IF Sustainability Project
ICF EVENTS
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY
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 ICF HAS INTRODUCED AN EVENTS SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY UNDERPINNED BY ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

In 2018, the International Canoe Federation (ICF) demonstrated its commitment to sustainability by signing up to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United Nations (UN) Environment’s Clean Seas campaign. Now, the ICF has introduced a sustainability strategy for events to raise environmental awareness, reduce environmental impact, protect the natural environment and demonstrate its commitment to social and economic sustainability.

OBJECTIVES
By implementing a sustainability strategy for its events, the ICF aims to:
• Raise awareness about the importance of sustainability at sporting events.
• Embed economic, social and environmental sustainability within events.
• Create an easy-to-implement toolkit for ICF event organisers.
• Involve and support ICF event organisers, athletes, National Federations, clubs and recreational paddlers.
• Inspire other individuals and event organisers to take similar actions.
“A CLEAN AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IS CRUCIAL FOR PADDLERS AT ALL LEVELS TO ENJOY THE BEAUTIFUL SPORT OF CANOEING, AND THE ICF IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS IN DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE CANOEING EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD.”

JOSÉ PERURENA, ICF PRESIDENT

As a first step, the ICF implemented a pilot event methodology, underpinned by key sustainability objectives. The methodology, which includes a reporting template, aims to support the development of sustainability guidelines and bidding requirements for future ICF events.

The methodology for pilot events in 2019 included:

• An initial venue evaluation.
• Workshops involving the ICF, the local organising committee and local stakeholders to identify key sustainability objectives.
• The identification of key performance indicators for all objectives.
• A joint communication plan to promote the pilot events and secure stakeholder support.
• The creation of a feedback questionnaire for event spectators, staff, athletes and volunteers.
• A post-event sustainability report to ascertain which sustainability objectives were met and where there was room for improvement.

The first ICF pilot event was the 2018 ICF Canoe Slalom World Cup in Augsburg, Germany. At the event, 500 reusable bottles were distributed among athletes and volunteers, while reusable glass bottles were made available to all volunteers and ICF staff. Working with the city authorities, the organising committee also set up a bike station at the venue, encouraging spectators and athletes to cycle to and from the event.

Inspired by the pilot event’s success, other ICF events followed suit. For instance, the organisers of the 2019 ICF Junior & U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships in Romania and the 2019 ICF Canoe Slalom & Wildwater Canoeing World Championships in Spain served food on reusable plates to avoid food waste, plastic packaging and plastic plates and cutlery.

The Spanish organiser also partnered with a local waste management company, MEU, to optimise the event’s recycling process, offering an award for the team with the most impressive recycling record.

EVALUATION
Having introduced a sustainability strategy for canoeing events, the ICF has set out new objectives to further boost sustainability across the sport. The ICF is exploring ways in which to improve its pilot event process and is developing a toolkit to facilitate the implementation of sustainability measures. To maximise the programme’s efficiency, some of the sustainability initiatives will be made mandatory at ICF events in 2020.

BENEFITS

• An events sustainability strategy can benefit both the environment and local communities.
• The introduction of environmental guidelines enhances collaboration with stakeholders.
• A strategy can improve relationships with stakeholders.