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 contributes to the holistic integration of sustainability and should be continued. These case studies, which now also showcase National Olympic Committees’ (NOCs) best practices, form part of a strategic support system given 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.

“Nocturnal animal species are at risk of extinction as a result of deforestation. 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
Recognising the capacity and responsibility of sport to manage issues relating to environmental sustainability, and following the Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21 recommendations, the International Ski Mountaineering Federation (ISMF) issued a mandatory sustainability handbook for its Local Organising Committees (LOCs), which between them organise six World Cups and one World/Continental Championship every year. Presented to all LOCs in 2017 and tested and successfully implemented by the Andorran National Federation at the Font Blanca Andorra World Cup event in 2018, the objective of the handbook is to protect the natural environment where ski mountaineering (skimo) competitions are held and to establish a clear and systematic framework that ensures sustainability around three key areas: Leave no trace; Reduce global impacts; and Be the change.

**OBJECTIVES**

The ISMF has produced a sustainability handbook for LOCs in order to:
- Protect the natural environment where skimo competitions take place.
- Establish a clear, systematic and mandatory sustainability framework for World Cup organisers.
- Seek the improvement of the LOCs’ environmental performance, edition after edition.
- Inspire organisers, sponsors, athletes and the public to follow in supporting the environmental commitments and protection of the ISMF and the LOCs.

“NOWADAYS, A SUCCESSFUL EVENT CAN BE CONSIDERED AS SUCH ONLY IF ORGANISED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRECEPTS OF SUSTAINABLE POLITICS. RESPECT AND LOVE FOR THE WORLD, AND THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL REPERCUSSIONS OF SPORT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WRITTEN IN EACH SKIMO LOVER’S DNA.”

ARMANDO MARIOTTA, ISMF PRESIDENT
Skimo practitioners enjoy contact with the mountain and naturally align with the ethics of the outdoors: respecting the environment and keeping nature intact. Even so, the ISMF appreciates that there needs to be a balance between growth of the sport and management of the potential impact that this growth can have on the environment. Competitions that take place on natural sites can have a direct impact on important biodiversity, primarily through increased footfall, traffic, waste and pollution. The sustainability handbook recommends LOCs adhere to the following:

- **Environmental diagnosis:** Conduct an evaluation in the areas of waste, water, energy and noise.
- **Action plan:** Assess and manage the environmental impacts identified.
- **Evaluation:** Assess the effectiveness of the action plan regarding the initial diagnosis.
- **Communication plan:** To improve sustainability knowledge and actions at all levels.

In addition to following these steps, LOCs also have a responsibility to:

- Appoint a person in charge of sustainability to liaise with the ISMF.
- Produce and sign an environmental policy statement with a commitment to respect the local regulations and prevent any negative environmental effects.
- Write an environmental analysis report and an environmental programme that determine and develop the necessary actions to comply with the established environmental criteria.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- Implementing such a handbook necessitates changes and therefore requires support from the International Federation (IF). However, the long-term aim is to optimise the functioning of the LOCs.
- Exchanging best practices with National Federations helped the IF to learn from them and build its own sustainability handbook.
- Simplifying the handbook text makes it easier to adhere to, and for the results to be processed.
- Using a specific communication strategy for the sustainability concept changes the image of the event and facilitates sponsorship opportunities.

**EVALUATION**

The implementation of the environmental handbook delineates clear environmental criteria applicable to all World Cup LOCs. Per the final evaluation carried out by the ISMF, LOCs better understand their environmental performance and learn what improvements can be made for future LOCs. The handbook aims to go beyond being purely a mandatory requirement, but to be a useful, complete and organised tool for LOCs.