NOC Sustainability Project

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE PACIFIC GAMES
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, 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
Each NOC/IF sustainability project contributes to one or more of the IOC’s sustainability focus areas and one or more of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**SAMOA CONNECTS SPORTS AND SUSTAINABILITY AT THE PACIFIC GAMES**

The 16th edition of the Pacific Games in 2019 were held in the Independent State of Samoa, making the return of the games for the first time since 2007. Samoa was host to 24 countries competing in 27 sports across 20 venues and two islands. During the games, the country was also host to an activity led by the Samoa Association of Sports & National Olympic Committee (NOC), with support of the IOC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to increase the participation of athletes in creating meaningful connections between sports and sustainability.

In line with the IOC Sustainability Strategy, the project focused on three out of the five key focus areas: Infrastructure and Natural Sites, Sourcing and Resource Management, and Climate.

The project was co-led by athletes who represent Samoa at the Olympic, Commonwealth, International Federations and Pacific Games and engaged athletes, officials and their fans in order to:

- **Plant native and fruit bearing tree seedlings within forest reserves.** Team Samoa athletes, officials and their fans planted almost 12,000 seedlings of eight native and fruit bearing tree species. These trees are forecasted to offset approximately 2,700 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere over ten years as well as provide critical food sources and shelter for endangered wildlife.

- **Collect, sort then weigh waste materials generated within the athlete’s village.** A total of 37 kg of non-biodegradable waste materials were collected at the Team Samoa athlete’s village over ten days, including plastic food packaging and beverage containers, tin cans and damaged sports gear. This provided the athletes with an opportunity to get hands-on education on waste management and gain awareness of better sourcing opportunities.

**OBJECTIVES**

The Samoa Association of Sports & National Olympic Committee used the opportunity of the 16th Pacific Games to:

- Build on its existing environmental awareness programmes by involving the athletes in the activities.
- Activate customary and traditional practices within the host country that would accelerate the implementation of greening initiatives and projects.
- Establish environmental thought leadership using available resources connecting sports and conservation, engaging athletes, officials and fans.
to Samoa’s unique culture, geography, national policies and economic context and include recommendations on sourcing of team uniforms, food-catering and laundromat services, and action-driven principles on the avoidance of single-use plastics and waste management.

The 16th Pacific Games left the Independent State of Samoa with a far-reaching environmental, social and economic legacy. While the near 12,000 trees will benefit the climate and support local biodiversity, local stakeholders have gained significant insights which translate to a positive legacy. Beyond sustainability awareness of those, a conscious approach to sourcing and waste management led to new guidelines for green procurement and involved athletes have become advocates, supporting other events with practical support on waste management.

**EVALUATION**

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**BENEFITS**

- The athletes that co-led the project have begun exploring pathways to legally register their own waste management enterprise including awareness on microplastic pollution.
- National Federations accredited to the NOC have been inspired and have since been incorporating tree planting activities into their sporting programmes and has sparked plans with the Samoa Sports Facilities Authority to plant native and fruit tree seedlings around their respective fields of play.
- Through the project, the Samoa NOC could see tangible examples on how they can advance environmental sustainability within its current socio-economic context and available infrastructure.