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.

“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
LTOK HAS INTRODUCED A SET OF CRITERIA TO IMPROVE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF ITS OLYMPIC EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

One of the core strategic goals of the National Olympic Committee of Lithuania (LTOK) is to disseminate Olympic values and achieve social development through sport. In order to do this, it implements Olympic Education Programmes (OEPs) throughout the national education system that follow a logic model based on a four-stage framework: needs assessment, design, implementation and evaluation. Across all of the education programmes – from the development of physical activity to Olympic values education – the OEPs share the challenge of measuring their results. Furthermore, securing funding and a continued interest from society and stakeholders depends mainly on the quality of the programme and the capacity to demonstrate effective results.

To make OEPs’ results measurable, effective and goals-oriented – and to improve their sustainability performance – the LTOK developed a framework applicable to the logic model of the OEPs through 94 sustainability criteria.

In order to encourage the implementation of the sustainability framework into the logic model of new and existing OEPs – making it easier to follow and understand – the set of criteria was grouped into four programme

OBJECTIVES
The LTOK developed sustainability criteria for education programmes in order to:
- Establish a clear programme planning, implementation and evaluation framework.
- Assess the current situation of the education programmes implemented by the LTOK.
- Develop a future strategy based on the results from the renewed programme development structure.
- Implement the criteria to increase the sustainability of education programmes.

“OLYMPIC EDUCATION IS A PRIORITY FOR THE LITHUANIAN NOC. THEREFORE, INCREASING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES IMPROVED THE NOC’S RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. WE FIND IT EASIER TO COMMUNICATE THE IMPORTANCE AND THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES TO OUR STAKEHOLDERS.”
Daina Gudzinevičiūtė, LTOK President
LESSONS LEARNED

• The sustainability criteria are most effective when combined with the OEPs’ logic model.
• Due to their flexibility, the sustainability criteria proved to be adaptable to both newly developed and existing programmes.
• The 94 defined criteria are non-exhaustive; they can be updated and further developed based on future education programmes and requirements.
• Communicating with the OEPs’ stakeholders about the improvement of the logic model when applying the sustainability criteria increases the visibility and use of both tools.

The criteria were selected after consultation with experts and a review of academic and framework documents on sustainable development, such as Olympic Agenda 2020, the Olympic Movement’s Agenda 21 and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. They cover a wide range of aspects – which include participation of local communities; recycling and waste management; ecological and biodiversity impact; cost-effective financial approach and diversification in funding sources.

The aim is to make the OEPs’ logic model as sustainable as possible and at the same time provide certainty and clarity to the OEPs’ development and outcomes. Both the logic model and the sustainability criteria have been implemented since 2017 in new and existing OEPs in Lithuania. This provides a clear path to developing sustainable OEPs in the near future.

EVALUATION

Olympic Education is extremely important for National Olympic Committees (NOCs) worldwide, and the LTOK demonstrates that integrating OEPs with sustainability criteria ensures effectiveness and support. This approach also serves as a method to define sustainability-driven initiatives with clear goals and measurable results. Offering a large number of sustainability criteria and integrating them within the logic model creates a flexible mechanism for NOCs to adapt and improve the financial efficiency of any OEP.