IF Sustainability Project
FEI EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS
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 FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY AT THE FEI EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS IS SET TO BECOME AN EXAMPLE FOR FUTURE EVENTS

In August 2019, the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) staged the FEI European Championships (EC) in Rotterdam, and sustainability was a key focus for the organising committee. The FEI EC organising committee engaged early with its stakeholders, including the City of Rotterdam and the main sponsors. The competition was a pilot event for coverage of sustainability initiatives by the FEI, and the FEI’s aim now is to promote such programmes at other FEI championships and events.

During the event, the focus was on the following three key areas:

- Sponsor engagement: Rabobank, a local sponsor, initiated its engagement by promoting new healthy and vegan food concepts that aim to minimise time and distance from producer to consumer within restaurants. Additionally, DHL, another local sponsor, promoted CO2-free mini-trucks for last-mile logistics.

OBJECTIVES

By promoting new sustainability initiatives during its European Championships and through the local organising committee, the FEI aimed to:

- Raise awareness about sustainability across the equestrian community.
- Generate support and active participation with sponsors and host cities.
- Inspire other event organisers to implement similar initiatives that promote environmental responsibility during events.
in line with its commitment to reducing all logistics-related emissions to zero by 2050.

- Work with the city on conservation of natural sites: As the event venue was situated within a forest, the organising committee joined forces with the local administration and foresters to ensure there was zero impact on the environment and its biodiversity. As an example, special lights with different intensities and frequencies were installed in order to avoid disturbing the flight path of local bats.

- Recycling: All horse manure collected during the event was reused as compost by local mushroom farmers, saving more than approximately 67 tonnes of waste going to landfill.

As horse manure has a huge potential for energy creation, the FEI is planning to create a documentary on the power of horse manure to produce combined heat and electricity at the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup Qualifier in Helsinki during 24-27 October 2019. The energy company involved in the process is also a major local sponsor of the event, opening up further opportunities for collaboration.

Looking ahead to the near future and following the success of the FEI European Championships, further systematic promotion of sustainability initiatives will be implemented at upcoming events.

EVALUATION

With the implementation of concrete sustainability measures during the FEI European Championships in Rotterdam, the FEI has successfully collaborated with the local event organisers. Driven by its sustainability strategy, which includes raising awareness while continuing to create technical information and guides for its event organisers, the FEI will continue to invest in its commitment to preserve and protect the welfare of horses and the natural environment.