sport and culture. The IOC ensures that the Olympic Games take place in conditions that take into account the environment in a responsible way, and collaborates with the relevant public or private authorities, with the aim of placing sport at the service of humanity, thus contributing to achieving [UN Millennium Development Goal 7](#).

THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE OLYMPIC CHARTER

Following the Centennial Olympic Congress, Congress of Unity, organised in 1994 in Paris, the IOC recognised the importance of the environment and sustainable development, and, in 1996, added a paragraph on environmental protection to the Olympic Charter.

"[The IOC's role with respect to the environment is:] to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly." Chapter 1, Rule 2, Paragraph 13 of the 2011 [Olympic Charter](#).

MISSION OF THE SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Created in December 1995, the main task of the Sport and Environment Commission is to advise the IOC Executive Board on the policy to be adopted by the IOC and the Olympic Movement on matters related to environmental protection and support for sustainable development in relation to sport.

AGENDA 21 OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT

Taking into consideration the decisions adopted in 1992 by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro regarding Agenda 21, the Olympic Movement decided to establish its own [Agenda 21](#). Adopted by the IOC Session in 1999, the aim of the Agenda is to encourage the members of the Olympic Movement to integrate sustainability principles into their operations. It presents fundamental concepts and general actions to be undertaken to attain this objective. In the framework of the Rio+20 summit in June 2012, the IOC demonstrated how the Olympic Movement has implemented the guidelines contained within its Agenda 21 and showcased best practices in a dedicated publication.

IOC GUIDE TO SPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This [Guide](#) was developed by the IOC in collaboration with all the Olympic International Federations to help the members of the Olympic family transform the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21 recommendations into concrete actions and programmes.

The Guide offers methodological and practical tools to the sports community, based on the principles of sustainable development. It provides an easy way to move from theory and concepts to practical initiatives and behavioural changes; and 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.



SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH SPORT: IMPLEMENTING THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT'S AGENDA 21

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), often abbreviated to Rio+20, was a good occasion for the IOC to assess how sport, a world-wide social movement that has millions of members, has been a driver for change and sustainable development. The IOC's new publication, entitled "Sustainability through Sport: Implementing the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21", contains a summary of progress made over the last 20 years in the area of sustainable development, including environmental protection, education and socio-economic development. It looks at how sustainability considerations have increasingly become an integral part of Olympic Games preparations, gives an overview of stakeholder initiatives, and reflects on partnership models, including those with United Nations agencies.

Besides looking back, the new publication also casts a look forward to determine the steps that need to be made to involve future generations – today's young people – in the process of working towards greater sustainability.

[Click here for the full version of "Sustainability through Sport: Implementing the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21".](#)

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The IOC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) signed a cooperative agreement in 1994 to conduct various activities together to raise awareness and educate people on environmental matters in sport.

Among other things, UNEP has participated in the IOC World Conferences on Sport and the Environment, in IOC regional seminars and in the production of information materials on sport

and the environment, such as the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21. UNEP has also developed working relationships with Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) since Athens (2004) to promote environmental issues linked to the Games.

The biennial World Conference on Sport and the Environment brings together representatives and partners of the Olympic Movement, as well as representatives of other entities involved in this field, such as governments, international and non-governmental organisations, industry and business sectors, research institutes and the media. Young people are also invited to participate and share their vision for a green future.

The aims of the conference are to regularly assess the progress made in the field of sustainable development by the Olympic Movement; to educate and increase awareness by sharing experiences and expertise from different sectors of society; and to encourage cooperation in, and further the development of, environmental policies in sport. The event is also a platform to award best practice at grassroots level through the IOC's Sport and Environment Awards.

Regional seminars are organised in cooperation with Olympic Solidarity, an IOC entity whose mission is to plan, organise and control support programmes for National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The seminars are adapted to local conditions and designed to raise awareness among NOCs. They advocate the need to use sport as a tool for sustainable development in their countries. They also provide an opportunity to share experiences on initiatives implemented by NOCs and their Sport and Environment Commissions to effectively deal with regional environmental sustainability challenges and to obtain commitment on relevant measures and actions to implement at a national level.



GAMES THAT RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

The IOC works to ensure that the Olympic Games are held in conditions that demonstrate responsible concern and respect for the environment.

To ensure this occurs, the IOC works closely with the OCOGs and the various Olympic delivery partners.

Within the Applicant and Candidate City procedure and questionnaire documentation, environmental and sustainable development guiding principles and requirements are included across many areas.

Statements provided by Candidate Cities are verified by an Evaluation Commission, which includes an environmental advisor appointed by the IOC.

Once elected, the host city is provided with assistance and guidance in its preparations by the IOC Coordination Commission, which also includes an environmental advisor.

The IOC's objective is, during the staging of the Games, for environmental risks to be avoided and reduced where possible, and the positive impact and opportunities of the event maximised. The ultimate objective is to bequeath a positive Olympic Games legacy to the host city, its region and its country, in which the positive impact outweighs any negative one.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES IMPACT (OGI) STUDY

Hosting an Olympic Games has a significant impact on the host city and its community. From tangible infrastructure construction, such as competition venues and transport improvements, through to the evolution of the image of a host city, the event acts as a vehicle and catalyst which leave a lasting mark on the city, host country and its people through its economic, urban, social or historic influence. To what extent, with what results and with what benefits has been the subject of a long-lasting debate.

To answer these questions and to assist the OCOG in this area, the IOC has created the Olympic Games Impact (OGI) study. The principal objectives of the OGI are: to measure the overall impact of the Olympic Games; to assist bidding cities and future Olympic Games organisers through the transfer of strategic directions obtained from past and present Olympic Games; and to identify potential legacies, thereby maximising the benefits of their Olympic Games.

In order to measure the impact of the Olympic Games, concrete tools were needed. More than 30 research themes were created and grouped into the three internationally recognised spheres of sustainable development: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. The OGI themes cover a vast range of activities, from those that are a direct result of the staging of the Olympic Games, such as the construction of competition venues or the Olympic Village, to others that are a more indirect consequence, such as the evolution of transport and accommodation infrastructure. Other themes facilitate the monitoring of contextual data within a host city and its region, such as crime rates, sports participation and water quality.

Since the establishment of the OGI study in 2003, the IOC has asked all OCOGs to conduct the study. Future Olympic organisers are informed of the OGI study during the Applicant and Candidate City phases through IOC candidature documentation. At present, the four OCOGs and/or their research partners (London 2012, Sochi 2014, Rio 2016 and PyeongChang 2018) are conducting the study.



EVENT SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: ISO 20121

London 2012 was the catalyst for this new international standard specifically aimed at the events sector. ISO 20121 provides the framework for identifying the potentially negative social, economic and environmental impacts of events by removing or reducing them, and capitalising on more positive impacts through improved planning and processes. ISO 20121 allows commitment to sustainability to be demonstrated in a globally recognised manner.

OLYMPIC GAMES SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Within the Olympic Movement, two host cities played pioneering roles in the field of environmental protection. The first, Lillehammer (Norway), set out to make the 1994 Olympic Winter Games a showcase for environmental policies pursued in the country. The second, Sydney (Australia), set new environmental benchmarks in the areas of energy, water conservation, waste minimisation, pollution avoidance and the protection of the natural environment. Since these Olympic Games, there has been a rapid evolution in the environmental element of the Olympic Games bidding and delivery processes. From a focus purely on environmental actions, OCOGs are increasingly taking a broader, more holistic view which encompasses all three spheres of sustainability, i.e. environmental, social and economic. Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 were the first Winter and Summer Olympic Games to formally adopt “triple-bottom” line sustainability management frameworks.

SALT LAKE CITY 2002

In the framework of planting programmes at the venues and “Plant it Green: The Global Trees Race”, over 100,000 trees were planted in Utah, and more than two million throughout the world.

The energy recycled from the curling hall’s air conditioning unit heated the showers and the bathrooms at the venue. This system used ammonia, which does not destroy the ozone layer.

ATHENS 2004

By the end of the Games, over a million large bushes, 290,000 trees and 11 million small trees had been planted throughout the Greek capital. Environmentally friendly building materials and new energy technology were used, and the global protection of natural resources was taken into account. Athens 2004 set up a series of initiatives and programmes for the environment, including the following:

- conception of a recreational eco-excursions programme in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature;
- use of environmentally friendly vehicles conforming to ecological requirements;
- creation of the Olympic Environmental Alliance, with the aim of establishing effective cooperation and dialogue between all the bodies concerned, and the parties actively involved, and establishing a conclusive decision-making procedure (Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, or the National Meteorological Service).

TURIN 2006

The environment was a key element of the Turin Olympic Winter Games. The Turin Organising Committee (TOROC) was the first OCOG to obtain both an ISO 14001 international environment standard certification and an EMAS certification for its environmental systems and programmes (the European equivalent).

TOROC also developed the HECTOR (HERitage Climate TORino) programme, aimed at raising awareness on climate change issues and offsetting the amount of greenhouse gases produced during the 2006 Winter Games



through financial investments in reforestation, energy efficiency and renewable energy source projects.

BEIJING 2008

Improvement, protection and awareness-raising were the key focus areas of the Beijing Organising Committee (BOCOG)'s environmental programme. Environmentally friendly and energy-saving building materials were used in the construction of the Olympic venues and the Olympic Green.

Significant efforts were made in Beijing and the surrounding areas to expand forestation, improve air quality and enhance public sewage and waste treatment systems.

VANCOUVER 2010

The Olympic Games held in Vancouver in 2010 were a leading example of how respect of and commitment to the environment were embraced and integrated into planning. The Olympic Village and the neighbourhood that surrounds it received an LEED Platinum rating and were considered a model for sustainable urban planning. The buildings were warmed by heat generated from raw sewage. The roof of the Richmond Olympic Oval speed-skating rink was constructed with wood from trees that had been infested by pine beetles, meaning that no trees had to be cut. Rainwater collected from the Oval's roof was used to flush toilets. As planned, post-Games, the Olympic venue was converted into a multi-purpose centre for the local community. Games organisers ensured other lasting environmental legacies in Vancouver by creating a non-profit entity to work with community groups, NGOs, governmental agencies and the private sector to develop sustainable projects related to sport and recreation.

LONDON 2012

Sustainability was a key component of the London 2012 bid and, in partnership with BioRegional and the WWF, the Organisers

established the concept "Towards a One Planet Olympics". The principles were taken forward in the form of the London 2012 Sustainability Plan, which was structured around five sustainability themes: climate change, waste, biodiversity, inclusion and healthy living. They provided London 2012 with the framework for delivering truly sustainable Games and were integrated into the three key phases of preparation, the Games and legacy.

In a backward glance, former host city London has shown that its Pre-Games Sustainability Plan has been true to its written word and delivered a sustainable and lasting legacy one year post-Games and beyond. London 2012's ambition was to rejuvenate neglected communities in London, promote healthier and better lifestyles within and outside the UK, change the way people perceive disability, and inspire an entire generation to participate in sport. By building the stage and hosting the Games, London 2012's delivery partners, i.e. construction, catering, hospitality and events companies, showed the value of incorporating sustainability practices.

SOCHI 2014

The Sochi 2014 mission is to combine the efforts, expertise and experience of its delivery partners to efficiently integrate sustainable development principles into all aspects of Games preparation and delivery. As a team, Sochi 2014 and its multitude of partners work to achieve the sustainability performance objectives of:

- Healthy living
- Barrier-free world
- Culture and national values
- Harmony with nature
- Economic prosperity
- Modern technologies

Sochi 2014 has harnessed the stimulus for sustainable development in collaborating with UNEP, the UNDP and independent



environmental organisations such as the WWF and Greenpeace. The integration of this international expertise has made the difference in protecting and/or restoring the complicated ecosystems and set in place the creation of a unique ecological legacy which will continue after the Games. Another key feature has been the soft area of cultural and national values with 2013 being the 'Year of Museums', the increase in volunteerism, and the educational component with the opening of the Russian International Olympic University.

In its own right, Sochi 2014 is a project of transformative value for the city, the region and the country.

RIO 2016

Social, environmental and economic responsibility criteria are being integrated into Rio 2016 Games planning and will be carried out from the onset to the end of the project cycle (i.e. operation to disassembling). Rio's goal is not only to reach high levels of excellence in Games-time delivery, but also to demonstrate leadership by setting new standards for sustainable management which will positively impact the country and the region.

The Organising Committee's Sustainability Management Plan (SMP) has, from the bid phase onward, been built on an inclusive foundation of principles, actions and projects related to sustainability:

Planet: reducing the environmental impact of the projects relating to the 2016 Games, leaving a smaller as possible environmental footprint.

People: planning and delivery of the 2016 Games in an inclusive manner, making it accessible to everyone.

Prosperity: contributing to the economic development of the state and city of Rio de Janeiro.

PYEONGCHANG 2018

Hailing the vision of "an O₂ Plus Winter Games", the PyeongChang Organising Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

(POCOG) has advanced in developing its environmental plan. Conserving Grade-1 water resources, revitalising ecosystems, improving biodiversity and recycling waste materials as energy resources are a part of the Olympic Games project environmental infrastructure. These environmental efforts have led to the city being designated a "Low-Carbon Green Growth Model City" by the national government.

Areas in which strides have been made include:

- Venue construction: halve energy consumption levels through the building of energy-efficient venues (e.g. eco-friendly construction materials);
- Biodiversity: land compensation programmes to minimise impact on protected areas;
- Water management: implement waste water reclamation and rainwater management systems;
- Energy: use renewable energy sources (e.g. wind and solar power) to reduce demand;
- Green transport: construct a high-speed railway to enhance use of public transport;
- Education: implement environmental awareness campaigns to increase public consciousness.

THE X WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The 10th World Conference on Sport and the Environment was organised from 30 October to 1 November 2013 in Sochi by the IOC with the NOC of Russia and the Sochi 2014 Organising Committee. The theme of this edition was "Changing Today for a Better Tomorrow". The subjects addressed included Russian legacies pre- and post-Sochi 2014, the sustainable development landscape following Rio+20, sustainable development legacies of previous and future Olympic Games, and the role of the UN system.

More than 500 delegates from over 50 countries unanimously adopted the "Sochi Declaration", which contains a set of sustainable-



development recommendations addressed to the various stakeholders in this field. Calls for action include the mitigation against food wastage at sports events and support for UNEP's "[Think Eat Save: Reduce Your Foodprint](#)" campaign; increased action in promotion of the [post-2015 development agenda](#) at national and regional levels with the support of NOCs and continental associations; the promotion of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (a recent UN initiative with a strong emphasis on the involvement of young people) to be celebrated on 6 April each year; and the widening of the scope, in terms of sustainability, of the IOC's Sport and Environment Commission, with a stronger focus on social and economic factors.

[Read the full text of the declaration here.](#)

The assembled delegates, representing the IOC, NOCs, International Sports Federations, UNEP and other United Nations entities, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, OCOGs, Applicant Cities, Olympians, partners and other members of the Olympic Movement put forward specific conclusions and recommendations which will guide the Movement's activities in sustainable development.

The five continental winners of **the 3rd IOC Sport and Environment Awards** were also announced during the Conference in Sochi and recognised for their outstanding initiatives in the field of environment and sustainable sport:

Africa: Kenya Rowing and Canoe Association (Tudor Water Sports Marina), Kenya

Americas: Clean Air Champions (CAC), Canada

Asia: Sport and Environment Commission, National Olympic Committee of Iran (Tochal Mountain Park), Iran

Europe: Sport and Environment Commission, National Olympic Committee of Serbia (Ada Ciganlija Lake), Serbia

Oceania: Sustainable Coastlines and Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee Inc (Go Green: Love Your Coast), Papua New Guinea

[Find out more about the winners and their projects here.](#)

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