

Module 2. How to develop a sustainability programme based upon international standards and frameworks

Unit 2.1 The history of sustainability in sport and evolution of standards

History

The vision of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic Movement, could be considered the earliest phase of sustainability in (and through) sport. In 1894, Pierre de Coubertin expressed that his ambition with the modern Olympic Games was to create an international movement that would promote an integrated culture of athleticism and education, position sport as a model for peace and harmony, and safeguard a set of values that extend well beyond the playing field (International Olympic Committee, n.d.).

About 100 years later, the Olympic Games Impact Study was published. This was a first-of-its-kind academic piece of research with standardized data for 126 different sustainability indicators (like environmental, social, and economic) (UBC, n.d.).

Sport events and organizations have started to develop their sustainability programmes in the past two decades. The Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) and the International Academy of Sports Science and Technology (AISTS) launched the Sustainable Sport and Events Toolkit in 2008 (Vancouver, 2010), a first practical toolkit that supported sport events to implement sustainability standards, including some which will be discussed later in this chapter.

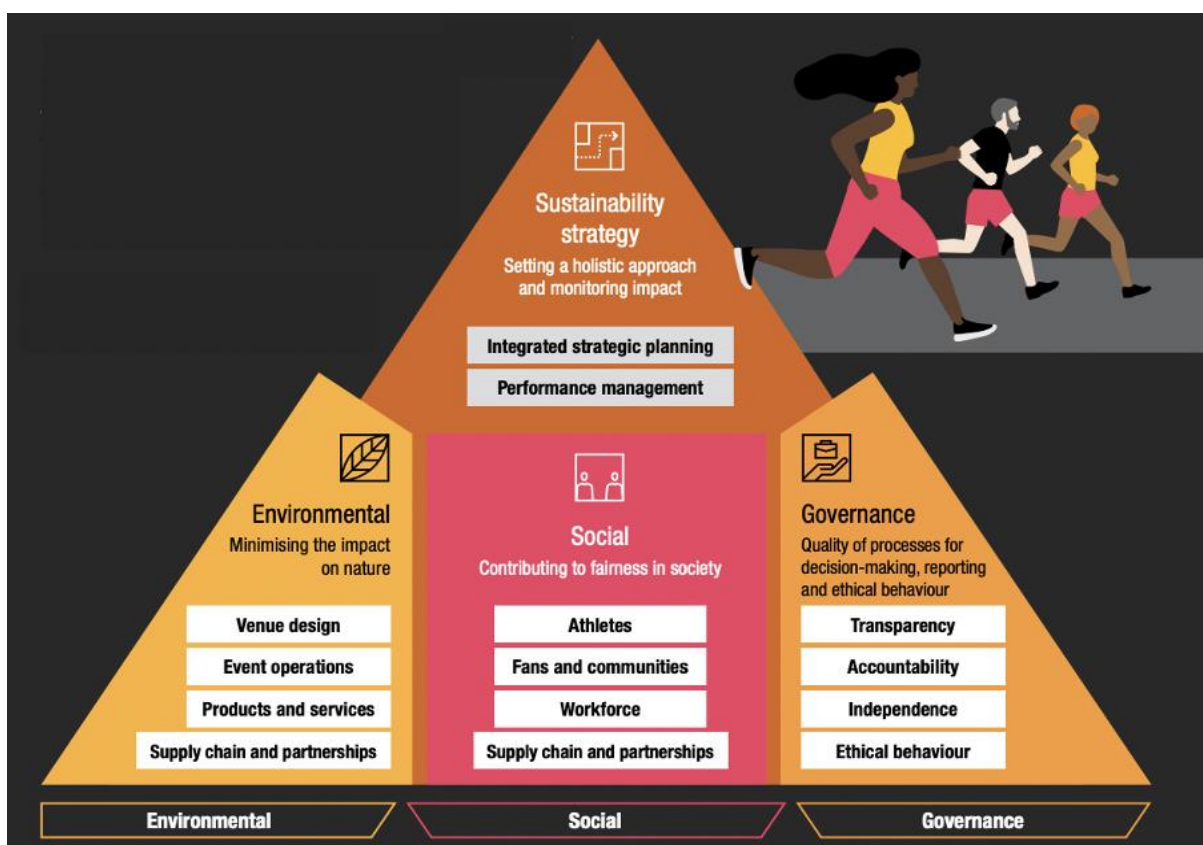
A multitude of sustainability standards and frameworks have evolved since 2008 and recent societal and economic developments have firmly put the topic of sustainability high on the agenda of sport organizations. A recent survey by PWC among 253 rights holders of sports events concluded that 71.9% of the organizations (i.e. sports rights holders) address social and environmental sustainability as part of their corporate strategy (PWC Sports Survey, 2021), and only 2% does not consider it a priority for management.



COVID-19 has changed the sports landscape for good, and has challenged sports organizations and events to develop a sustainability strategy that meets business, legal and independent targets. Business targets refer to the organization's primary objectives, such as being profitable or growing sports participation. In addition, a growing number of countries accept laws and legislations to prohibit single-use plastic, enforce financial transparency, etcetera. Moreover, soft laws and resolutions such as the Paris Climate Agreement direct sport organizations' sustainability efforts as well. In an attempt to address all aspects, PWC (2021) proposes a new framework for sports organizations (see below).

This unit will discuss the history and evolution of existing standards and frameworks, both from within and from outside the sports industry.

Figure 1: ESG Framework for sport organisations



From PwC Sports Survey 2021

Standards and frameworks

Considering the broadness of the concept of sustainability and its application across sectors, it has been easy to find specific and operational frameworks for evaluating the sustainability of a certain action or society (Tolstrup Jensen, 2021). International standards and frameworks for sustainability are important for many reasons, as it has

been noted that sports actions to safeguard the natural environment can make an impact in and beyond sport to society in general (Harvey, 2008), which comes from the sports' ability to influence organizations, including governmental and non-governmental groups, to develop and implement environmental policies (Chatzigianni, 2021). Additionally, as there is greater emphasis on sport governance across all levels, from grassroots to federations, and the policies, frameworks and mechanisms are in place to guide these various institutions, there is also a space for environmental policy for sport or eco-policy within sport. As sport is broad and includes actors across the private and public sectors, we find sustainability and sport environmental frameworks, standards, mechanisms, and policies which are targeting each sector differently; others which cut across to target all actors in the area.

For example, international forums like COP21 in Paris, the International Olympic Committee's conferences on Sport and the Environment, and the Green Sports Alliance Summits have been able to bring environmental sustainability to the forefront of discussion within the sport industry, and with actors from both public and governmental entities, and national and international federations as well as with corporations and businesses. Encouragingly, sport organizations of all types have responded by implementing environmental sustainability initiatives like waste management (i.e., recycling and composting), energy management, and water management programs. In fact, some organizations have even launched comprehensive sustainability campaigns (McCullough, Pfahl, & Nguyen, 2015). These different initiatives can also be found in the various existing standards and frameworks, which aim to ensure that entities operate more responsibly relating to various elements, including the natural environment.

It is important to note that frameworks and standards are two different items. Standards are often understood as well-defined, and are expected to be followed closely. Frameworks, on the other hand, are broad guidelines and tie into expectations of reporting. For example, sustainability reporting is often positioned as a tool to help an organization set priorities to reach environmental and social impact goals by exposing both positive or negative impacts on the planet, society, and the economy. The greater sustainability movement across sectors demands that companies, organizations, institutions, and other stakeholders report on and share how they are acting on sustainability issues around environmental, social (people) and governance aspects. As a result of this, there has been a growing demand for measurable and comparable sustainability reporting that is being asked for by share and stakeholders of the different entities. This demand is becoming even greater as companies and organizations are expected to be more responsible, lead with purpose, and be part of taking climate action. The research around corporate social responsibility (CSR) indicates that there is a general recognition that there has been a large growth of organizations across sectors showing interest in acting in a socially responsible way (Bertels & Peloza, 2008).



Within the academic literature, when aiming to understand the standards and frameworks, there is a discussion on the subtopic of sport and environmental policy, which includes an examination and discussion around the policy instruments, regulations, voluntary options, and incentives, and their role and effectiveness in reaching environmental objectives within sport. The call for more research on the effects of policy and standards in practice and on outcomes stems from a general belief that sustainable efforts will allow sport organizations to reduce the ecological footprint of sport and the associated activities, an increasing interest in the contribution of sport to the sustainable development and protection of the environment and from research which is examining how adopting environmental initiatives and approaches can bring various types of benefits, from reducing an entity's ecological footprint to financial incentives, meeting regulatory requirements, and becoming a leader for others in this area. In his chapter, *Going Green: Environmental review, design and operation of sport facilities*, Alex Porteshawver (2022) covers the application of environmental law and regulation to sport stadium construction and operation. Examining the USA context and specifically California, his research sheds light on the multitude of policies, laws, and governance frameworks from national to city levels which need to be considered when aiming to understand how, in one example, sport arena construction is regulated, reported and operationalized to meet sustainability criteria and standards.

To cover the topic of international standards and frameworks, this unit will touch on the following sub-topics:

1. Existing frameworks applied across sectors

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGS)
- Earth Charter
- Climate Pledge
- Scientific Frameworks
- The Natural Step and Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development

2. Existing standards

- ISO
- GRI
- ESG



- B Corp
- The EU-Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

3. Sport specific frameworks & standards

- Sports for Climate Action
- Council for Responsible Sport
- EPA Green Sports
- BASIS Scheme
- Sustainable Sport Index
- Commonwealth Sport & SDG Indicators
- Laureus Sport for Good Environmental Action Toolkit



Unit 2.2 Universal sustainability frameworks and standards and its use in football

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Sustainable Development Goals

When assessing sustainability and its approach to development, the most prominent framework is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 framework is commonly referred to as the Global Goals, and includes 17 goals which are a call for action by all countries to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations with a globally agreed framework for a more sustainable world by 2030. They aim to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 goals are integrated, as the outcome of one will affect the outcomes in others. Social, economic, and environmental sustainability development should be balanced (UN, n.d.).

Figure 2: The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals



The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals [online video]. Retrieved on April 26, 2022, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=11&v=0XTBYMfZyrM&feature=emb_title screenshot by author

The five principles of the SDG framework are: people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership and their significance is explained below:



- **People:** We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.
- **Planet:** We are determined to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations.
- **Prosperity:** We are determined to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature.
- **Peace:** We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.
- **Partnership:** We are determined to mobilise the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focussed in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people. (UN General Assembly, 2015, p. 2)

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be found in the figure above and as the main aim of the UN and its various institutions is to promote, communicate and ensure that this is a global framework for action, there are a plethora of sites, resources and educational materials targeting different audiences available in various languages. Additionally, the reporting on the SDGs is crucial and these are done at the global, national and more local levels.

For each of the 17 goals, there is a set of targets and indicators. In fact, there are 169 targets with 232 unique indicators to track the progress towards the goals and with open access platforms like the SDG Tracker (<https://sdg-tracker.org/about>), there is a push to encourage and share all progress, challenges, and solutions towards achieving the global goals. However, it has been noted that in 2017, when these targets were introduced to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the respective goals, it was designed for national and global metrics. The business sector and individual organizations have since worked on ways to track and report their direct contribution to the SDGs and additional policies have been created to provide frameworks to shepherd the sport sector and respective



organizations toward sustainable development (McCullough, Kellison, & Melton, 2022). Specifically, the United Nations Global Compact (<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/library/5361>) is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative which is a voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support the UN goals.

Regarding entities, institutions, and organizations in the sport sector, it has been recognized by the UN that sport has a strong linkage and relationship to the SDGs and the UN explicitly called upon sport to champion the goals introduced in their guiding proclamation, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize 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. (General Assembly, 2015, p. 10)

The UN Environment Programme focuses on the elements of the sustainable development goals which specifically relate to the environment and from their resources and mapping it is evident that each of the 17 goals has indicators and targets connected to the natural environment, some more straightforward, like Goal 13 or 15 than others.

Example: German Bundesliga football club Borussia Dortmund was the first German professional football club to join the UN Global Compact and is reporting the impact the club has on a selection of the UN SDGs.

The club has identified 10 out of the 17 SDGS to which it concretely contributes and has included their activity regarding the goals in the club's annual sustainability report.



Figure 3: Borussia Dortmund and SDG 10



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

The team has spoken out many times in support of and in defence of human rights, including the Black Lives Matter movement, and has taken a clear stance against all forms of discrimination.

From Sustainability Report for the 2020/2021 season, by Borussia Dortmund, 2021, https://ungc-production.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/attachments/cop_2021/505823/original/EN_BVB%20Nachhaltigkeitsbericht%20202021.pdf?1639131852

The Climate Pledge

The Climate Pledge is a call to businesses and organizations to take collective action on the world's greatest crisis and to work together to build a safe and healthy planet for the next generations. In 2019, Amazon and Global Optimism co-founded The Climate Pledge, a commitment to net-zero carbon by 2040. Presently, there is a growing list of major companies and organizations who have also joined and signed the Pledge to commit to three principal areas of action, including:

- **Regular reporting** Signatories agree to measure and report greenhouse gas emissions on a regular basis.
- **Carbon elimination** Signatories agree to implement decarbonization strategies in line with the Paris Agreement through business change and innovations, including efficiency improvements, renewable energy, materials reductions, and other carbon emission elimination strategies.
- **Credible offsets** Signatories must take action to neutralise any remaining emissions with additional, quantifiable, real, permanent, and socially beneficial offsets to achieve net-zero annual carbon emissions by 2040. (The Climate Pledge, n.d.)

Currently, there are 313 companies and organizations who have become signatories of the Climate Pledge. The signatories are organized into different categories such as entertainment facilities, hospitality, health care and services, manufacturing, specialized professional services, apparel, renewable energy equipment, non-profit services and many more. In addition to the cross-industry signatories, the Pledge is supported by the following partners: The Nature Conservancy, We Mean Business, Race to Zero, TED Countdown, Science Based Targets Initiatives (SBTI) and SME Climate Hub. In addition to



the Pledge and community of Signatories, there is the Climate Pledge Fund, which is described as a corporate venture capital fund that invests in companies that can accelerate Amazon's path to meeting The Climate Pledge. As reported on the website, this dedicated investment program—with an initial \$2 billion in funding—will invest in visionary companies whose products and solutions will facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Additional information about the process and commitment indicates that all signatories must map and measure their carbon footprint, and when a signatory is new to this type of measurement, they are supported by leading organizations such as CDP, a non-profit charity that runs the global disclosure system for investors, companies, cities, states, and regions to manage their environmental impacts. Among the signatories are sport related companies such as Brook's Running, who have committed to designing and manufacturing a carbon-neutral shoe (Foutes, 2022).

Example: Sport is very under-represented among the 300+ signatories, with The Climate Pledge Arena (entertainment centre) as one of the exceptions. The arena is home to the Seattle Kraken, the newest NHL (National Hockey League) franchise.

Scientific Frameworks

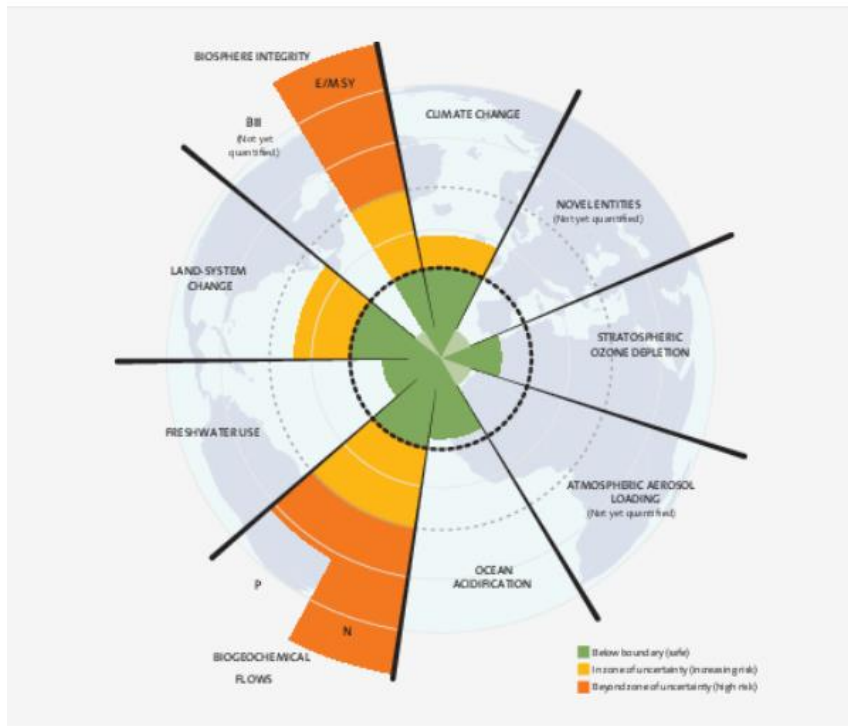
There are different scientific frameworks to examine sustainability at a deeper level and two of these include Planetary Boundaries (Stockholm University, n.d.) and The Doughnut and Doughnut Economics (<https://doughnuteconomics.org/>). The planetary boundaries approach and

concept presents a set of nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come. In 2009, a group of 29 internationally renowned scientists worked together to identify the nine processes that regulate the stability and resilience of the Earth system. The scientists proposed quantitative planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come. (Leal Filho, 2020)

The 9 boundaries and their level of risk can be found in the diagram below.



Figure 4: The 9 boundaries and their level of risk



From Planetary Boundaries, by Stockholm University, n.d. *Stockholm Resilience Centre*. Retrieved on April 28, from <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>

What is important to note is that the planetary boundaries model demonstrates maximum burdens to the environment before risking catastrophic change. Incorporating the social boundaries needed for human life to thrive within the planetary boundary is the direction of the Doughnut Economics approach, which examines planetary boundaries and social foundations. The Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries is a playfully serious approach to framing that challenge, and it acts as a compass for human progress this century. The twelve dimensions of the social foundation are derived from internationally agreed minimum social standards, as identified by the world's governments in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. Between social and planetary boundaries lies an environmentally safe and socially just space in which humanity can thrive. The 12 dimensions of the social foundation include: water, food, health, education, income & work, peace & justice, political voice, social equity, gender equality, housing, networks and energy.

To learn more about the lead researcher Kate Raworth and the Doughnut Economics approach and model, take a look at this platform (<https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>).

Example: the music festival DGTL has used the Doughnut Economics model to assess its sustainability programmes (Akosa, 2020).



The Natural Step and Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development

The Natural Step is a global network of non-profit and benefit organizations that share the same brand, core identity and purpose. The Natural Step has been at the forefront of sustainable development internationally for more than thirty years. Their vision is one of a sustainable society—one in which individuals, communities, businesses, and institutions thrive within nature's limits.

The purpose of The Natural Step International is to accelerate the transition towards a truly sustainable global society. It does this by supporting its members in 10 countries, who engage individuals and organizations to take concrete action towards, and beyond, ecological, social, and economic sustainability. The underlying premise for the work is a scientific, systemic and strategic approach to sustainability as codified in the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development (FSSD).

The framework focuses on the following objectives:

- Empowering individuals—empowering interested people to become effective change agents for sustainability.
- Organizations—creating future-fit organizations and role models for sustainable business and communities.
- Facilitating systems change towards future-fitness—delivering breakthrough results that make whole systems more sustainable.

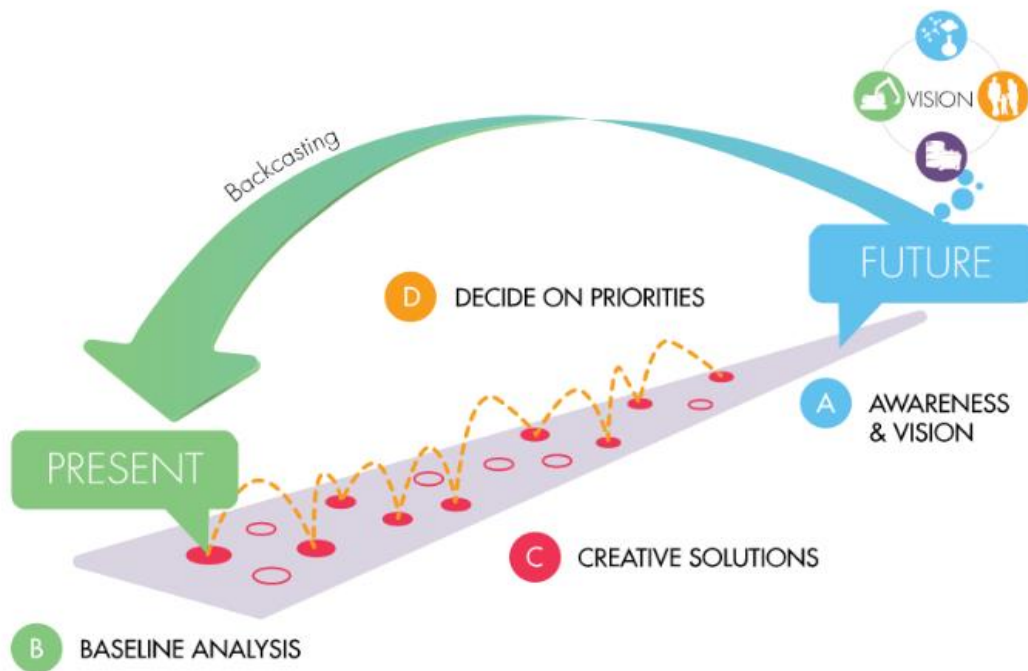
The Sustainability Principles are science-based, necessary, comprehensive, universal, concrete and distinct. Sustainability is defined as when nature is not increasing:

- concentrations of substances from the earth's crust (such as fossil CO₂, heavy metals and minerals);
- concentrations of substances produced by society (such as antibiotics and endocrine disruptors);
- degradation by physical means (such as deforestation and draining of groundwater tables);
- a society with no structural obstacles to people's health, influence, competence, impartiality, and meaning.



To apply the sustainability principles, the following ABCD process is the desired model and encouraged in application:

Figure 5. Accelerating Change



Awareness
Everything starts with awareness. We need to understand how to define sustainability and what it means for individuals, business and other organizations, society, and ultimately the Earth. We use a science-based and 'whole-systems' definition as a firm foundation to build a vision of what success looks like in the future.



Baseline assessment
This step uses the four sustainability principles to conduct a sustainability 'gap analysis' of the major flows and impacts of the organisation to see how its activities are running counter to sustainability principles. This way we assist organisations to identify critical sustainability issues, their business implications, and strategic opportunities for change.



Creative solutions
Now that we have identified the gap between where we are today (current reality) and where we want to go (vision), we can start to think about innovations and solutions. These will bring us step by step closer to a sustainable product, service or organisation. We are clear on what success looks like, and which process we must set up or change in order to get us there.



Devise a plan
What do we need to do, and when should we do it? What are the first steps and "low hanging fruit" that will bring quicker benefits, and what needs longer term planning? Through a set of prioritization questions we can design a pathway that keeps the goal in mind with maximum flexibility and benefits. We make this plan together so you can get started quickly on your path to a sustainable future.

From Accelerating Change, by The Natural Step, n. d., retrieved on April 26 from <https://thenaturalstep.org/approach/>



Example: Nike has been using the Natural Step framework in the late 90s to further embed sustainability into its business operations. This collaboration, which lasted for more than a decade, supported Nike as well in its long-term product innovation strategy (The Natural Step, n.d.).

Existing Standards

International Standards Organization (ISO)

ISO is one of the principal organizations in charge of developing and publishing international standards. This organization defines standards as formulas that describe the evidenced the best way of doing something. Standards can be applied to a range of activities from making a product, managing a process, delivering a service or supplying materials. Standards are developed by experts on the specific subject area. To better understand the purpose of standards, the following list is of examples and their objectives.

- ISO 9001: Quality management (International Organization for Standardization, 2015).
- ISO 14001: Environmental management (International Organization for Standardization, 2015).
- ISO 45001: Health and safety (International Organization for Standardization, 2018).
- ISO 50001: Energy management (International Organization for Standardization, 2018).
- ISO 22200: Food safety (International Organization for Standardization, 2018).
- ISO 27001: IT security (International Organization for Standardization and International Electrotechnical Commission, 2013)

There are specific ISO standards which align with or address the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, Goal 3: Good Health and Well Being is connected to 3036 standards which include standards on medical devices, health informatic, promotion of health and wellbeing in the community and others. Relating to Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, standards pertain to responsible use of resources, city indicators, indicators for smart and resilient cities. Additionally, standards apply to intelligent transport systems, water management and community resilience. Goal 13: Climate Action is addressed through several standards for environmental management systems. Aligned with the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, the ISO 14064 (International Organization for Standardization, 2018) provides specifications for the quantification, monitoring, and



validation of greenhouse gas emissions. ISO 14080 (International Organization for Standardization, 2018) gives organizations a framework to develop consistent, comparable and improved methodologies in the fight against climate change.

Sport organizations and event organizers commonly use ISO 20121 (International Organization for Standardization, 2012), a standard dedicated to sustainable event management. The standard has been developed by sustainability experts from the event industry and launched in 2012. It gives guidelines for the way of working, so as it is not your event that is sustainable but your way of working and collaborating with the different stakeholders.

The benefits of implementing ISO 20121 (International Organization for Standardization, 2012) are varied. One of them can be monetary, such as for Old Trafford (home to football club Arsenal) who saved 25% on their electricity bill by carrying out energy savings audits. Furthermore, professionalization and certification will provide long-term benefits and credibility to the organization.

Example: Since the London 2012 Olympic Games, many sports organizations have become ISO 20121 (International Organization for Standardization, 2012) certified, including Wembley Stadium. It worked for 18 months with their departments on the creation of a sustainability management system that allowed them to track progress against the ISO 20121 requirement.

Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)

GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) is the independent, international organization that helps businesses and other organizations take responsibility for their impacts, by providing them with the global common language to communicate those impacts. They provide the world's most widely used standards for sustainability reporting—the GRI Standards. The development of the GRI Standards is fostered through the collaboration between businesses, investors, policymakers, civil society, labour organizations and other experts of sustainability. As sustainability and particularly reporting on sustainability is becoming more and more important across sectors, it is key to note that the GRI Standards are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect global best practice for sustainability reporting.

The GRI Standards System includes the Universal Standards, Sector Standards and Topic Standards. Any organization can use the GRI Standards as a way to report on the organization's impact in a credible way that is monitored over time and against other organizations reporting or results. The GRI Reporting also allows the organization to assess its own international policies, decision-making, strategies and goals.



In 2016, GRI transitioned from providing guidelines to setting the first global standards for sustainability reporting – the GRI Standards. The Standards continue to be updated and added to, including new Topic Standards on tax (2019) and waste (2020).

Example: Many large sport organizations and businesses, such as Juventus Football Club or sustainable outdoor clothing brand Vaude use the GRI reporting and standards in their companies or club's sustainability reporting. However, the International Sambo Federation (FIAS) proved that the GRI Standard can also be used by small sports organizations when it published its first-ever sustainability report using the GRI reporting standards (Global Sustainability Standards Board, 2016).

Environmental Social Governance Reporting Framework

ESG frameworks are systems for standardizing the reporting and disclosure of ESG metrics. They are often voluntary, but may be required by a certain investor or by regulations in some countries. These frameworks are put together by non-profit organizations, NGOs, business groups, and others. As a result, they vary widely in areas of focus and the metrics they recommend.

There are many ESG frameworks, and following is a non-exhaustive list to provide different examples:

- CDP
- Climate Disclosure Standards Board (CDSB)
- Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi)
- Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB)
- Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD)
- UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI)
- World Economic Forum (WEF) Stakeholder Capitalism Metrics

Looking across the frameworks, it is noted that ESG standards and frameworks were developed independently by many parties, with each framework placing emphasis on different topics and metrics. In addition to ESG frameworks, ESG Ratings measure a business's exposure to environmental, social and governance risks and the handling and managing of these risks. The ratings lead to an ESG performance.



An extensive piece of research on the use of ESG in sport was published in 2021, including sports organizations such as FIFA, Formula 1, Esports Federation and several professional football clubs (like Paris Saint Germain, Manchester City, and AC Milan).

B Corp Certification

B Corporations are for-profit companies certified by the non-profit B Lab for meeting rigorous standards (<https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/>) related to governance, workers (staff and volunteers), community, environment, and the customers of an organization.

Figure 6: 5 pillars of B Corp

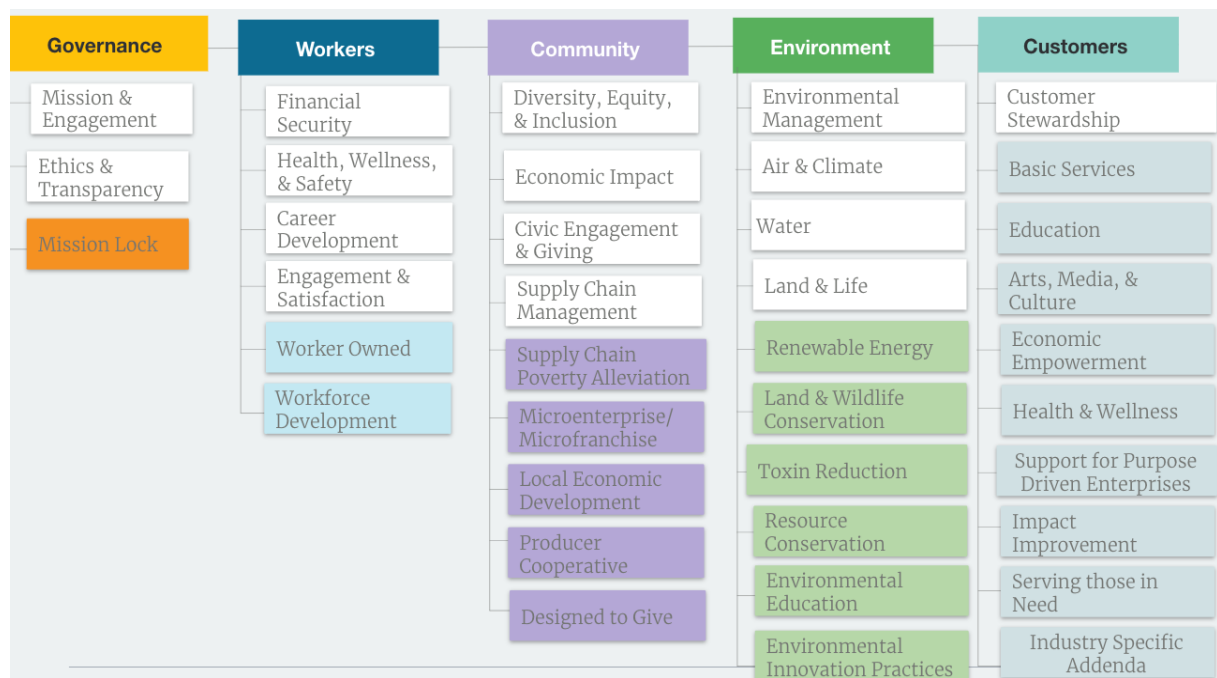


From About us, by B Corp Thailand, n. d., retrieved on May 10, from <https://bcorpthailand.org/about-us/>

The B Lab is the network aiming to transform “the global economy to benefit all people, communities, and the planet” (B Lab Global, n.d.). The vision of the network and movement is to lead to economic systems change to support an inclusive, equitable, and regenerative economy. The B Lab creates standards, policies, tools, and programs that shift the behaviour, culture, and structural underpinnings of capitalism and which concretely works towards the certification of B Corporations which are companies that meet high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.

The B Lab's standards are at the heart of the B Corp movement and lead on the B Corp Certification process as well as policy work at a global level. The B Impact Assessment (BIA) and the respective standards are independently governed by the Standards Advisory Council, curated by B Lab, and continuously reviewed and improved by the community of users and stakeholders. The BIA provides a comprehensive and objective measure of an organization’s positive impact on society and the environment through a set of customized questions that reflect impact indicators, best practices, and outcomes. An organization receives a composite score on a 200-point scale representative of its overall impact on its employees, communities, and the environment. B Corporations “must demonstrate high social and environmental performance by achieving a B Impact score of 80 or above and passing the risk review” (B Lab Global, n.d.).

Figure 7: Measurement of the 5 pillars for B Corp



From B Impact Assessment Structure, by B Impact Assessment, May 20, 2020, from <https://kb.bimpactassessment.net/support/solutions/articles/43000574682-b-impact-assessment-structure>

The BIA recognizes and aligns in many ways with the GRI. Companies are guided via different tools and resources on how to use indicators and GRI topics and disclosures in their BIA assessments and reporting. In fact, the B Lab reports that the BIA content is informed by and references many other social and environmental reporting and performance standards and certifications, noting that alignment and harmonization will continue to occur over time, when relevant and possible.

Example: B Corp is still in its infancy within the sports industry which is largely because many sports organizations (especially in Europe) have the status of a non-profit organization (e.g. IOC, UEFA, FIFA), while B Corp aims at for-profit entities. Sports apparel company Patagonia is probably the most well-known sports brand that obtained B Corp certification. One of the first sport event organizers that is aiming for B Corp certification is the Swiss-French outdoor event organizer OC Sport who worked with The Shift on their ReThink Sport sustainability (<https://www.ocsport.com/sustainability>) programme that includes the objective to become B Corp certified by 2023.



Unit 2.3 Sport Specific Frameworks & Standards

The following section includes frameworks and standards specific to the sport sector.

UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action Framework

The UN Climate Change (UNFCCC) has created an initiative specific to sports organizations and their stakeholders to commit to climate action within the sport movement. This initiative aims at supporting and guiding sports actors in achieving global climate change goals. Sports for Climate aims towards:

- Achieving a clear trajectory for the global sports community to combat climate change, through commitments and partnerships according to verified standards, including measuring, reducing, and reporting greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the well below 2-degree scenario enshrined in the Paris Agreement;
- Using sports as a unifying tool to federate and create solidarity among global citizens for climate action. (UN Climate Change)

Participants in the Sports for Climate Action Initiative will commit to adhere to a set of five principles or the Sports for Climate Action Framework and incorporate them into strategies, policies, and procedures. The Principles are designed to mainstream climate action and will outline actions that, at a minimum, meet fundamental responsibilities in the areas of environmental sustainability and combating climate change. The 5 Principles are described below:

- Principle 1: Undertake systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility.
- Principle 2: Reduce overall climate impact.
- Principle 3: Educate for climate action.
- Principle 4: Promote sustainable and responsible consumption.
- Principle 5: Advocate for climate action through communication.

The hundreds of Sport for Climate Action signatories recognize that sports have a unique power to inspire a wider societal change that embraces a low-carbon future and keeps the planet safe for future generations. As signatories, they also commit to support the goals of the Paris Agreement in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and affirm their commitments to:



- undertake systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility,
- reduce overall climate impact,
- educate for climate action,
- promote sustainable and responsible consumption, and
- advocate for climate action through communication.

In addition to the 5 aforementioned principles and commitments, signatories are required to commit to achieving specific climate goals of halving emissions by 2030 and aiming to achieve net-zero by 2040. To achieve this, the following targets are recommended:

Figure 8: Sports for Climate Action targets and requirements

- One mid-term target to reduce GHG emissions by 50% by 2030 at the latest. 2019 baseline is recommended but signatories should choose the latest year for which data is available.
- One long-term target to reach net zero GHG emissions by 2040
- Targets should be inclusive of scopes 1, 2 and 3 (categories which are material to total emissions and where data availability allows them to be measured sufficiently).
- Organizations for which scope 3 represent 40% or more of total emissions generated by the organization to model Scope 3 emissions and set Scope 3 targets as well.
- Process of Commit, Plan, Proceed and Report will enter into force effective December 2021.

From Sports for Climate Action, May 20, 2020, from <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>

For the sport organizations who successfully adopt the targets, they will join the Race to Zero (Climate Champions, n.d.), a global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, and investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth.

Council for Responsible Sport

The Council for Responsible Sport is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization with a vision of a world where responsibly produced events are the norm. Its mission is to provide objective, independent verification of the socially and environmentally responsible work event organizers are doing and to actively support event organizers who strive to make a difference in their communities.

Since 2007, the Council for Responsible Sport has helped measure and manage the social and environmental impacts of sport events. Council for Responsible Sport certified events are some of the world's leading examples of responsible sport in action.

The Council offers two collections of standardized good practice guidance, one for individual events and the other for organizations that host many events. Both are based on a proven framework that relates directly to the production and delivery of sporting events.

Designed to equally balance elements of social, environmental and economic responsibility, the Responsible Sport Standards are organized into five broad categories of action: planning and communications, procurement, resource management, access, and equity and community legacy.

Figure 9: Responsible Sport Standards



From The Council for Responsible Sport offers a framework to help you deliver purposeful events that go above and beyond the bottom line, by Council for Responsible Sport, from <https://www.councilforresponsiblesport.org/assess-certify>

Sport-hosting entities may pursue certification of either an individual event or an entire organization, or venue. To do so, they enrol in the certification program, then use the custom ReScore–Sport’s Responsibility Scorecard application to report according to the Responsible Sport Standards (Responsible Sport Standards for Events, version 4.2 for single events, and Responsible Sport Standards for Organizations, version 1, for organizations or venues). The application then undergoes a thorough verification process, including an on-site visit to ensure the credibility and accuracy of the self-reporting.

Figure 10: ReScore is a cloud based application helping users achieve responsible event standards.



From ReScore–Sport’s, by Council for Responsible Sport, from <https://www.councilforresponsiblesport.org/rescore>

USA Environmental Protection Agency: Green Sports

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promotes the greening of sports across the sector from events, stadiums, etcetera. The EPA platform defines sustainability on a simple principle: everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.

Sustainability contributes to environmental benefits such as:

- Conserving natural resources helps to preserve biodiversity.
- Protecting and improving air and water quality.
- Reducing waste streams.



The platform has various calculators and models (<https://www.epa.gov>) which measure energy, greenhouse gases, wastes, and other elements. Specific to sport, the EPA Green Sports Scorecard highlights the following principles and sustainability strategies:

- increasing energy efficiency,
- renewable energy,
- water conservation,
- reducing waste,
- safer chemicals, and
- increasing environmental awareness.

The platform also includes a list and additional resources on Green Sports Success Stories where the community can learn from many examples:

Figure 11: Green Sports Success Stories

EPA Success Stories

Click the column heading for the column that you want to sort.

Title	Stadiums, Venues, Events	Professional Leagues	Collegiate	Type of Sport
New York Mets - Citi Field Environmental Assessment: MOU Annual Report (PDF) (7 pp, 347 K, About PDF) [Case study]. August 28, 2015.	*	*		Baseball
MetLife Stadium (formerly New Meadowlands Stadium) Environmental Assessment: MOU Annual Report [Case study]. March 20, 2013.	*	*		Football
NHL Green launches Hat Tricks for Trees EXIT [Press release]. January 22, 2013.		*		Hockey
Three Boston-area Businesses Honored for Food Waste Recycling Efforts on America Recycles Day [Press Release]. November 15, 2012.	*			General
NASCAR and EPA Partner on Green Initiatives [Press Release]. May 21, 2012.		*		Motorsport
Brandon's Blog: A Sustainable Future EXIT [Blog entry]. March 6, 2012.			*	General

From Green Sports Success Stories, USA Environmental Protection Agency, from <https://www.epa.gov/green-sports/green-sports-success-stories>

BASIS Sustainable Sport Principles

BASIS (the British Association for Sustainable Sport) provides expert help to sport clubs, venues, and governing bodies for over a decade by helping them to understand their



impacts, set targets and implement processes to improve their environmental performance. The vision of BASIS is to harness the power of sport to build a sustainable future, and their mission is to empower sports in the UK to become a world leader in sustainability with the urgency dictated by science.

To provide a structure against which sustainability performance can be managed and assessed, BASIS uses twelve principles which are categorised into the three related pillars of environmental responsibility, social progress, and economic activity. Environmental responsibility includes the following sub-categories:

- **Energy and emissions:** To minimise greenhouse gas emissions from all sources including buildings, equipment, and other operational sources, including emissions from non-energy sources such as refrigeration.
- **Waste management:** To minimise the generation of waste. All unavoidable waste to be reused, recycled or recovered with no waste sent for incineration or landfill.
- **Water and effluents:** To use water efficiently and effectively, to dispose of wastewater appropriately, avoiding watercourse pollution and to design buildings and hard landscaping surfaces to avoid local issues such as flooding.
- **Materials and chemicals:** To use sustainable, healthy, non-toxic products and raw materials with low embodied energy which are sourced locally and made from reusable, recyclable or recycled resources.
- **Transport and travel:** To minimise the impacts of transport and travel by reducing journeys and using low and zero-carbon transport and travel options.
- **Food and drink:** To reduce the impact of food and drink production, use and disposal by choosing local, seasonal, high welfare and organic produce; minimising waste and, where waste is unavoidable, segregating and disposing of waste in a positive- or low-impact way; and redistributing unused food and drink where possible.
- **Biodiversity and habitats:** To encourage and protect biodiversity and wildlife habitats through appropriate land use, management, and integration into the built environment.

The social progress pillar includes the following sub-categories:

- **Accessibility and equality:** To provide facilities and services that are physically accessible to all and to provide a welcoming atmosphere to all with knowledgeable, confident staff.

- **Healthy options:** To give opportunities to staff, fans and other visitors to improve their physical and mental well-being, including healthy food options and opportunities for active travel.
- **Engagement and education:** To engage with, and respond to the needs of, your communities of interest at all scales from residents to global fan bases. This includes groups such as disabled spectators.

The economic pillar includes the following sub-categories:

- **Procurement and employment:** To engage with, and respond to the needs of, your communities of interest at all scales from residents to global fan bases. This includes groups such as disabled spectators.
- **Economy and community:** To support and have positive impacts on the local economy and local community, including community engagement.

The BASIS Sustainability scheme can be used to assess the facilities of community clubs as well as professional venues and has been tested by a range of venues including some of the biggest sports venues in the United Kingdom. BASIS has assessed sports including football, rugby, cricket, tennis, horse racing and sailing. All can attain recognition for their achievements through the scheme.

Sustainable Sport Index

The Sustainable Sport Index is an industry-wide initiative to understand the collective environmental and social impacts of the sports industry. The Index resulted from a gap in the exchange and practicality of having a database to share what is being done in the sport industry and to understand the industry's impact on society and the natural environment.

The resulting collective effort is this first of its kind report for the sport industry. Collaborating with countless industry professionals and academics, it concluded with a comprehensive survey to gather data in areas including energy, water, waste, carbon emissions, cleaning, staff engagement, policies, food and beverage, transportation, communications, and wellness and accessibility. The aim is that the report becomes the first of many annual Sustainable Sport Indexes, providing long-term value to the industry while highlighting existing team and venue best practices and opportunities for improvement.

The inaugural Sustainable Sport Index 2021 Benchmarking Report focuses on the US sports industry, with participants from across the states. The report includes a series of key findings as well as reflections from the overall industry which emphasise that there has been an incredible embrace of sustainability in a relatively short span of time since



this issue has infiltrated the sports industry. The team behind the index will continue to collect and grow the data set to be able to provide the industry a baseline from which to measure and evaluate progress.

Figure 12



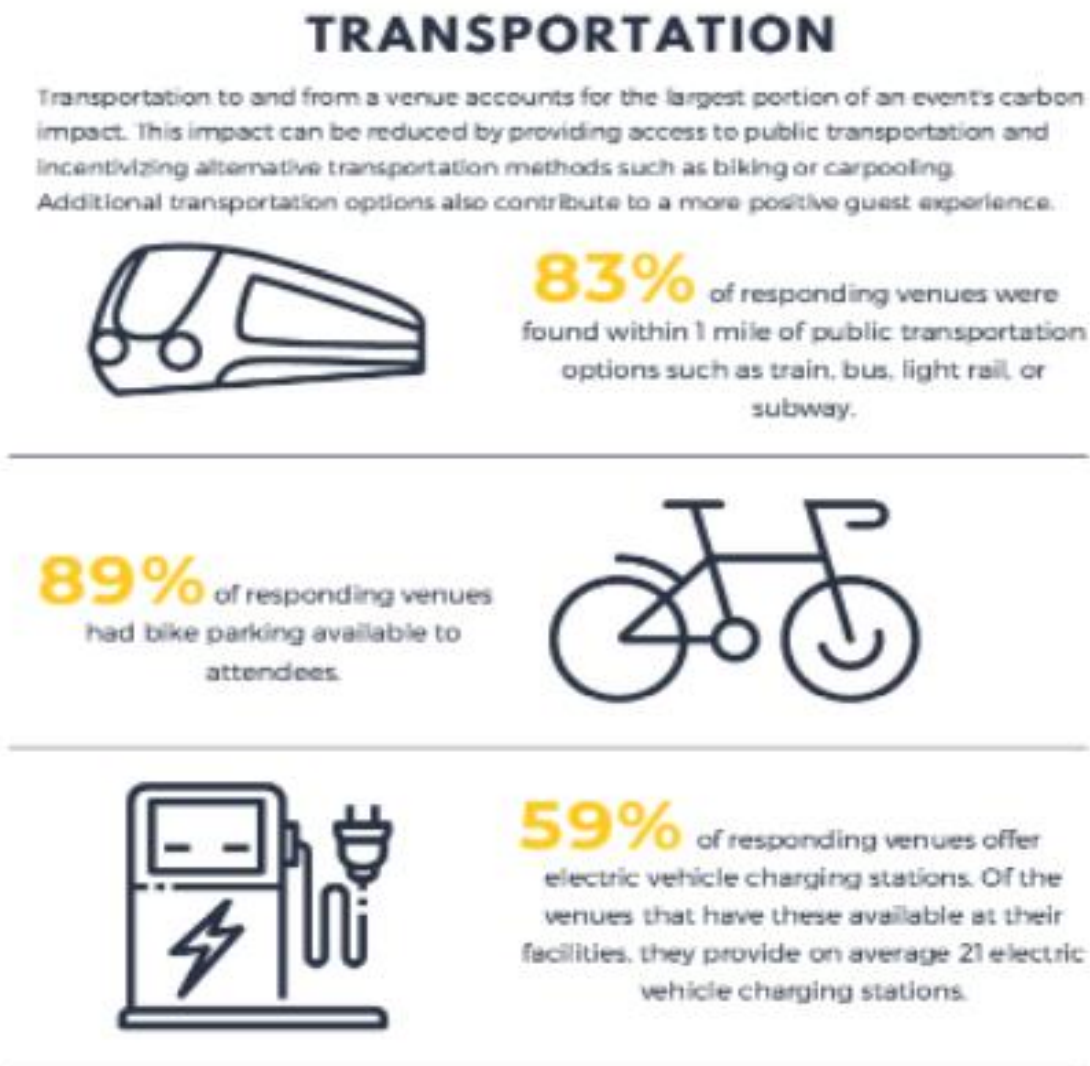
From Sustainable Sport Index 2021 Benchmark Report, Sustainable Sport Index.

Regarding the key findings, the report indicates that facilities see value in sustainability certification with sixty-five percent (65%) of responding facilities having achieved some type of sustainability-related certification, with the most common certifications being Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and WELL Building. Another key finding relating to carbon offsetting found that only 16.67% of facilities and teams track their carbon emissions, with just one team offsetting emissions. Relating to those responsible for sustainability initiatives or strategies within sport organizations, the report indicates that thirty-eight percent (38%) of teams have a dedicated sustainability or community focused position on staff. Of those that responded otherwise, another thirty-eight percent (38%) are considering adding this position in the near future. Similarly, 56.25% of responding facilities have a staff position dedicated to diversity and equity.



Concerning transportation, which is significant for events as transportation to and from a venue accounts for the largest portion of an event's carbon impact, the report included the following findings:

Figure 13: Transportation



TRANSIT PROGRAMS

28.5% of responding teams provide transportation incentives for fans or staff to support sustainability such as rewards for biking or carpooling to work or games.

Incentives include:

- "Bike to the Game" days where fans can win items via raffle
- Free shuttles for fans with baseball tickets between the Stadium and several mass transportation hubs located throughout the city.
- Deeply discounted tickets and free subway rides home from the stadium on certain game days throughout the year.

From Sustainable Sport Index 2021 Benchmark Report, Sustainable Sport Index.



Commonwealth Sport & SDG Indicators

The Commonwealth is leading global efforts to more effectively measure the contribution that sport policies and programmes make to these agreed global goals.

Their work, including toolkits, indicators, and reports aim to help countries and sporting bodies to assess if the positive contribution of sport to society is being realised and better target future strategy and investment. It also helps to develop future strategy and investment in sport to be evidence-based and data driven.

The commonwealth is committed to improving how countries and sporting bodies plan, monitor and evaluate the contribution sport makes to society and is joined by the wider international community which is also interested in using a set of common measures, or indicators, to monitor and evaluate the contribution of sport, physical education and physical activity to the SDGs.

Among their different reports produced are several on key indicators at different levels which can help monitor the contribution of sport to areas such as:

- good health (SDG 3)
- quality education (SDG 4)
- gender equality (SDG 5)
- economic growth and decent work for all (SDG 8)
- reducing inequality (SDG10)
- sustainable consumption and environmental sustainability (SDG 12 and 13)
- safeguarding athletes and participants from abuse and violence (SDG 5 and 16)
- building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions (SDG16)

Laureus Sport for Good Environmental Action Toolkit

The Laureus Sport for Good Environmental Action Toolkit is designed for sport, for development organizations who are looking for guidance on operating more sustainably, being more responsible for their environmental impact and expanding on their understanding and work around the sustainable development goals, specifically those connected to protecting the environment.



The opportunities enclosed in this Guide are consistent with the recommendations of the Conference of the Parties 2015 Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action Framework.

The guide places emphasis on 7 SDGs connected to the environment, namely those specifically linked to protecting the planet. These are SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, and SDG 15.

Figure 14: Sport for Good Environmental Action Toolkit

GETTING STARTED

The first step in becoming a more environmentally sustainable organisation is to identify how the organisation's actions and operations impact the natural environment and to minimize that impact.

Questions to ask when determining how your organisation may be negatively impacting the environment include:

- ▶ How much waste are we producing? Can the waste be reduced, recycled, or composted?
- ▶ Why do we produce so much waste? Could we cut down on how much we purchase or consume? What kind of packaging do our deliveries come in?
- ▶ Where do we get our energy?
- ▶ How much energy do we use? Are there ways to reduce our energy use?

- ▶ How much water do we use? Are there ways to reduce our water use?
- ▶ How do people get to our facility? Are there opportunities to leverage public transit options (if safe and available) or car pooling?
- ▶ What natural features exist on our site? (e.g. plant life, animals, river or stream, etc.) What can we do to protect the nature that exists here? (e.g. by reducing or eliminating pesticide use or by cleaning up river banks, or by planting native flora)

These questions are intended to get you started, but this list is not extensive. There are countless opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint.

From Sport for Good Environmental Action Toolkit, Laureus Sport for Good, from <https://laureusuk.blob.core.windows.net/laureus/laureus/media/laureus/news/2021/environmental-action-toolkit.pdf>

After the 'getting started', organizations are guided through the following sections:

- launching a green team,
- opportunities to implement sustainable practices,
- collective action,
- individual action,
- resources for further learning.

Within the resource section, the following list of tools to support an organization's sustainability efforts included:

- Sport Club Energy Calculator, by Sport England
- Travel Emissions Calculator, by City of Eugene (this works for the USA, Canada, and international events)
- Carbon Emissions Calculator, by Resurgence
- The Sport Ecology Group's Research Summaries, monthly summaries of the latest research in sport sustainability



Unit 2.4 A step-by-step approach to meet an international standard

How to start

Sport (event) organizers have a variety of standards and frameworks at their disposal to support their sustainable development, but which of these standards is best depends on several factors. Below is a short, not exhaustive, listing of some important factors for choosing which standard to adopt.

- Legal status: The management standard of B Corp is developed for for-profit organizations, hence excludes non-profit sports organizations. However, the holistic and business-driven approach of B Corp could still be beneficial for non-profit sports entities
- Certification: Is the organisation seeking to become certified for its sustainability efforts? ISO-certification is widely recognised and provides, especially for event organizers, a solid base.
- Sponsors/partners: If an organization is or wants to be associated with the United Nations, it should consider adopting its frameworks. Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals increasingly become a “language” for sport organizations to engage with their sponsors.
- Geographic location: Some standards have a geographical focus or reach, which should be considered when reflecting on the validity of a standard.

Available resources

Several “toolkits” are publicly available for sports organizations to help them reflect on the use of standards, read case studies from other organizations, and get access to concrete tools to implement a standard. Examples include:

- www.sustainability.sport
- www.sustainabilitytoolbox.com
- www.eventsustainability.com/

In addition, industry networks such as Sport and Sustainability International (<https://www.sportsustainability.org/>), Green Sports Alliance and Sustainable Events Alliance regularly organize webinars or seminars on the subject.



The remainder of this unit will describe in more detail some practical steps that sports organisations can take towards the use of GRI (reporting) or B Corp (management standard).

Global Reporting Initiative

One of the most common international standards for reporting on sustainability is the Global Reporting Initiative, which has been discussed earlier in this course.

An organisation that seeks to comply with the GRI standards can follow five recurring phases.

Figure 15: The 5 phases of GRI



Source: Own elaboration

1) **Prepare:** Plan the reporting process

Examples of activities:

- Designate a Sustainability Coordinator.
- Identify and collect existing sustainability practices.
- Write the 'Business Case' for sustainability for the organization.
- Brainstorm on potential sustainability aspects¹.

¹ The word 'Aspect' is used in the GRI guidelines to refer to any possible sustainability subject.



2) **Connect:** Collect input from key stakeholders

Examples of activities:

- Identify and prioritise the (key) event stakeholders.
- Dialogue with key stakeholders on relevant sustainability aspects.

3) **Define:** Decide on report content

Examples of activities:

- Prioritise sustainability aspects by creating a Materiality Matrix.
- Select and validate a set of relevant sustainability aspects that will be prioritised by the organization to be measured and managed.

4) **Monitor:** Build the report

Examples of activities:

- Define performance indicators for sustainability aspects.
- Agree on a (feasible) data collection method and targets.
- On-site data collection (at the pilot event) on agreed performance indicators.

5) **Report:** Check and communicate

Examples of activities:

- Develop a communication plan.
- Write and publish the event's Sustainability report.
- Develop or review Sustainability Guidelines and related documents.

To meet the GRI standard, an organization will need to report according to a predefined structure. UEFA complies to these criteria in its annual sustainability report (see figure)



Figure 16: UEFA Sustainability Reporting Index

DISCLOSURE	SECTION	SUBSECTION/REPORT (P) (C)	COVERAGE	SDG TARGETS
Material topics¹⁴⁸				
GRI 201: Economic performance 2016				
201-1 Direct economic value generated and distributed	About the report	RESPECT UEFA Football and Social Responsibility Report 2017/18	●	9.1
GRI 205: Anti-corruption 2016				
205-2 Communication and training about anti-corruption policies and procedures	Anti-match-fixing unit	(40-43)	●	16.5
GRI 305: Emissions 2016				
305-3 Other indirect (Scope 3) GHG emissions	Environment	(152)	●	13.1
GRI 306: Effluents and waste 2016				
306-2 Waste by type and disposal method	Facility management	(34)	●	12.5
GRI 401: Employment 2016				
401-1 New employee hires and employee turnover	Human resources	(38)	☺	5.1
GRI 404: Training and education 2016				
404-2 Programmes for upgrading employee skills and transition assistance programmes	Human resources	(37-38)	●	8.2

From UEFA Football and Social Responsibility Report 2019/2020, by UEFA, 2020, retrieved on April 26 from https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0267-11e9abcc6e27-325df02d0d3f-1000/uefa_fsr_report_19-20_eng_v10.pdf

Note that an independent audit of the sustainability report is required for GRI. To claim that, a report has been prepared in accordance with the GRI standard can be done at different levels. For more details, consult the GRI website.

B Corp Certification

B Corp is a widespread certification of corporations in the United States and going through an explosive growth in Europe. Even though the certification is hardly used within sport, it is still considered as one of the most holistic and relevant future certifications for for-profit sport entities.

The three key pillars for B Corp certification are:

- 1) social and environmental performance
- 2) legal accountability
- 3) public transparency

A sport organization needs to meet the requirements on all three pillars to obtain B Corp certification. The remainder of this paragraph looks in more detail at each of the pillars.

1) Social and environmental performance



To qualify for certification, the organization must achieve a minimum score of 80 out of 200 points on the B Impact Assessment (BIA). The BIA is the starting point to become a B Corp by surveying the overall impact of a company on its workers, community, customers, and environment. The BIA adapts its questions according to the size and field of the organization assessed.

2) Legal accountability

The second element is an assessment of the governance model and practices of an organization. The required governance model ensures for B Corps that their Board of Directors act in the best interests of both the company and the society. B Corp organizations are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on all their stakeholders by incorporating this dimension into their statutes to “lock” the organizations' mission. It ensures that the organization will remain legally accountable to all its stakeholders—workers, communities, customers, suppliers, and the environment—and not just to shareholders. This practice differs from common practices that aim exclusively to maximise shareholder value.

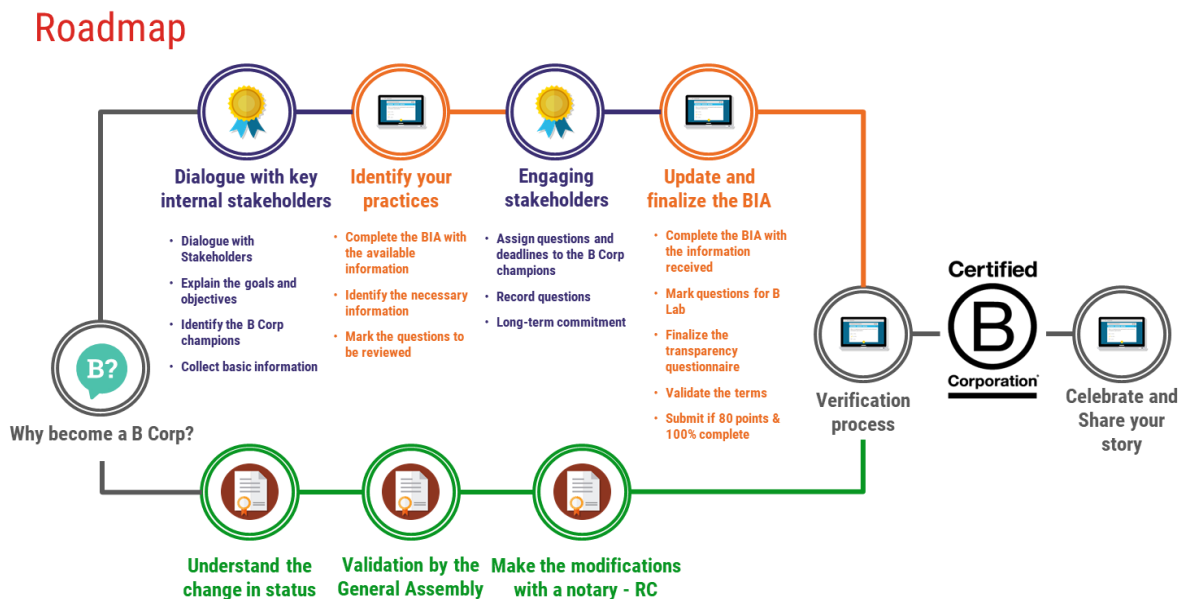
3) Public transparency

A final requirement for certified B Corps is to publicly disclose their full BIA rating and score by category. Beyond the BIA score, this transparency also includes the recognition of potentially sensitive industries, practices, sanctions, and outcomes in which a company or its partners may be involved.

A summary roadmap towards B Corp certification is shown below.



Figure 17: B Corp certification roadmap



From Is B Corp certification right for your business? Sustainable Business Guide, retrieved on May 20, <https://sustainable-business.guide/2022/02/23/is-b-corp-certification-right-for-your-business/>

To maintain the certification, B Corps must update their BIA and verify their revised rating on a three-year cycle.

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