**NOC AND IF SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES**

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
THE ONOC HAS CO-LAUNCHED AN INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE, ENGAGE AND EMPOWER ATHLETES AS ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

The Voices of the Athletes (VOA) programme is an initiative co-created by the Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC) Athletes’ Commission, with the aim of reaching out to athletes to promote and reinforce Olympic values and the spirit of sport. VOA’s core messages are: Be a Leader; Play True; Play Fair; and Go Green.

VOA’s strategy to achieve this mission is based on developing messages that are relevant and meaningful to sports communities, as well as implementing activities through an Outreach Programme (OP). Recently deployed at the 2017 Pacific Mini Games in Vanuatu, VOA’s OP focused on educating athletes and athlete support staff to become VOA Champions who would go on to promote and deliver key messages.

“GOING THROUGH THE VOA GO GREEN MESSAGE REMINDS US TO BE MORE RESPONSIBLE WITH OUR ACTIONS, FOR IT AFFECTS NOT ONLY VANUATU BUT OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES.”

JUDY AVOK, VANUATU CRICKETER

OBJECTIVES
The VOA project was created in order to:
• Develop environmental messages that are relevant and meaningful to sports communities.
• Reach out to athletes to promote and reinforce Olympic values and the spirit of sport.
• Train the VOA Champions to advocate for doping-free sport and health and environmental issues.
• Encourage the protection of our environment through the Go Green campaign.
A total of 762 participants from 24 countries took part – a record number for the initiative, including 49 per cent of all athletes competing at the games.

VOA’s messages encouraging protection of the environment were framed in the Go Green campaign, with a primary message of: keep our beaches and coasts free of plastic litter. One of the methods that VOA uses to execute the Go Green campaign is by associating with the Love Your Coast educational programme, consisting of visits to schools, and educational and clean-up activities. In Vanuatu, an interactive education booth was installed and hosted by VOA Champions in a prominent zone with high athlete footfall. Athletes were invited to register with the programme and learn about the impact that plastic has on marine and human life, as well as the specific problem of Oceania’s coastal litter.

Through an interactive Q&A and an educational video, VOA Champions engaged with other athletes and raised awareness of the impact of pollution in the environment and possible uses of recycled plastic. Athletes who completed the activities received, among other things, hand-woven goods made by local indigenous people.

LESSONS LEARNED
- Digital materials appeal to younger participants more than paper ones and help save resources.
- Offering locally produced items as merchandise helps generate engagement.
- Programmes bring added value if carried out in partnership with other commissions or complementary programmes.

EVALUATION
The VOA programme successfully engages with athletes to raise awareness of environmental issues and make them part of the solution. Conveying messages in a friendly and interactive way through the VOA Champions makes the VOA programme an effective method through which to educate and inspire. When learning about these issues, athletes are able to take personal responsibility while also encouraging the general public to follow their example.