IF Sustainability Case Study
DONATE YOUR FENCING GEAR
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 recommendation 5 of Olympic Agenda 2020 (“Include sustainability within the Olympic Movement’s daily operations”), the IOC conducted the International Federations (IF) Sustainability Project in 2016. This allowed the IOC to obtain an overview of IFs' sustainability initiatives; identify common topics, good practices and mutual challenges; and share information. One of the Project’s outcomes 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 IF sustainability case studies should be continued. These case studies form part of the enhanced support system provided 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. The studies are also aligned with one or more of the United Nations’ (UN) framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This framework is pivotal for the Olympic Movement since 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 UN’s 17 SDGs provide a common framework for organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle the key global sustainability challenges. The IF case studies attest to the fact that the Olympic Movement contributes to the achievement of many of these.

“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
In March 2017, the International Fencing Federation (FIE) launched “Donate Your Fencing Gear”, a new long-term initiative encouraging fencers to donate their fencing equipment to fencers that may not have access to such materials. Following tests at the Junior & Cadet World Fencing Championships in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in April 2017, the scheme was fully implemented at the World Fencing Championships in Leipzig, Germany, in July.

KEY FIGURES APRIL-JULY 2017
• 73 athletes donated gear
• 295 items of equipment were received
• 5 National Federations benefited: Brazil, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Rwanda and Senegal

ACTIVATION OF THE PROJECT
The first fencer to donate equipment in Plovdiv was Gábor Boczkó, two-time Olympic medallist. After promotion on social media, many other fencers followed his lead, and the FIE also invited manufacturers to donate new and used equipment. The gear was then distributed to the beneficiary National Federations (NFs) at the World Fencing Championships in Leipzig. To determine the most suitable recipients, the FIE invited NFs to submit proposals for projects designed to reach people who would normally not be able to take up fencing due to a lack of funds. The FIE Legal Commission provided a contractual framework to ensure the donated equipment was used appropriately by the NFs.

OBJECTIVES
The FIE has started encouraging athletes to donate their fencing gear in order to:
• Increase participation in fencing, particularly among people in countries or communities that otherwise may not have access to it.
• Promote and encourage sustainable consumption and production through equipment reuse.

THE KEY ELEMENT OF THE PROJECT WAS THE DIRECT REDISTRIBUTION OF THE EQUIPMENT, SO FIE DID NOT INCUR ANY SHIPPING OR STORAGE COSTS.

ELENA MURDACA, FIE ADMINISTRATION DIRECTOR

A member of the FIE SEMI Commission (Commission de la Signalisation Electrique, du Matériel et des Installations) was on hand in Leipzig to check that the donated equipment was safe to use.

COMMUNICATION
The FIE created banners with the “Donate Your Fencing Gear” slogan, which were designed to be reused at future events, and promoted the project on the FIE Twitter account, in FIE news releases and in the FIE quarterly magazine. Every donor received...
a FIE certificate of solidarity recognising their contribution, and a section on the FIE website will display a list of all donors and donations.

EVALUATION
The project has been very well received by the fencing community: the first donations exceeded expectations, and the fact that NFs collected the gear at the World Fencing Championships reduced the FIE’s costs. Some NFs are now replicating the campaign in their own countries, and are working with athletes and clubs to donate equipment. This has further strengthened the FIE’s resolve to continue this initiative at future events and encourage everyone who wants to donate equipment in a cost-effective way – reducing their environmental footprint while inspiring future athletes.

THE PROGRAMME BRINGS ATHLETES TOGETHER THROUGH CHARITABLE GIVING AND A GENUINE NEED FOR SUPPORT – AND ALSO PROLONGS THE LIFESPAN OF FENCING EQUIPMENT, ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION.”
YUKI OTA, FIE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

LESSONS LEARNED
• The support of the leadership and management teams is essential for success.
• Working with athletes’ commissions and communications teams is a good way to explain your initiative, build awareness and increase participation.
• To facilitate continuity, try to create a structure that is easy to replicate at future events.
• To ensure the donated equipment is used appropriately, establish clear processes to monitor its distribution.
• Acknowledging the athletes, manufacturers and stakeholders who participate may encourage similar actions in the future.
• Receiving and distributing equipment at events will reduce storage and shipping costs.