

Module 3. Engaging fans and athletes in sustainability

Unit 3.1 Engaging football fans and supporters in sustainability

Introduction

As recognised by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2017), sport organisations and events have an inherent advantage and duty in promoting sustainable behaviours by leveraging sport fans and participants' connection with sport (Ottman, 2011; Sartore-Baldwin and McCullough, 2018; Sartore-Baldwin *et al.*, 2017; Trail and McCullough, 2018). For example, sport organisations and events have introduced various environmental sustainability initiatives, ranging from preliminary efforts of recycling programmes to more advanced programmes focusing on offsetting carbon emissions (McCullough *et al.*, 2016). These initial steps have focused on waste reduction and more sustainable procurement. Mallen *et al.* (2010) noted that as event organisers progress, they increase the sophistication of initiatives and engage participants or fans more effectively to further reduce the event's environmental impact by, for example, promoting sustainable behaviours when travelling to the event and communications on how to dispose of waste properly during the event. Initial research has demonstrated the challenges of engaging sport participants using sustainability campaigns and getting participants to improve their sustainability behaviours both during their sport participation or at home (Brymer *et al.*, 2009; Dawson *et al.*, 2011).

According to David Goldblatt's *Playing Against the Clock: Global Sport, the Climate Emergency and the Case for Rapid Change* (2020), global football's carbon footprint is massive as the number of mega sport events are responsible for massive levels of aviation, carbon heavy stadium construction, and mountains of unrecycled rubbish. Goldblatt (2020) informs "Perhaps the biggest challenge for global sport is dealing with the carbon emissions from spectator attendance, especially at international events, which generate huge amounts of air traffic" (p. 18). He provided an example with UEFA, at the 2016 Euros, where they launched a campaign and app that would allow fans to offset their own carbon emissions when attending the tournament; however, the reception by fans and supporters was lower than expected.



His research illuminates the effects of climate change on the sport itself, with games being cancelled due to intense rain, and, from the data, he notes that English football, a game not unused to rainy playing conditions, saw more than twenty football league fixtures cancelled in the 2015/16 season. This kind of weather doesn't only affect professional sport, but amateur and grassroots sport as well. In England in 2014, the average grassroots pitch lost five weeks per season to bad weather, and a third of these pitches lost between two and three months in a season. Based on his research, he predicts that "of the 92 league teams in England, almost one in four, can expect partial or total annual flooding of their stadiums by 2050" (Goldblatt, 2020, p. 9). All of these stats and findings demonstrate how fans, supporters and patrons, who—on one hand—contribute to the game's global footprint through their travel, consumption and behaviours before, during and after the games, and who—on the other—will be directly impacted when their teams will not be able to play due to the impact of climate change.

However, when examining the growing number of initiatives, alliances, projects led by fans, teams, leagues, and supporters, it is clear that football fans and supporters, from grassroots to professional levels, recognise their strength in numbers and that they too have a role in addressing sports' impact on climate change. This unit will explore how football fans and supporters are engaging in environmental sustainability.

Background

To understand fans and supporters' engagement with sustainability, it is important to note the uniqueness of the sports industry. The sport industry is unique in that it strives to sell an emotional experience that comes along with the drama of a sporting event. Sport professionals working for a sports club, league or event aim to sell tickets for an experience which is created irrespective of the outcome. The larger the sport event, the more layers that are included (for example, the pre-game festivities, the tailgating, concessions, etc.), and with each layer comes the environmental impacts (McCullough and Kellison, 2018). The consumers of these events are the fans, spectators or patrons who are both part of the problem and the solution; it is their consumption and behavioural patterns in and around the sport event which increase the carbon footprint of the sporting event, while it is also their decisions, actions, support, and activations, which are called on by the sport organisation, club or league, when they are aiming to launch a sustainability measure or do things in a more environmentally sustainable way. There is a struggle for fans and spectators to strike a balance between preserving the natural environment and the consumption of sport, as both participants and spectators (Sartore-Baldwin *et al.*, 2017).

According to the FIFA Football landscape, there are five billion football fans around the world, with Latin America, the Middle East and Africa representing the largest fan bases (The Football Landscape, 2021). These fans will very often support their national team,



their local club, a ‘world’ club, and, sometimes, even a particular player. The term fan refers to individuals who have a special taste or affection for celebrities, a sport, a sports team. The European Club Association (ECA), in its study *Fan of the Future: Defining Modern Football Fandom* (2020), defined a football fan as anyone expressing an interest in football. Fans can also be referred to as supporters. Hourcade (2010) distinguished four types of supporters: classic supporters, traditional or official supporters' associations, autonomous supporters and hooligans, ‘hools’ or independents. Sport sociologists examine ‘supporterism’ and the motivations for becoming a fan or supporter and investing one’s time, energy and resources into the role. Research reveals this concept of a supporter/‘supporterism’ is associated with the perspective of social identity, and this construction of identification with a team is multidimensional (Bernache-Assollant, 2010).

The fluid fan concept is becoming more known in the discussions about fan groups and behaviours. The ‘fluid fan’ was introduced by research from the Sports Innovation Lab, and it is defined as being very distinct and different from your die-hard traditional fans. The fluid fans are open to change, empowered to choose, and are continuously evolving. They move from one form of entertainment to another. They consume sports media and content in shorter bursts of interest instead of longer, committed periods of ritualistic spectatorship. For sport businesses, it is important to note that these fluid fans are disrupting the traditional ways sports and entertainment businesses make money and require a different approach.

Figure 1. Different types of fans

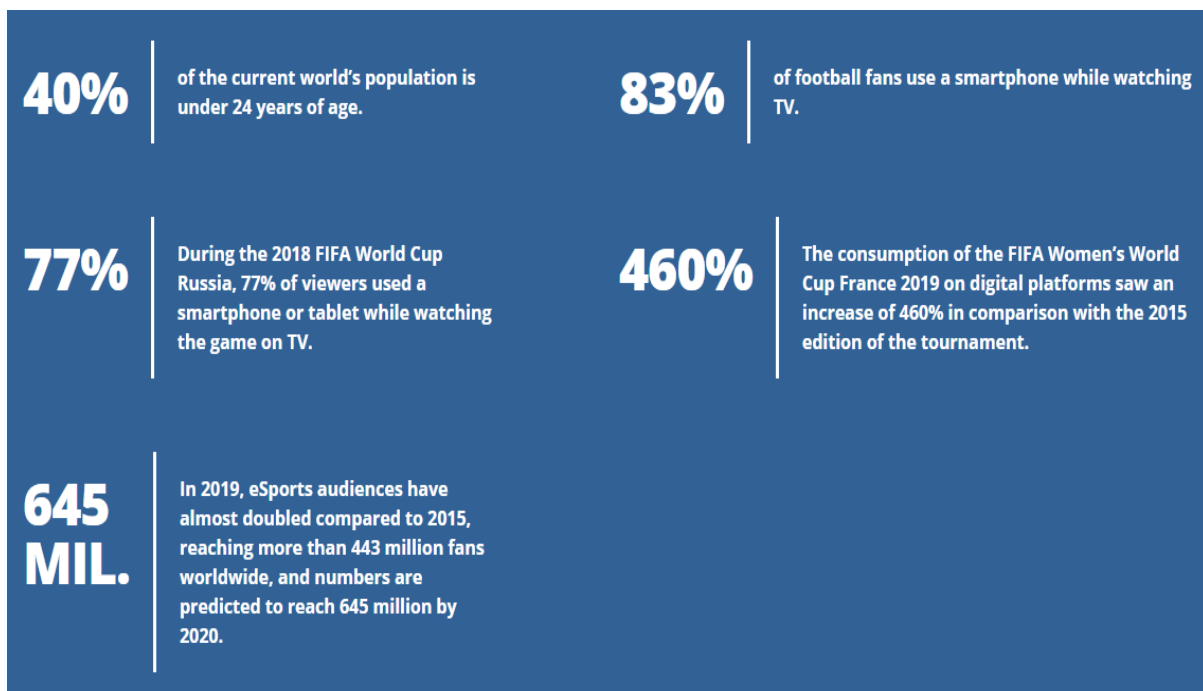
Age of the Local Fan ca. 1850s - 1950s	Age of the Global Fan ca. 1950s - 2020	Age of the Fluid Fan ca. 2020 - Future
Supports Local Team	Supports Global Teams	Changes Allegiances
Radio/Newspaper/TV	Satellite/Cable/OTT	Transmedia
Local Fan Communities	Global Fan Communities	Digital Fan Communities
Consumer	Consumer	Consumer/Creator
Follows Teams	Follows Teams/Leagues	Follows Players
Prioritizes Winning	Prioritizes Winning	Prioritizes Values
Fixed Identity	Fixed Identity	Contextual Identity

Source: Sports Innovation Lab, 2020, p. 5.



It should be noted that, although a lot of the figures, research and stats come from men’s football, women’s football is experiencing remarkable growth across different continents, notably in Europe and North America. There has been a growth in both participation and interest from fans and spectators, who are laying the foundation for higher commercial returns. The FIFA report indicates that digital technologies are changing the way fans engage with football, experience the game and, overall, how they change their habits. The stats below provide examples of how football fans are consuming, experiencing, and engaging with the game.

Figure 2. Change in the habits of football fans



Source: FIFA, 2021, <https://fifa.fans/3yteShM>.

The report also touches on an increased awareness of and a concrete commitment to sustainability and social responsibility that are on the agenda of football stakeholders globally. Football stakeholders globally also includes the 5 billion fans, who, according to different surveys and reports, are also interested in minimising the environmental impact of football events, to promote safe sport and to maximise the positive influence of football on people and communities around the world. This is also demonstrated through the many social activations around football which aim to remove the discrimination and inequalities that exist around the game. These types of campaigns, such as UEFA’s #EqualPlay campaign, encourage and involve fans to fight against discrimination and to be involved in local activations to also ensure that all people, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to access and enjoy the game. As seen in a visual from the UEFA 2020/2021, the campaign led to many outputs, one of which was the fact that

over 3.48 million people (fans and supporters) shared their signatures on social media in support of the #EqualPlay campaign and commitment to fighting the various types of discriminations in football.

Figure 3. Equality and inclusion policy



Source: UEFA, 2020, p. 22.

This is only one example of many social activities around football that involve fans and supporters to make the game a more welcoming and inclusive space for all. There are many examples of clubs, leagues and federations; in fact, there are entire networks devoted to bringing these stakeholders together to share their best practices on how to best promote and position football as a tool for social development. For example, the European Football Development Network consists of professional football clubs, leagues and FAs that are committed to their communities and social responsibilities and have the passion to cooperate and engage on a European level. The network aims to promote the power of football as a tool for social development and support the efforts of the network members in their initiatives to use football to reach out to various target groups in their communities. This creates a collaborative environment for knowledge sharing, in order to develop a diversity of training methods that will directly benefit communities throughout



Europe. Within this network, there is a specific focus on fan involvement and fan support, with examples from across leagues. Some existing fan supporter networks come together to focus on more specific topics within football and social responsibility, such as the FARE network based in the UK. The FARE network stands for Football Against Racism in Europe and is an umbrella organisation that brings together individuals, informal groups and organisations driven to combat inequality in football and use the sport as a means for social change. The majority of these informal groups and individuals are fans and supporters who want to ensure that not only their club or league combats inequalities, but that football at all levels takes on more social responsibility.

Fan and supporter structures

Fans and supporters organise themselves differently around the world. As a global sport, there are many ways in which a fan or supporter can cheer on and support his/her/their team. Research on supporters' associations find that they have a significant social role, both in the world of football and in local society (Cleland *et al.*, 2018). In particular, they promote social integration by offering, for example, a structured frame, a social network, and meeting places.

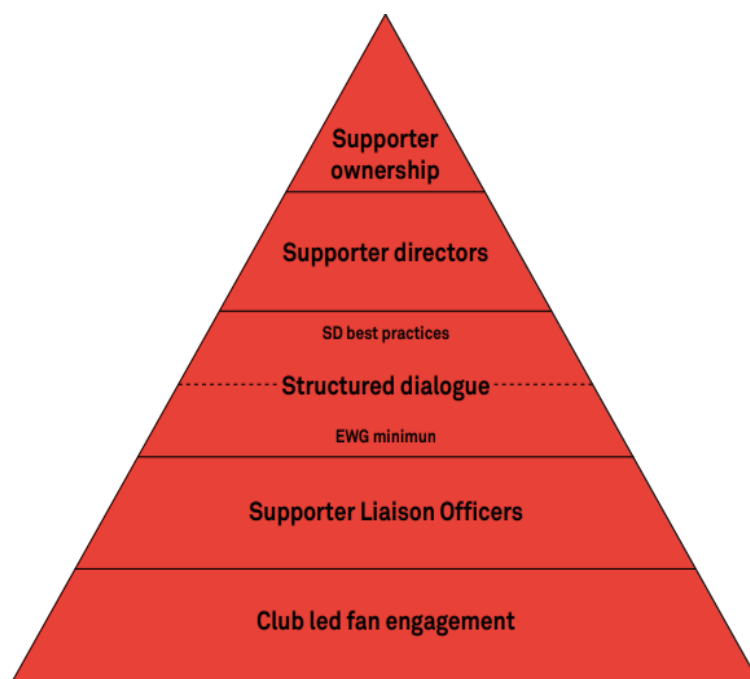
Beyond the experience in the stadiums, these associations provide several other activities such as serving as interlocutors for leaders, setting up educational programmes for youth and children or marginalised groups, co-organising socio-cultural activities, supporting campaigns and relating to or cooperating with the supporters' liaison officer of their respective clubs.

Importantly, football and other sports in the sport industry have significantly moved away from being a pastime to becoming a business, as a result of a trend towards sport spectating, changing technologies, increasing competition and professionalisation of sport management. A majority of research agrees that the source of this shift would have its origin in the commercialisation of the sport (Robinson, 2016). The question on fans/supporters and their role in the commercialisation of the game is interesting and has led to many discussions and debates amongst fan and supporter groups and alliances. For example, the Football Supporters Association (FSA) is the democratic, representative body for supporters in England and Wales. Their membership includes all fans, affiliate membership for supporter groups, and associate membership such as regional groups. They are the leading advocates for supporter ownership, better fan engagement, cheaper ticket prices, the choice to stand at the match, protecting fan rights, good governance, diversity, and all types of fan empowerment. Amongst the many topics on which the FSA concentrates, there is the opposition to the European Super League, and, through their partnership with Pledgeball, they aim to tackle the climate crisis and improve the practices for matchgoing fans (Pledgeball, n.d.).



Another major structure for football fans and supporters in Europe is the Football Supporters Europe (FSE), who identify themselves as the democratic voice of European football fans. Through collective action, solidarity and democracy, the group is committed to their belief that fans are entitled to watch their team in a safe environment—whatever their background is—, enjoy the same freedoms as the general public, and have a bigger say on how the game is run. They also work towards a more equal, competitive, and sustainable football—one that works for everybody, not just a selected few. With fan and supporter members in over 50 UEFA countries, FSE represents millions of fans and their interests. The pyramid below depicts the different types and levels of fan structures.

Figure 4. Types and levels of fan structures



Source: Supporters direct, n. d., p. 5.

The last example of a fan and supporter network is Supporters Direct Europe or SD Europe. They are interested in the sustainable development of the game, and this includes football’s relationship with and impact on the natural environment. In fact, they recently added sustainability as one of their organisational principles. With their motto for a Greener Football, SD Europe is focused on developing its own environmental sustainability policies and strategies, and then, in the next step, supporting its members to do the same. The SD Europe’s report called *Clean Sheet: SD Europe’s Path To Sustainability* details different cases of best practices around football and sustainability at the club and local level where fans and supporters are involved.

Fan and supporter activism



It has been discussed that fans and supporters have power through numbers and working together collectively. Supporters organise political movements and create associations to challenge and influence various aspects of football. The multiple studies of historians and sociologists of sport, such as those of Cleland *et al.* (2018), find that supporters' associations have multiplied since the 1980s and that the activism of fan groups across Europe is growing. In his analysis, Doidge (2015) reports that fans use different types of activations and mobilisation to protest or to ensure their voices are heard and listened to. These mobilisations are visible in several forms. On the one hand, in stadiums and on the perimeter of sports venues by flags, banners, boycotts of presence (e.g., match without supporters), strikes of songs and encouragement, communication campaigns. On the other hand, in the public sphere; these demands are revealed as street manifestations, positions in public debate, the creation and development of legal actions, workshops, political lobbying, petitions, etc. According to Basson and Lestrelin (2014), these activities tend towards mobilising collective action. What is also important to consider is the interconnectedness of European football, as it allows fans to be constantly aware of what is happening on the continent and to share what works/what doesn't and why with others across countries.

Fans and environmental awareness

Fans and supporters are becoming more and more interested and aware about climate change and its implications on sports, as well as about sports and its impact on climate change. There is not a disconnection of fans and supporters with the sport they love and the natural environment. This is demonstrated through research and fan surveys indicating fans' level of awareness of various environmental and climate related challenges, but also through paying attention to clubs, leagues and federations which are placing environmental sustainability as key pillars and in communication and activation campaigns. For example, Germany's bid to host Euros 2024 was very focused on the sustainability of all aspects of the game and inclusion of fans and impact on the local communities. In the bid book, the proposal includes a range of technological sustainability projects, all outlined within the greater DFB sustainability concept. These projects include the development of eco-friendly transport systems, free use of public transport networks for fans, the introduction of a systematic energy management system in all stadiums and the use of 100 % renewable energy.

For the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2022, there is an entire website dedicated to explaining the sustainability approach and measures of the games. Many of these measures involve fans and spectators as consumers of the game. Many of the measures also speak to fans and spectators, who are indeed concerned about the environmental impact. These efforts at all levels of football are done because there are reports indicating that these issues matter to fans. For example, it has been found that more than two thirds of sports fans aged 16 to 24 support environmental change and have higher expectations from brands,



teams and athletes to support their values, according to new research from market researcher Global Web Index (GWI). The Sports Playbook, formed using GWI's new sports data set which surveyed 9,763 sports fans aged 16 to 64 across 15 core markets, shows that 69 % of those in the 16 to 24 age bracket want to see sport's stakeholders do more to help the community, improve inequality, or act sustainably. The study also anticipates that younger fans expect sports and politics to become increasingly interconnected in the future (Dixon, 2021).

Not only are sport organisations and events using their platforms to respond to fans and supporters' sustainability demands, but so are athletes who are becoming climate action ambassadors and using their platforms, networks and resources to share sustainable behaviours, information on climate change, and activations and social media campaigns with their fans and social media followers. At the Global Sports Week event, Jamie Farndale, the Scotland rugby sevens player and climate action advocate, used his keynote to make the case that sport, and athletes in particular, had a responsibility to use their influence to encourage people to adopt more sustainable everyday behaviours. According to the research he presented by Net Zero Scotland and MIT, 60 % of the actions we need to take to achieve net-zero are behavioural and social, with research carried out by the latter suggesting that people are more likely to take these behavioural and social cues from their favourite athletes as opposed to scientists and politicians. Matthew Campelli, editor of *The Sustainability Report*, dives deeper into the behavioural changes of fans through sports events and activations through his interview with Christian Gravert (a behavioural economist and associate professor at the University of Copenhagen). The concept of nudging (Campelli, 2022) – asking people to make decisions in a slightly altered environment, such as putting plant-based food at the top of the menu, for example – was discussed, and it was suggested that sports venues, where tens of thousands of people could be present at any one time, could be the perfect places to explore how people can be 'nudged' towards more optimal decisions for the planet (Campelli, 2022).

There is definitely a consensus about the fact that more research is needed to understand how sport can use its platform and power to help fans and other stakeholders to adopt more sustainable decisions and behaviours. However, despite the lack of evidence, there is still a strong belief that, due to its cultural and global significance, sport, and especially football, could be a significant climate action mobiliser; this is made evident by the many existing practices with some of the following highlighted below.

- Major League Soccer (MLS) and the Greener Goals campaign
 - **Tree planting:** support the league's reforestation project between April 18 - 24. For every tweet that tags @MLSWORKS and #GreenerGoals, MLS and One Tree Planted will plant a tree in national forests across the United States and Canada. This will mark the reforestation of up to 69 acres of land and up to 28,000 trees.



- MLS and Adidas teamed up to create Primeblue jerseys which are made from plastics intercepted from beaches, coastal communities, and shorelines, preventing them from polluting the ocean. Once collected, the original plastic source is reworked into technical fibres that can then be repurposed for use in either apparel or footwear. The high-performance yarn features more than 50 % Parley Ocean Plastic on each jersey.
- LAFC is teaming up with Heal the Bay and the World Surf League to host a beach clean-up event at Venice Beach, raising awareness of the importance of preserving the coastline and protecting our oceans by taking action to intercept waste before it reaches the ocean.
- Seattle Sounders FC is proud to be the first carbon-neutral professional soccer club in North America and the first carbon-neutral pro sports team in the United States. The club partnered with the Seattle Mayor's office and OL Reign to host two days of service projects to help clear trash and clean neighbourhoods.
- National Women's Soccer League and examples from players taking on climate action
 - OL Reign defender, Lu Barnes, has started her own sustainability effort in the form of MAD Travel Kits. MAD Travel Kits, short for 'make a difference', are eco-friendly travel kits filled with everyday products that are useful for professional women's soccer players, such as protein powder, reusable utensils, reusable water bottles, toothpaste, deodorant, and more. These kits will be distributed to members of the club. The purpose of the project is to encourage professional athletes to support sustainability efforts with their everyday habits, and to encourage other professionals and fans to make an effort to do the same.
 - OL Reign forward, Jasmyne Spencer, started her own sustainable clothing brand, Jas it Up, in 2017 with the goal of having a positive impact on the environment and society. Spencer works to make sure that her clothing is sustainably sourced on an environmental level, using manufacturing practice and materials that are better for the earth, as well as on a people level, ensuring that the work being done under ethical conditions and those doing the work are paid a fair wage.
 - Zoe Morse was named the official sustainability ambassador for the Chicago Red Stars. As Zoe says, this brand-new position shows the club's commitment to sustainability issues. As the sustainability ambassador, Zoe will continue her advocacy work for the environment and make suggestions for ways the club can improve their sustainability efforts.
- Premier League and the Premier League sustainability rankings



- Liverpool has planted over 900 trees, hedges, bushes, and wildflower plugs at their academy, as well as vegetables that the club chefs use. They also work with the local Hedgehog Society to protect the animals.
- Tottenham and Liverpool use players to engage via their own media channels and also in partnerships with other sustainable organisations.
- Arsenal have been offering their fans a special renewable energy tariff via green energy supplier, while Everton are working with fans to set up an 'Everton for Change' project group, with six supporters helping to promote green initiatives to fellow fans and feed ideas back to the club.
- Manchester City have a car-sharing scheme, with pricing advantages for multi-occupancy of cars, while Southampton's cycle to work scheme for staff comes with three free bike doctor sessions to ensure the bikes are safe.
- A number of clubs are also tracking fan travel, with Spurs surveying fans after home matches. The club state they are close to achieving its target of no more than 23 % of supporters (14,250 fans) travelling by private car on match days.

What does the research say about fans and supporters and their relationship and engagement with environmental sustainability?

As aforementioned, when examining the environment sport sustainability research specific to fans and supporters, there is a tendency to examine their levels of sport environmental awareness, their perceptions on different environmental topics, motivations to change behaviours and responsiveness to different types of promotions. These topics relate to how sport organisations aim to promote environmental lifestyles, behaviours and products to fans, while also creating more support for the club or sport organisation regarding their own environmental strategy, initiatives, and actions. Additionally, researchers are interested in finding out more about if and how a sport organisation, club or league's positive environmental practices increase fan/consumer internalisation of the team's values. In this type of investigation, the question remains whether sports organisations have a unique ability over other organisations or businesses to influence sustainable behaviours of its consumers.

Other research introduces the concept of environmental literacy of fans and supporters. This concept defined by Roth (1992) is understood "as the degree of our capacity to perceive and interpret the relative health of environmental systems and to take appropriate action to maintain, restore or improve the health of those systems" (as cited in Karimzadegan and Meiboudi, 2012, p. 405). Connected to the discussion around environmental literacy is an examination of the linkages between cognitive, affective and pro-environmental fan behavioural levels.



The communications and marketing around environmental sustainability in and around sport organisations and events is an interesting subtopic as it involves fans and supporters. Marketing and communications places fans and supporters as the consumers to the sport club and organisation. The marketing and communications also touches on the consumer- organisation relationship quality. According to McRoberts and Reid (2021), who analysed the existing literature on sport partnerships, relationship and marketing for environmental sustainability, to greater understandings, are needed on how relationship marketing strategies influence sport consumption behaviours, especially on sport consumers' intermediate responses to relationship marketing, such as potential psychological effects that precede actual consumption behaviour (Hoyer & MacInnis, 2007).

In *Marketing sustainability through sport: testing the sport sustainability campaign evaluation model by Trail*, Galen and McCullough contribute to a new model of understanding how active fans, who are also sport participants in an event, perceive and become more aware about environmental information and then act on it. Their model is based off of Trail's (2015, 2016) sport fan sustainability behaviour model, which was one of the first to fill a theoretical gap on how to engage participants/fans to increase sustainable awareness or on how to increase sustainable behaviours.



Figure 5. Sport fan sustainability behaviour model

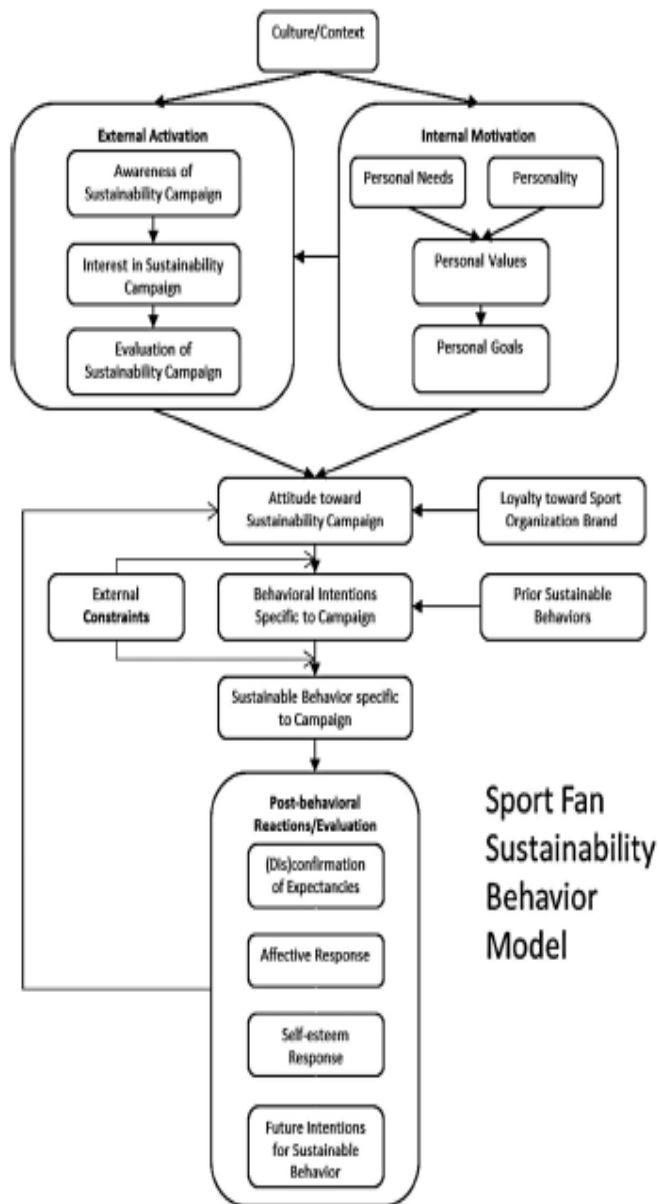


Figure 1. Sport fan sustainability behavior model.

Source: Trail's (2015, 2016) Sport Fan Sustainability Behavior Model.

Their edited version can be found below and specifically aims to represent how an individual evaluates a sport sustainability campaign through various factors.



Figure 6. Sport sustainability campaign evaluation model

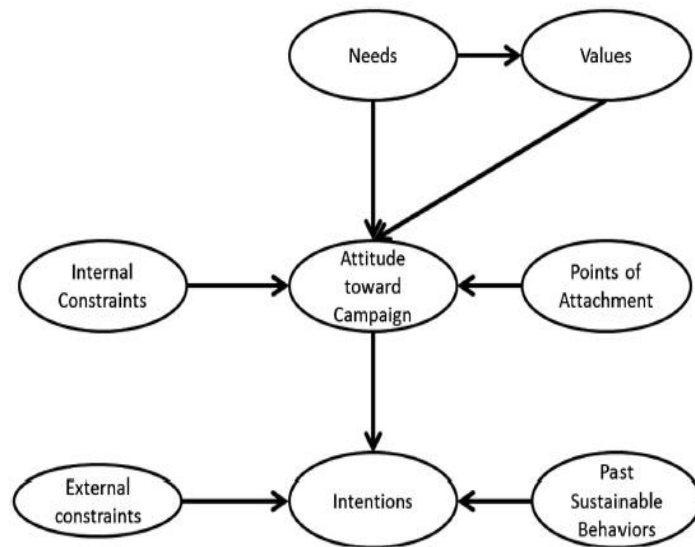


Figure 2. Sport sustainability campaign evaluation model.

Source: Brian P. McCullough (2020) Sport sustainability campaign evaluation model.

Environmental sustainability communication strategies and messages are important for each of the different stakeholders present in any form of sport organisation from the fans to the organisational personnel to the media to the vendors. Despite research and surveys sharing that sport fans are increasingly interested in climate action, there are still found to be many sport executives and leaders who are slow to realise the value of a fully comprehensive sustainability campaign to engage sport fans (Casper and Pfahl, 2012). As a result, sport fans (consumers) are hesitant to engage in environmental sustainability efforts or behave in sustainable ways when attending sport events (McCullough, 2013).

McCullough and Kellison (2016) proposed that sport organisations have an inherent advantage in getting people to participate in sustainability campaigns. Specifically, sport organisations can leverage the brand affinity (fan identification) fans/spectators have with their team to influence their behaviours; that is, a person who is a fan of a specific team may be influenced by messages from their team to participate in specific sustainable behaviours or campaigns (McCullough, 2013). There is an argument that the communication strategy around the sustainability effort needs to be designed and delivered effectively. It needs to go beyond green games, one off events or activations and move towards perpetual communications which allow fans to continually get messages and opportunities to alter behaviour.

Good practices

Birmingham County FA is recognised as a strong grassroots football example.



Figure 7. Save today, play tomorrow



Source: "Save Today, Play Tomorrow", Newsletter, July 2021, <https://www.thefa.com/-/media/cfa/birminghamfa/files/save-today-play-tomorrow/newsletters/stpt-newsletter-july-2021.ashx>

Figure 8. Birmingham County FA



Source: Birmingham County FA: <https://www.birminghamfa.com/about/save-today-play-tomorrow>

On June 8th, 2021, the GA proudly launched 'Save Today, Play Tomorrow', the first of its kind sustainability programme in the UK. The programme looks to engender and empower grassroots football to support an ambitious goal of creating a low carbon, greener game across the region. As a regional governing body, they recognise the need to act now to ensure the beautiful game significantly reduces its environmental impact, whilst helping to educate those involved in football at all levels to make informed decisions that will shape how much future generations will be able to enjoy and sustain the game in the long term.

LifeTackle

LifeTackle is a collaborative project and approach to understanding environmental sustainability in football in Europe. Concretely, the project is described as co-financed by the European Union, aiming at improving the environmental management of football matches and the overall level of awareness and attention towards environmental issues in the football sector, engaging its most relevant stakeholders – National Football Associations (NFAs), football clubs, stadiums, managers and supporters. To engage with the supporters, the project has various activities, one of which is focused on assessing football fans across Europe in relation to their awareness, perceptions and attitudes towards environmental sustainability in football. Through a survey conducted by the Institute of Management of Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy), they found the following:

- the majority of football fans are aware of the importance of protecting the environment.
- Although fans are in favour of the football industry being more committed to environmental protection, they do not fully appreciate their own ecological impact and the importance of their individual commitment.
- Fans are unaware of football's overall environmental impact.
- When it comes to identifying the various measures to be taken to contribute to this, fans believe it is the major international bodies, such as the European Commission, FIFA and UEFA, who have a particular responsibility to address the problem and provide solutions, while football clubs and stadium owners, despite being responsible for implementing the various environmental initiatives, should feel less pressure.

The project team also tested out awareness raising tools with fans and supporters to gain a better understanding of what works and what doesn't and why. According to the project [website](#), the following tools were used:

- informative panels and banners showing environmental awareness messages in stadiums;
- Messages printed on the backside of tickets;



- Video-interviews with football players as testimonials and Vox Pops with supporters, projected on big screens of stadiums and published online;
- Organisation of specific initiatives and distribution of gadgets to reduce waste production (e.g., distribution of refillable water bottles and installation of water dispensers in strategic points of the stadium). (Fans and supporters' information, 2020, para. 3).

Below, there are examples of informative panels designed and shared with fans/supporters.

Figure 9. Examples of informative panels for fans/supporters



Source: Life Tackle, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3yElaLz>.

Our Football a.k.a. 'Unser Fußball'

The founders of the initiative 'Unser Fußball' (Our Football) are making demands on German professional football. According to a declaration, which has since been signed by 2,663 fan clubs representing a total of around half a million fans, German football is to become "close to the grassroots, sustainable and contemporary."

In addition to fair competition between large and small clubs and more democratic structures, Unser Fußball also calls for the sport to fulfil its function as



a role model and act in a more ecologically sustainable manner. (Grüll, 2020, para. 1-3).

La Liga

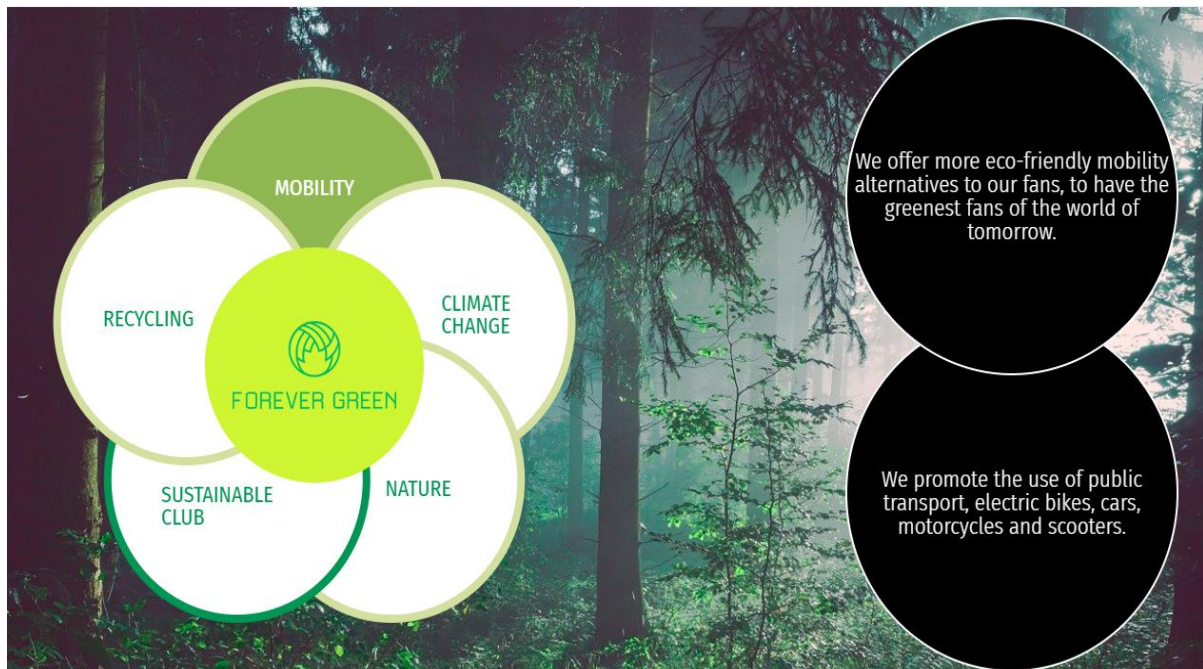
Real Betis and the Match for Sustainability relied on fans and supporters' interest in environmental sustainability and practising sustainable behaviours. According to *The Sustainability Report* [article](#) on the game, in the end, the carbon footprint equivalent to the use of 500 private vehicles over the course of a year was avoided during the match, as fans were encouraged to travel to the stadium via public or active transport (Campelli, 2022). In fact, with fans ditching their cars and taking to foot, bus, bicycle and electric scooter, 911 tonnes of CO₂e were avoided.

Fans also had access to the Ciclogreen app, which promotes sustainable mobility. They could log their more than 1,000 kilometres of journeys made to the Estadio Benito Villamarín via means other than car. Those walking made up 43 % of those journeys, while bus, bicycle and e-scooters accounted for 20 %, 13 % and 4.35 %.

Once in the stadium, fans were able to return sunflower seed shells (already served in biodegradable cardboard) so that they could be used as fertiliser for the pitch. In the stadium, fans were exposed to 100 messages of advice to look after the planet. Forever Green sneakers, produced with recycled materials and by people with disabilities, were also presented. In the week leading up to the match, fans were encouraged to take care of Seville's green spaces via a social media campaign. There were many layers of environmental and social sustainability awareness and campaign as part of the match day experience.

This one game is part of a larger initiative of Real Betis called Forever Green, a sustainability platform that uses the power of the most popular sport on the planet to help to save it, and it is to make the millions of fans of today our allies to fight against climate change tomorrow. Below is the visual to describe the nexus of the Forever Green platform. As seen in the two large black circles to the right of the Venn diagram, the platform aims to offer more eco-friendly mobility alternatives to their fans, to have the greenest fans in the world, and they also aim to promote the use of public transport, electric bikes, cars, motorcycles and scooters.

Figure 10. Forever Green platform



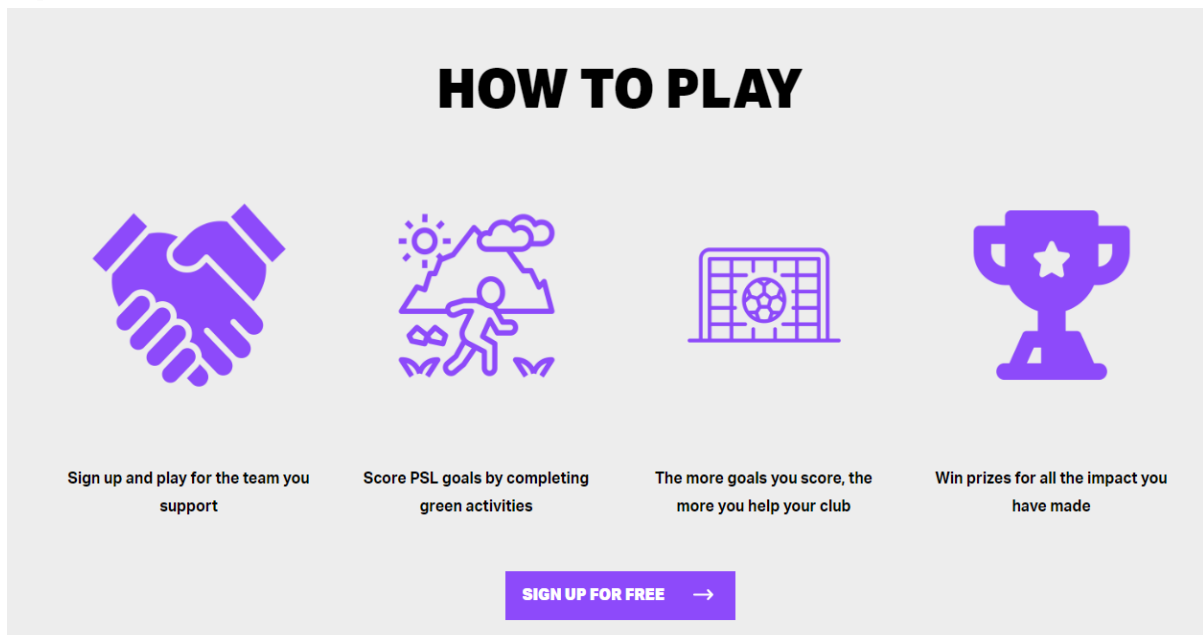
Source: Forever Green, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3nB8uyR>.

Planet Super League

Planet Super League is the place for football fans to learn about climate action and do fun things to be greener, at home, school, work, and at the match. The Planet Super League site encourages interested fans to join by facilitating that every action one takes for the planet will be valued as a goal for one's favourite club. They remind individuals that "It's down to the fans, the more you do, the more you help your club" (About us, n.d., para. 5).

With free registration, fans, players, and any individual involved in the game are encouraged to take the actions presented in the figure.

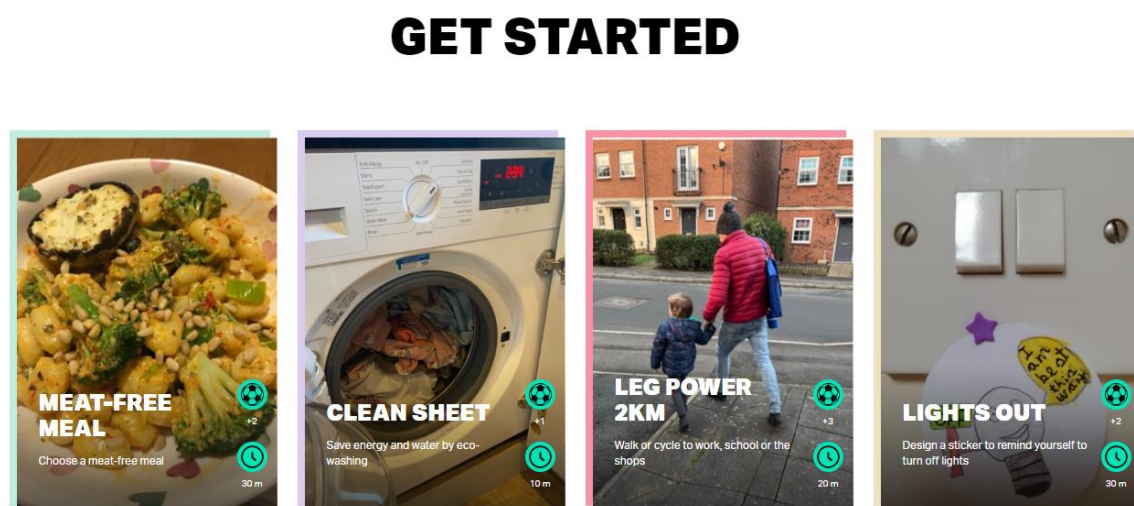
Figure 11. How to play



Source: Planet Super League, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3bJYVLi>.

The platform shares that over thousands of fans have signed up for the league with over 60 clubs involved and a myriad of practices and activities demonstrated. Activities are those which relate to energy, food, nature, travel, and water. The site makes it easy to take the first step, and, through the examples, photos, and human-centred approach, it is easy to see how fans would want to get involved.

Figure 12. Get started



Source: Planet Super League, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3bJYVLi>.

The tips and tricks for football fans help one to understand sustainable measures they can take while playing football, travelling to a match, watching on tv or watching in a public



viewing. Additionally, fans are educated about how their activities cut emissions or reduce their environment. The platform aims to inform and educate the fans through different types of information, resources, toolkits, and infographics.

Figure 13. Summary table

Summary table

The table below lists a selection of activities and shows the calculated tournament impact and annual impact.

Activity (sample)	Realistic frequency	Impact	
		Tournament	Annual
Switch to green electricity provider	Once a year	157	742
Cut down on meat	One third reduction in meat	76	691
Avoid food waste	Constant	15	253
Turn heating down by 2 degrees	All through winter months	84	198
Replace short-distance travel with walking	One day a week	26	118
Keep tyres pumped up	Monthly check	18	69
Bleed radiators once a year	Once a year	14	66
Use plant-milk	One litre a week	13	61
Switch 3 bulbs to LED	One-off	9	42
Dry clothes on the line	One in three washes	9	33
Make a draught excluder	All through winter months	7	33
Put water savers on taps	Half of the taps	8	19
Have screen-free evenings	Two days a week	7	18
Total impact		442	2,343

figures in kg CO2e for a typical UK family

Source: Planet Super League, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3bJYVLi>.

Pledgeball

Pledgeball is a way to encourage millions of people in the football community to make a small, easy change to their lifestyle, to collectively have a big impact on our planet. Fans, players, clubs, grassroots teams – everyone – can get involved. Below, there is a visual on how it works.



Figure 14. How does Pledgeball work



Source: Pledgeball, n.d., <https://bit.ly/30Xa7CA>.

Conclusion

According to the Euractive France news platform, French fans are more than just environmentally aware and conscious: they are looking to boycott non-eco-friendly sport events. Based on the latest study carried out by the CSA Institute:

The expectations of sports fans towards brands and events in terms of ecological commitments are no longer negligible.

The study [...] shows that 69 % of those supporters questioned would be ready to limit [their] sports-related outings to reduce their ecological impact, and that 66% of them would go so far as to boycott an event with no environmental commitment.

Among the people surveyed who have an interest in sport, 35% see phasing out plastics as a top priority – compared to 21% who favour access to responsibly produced or local food and drink.

The survey also reveals that 72% believe it is their responsibility as consumers to take environmental action, while 63% say it is up to companies, and 61% are of the opinion that governments should step in. (Pollet, 2021, para. 1-4).

The responsibility is being shared by many sport stakeholders in France, including the French Association Match for Green and Football Ecologie France.

This unit has explored the research around fan engagement in environmental sustainability, with a particular focus on the football industry where fans are global, fluid and adapting to the changing landscape, technologies, and current political, social and environmental crises. As a football professional, it is key to understand and have a finger on the interests and concerns of football fans around the safeguarding of the game they love. It is also key to understand how they are being positioned as part of the campaigns which lead to less environmental impact and whether these campaigns are also being matched with changes/strategies at the organisational, club and league levels to address football's impact on the natural environment. There are many good practices at local grassroots to club levels, and many of ours have focused on Europe and North America; however, as a global game, there are many more out there to be explored and which to learn from.



Unit 3.2 UEFA & #EqualPlay Campaign

UEFA, the Union of European Football Associations, is the governing body of European football and the umbrella organisation for 55 national associations. It is a continental confederation recognised by the world football governing body FIFA. According to UEFA's website, as a confederation, its objectives are the following:

- to deal with all questions relating to European football.
- To promote football in a spirit of unity, solidarity, peace, understanding, and fair play, without any discrimination on the part of politics, race, religion, gender or any other reason.
- To safeguard the values of European football, promote and protect ethical standards and good governance in European football.
- To maintain relations with all stakeholders involved in European football.
- To support and safeguard its member associations for the overall well-being of the European game.

The vision leading the confederation is to ensure amongst its stakeholders in the European game, that football is the most played, trusted, competitive, engaging, and responsible sport. Their current 2019-2024 Together for the Future of Football strategy sets out a five-year road map based on five pillars: football, trust, competitiveness, prosperity and responsibility. In 2019, the responsibility pillar was approved to ensure that the European football confederation leveraged football's potential for driving positive change in society.

Within the responsibility pillar, the following objectives are prioritised:

- ensuring European football takes responsibility for helping achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Guaranteeing the safety of everyone involved in football, safeguarding youth players and children.
- Maintaining respect as our overarching value, encouraging inclusive practices and activities.
- Fostering economically viable, sustainable programmes that conserve the game for future generations (UEFA Strategy, n.d.).

In relation to how these pillars are operationalised, UEFA emphasizes the importance of its four fundamentals or elements to building and developing European football, which include: the team, the game, the fans, and the rules. These elements are seen throughout the five strategic priorities which are leading the confederation's strategy until 2024 and, perhaps, beyond. These priorities include women's football, good governance,



competitive balance, fan engagement, and sustainability commitment. The latter priority is described as following: “Guarantee all our activities and events are founded on the values of respect and sustainability, leading by example for the benefit of current generations and ensuring a positive legacy for the future” (Together for the Future of Football, 2019, p. 15).

Supporting the sustainability commitment is the Strength through Unity 2030 Football Sustainability Strategy (Strength through Unity, 2021). By linking football to social and environmental sustainability, the strategy sets 11 policies and five areas of action, with the overall ambition to create a plan with targets, KPIs and adaptability to the moving world of sustainability. These 11 policies are about the following topics: anti-racism, child and youth protection, equality and inclusion, football for all, health and well-being, refugee support, solidarity and rights, circular economy, climate and advocacy, event sustainability, and infrastructure sustainability. Collaboration within the football ecosystem and with actors outside the ecosystem is noted as being fundamental to European football being able to make a positive and credible contribution to a sustainable future for the next generations of football players and fans, at international, national, and local levels.

The confederation’s governance is structured through different organs such as the UEFA Congress, the UEFA Executive Committee, the UEFA President, and the organs for the administration of justice.

UEFA stakeholders

In addition to cooperation with its 55 national associations, UEFA involves all stakeholders – including leagues, clubs, and players, in the decision-making process within European football. Particularly significant are the football fans, with whom the confederation is aiming to establish closer relations to ensure that their feedback and voices are heard on key issues such as stadium, security, ticketing, and the various social challenges which are being addressed through different campaigns, such as those targeting racism and violence.

Below, there is a diagram of the football ecosystem referred to in the UEFA Football Sustainability Report.



Figure 15. UEFA'S football ecosystem



Source: UEFA, 2021, p. 22.

According to the same report, UEFA's reach within this ecosystem can be quantified by the following statistics and driven by the statistic that 70 % of football fans believe UEFA has a role to play in the role of sustainability:

- 18.5 million football players across member associations
- 300 million followers on UEFA social media channels
- 877 million reach of UEFA online campaign sign for an Equal Game
- 321 football social responsibility projects financed by UEFA since 2016

These statistics are projected to grow even more with the sustainability strategy which responds to increased stakeholder expectations and strong call to actions to mobilise and accelerate the power of football, to contribute to a sustainable future for the next generations of football players and fans, at international, national, and local levels (Strength through Unity, 2021).

Background on the #EqualGame campaign

The #EqualGame campaign launched in August 2017. The campaign was officially released in Monaco in August 2017, at a ceremony attended by UEFA President Aleksander Čeferin and Manchester United's French star Paul Pogba, and with superstars Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Ada Hegerberg sharing their support.

During this time, UEFA partner, the FARE Network, was coordinating more than 2,300 #FootballPeople events in 62 countries. In these events, 114,000 people were involved in

anti-racism tournaments, panel discussions, workshops, multicultural sports festivals, conferences, stadium initiatives, and other activations. In fact, during the #FootballPeople action weeks all 58 UEFA club competition matches played from the 11th to 19th of October, had players line up for a mixed photo with UEFA's #EqualGame campaign on display. Different messages were read and displayed on the screens to large, digital, and growing audiences.

In June 2018, Fare Network was featured in UEFA's #EqualGame dome at the Champions League fanzone in Kyiv and in August 2018, UEFA unveiled its inaugural #EqualGame award where Georgian national team player Guram Kashia was recognised. The award was designed to reflect the key ethos of the #EqualGame campaign, which is that everyone has the right to enjoy football, irrespective of ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, social background or religious beliefs. Specifically, the award was designed to celebrate and recognise players who promote diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Figure 16. Guram Kashia making a stand for diversity and inclusion



Source: UEFA, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3nA5v9Y>.

In February 2019, Virgil van Dijk presented a €100,000 donation to the International Committee of the Red Cross on behalf of UEFA. The handover of the symbolic check in front of a larger audience included the #EqualPlay hashtag, as seen below in UEFA's timeline featured in their yearly report.

Figure 17. UEFA'S timeline



Source: UEFA, 2019, p. 16.

In the 2018/2019 UEFA Football and Social Responsibility Report, the #EqualGame campaign is described as an initiative created under the UEFA respect umbrella, which promotes UEFA values by demonstrating the positive role that football plays in individual lives. The respect message, which has been displayed at all UEFA competitions and events, unites all UEFA social responsibility projects using football to tackle either environmental and/or human rights issues.

When the campaign launched, it included the publication and promotion of monthly stories of different people from among the confederation's 55 member associations. The videos tell the story of how football promotes inclusion, accessibility, and diversity. This is demonstrated by sharing the compelling and inspiring stories about football legends, grassroots players, and coaches and fans. For example, fans can find a myriad of #EqualGame videos on YouTube, which feature all types of stories of fans and players in football from grassroots to professional. Matthijs de Ligt, João Félix, Pernille Harder, Moise Kean, Paul Pogba and Jadon Sancho are all featured as protagonists who have signed up for the campaign, and, in their videos, they share their personal local stories and digital signature cards, encouraging fans to sign up for the campaign. In addition to the professional videos, one can find videos of fans from all different backgrounds and situations including stories with the following narratives. Many of these mini-documentaries and others can be found in the list available on the UEFA website on [#EqualGame](#):

- Grandmothers' football in Lithuania
- Ljubomir was a promising goalkeeper until he lost his arm. Now he's on the path to recovery and pursuing a career as a referee
- Pride and passion. This is Liam's story of being the first openly gay footballer to play at Wembley
- Abubacarr risked his life when he left The Gambia for Italy. Now, it's football helping him to integrate and settle in his new country
- She was told that girls don't play football, but Zehra had other ideas
- He might be blind, but István finds freedom in football. #EqualGame
- Football helps teenage girl from Azerbaijan to overcome personal tragedy #EqualGame



Overall, the campaign message – that football is open to everyone – brings people together and embraces diversity and champions inclusion, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation or religion (UEFA #EqualGame campaign).

#EqualGame highlights

Through video productions, words, photos and across UEFA's communication and social media channels, the campaign grew to include voices across and beyond Europe. A specific and dedicated campaign website was created. Additionally, UEFA's official magazine UEFA Direct has featured regular stories on the football fans featured throughout the campaign. A bespoke TV spot broadcast around UEFA's major competitions also gave broad exposure to the #EqualGame message. Teams lined up for mixed photos with the match referees, while videos were played on the giant screens in Europe's stadiums. Children wearing #EqualGame t-shirts were present in stadiums to help encourage people to embrace the message that discrimination must be a thing of the past. Another highlight in 2018 occurred in May, when the campaign brought top stars and grassroots players together at the UEFA Europa League Village ahead of the competition's final in Lyon. Grassroots stars from the campaign joined in a special match by Portuguese legend Luís Figo, former Olympique Lyonnais and Barcelona favourite Éric Abidal, and Olympique Lyonnais women's stars Ada Hegerberg and Shanice van de Sanden.

Figure 18. Ada Hegerberg and Jane Velkovski



Ada Hegerberg and Jane Velkovski
©Lukas Schulze

Source: UEFA, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3IbG0oZ>.

According to the 2018/2019 campaign report, 400 clubs and more than 35 national associations use #EqualGame to call for an end to racism, discrimination, and intolerance. In March 2019, the #EqualGame conference was held at Wembley Stadium. The conference brought together 260 delegates from UEFA member associations, leagues,

clubs, political and governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and minority groups, in addition to experts and media representatives. The conference was organised jointly by the FARE Network, the English FA and UEFA, to come together to focus on an array of topics around tackling discrimination and intolerance in the game. The key agenda points included 1. diversity and inclusion, 2. gender equality, 3. accessibility, 4. LGBT+, 5. human rights, 6. refugees and asylum seekers, 7. sanctioning discrimination, and 8. youth. The official report includes a synopsis of the discussions about each of the thematic topics, with stats and figures shared around the challenges. Additionally, some recommendations were shared, which are means to serve as viable next steps for individuals, organisations, football stakeholders who are beginning on their #EqualGame activations. These include the following and can be found discussed in more detail in the [report](#):

- Involve champions.
- Be consistent.
- Collaborate with experts.
- Address lacking representation.
- Utilize storytelling (EqualGame Conference Report, 2019).

In 2019 and 2020, #EqualGame showcased compelling and inspiring stories about famous players and grassroots stars, as well as supported a number of key events that amplified the campaign's message. In August 2019, Borussia Dortmund and Burnley FC fan, Scott Cunliffe, were recognised with the prestigious #EqualGame Award, which recognises a person and/or entity that has acted as a role model in promoting diversity, inclusion and accessibility in European football. Borussia Dortmund received the award based on the club's work and initiatives addressing extremist influences within their fan base, challenging everyday racism and adopting a clear policy on the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. Burnley FC supporter Scott Cunliffe received the award for his successful RunAway Challenge, in which he ran to every one of Burnley FC's away matches in the 2018/19 Premier League season, raising over €60,000 for Burnley FC in the community, Burnley FC's official charity.

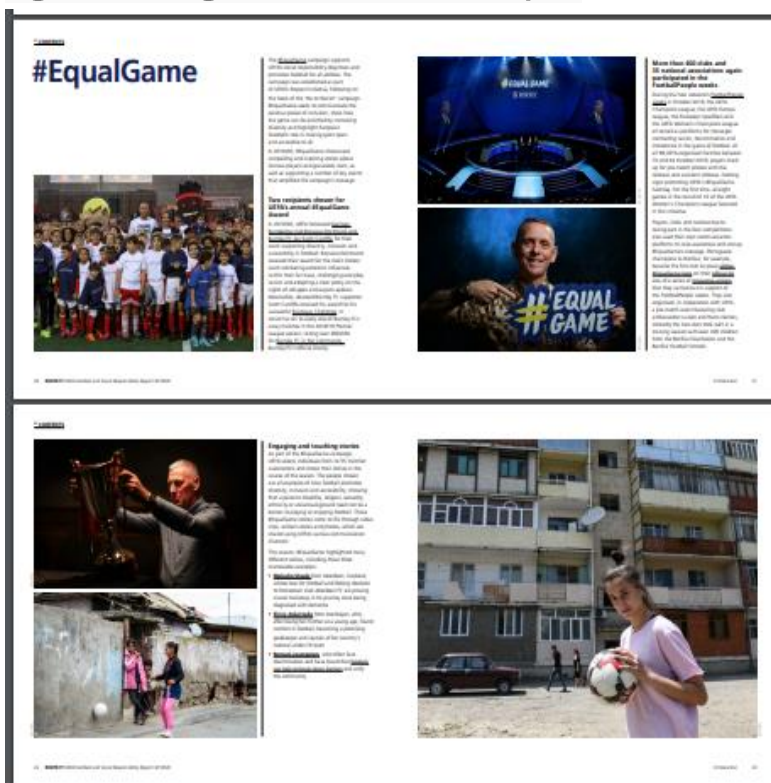
Additional highlights of the 2019/2020 season include the following:

- more than 400 clubs and 35 national associations again participated in the Football People weeks. During the Fare network's Football People weeks in October 2019, the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Europa League, the European Qualifiers and the UEFA Women's Champions League all served as platforms for messages combating racism, discrimination, and intolerance in the game of football.



- At all 98 UEFA-organised matches between 10 and 24 October 2019, players lined up for pre-match photos with the referees and assistant referees, holding signs promoting UEFA's #EqualGame hashtag.
- For the first time, all eight games in the round of 16 of the UEFA Women's Champions League featured in this initiative.
- Players, clubs, and national teams taking part in the four competitions also used their own communication platforms to raise awareness and convey #EqualGame's message.
- Portuguese champions SL Benfica, for example, became the first club to place UEFA's #EqualGame logo on their official kit, one of a series of innovative actions that they carried out in support of the Football People weeks. They also organised, in cooperation with UEFA, a pre-match event featuring club ambassadors Luisão and Nuno Gomes, whereby the two stars took part in a training session with over 200 children from the Benfica Foundation and the Benfica Football Schools.

Figure 19. Images of UEFA 2019/20 Report



Source: UEFA, 2020, pp. 22-23.

Documentary Outraged, released under the #EqualGame campaign

In December 2020, the UEFA.tv documentary released the documentary *Outraged* under the #EqualGame campaign. The documentary features football professionals from both the men's and women's game giving their personal views on racism, sexism, and homophobia in football. The freely accessible documentary can be viewed on UEFA.tv and in it, the audience gets the chance to hear from key players speaking about their own personal experiences of racism and other forms of discrimination. Football players such as Paul Pogba, Nadia Nadim, Megan Rapinoe, Moise Kean, Dejan Lovren, Olivier Giroud, Shanice van de Sanden, Tyrone Mings, Juan Mata, Guram Kashia and Kalidou Koulibaly, all share their stories of exclusion and discrimination in football, as well as offering their own thoughts on the best way to help eradicate these issues from the sport.

Figure 20. Documentary Outraged



The full 'Outraged' documentary can be viewed on UEFA.tv
@UEFA.com

Source: UEFA, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3bIjmbn>.

In 2021, after key developments within UEFA, including the creation of its Football Social Responsibility Division and the addition of the 'responsibility' pillar as its fifth element in its five-year strategy, in May 2021, the Sign Up for #EqualGame campaign was established and launched. Specifically, during the EURO 2020 final tournament, Sign Up for an Equal Game asked every member of Europe's football community to express opposition to discrimination by creating a digital signature card on equalgame.com. According to the 2020/2021 UEFA Report, 3.48 million people shared their signatures on social media.

Figure 21. Sign Up for an Equal Game



Source: [online image of Sign Up for and Equal Game], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/30M4mb6>.

During 2020/2021, the #EqualPlay award was given to three different individuals/entities, including Khalida Popal, Juan Mata and the German Football Association. All were recognised for their outstanding leadership qualities in creating a more open, diverse, and accessible game. Khalida Popal is an example of an individual working tirelessly to fight gender stereotypes and to create safe environments for the empowerment of girls, women, and minority communities through sport. Juan Mata was recognised for his socially conscious leadership as co-founder of Common Goal, an NGO making positive change in socially challenged communities, using football's power and popularity to tackle gender inequality, promote inclusion, and provide more opportunities for underprivileged children. The German Football Association, DFB, was recognised for its various football for all programmes and activities which work to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can enjoy the game. Specifically, the DFB was recognised as one of the first football associations to actively support refugees.

The following quotes from UEFA leaders exemplify the importance of the #EqualPlay campaign and leaders in creating a more inclusive and welcoming game.

Figure 22. Quotes from UEFA leaders

Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA president:

"Each of these three #EqualGame Award winners is a fine example of how football can be used as a catalyst for positive change. They can and should be very proud of their achievements and I would like to personally thank them for their exemplary leadership that will, hopefully, inspire many others."

Michele Uva, UEFA director of football social responsibility:

"Khalida, Juan and the DFB have all shown enormous heart and commitment. They have found ways to use their position in football to improve the lives of others and mobilise people around their important causes. Thereby, they are fantastic role models for all of us – for players, fans, national associations – to care about others, especially the weakest people in society."

Source: UEFA, 2021,
<https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/mediaservices/mediareleases/news/0270-13f658e71406-c9018a3666ca-1000--khalida-popal-juan-mata-and-german-football-association-honoure/>

Current context

The #EqualGame campaign continues to shine during the lead up to the Women's EUROS 2022. With the announcement of TikTok as a global partner of UEFA Women's EURO 2022, it was also shared that the digital platform will support the games in their efforts to promote equality and inclusion in football through TikTok's #SwipeOutHate campaign and UEFA's #EqualGame.

The #EqualGame campaign launched in 2017 and has become much more than a hashtag for making the game a more inclusive, safer, and accessible space. With videos, words, images, mini-documentaries, football matches, signatures, and other types of content, it is clear that there are many voices, stories, challenges, and solutions which are all part of the European football community, and which are demanding and pointing out ways to make football an even better game, a more effective tool and a platform to drive sustainable and equitable change.

Unit 3.3 Using new technology to engage with fans on your sport's sustainability programme

3.3.1 Introduction

Defining engagement beyond communication and public relations (PR)

In 2017, when the concept of sustainability was only starting to infiltrate into the sports management and sports communication strategies, The Sport Ecology Group, led by Madeleine Orr, conducted a study based on an online survey which was administered to 557 sport fans. Items measured fan connection to the organisation, environmental values, expectations, behaviours (at the event, at home), and recall of environmental sponsors. The title of the study was a sign of the times: "Is Going Green Worth It? Assessing Fan Engagement and Perceptions of Athletic Department Environmental Efforts" (Casper *et al.*, 2017). And the results were that fans want and expect sport organisations to engage in environmental action. Initiatives taken by sport organisations have a positive influence on fan behaviours at the event, and these translate to favourable behaviours at home. Two distinct groups were identified: the high pro-environmental attitudes group exhibited low attachment to the organisation, high perception of environmental initiatives, higher recall of environmental sponsors.

Five years later, almost every sports organisation – from governing body to sports federation, most of big clubs or sports organisations – have created and developed C level positions for sustainability experts that are committed to coordinating with Ops, Comms, BizDev, Health & Science departments, to lead the internal transformation, but also to promote sustainable behavioural change at-home, among the fan base, who will support and demand the implementation of sustainable initiatives in events (i.e., single use plastic reduction, sustainable mobility), closing the loop of engagement in sustainability.

Defining the role of technology

Technology means 'science of craft', from Greek. The *Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary* offers a definition of the term: "the use of science in industry, engineering, etc., to invent useful things or to solve problems" and "a machine, piece of equipment, method, etc., that is created by technology".

Ursula Franklin, in her 1989 *Real World of Technology* lecture, gave another definition of the concept; it is "practice, the way we do things around here". (Howe, 2021, p. 11).



Technology in itself has no value. It's only an enabler, a tool, that acquires value if it serves to some predetermined specific purposes. In the scope of sustainability, what matters is how much it can help you as a sustainability manager to the following:

- reduce costs or externalities.
- Minimise waste to landfill – reduce, reuse, recycle.
- Improve the efficiency of operations.
- Facilitate monetisation and new business models to fund initiatives.
- Help to meet sustainable targets.
- Accelerate change.
- Facilitate engagement with stakeholders and fans.

Old vs. new technology

A technology becomes obsolete when it is replaced by a new innovation.

Although you will find different taxonomies for the types of innovation, this framework with four main types of innovation is widely accepted:

- **continuous and/or evolutionary innovation.** It's the most common, and it's based on incremental improvements in a technology. E.g., timing and scoring, whilst being core to every competition, have evolved for centuries based on innovations that provide higher accuracy, precision.
- **Ground-breaking innovation.** It implies solving old problems with innovations from other fields or domains. E.g., KERs are motorsports that improve the performance of cars by generating new engine power from the same heat of the breaks.
- **Disruptive innovation.** Very much related to the concept of Blue Ocean or new markets, these innovations facilitate entirely new business models. E.g., the videogames and virtual reality, as digital disruptions, are changing the business and opening new possibilities for a more sustainable remote event participation.

3.3.2 Technology as enabler of fan engagement

Intelligent and powerful technologies – in special digital innovations – are radically and unpredictably transforming our reality at a pace that is growing exponentially. Therefore, it's difficult to encompass the wide range of incremental and disruptive innovations that are now available for sustainability professionals in the sports industry.

In particular, digital technologies and data science are disrupting the sports industry with applications in several fields:



- Gamification technologies for the augmented and virtual realities, and metaverses
- Wearables, intelligence on the edge and cloud-based applications for the IoT (Internet of Things)
- Software for events management and fan engagement
- Blockchain, tokenization, NFTs for engagement, and new shared value creation
- Communication technologies
- Video-based technologies for tracking of movement or automated access
- New materials and design technology for sports apparel
- Online training about sports

But not all of these technologies are relevant to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, and some of them are even under the scrutiny.

In the next pages, we will review some of the main benefits that the different technologies bring us as sustainability managers, and learn from some best practices and real applications by leading organisations.

A. Protecting the environment

Promoting sustainable innovation through sports

<p>How it works</p>	<p>Sustainable technologies are those that balance the use of natural resources with economic profitability and social development.</p> <p>Usually, these are innovations that look at balancing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Substitution of a non-renewable resource with a renewable one. ● Prevention of externalities, pollution, impact on the environment. ● Efficiency in the use of energy and resources. <p>Examples of sustainable technologies reshaping the modern industry are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Electric mobility - Biofuels - Wind or solar energy - Carbon capture and storage technologies - Event production or manufacturing processes that minimise waste and pollution - Innovations for circular supply chains
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<p>Why it is engaging</p>	<p>Sports have a key role in educating the public and promoting sustainable innovation. So, when a sports organisation considers technologies that help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it sets an example and paves the way for adoption of these technologies among fans.</p>
<p>Who is applying it</p>	<p>Figure 23. ABB Formula E</p>  <p>Source: [online image of ABB Formula E], (n.d.), https://bit.ly/3acNA62.</p> <p>Using the spectacle of sport, ABB FIA Formula E Championship aims at altering perceptions and speeding up the switch to electric mobility. The championship is not only a platform to showcase the benefits of EV (electric vehicles), but also a development test bed, constantly testing and improving EV technology.</p> <p>During the inaugural season of the ABB FIA Formula E Championship, the total carbon footprint of the event was calculated at 25,000 tonnes of carbon.</p> <p>Despite this, as soon as in 2020, it has become the first sport to have a net-zero carbon footprint since inception, investing in internationally certified projects in all race markets to offset emissions from eight seasons of electric racing. From biogas energy generation in China, to landfill gas energy generation in Mexico and wind power energy generation in Morocco, the impact of these projects reaches far beyond the environmental benefits.</p> <p>Some other key initiatives towards engagement with fans and stakeholders through implementation of sustainable innovation are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formula-E became the first sport in the world to join the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and the Business Ambition Pledge for 1.5°C commitment. Formula-E will further reduce its emissions by 45 % by 2030.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formula-E achieved ISO 20121¹ re-certification in August and remains the only motorsport series to achieve ISO 20121 since original certification in 2016. - Formula-E became the first global sports organisation to partner with UNICEF on climate change. The partnership will empower three million children around the world to become agents of change against the climate crisis over the next three years. - At COP26, the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship was one of the most active elite sports to participate in the global conference. <p>Read the Full Formula E 2021 Sustainability Report:</p> <p>Source: Race for Better Futures. Sustainability Report 2020/2021. (2021). Formula E. https://assets-prd.formulae.cloud/-/media/files/pdf/sustainability/season-7-report-201221.pdf?modified=20211221100853.</p> <p>Follow to know more:</p> <p>https://www.fiaformulae.com/en/discover/sustainability/net-zero.</p>
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B. Communicating with social purpose

Promoting behavioural change

How it works	<p>The sports industry can take advantage of the capabilities of social science to promote behavioural change among the fanbase, to protect health, and achieve sustainability targets.</p> <p>Human behaviours, including tobacco and alcohol consumption, dietary behaviours, physical activity, and sexual practices, play a key role in many of the leading causes of death in developing and developed countries. Even small changes in such behaviours can have substantial effects on population health outcomes. Understanding these behaviours and the contexts in which they occur is essential for developing effective evidence-based health</p>
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¹ ISO 20121. Event sustainability management systems -- Requirements with guidance for use. (2012). International Organization for Standardization. <https://bit.ly/3bSjRj6>.



	<p>behaviour change interventions and policies, and for reducing avoidable mobility and mortality (Campbell <i>et al.</i>, 2015).</p> <p>Among the plethora of different behavioural change theories and approaches to the design of campaigns, there is one particular framework that resonates with the core motivation in every sports' activity: the nudge theory.</p> <p>Nudge theory is a concept in behavioural economics, political theory, and behavioural sciences that proposes positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions as ways to influence the behaviour and decision-making of groups or individuals. Nudging contrasts with other ways of achieving compliance, such as education, legislation or enforcement.</p> <p>A nudge makes it more likely that an individual will make a particular choice, or behave in a particular way, by altering the environment so that automatic cognitive processes are triggered to favour the desired outcome. (Butterworth <i>et al.</i>, 2022, para. 13-14).</p>
<p>Why it is engaging</p>	<p>Would the sport exist without the nudges and awards that bring us humans?</p> <p>What is the role of medals, rankings, high income, fame and social recognition, belonging to a club, the health benefits... into triggering the extraordinary motivation that moves athletes and fans?</p> <p>How can a sustainable sports organisation use behavioural change and nudge theory to trigger behavioural change among its fan base, towards more sustainable practices that will improve their health and protect the future of the sport?</p>
<p>Who is applying it</p>	<p>Figure 24. World Athletics</p>  <p>WORLD ATHLETICS.</p> <p>BETTER WORLD</p> <p>Source: [Untitled image about World Athletics], n. d., https://bit.ly/3uKNqKb</p>



Launched in 2018, in an initial partnership with UNEP (United Nations Environmental Program), the World Athletics Air Quality project is part of a broad campaign to raise awareness about air pollution around the world and the harmful impact it has on elite athletes and recreational runners. Identifying sources of local air pollution by installing monitors that collect air quality data during athletics events, and finding the best solutions to combat it, is crucial.

Combating air pollution and working to improve air quality is one of the six key pillars of the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy, a ten-year road map unveiled in April 2020 whose goals include transitioning to carbon neutrality across all of its operations and events by 2030.

The project has been successful in standardising field deployments, the publication of scientific research and the inclusion of Air Quality requirements in new tender documents.

But some initiatives of World Athletics and UNEP are aimed at promoting behavioural change and healthy lifestyles.

- **Running to celebrate UNEP 50 anniversary:** World Athletics Council Member Sylvia Barlag was among the dignitaries who gathered in Nairobi in March 2022 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Barlag attended a 10 km run at the Karura Forest, an event organised by Athletics Kenya.

More info

Source: **Athletics Kenya celebrates UNEP's 50th anniversary with star-studded 10 km run in Karura Forest.** (2022, March 5). *World Athletics*. <https://worldathletics.org/athletics-better-world/news/athletics-kenya-unep-anniversary-10km-karura-forest>.

- **Runsmarter Competition:** in the summer of 2021, the first #runsmarter campaign was launched on social networks to promote a virtual competition between recreational runners of Lausanne and Geneva and awareness about Air Quality conditions. The Air Quality was monitored during the two



	<p>months of the competition, and the runners had access to weekly reports of the conditions and the best hours to train. Watch the promo video here:</p> <p>Source: World Athletics [World Athletics]. (2021, March 31). World Athletics #RunSmarter City Challenge [video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/RLUGBb94p8w</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sport@Cop Hackathon: the Clean Air Project by World Athletics sponsored a hackathon during COP26 in Glasgow. This hackathon promoted competition between universities and looked for innovation in sustainability for sports. The winning team of Coventry University presented 'Pick Up and Play', a programme which would have sports clubs doing litter pick-ups in their community parks followed by a training session or a game. <p>More info here:</p> <p>Source: World Athletics Air Quality project highlighted at Sport@COP in Glasgow. (November 9, 2021). World Athletics. https://www.worldathletics.org/athletics-better-world/news/world-athletics-air-quality-project-sportcop-glasgow.</p>
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C. Democratising the governance

Tokenization of governance

<p>How it works</p>	<p>Tokenization is a term from the domain of blockchain, cryptography. It is a digital asset, a line of code, that represents ownership or rights. Therefore, it has an owner, it needs to be stored in a secure place, and it includes in itself a description or link to the assets or rights that it entitles the owner to. The main difference with other titles of ownership is that a token is usually stored in a blockchain, a distributed database, where there is no central authority or notary. Therefore, is the network that recognises and protects ownership of</p>
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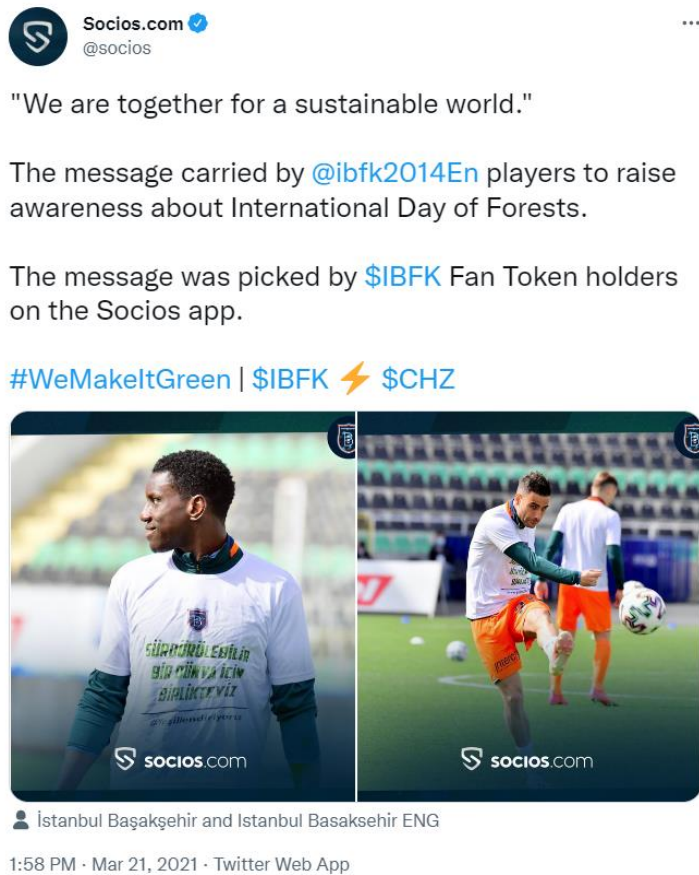
	<p>the token.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ownership might include assets like amounts of fiat money converted into a fan token, or a share in a property of a club. • The rights might include rights to vote or to attend events. The vote can be for a non-bidding decision like choosing the new design of a uniform, but also for a bidding decision like choosing new team members or deciding on the salaries for next year.
<p>Why it is engaging</p>	<p>Blockchain technology enables new ways of distributing and managing governance rights among fans, in a more secure and cost-effective way. It is helping sports organisations be more inclusive in the decision-making processes, hopefully, allowing them to make better decisions in terms of sustainability.</p>
<p>Who is applying it</p>	<p>Figure 25. Socios.com</p>  <p>Source: [online image of Socios.com], (n.d.), https://bit.ly/3P2svds.</p> <p>The football team Istanbul Basaksehir partnered with Socios to launch a campaign to let fans choose the message to raise awareness about International Day of Forests.</p> <p>Socios.com is a new app for sports and esports fans, where you acquire tokenized voting rights to influence the clubs and teams you love.</p>



Figure 26. Tweet of Socios



Source: [online image of tweet of Socios], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3yiZVNX>.

3.3.3 Sports innovation & research hubs

SandSI Sustainable Sport Lab

Figure 27. Sustainable Sport Lab



Source: [online image of Sustainable Sport Lab], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3aj8NLx>.

<https://www.ssl.sport/>

The Mission of Sport and Sustainability International (SandSI) is to accelerate sustainability in and through sport.

The Sustainable Sports Lab is an international programme powered by SandSI, that explores, experiments, and engages sustainable innovations to facilitate high-impact systematic change across the global sports sector.

One of the last initiatives of SSL was the Air Quality Challenge. The challenge was organised by ThinkSport, together with the Sustainable Sport Lab (SSL) and the Sustainable Mountain Alliance (SMA), and supported by prestigious stakeholders, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Athletics, Formula E, UCI and ENGSO.

The winners and other pioneers in innovation met at THE SPOT, ThinkSport's international sport and innovation flagship event, in Lausanne.

Barça Innovation Hub

Figure 28. Barça Innovation Hub



Source: [online image of Barça Innovation Hub], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3P5bNdc>.

<http://www.barcainnovationhub.com>

FC Barcelona wants to help change the world, through athletic excellence, using knowledge and innovation.

Our goal is to create an ecosystem that bolsters knowledge, and to create an ecosystem that bolsters knowledge and innovation. This ecosystem is based on a model that promotes a culture of excellence and collaboration with prestige brands, universities, research centres, start-ups, entrepreneurs, students, athletes, investors, and visionaries from all over the world.

“We want to showcase the decades of knowledge that FC Barcelona has accumulated on topics such as health, nutrition, high athletic performance, the digital sphere and all topics related to sports and its impact on society” (Barça innovation hub, n.d., para. 1).

What do we do?

- Produce and share knowledge: exchange ideas with the most brilliant minds in the world to develop cutting-edge applied research projects.
- Codevelop, test, and launch new products and services: leverage our knowledge in order to partner with other leaders in their fields and create new technologies, processes, and experiences that will bring added value not only to the club, but to society in general.
- Promote and nurture an ecosystem: nurture and build an ecosystem for the sports world. Athletic organisations, leading businesses, research centres, universities, entrepreneurs, and start-ups.

HYPE Sports Innovation

Figure 29. HYPE Sports Innovation



Source: [online image of HYPE Sports Innovation], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3IdmGYc>.

<https://www.hypesportsinnovation.com/>.

HYPE Sports Innovation has built the largest global ecosystem in sports innovation. With over 40,000 members, including retail brands, athletic clubs, federations and academia together with over 11,000 start-ups, HYPE has an unrivalled capacity for outreach to global partners across all sectors in this highly diverse field.

Figure 30. HUB23 - Barcelona SportsTech HUB23



Source: [online image of HUB23 - Barcelona SportsTech HUB23], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3aewZil>.

HUB23 - Barcelona SportsTech HUB23

<http://hub23.io/>

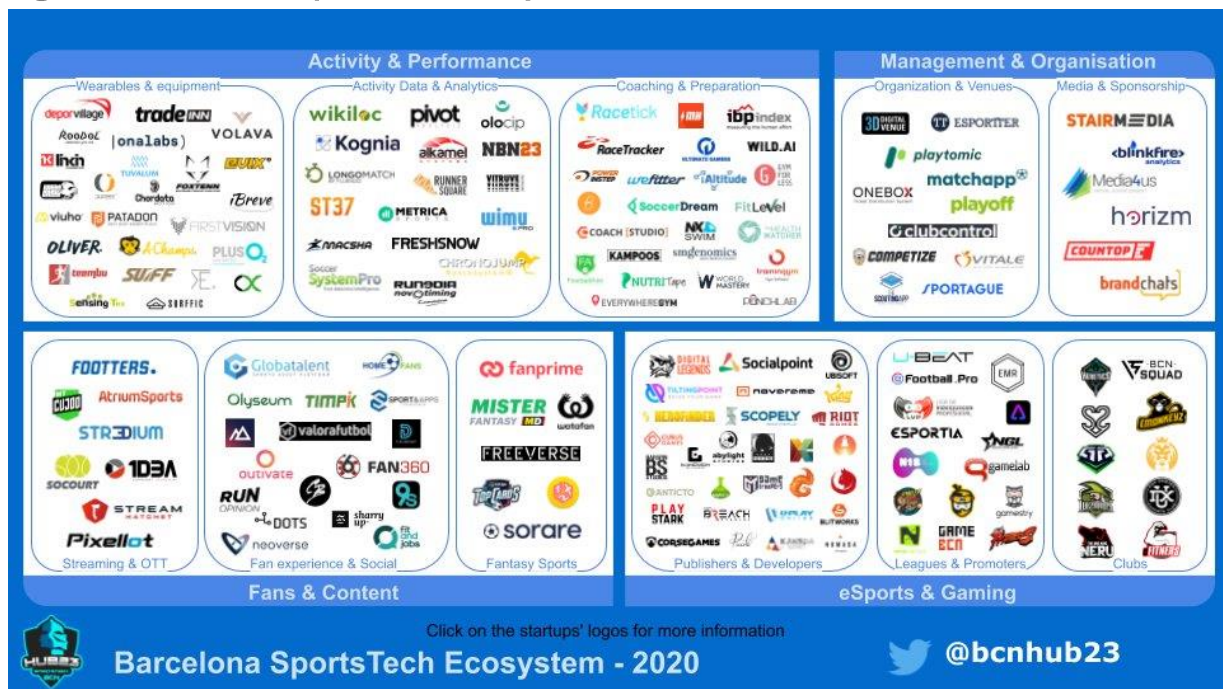
@bcnhub23

We are creating a sustainable ecosystem with a sports services arena beyond coworking, which will allow it to be an international benchmark and attract talent and investment.

A few facts:

- 🏆 170 start-ups and companies are among the most outstanding.
- Sports: 1/3 of the projects apply to Activity & Performance.
- Gaming: Barcelona has a great ecosystem of developers, with more than 50 Indie & Game Publishers.
- eSports: about 8-10 professional teams and the main country's leagues promoters are in Barcelona.

Figure 31. Barcelona SportsTech Ecosystem



Source: Barcelona SportsTech Ecosystem, 2020, <http://hub23.io/>

The Sport Ecology Group



Figure 32. The Sport Ecology Group



Source: [online image of The Sport Ecology Group], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3upxm0j>.

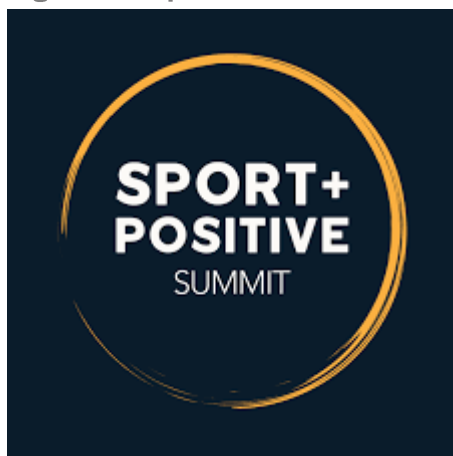
<https://www.sportecology.org>.

With more than 160 years of **combined experience** and more than 270 academic articles published, our team is accelerating climate action in sport through research, resources, and events.

The Sport Ecology Group is a community of academics seeking to share our research with a broader audience than traditional academic journals will allow.

SportPro Summit

Figure 33. SportPro Summit



Source: [online image of SportPro Summit], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3P2FYBN>.

<https://www.sportpositivesummit.com/>.

Sport Positive is a UK-based organisation that focuses on supporting global sports organisations to increase ambition and action on climate change. We work tirelessly to connect industry stakeholders globally, host an annual summit in collaboration with UNFCCC, and we research and share environmental sustainability data via our leagues. If the conversation is about sport x sustainability globally, we're usually not far away!

Our Sport Positive Summit is the global meeting place for the sports community effecting positive sustainability and climate impacts, in collaboration with UNFCCC Global Climate Action and the International Olympic Committee, and we will meet on 4-5 October 2022 at Wembley Stadium, and online.

3.3.4 Avoiding pitfalls and making technology work for sustainability

When planning to implement a new technology in the organisation, there is a risk of (i) not choosing the right tool and (ii) failing in the implementation. The sustainability manager needs to make sure that the process and the tool itself do not actually create more problems than they solve.

This is a tentative list of topics that you should review and discuss internally and with your vendors:

- what need does the technology aim to meet or resolve?
- How was the technology developed.
- Evidence that supports claims of the technology's sustainability throughout manufacture, packaging, shipping, and sale.
- The entry can cover an entirely new concept or the development of an existing process or product to provide a sustainable approach.
- Quantitative and qualitative data supporting the entry (e.g., stats and third-party endorsements).

A. Be aware of the technology hype

As the experienced consultants at Gartner say: when new technologies make bold promises, how do you discern the hype from what's commercially viable?

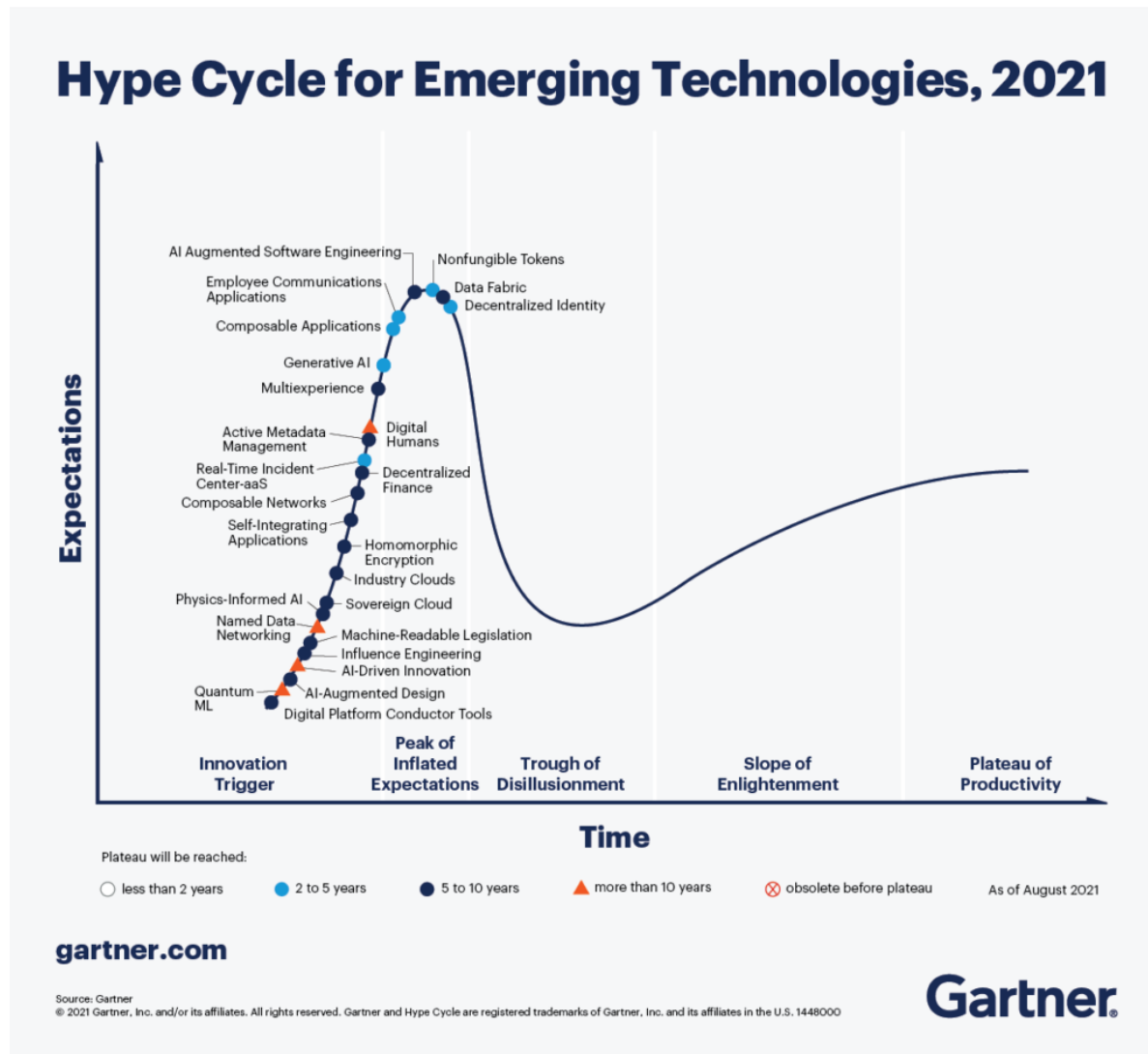
Watch the following video, to understand how Gartner Hype Cycles provide a graphic representation of the maturity and adoption of technologies and applications, and how they are potentially relevant to solving real business problems and exploiting new opportunities:



Source: **Gartner** [Gartner]. Gartner Hype Cycles, Explained [video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jB1RDz9iaj0&t=28s>.

To know more, visit: <https://www.gartner.com/en/research/methodologies/gartner-hype-cycle>

Figure 34. Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies, 2021



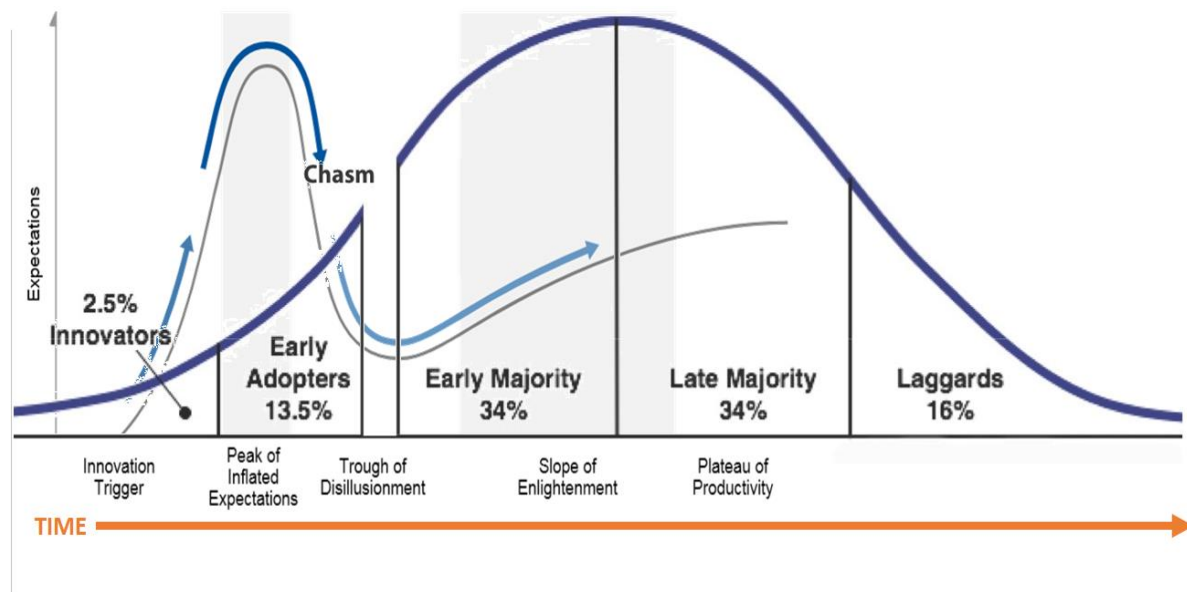
Source: [online image of Hype Cycle for Emerging Technologies, 2021], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3aezEIR>.

B. Analyse the organisational readiness to innovate

The technology adoption lifecycle is a sociological model that describes the adoption or acceptance of a new product or innovation, according to the demographic and psychological characteristics of defined adopter groups.



Figure 35. Technology Adoption Lifecycle illuminated by the Gartner Hype Cycle



Source: [online image of Technology Adoption Lifecycle illuminated by the Gartner Hype Cycle], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3RajFw1>.

To avoid falling into a technology trap, you should also analyse what type of organisation you serve. Is your organisational culture ready to innovate? Can you find internal support to take the necessary risks? If not, you might wish to focus on technologies which are available and have been tested by other organisations.

Make sure you can answer clearly to the question, which consumer group do you belong to?

As the figure above shows, only those consumers that have innovators and early adopters' mindset, with a willingness to pay high prices, wait for the solution to be implemented, cope with some lack of standardised support, and are willing to invest time to co-create the solution will be later ready to cope with inflated expectations and inevitable disillusionment – and to learn from them. The rewards are also high for this group thanks to the invaluable learnings, and when the new innovation proves feasible.

If you serve a more conservative or pragmatic organisation, the right strategy is to wait and see, and only adopt the technologies when the market has tested and accepted them as standards. Then, you should try to work always with the best company that you can afford.

C. When possible, start with a proof of concept

The term proof of concept (POC or PoC) may be defined as a proof of principle. It is a realization of a determined method or an idea so as to demonstrate its feasibility or a demonstration in principle with the aim of verifying that some concept or theory has



practical potential. A proof of concept is, generally, small, and it may or may not be complete. These collaborative trials aim to test the feasibility of business concepts and proposals to solve business problems and accelerate business innovation goals.

Launching a proof of concept with an agile and multi-stakeholder approach, including different interested parties, will allow your organisation to learn while doing, to co-create the solution with your technology vendor, and own the outcomes.



Unit 3.4 Creating an athlete or ambassador sustainability programme

3.4.1 Athlete activism

Today, many athletes are eager to lead strong sustainability campaigns, to act proactively within their sport family towards better practices and to raise awareness among their audience. This growing activism in the athlete's community can be a great opportunity for sports organisations with sustainable strategies. Indeed, creating synergies with athletes and benefiting from their official support can strengthen initiatives, gain additional credibility, and increase visibility for a sport organisation.

Among the many initiatives launched by athletes, here are a few examples in different sports fields.

Rugby: The Cool Down campaign (2021), launched by David Pocock (Hytner and Morton, 2021)

Since the start of his retirement in 2020, David Pocock has focused his energy on nature conservation and climate activism. Part of his campaign is an open letter signed by 300 current and former Australian athletes to the Australian government calling for immediate climate action. The campaign launch comes as a YouGov survey of 15,000 Australians conducted on behalf of the Australian Conservation Foundation, which reveals that the majority of voters in every federal constituency believe the federal government should do more to tackle climate change.

Football: We Play Green organisation (2020), founded by Morten Thorsby (<https://www.weplaygreen.com/>)

Morten Thorsby, in addition to being a professional footballer, is a very active environmentalist. He founded We play Green, which is a non-profit organisation committed to creating a green chain reaction of sustainable attitudes and actions by mobilising the global soccer family.

Snowboard: Protect Our Winters (2007), founded by Jeremy Jones (<https://protectourwinters.org/about-pow/>)



Professional snowboarder Jeremy Jones founded this non-profit organisation to mobilise the snow sports community on climate issues. The organisation focuses its efforts on climate change legislation and strives to turn outdoor enthusiasts into climate advocates.

As a result of the growing interest of athletes in sustainability, there are new types of organisations that accompany them to become leaders in the field. EcoAthletes (<https://www.ecoathletes.org/>) for instance is a non-profit which aims to “inspire, coach, and deploy EcoAthlete Champions to talk confidently and substantively about climate change whenever possible, in whatever ways work for them” (EcoAthletes, 2020, para. 13). Their method successfully combines the following three axes:

1. Finding the right athletes and inspiring them

“Identify and excite prospective EcoAthlete Champions about their ability to make a real difference in the climate fight” (EcoAthletes, 2020, para. 14).

2. Teaching knowledge and tools through comprehensive coaching to empower their voices

“Educate EcoAthlete Champions through substantive, engaging virtual group and individual coaching sessions, to talk comfortably about climate change with media and in their communities” (EcoAthletes, 2020, para. 15).

3. Facilitating speaking opportunities

Enable “EcoAthlete champions to use their voices to talk about climate action” (EcoAthletes, 2020, para. 16).

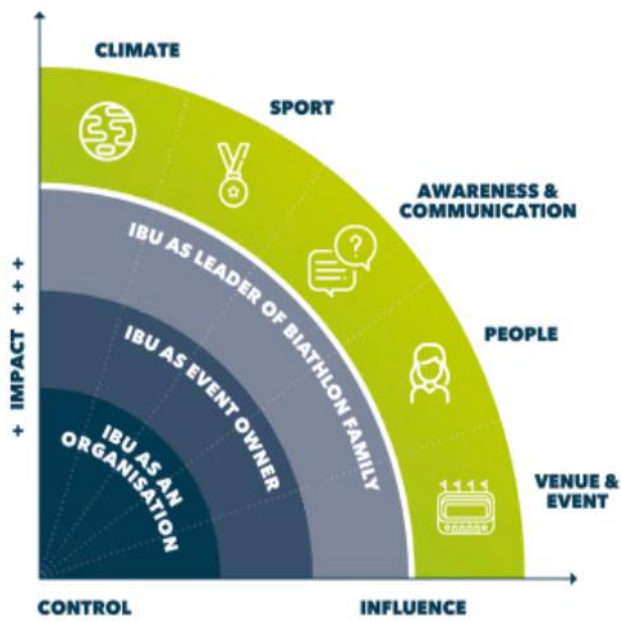
3.4.2 Sustainability strategy integrating athletes’ engagement: the case of the International Biathlon Union (IBU)

In 2020, the IBU launched its 2020-2030 sustainability strategy, with the goal of addressing a number of social and environmental issues with a focus on long-term behaviour change.

The strategy has been built around a sustainability framework that comprises three levels of stakeholders which are prioritised from the more direct to the less direct control area:

1. IBU's own activities.
2. Events organised by the IBU.
3. The wider sporting community.

Figure 36. IBU sustainability strategy



Source: [online image of IBU sustainability strategy], (n.d.), <https://bit.ly/3IdeGGT>.

Figure 37. Five areas of intervention



Source: IBU, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3abIHKF>.



Figure 38. IBU sustainability framework

CLIMATE

Reduce the carbon footprint of biathlon as a sport according to science-based targets (4.5% p.a.) to become climate neutral by 2030, and climate positive latest by 2034.

SPORT

Ensure environmental neutrality of the sport (air, water and soil).

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

Lead in advocating for climate action and sustainable development within the biathlon family and winter sports for the global fanbase.

PEOPLE

Become the leading winter sport in terms of good governance, gender equality and diversity.

VENUE & EVENT

Enable biathlon venues and events to have a long-term positive impact on their host communities and the environment. Ban single-use plastic and ensure 100% waste is re-used, recycled or composted.

Source: IBU, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3abIHKF>.

As the governing body for biathlon, the organisation aimed to position itself as a sustainability leader in the global biathlon family, and influence the wider sporting community, including national federations, their members, partners, sponsors, as well as the media and fans around the world.

In 2021, the IBU took a further step to support its sustainability strategy and commitment to establish itself as a leader in promoting sustainability in sport. It launched an athlete ambassador programme. As part of this, fifteen athletes from twelve different countries have been selected to support the union in its environmental and social commitments, to lead by example, and to raise awareness and educate the public within the IBU on three key development areas named 'sustainability', 'gender equality' and 'integrity'.

The athlete ambassador programme aims to support the IBU's positioning that sustainability is an everyday behaviour of everyone.

The athlete ambassadors are well-known athletes who are role models for their peers and the global biathlon family. They are engaged at a personal level first and have a genuine willingness to make a positive impact and lead change. In the scope of the ambassador programme, they have agreed to help the sport reach a wider community of fans and followers while using their voice to promote positive change in the sport industry and society.

Here are some quotes from the athlete ambassadors on why they joined the ambassador programme and what they hope to achieve in their new roles.

Hereafter are some athlete ambassadors' quotes on the reasons why they joined the Ambassador Programme and what they hope to achieve in their new roles.

Figure 39. Thierry Langer

THIERRY LANGER, TEAM BELGIUM

"Already during my chemistry studies, I was interested in environmental chemistry and the responsible use of resources. So I am interested in this topic on principle and I see the possibility of the biathlon family to become a leading figure in sport."

"I hope we can lead all the athletes, teams, and the public in becoming role models in sport events. This means setting new standards in the responsible use of resources for the world cup so that we can continue to practice the sport we love for a long time to come."



Source: IBU Sustainability Ambassadors, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3PIxelZ>.

Figure 40. Isabella Moon



ISABELLA MOON, TEAM AUSTRALIA

"I wanted to become a sustainability athlete ambassador because I am highly passionate about the sustainability of biathlon. This opportunity provides a leadership position where I am able to address issues such as climate change, hear from other athlete ambassadors, and encourage people from within Australia and the wider sporting community, to take action and ensure that Biathlon is a sport that continues to be enjoyed for a long time in the future."

"Through being a sustainability athlete ambassador, I hope to further understand issues of sustainability in Biathlon, to educate other athletes and fans about these issues, and to empower people to take action and create positive changes to protect the sport of Biathlon."

Source: IBU Sustainability Ambassadors, n.d., <https://bit.ly/3PIxelZ>.

3.4.3 How to effectively engage the athletes in a sustainability programme

The concept of engagement is key when addressing the notions of athlete/ambassador sustainability programme and must be considered in the development of such a

programme. It underlies how people relate to different contexts, topics or issues. In other words, the level of engagement of the athlete or ambassador has a direct impact on the success of the programme, the associated results and the engagement of the fans. But, for that, it requires recruiting the right athlete for the right cause.

The Sustainability Report (2018) highlights four important steps to address when recruiting athletes in sustainable development projects (Campelli, 2018).

1. Identify the right athletes

Athletes with the right values, a strong fanbase and credibility to talk about the cause they are representing (Campelli, 2018).

2. Convince the athletes to get involved

Show the value behind engaging positively in addressing environmental and social issues (for instance: it is a leverage for them to broaden their fanbase; to add value to potential sponsors, and also, to gain skills, experience, and network for eventually pursuing a career in sport for development once they retire (Campelli, 2018).

3. Train the athletes

It is essential to prepare the athletes for speaking on the subject. They must be knowledgeable and able to answer questions that are more or less delicate, depending on the sport (Campelli, 2018).

4. Measure their impact

One way to measure the impact is to follow the activity of the ambassadors on social networks and to analyse the responses received following publications. Another way is to ask the fans to donate for initiatives supported by the ambassadors (Campelli, 2018).

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