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. 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.

“The IOC provides support to NOCs and IFs in the definition, design and development of their sustainability strategies.

Paragraph 37, UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

“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.”
THE DIF IS ENCOURAGING STAKEHOLDERS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY IN THE AREAS OF NATURE, ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

Originally drafted in 1997 and revised in 2008, the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF)’s Environmental Code of Conduct contains requirements and recommendations on the subjects of nature, environment and planning, addressed to three key stakeholder groups: National Federations (NFs); local clubs; and athletes. The direct and action-oriented language of the code has been designed to strongly encourage its implementation.

The DIF encourages NFs to apply the code and to achieve its GREEN certification, which demands fulfilment of seven requirements. Via a domino effect, clubs and athletes adhere to the commitment by engaging in their own activities – which in turn means that a single event can involve the actions of multiple stakeholders in multiple areas.

“OUR NOC INVITES THE NFs TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND INSPIRE EACH OTHER EVERY TWO MONTHS. THIS HAS BEEN PARAMOUNT IN GAINING RESULTS WITH EACH NF AND ACROSS THE NFs – THEY QUALIFY EACH OTHER’S WORK AND OURS.”

NIELS NYGAARD, DIF PRESIDENT

OBJECTIVES
The DIF’s Environmental Code of Conduct aims to:
• Encourage different stakeholder groups to engage with environmentally friendly commitments and actions.
• Put in place a clear and comprehensive environmental framework addressed to each stakeholder group.
• Secure convergence between the code, the IOC Sustainability Strategy and the policies of Danish NFs.
• Secure a written commitment from all stakeholders that is periodically reviewed and broadened.
CONTACT: Dorthe O. Andersen, DIF Head of Environment doa@dif.dk

www.dif.dk

EVALUATION

The code provides a set of specific objectives, actions and recommendations for each stakeholder group. Demonstrating the benefits of the DIF’s support and guidance, there are now 19 GREEN-certified NFs, and their commitments and actions in relation to the code extend to member clubs and athletes. The code gives certainty and shape to the NFs’ commitment and helps the DIF evaluate their environmental performance.

LESSONS LEARNED

• Addressing the language to target groups helps with the inclusion of concrete and tailored actions.
• Following up regularly with stakeholders provides a chance to review their progress and demonstrate support for their initiatives.
• Organising meetings for the stakeholders to share their experiences prompts others to follow, implement and learn from them.
• Periodically updating the code and broadening its scope is necessary to keep its commitments and actions up to date.

The code works in many ways. For example, if an NF commits to using water stored in cardboard cartons rather than in plastic bottles at an event, the DIF will pay any extra costs; or if a mountain bike competition is held in a forest, competitors must commit to protecting the site.

Alongside this, actions by one NF in line with the code may inspire other NFs to follow suit.

For example, after the success of Find Your Way, a Danish Orienteering Federation project about outdoor exercising, the code was replicated by Danish NFs in sports such as golf, roller skating and canoeing.

A GREEN certification improves dialogue between NFs and both authorities and landowners: it helps NFs to gain access to locations that may not be easily accessible, as it shows that the NF, its member clubs and its athletes have committed to environmentally friendly behaviour. The DIF also provides guidance and financial support, and advocates for its GREEN-certified NFs.

2018 | 4