

IF SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT IMPROVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF RUGBY TOURNAMENTS



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 contribute to the holistic integration of sustainability and should be continued.

These case studies, which now also showcase the best practices of National Olympic Committees (NOCs), form part of a strategic support system made available 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.

The IOC provides support to NOCs and IFs in establishing, designing and developing their sustainability strategies.



“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 SDGs.



International Olympic Committee

PRACTICAL DELIVERY OF THE ESP2030 AT KEY RUGBY TOURNAMENTS

World Rugby launched its [Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030 \(ESP2030\)](#) in January 2022, outlining its duty to take credible steps to combat climate change. Building on enhanced obligations for hosts to further embed sustainability principles into the planning and delivery of tournaments, the launch and implementation of the ESP2030 has been a motivating catalyst to run several activities at rugby tournaments.

Within the third pillar of the plan, [Delivering and supporting sustainable rugby events](#), sits the strategic goal to ensure that all World Rugby events are delivered to the best international standards of sustainability, with a focus on climate action, the circular economy and protecting the natural environment. Below are some examples of actions to deliver on this goal, demonstrating how World Rugby and tournament stakeholders are collaborating on initiatives which create a positive environmental, social and economic impact.

A sustainability plan for the Rugby World Cup (RWC) Sevens 2022:

Held in Cape Town in September 2022, the Rugby World Cup Sevens was the first major tournament to take place since the launch of the ESP2030. World Rugby worked closely with the tournament host, the South African Rugby Union (SARU), to develop a tangible



OBJECTIVES

- Use World Rugby tournaments to deliver across the four pillars of the ESP2030, embedding sustainability into operations and engaging the rugby family to support collective efforts.
- Engage and educate athletes, fans, commercial partners and suppliers and other stakeholders on the need for climate action.
- Ensure all rugby tournaments have a measurable positive effect on the environment and the communities holding rugby events.
- Inspire other sports federations and event organisers to embark on their own sustainability journey.

[sustainability and legacy plan](#) for this event, mindful of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Alongside efforts to reduce waste, support waste recovery and apply circular economy principles, “[The Bag That Builds](#)” initiative, carried out in collaboration with the Centre for Regenerative Design & Collaboration (CRDC), was a key element of this plan: 1,400kg of plastic waste from the tournament was transformed into Resin8, an eco-aggregate used in construction blocks, which reduces the need for concrete by approximately 20% and provided enough blocks to build six affordable housing units in a community housing development.

ChildFund Rugby, the international rugby-for-development agency, was also appointed as the first ever principal [charity partner](#) for a RWC Sevens edition, building on the successful partnerships for the Rugby World Cup 2019 and 2021. The funds raised are being used to support ChildFund Rugby initiatives across Africa, to promote gender equality and other core values linked to rugby, such as solidarity and respect.

Other initiatives for the tournament include:

- offering sustainable transport options for fans with free travel via the MyCity bus network
- collecting tournament kits and equipment and distributing this to schools and clubs from disadvantaged communities,
- using renewable energy from wind farms
- rainwater harvesting.

Rugby World Cup 2021, an environmentally friendly and inclusive tournament:

The rescheduling of the women's edition of the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand from 2021 to 2022 due to COVID-19 enabled the organisers to further strengthen their sustainability plans following the ESP2030 launch. This allowed for the development of a comprehensive [sustainability action plan](#), which included a range of initiatives aimed at creating a positive

BENEFITS

- These activities contribute to World Rugby's goal of reducing its carbon footprint by at least 50% by 2030 as part of its commitment to the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework.
- Carbon footprint measurements at tournaments allow for tangible results, greater efficiencies and savings, and help build the basis for future improvements and replication at other events.
- Sustainability best practices and minimum standards for rugby events help ensure the future of the sport through an overall positive impact on communities and the wider environment.

impact for local communities and promoting climate action through carbon reduction. For the first time in the history of the women's tournament, data relating to carbon emissions was collected across a range of operations, including teams, staff, broadcast logistics and venue operations. Furthermore, the RWC 2021 implemented digital ticketing to reduce printing, offered free water at match venues to encourage fans to bring their own reusable bottle, donated equipment after the tournament, offered free public transport in Auckland for match ticket-holders, and promoted sustainable mobility through fan trails in match cities.

On top of the environmental action, social initiatives were also implemented to foster diversity, equality and inclusion. World Rugby launched its Coaching Internship programme to provide further opportunities for female coaches, while the Organising Committee promoted te reo Māori language and culture, offered gender-neutral changing facilities, and included family areas that were smoke and alcohol free. As a result of these and other initiatives, New Zealand Rugby was certified by Rainbow Tick for diversity and inclusion.

"It is fantastic to see recommendations from World Rugby's Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030 being put into practice. The players' actions will no doubt inspire many others to take notice and be a force for good, helping to protect the planet for future generations to continue to enjoy playing rugby in a healthy environment."

ALAN GILPIN, WORLD RUGBY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Rugby World Cup 2023 aims to have an overall positive impact:

Prior to the launch of the ESP2030 in 2022 and building on increased awareness and understanding of the need to embed sustainability into all areas of activity, World Rugby and the France 2023 Rugby World Cup Organising Committee have been working on ways to make the next edition of the men's RWC the most sustainable edition ever, and to make a lasting, [positive impact](#). This ambition has already helped raise existing standards for international events in terms of social responsibility, inclusion and sustainable development. The tournament organisers have established [four key commitments](#):

- Acting for a sustainable and circular economy
- Investing in education, training and employment
- Reducing the impact on the environment
- Fostering inclusion and accessibility.

France 2023, supported by World Rugby, will tackle a number of tangible challenges, including sustainable procurement, low-carbon transport plans, waste management, diversity and inclusion.

