IF Sustainability Project

SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER FOR SANCTIONED EVENTS
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
World Sailing (WS) has created a ‘Special Event Sustainability Charter’, a comprehensive list of sustainability requirements for the largest sailing events in the world that World Sailing sanctions. WS is a participant of the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework and a partner of the IOC and UN Environment on campaigns related to Ocean Health including the Clean Seas initiative fighting plastic pollution in our oceans.

The Special Event Charter was launched in 2019 with the support of their Special Event, Sail GP, which, together with The Ocean Race and World Match Racing Tour are among the first signatories. While all special events can sign up voluntarily at any stage, all ‘Special Events’ will eventually be contractually obliged to sign when their contracts are due for renewal.

World Sailing intended to build on the momentum of existing sustainability efforts but also to better co-ordinate a sport-wide effort to focus investment in technological solutions as well as more transparent reporting.

The Charter forms part of the contractual agreement and covers a wide range of requirements including:

- Having a sustainability strategy approved by WS consistent with the goals of the WS Sustainability Agenda 2030 and with defined time-bound targets.
- Having a strategy for gender equality that supports the goal of 50% gender balance by 2030 in responsibilities on and off the water.
- Operating the event in accordance with the international ISO 20121 standard, including a comprehensive waste management plan targeting the elimination of single use plastic and a measurable carbon reduction plan in line with the Sports for Climate Action Framework.

OBJECTIVES
World Sailing launched its Special Event Sustainability Charter with the aim to:

- Showcase sustainability in the sport at the highest level while encouraging its uptake across all the suite of ‘Special Events’ which consists of major international sailing events.
- Use the collective purchasing power and influence of the large events to stimulate change in the industry acting as a catalyst for innovation in the sector.
- Ensure that Special Events follow ISO 20121, the international standard for Event Sustainability Management, which provides a framework for continual improvement.
• Annually reporting on the sustainability targets and the overall carbon footprint of the events.
• Implementing a sustainable procurement policy, including equipment, branding and venues. Encouraging suppliers to undertake impact assessments on their products, accelerating end of life options for materials which can’t be recovered and looking for venues which have been certified with sustainability credentials such as ISO 14001 or Clean Marina.
• Establishing an education and outreach programme to attract the wider community to the sport and use the event as a platform to achieve social and environmental impact.

As more of the sanctioned ‘Special Events’ sign the Charter, WS’s role will be focused on working with the events on the delivery of the Charter and evaluate the impact through the collection of annual reports.

“SPECIAL EVENTS, AS THEIR NAME SUGGESTS, CAPTURE GLOBAL INTEREST FROM SAILORS AND SPORTS FANS. THEY OFFER AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOWCASE THE SPORT, SAILORS AND INNOVATION. THEY ALSO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THEIR VOICE AND RESOURCES TO TACKLE SOME OF THE KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES THAT WE CAN COLLECTIVELY WORK TOWARDS.”
DAN READING, WORLD SAILING HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY

EVALUATION
The introduction of a ‘Special Event Sustainability Charter’ means that World Sailing can align its global sustainability agenda with the work done by the largest event holders in the sport of sailing. Furthermore, the involvement of the signatories in the co-creation of those commitments translates into a stronger buy-in by the relevant stakeholders. The federation’s capacity to influence turns then into a collective action plan aligning the event, the federation and global sustainability goals.

BENEFITS
• Through the agreement of a joint Charter, an organisation can align major stakeholders in a collaborative effort to make the sport more sustainable within the context of its overarching sustainability strategy.
• By combining efforts across many events, there are more opportunities to engage with a wider fan base.
• By way of a common strategy, stakeholders can influence the broader industry to become more sustainable through their collective purchasing power and influence.

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