



Organisation

How to structure sport clubs to be green

Directives and Policies

The EU is in charge of developing policy and fostering cooperation and initiatives in support of sport across Europe.

The European Union did not have an official EU sport policy until the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. Until that milestone other EU policies had an impact on sport. The case-law of the European Court of Justice (ECJ), Bosman ruling (1995), stretching from Walrave (1974), and the Meca-Medina (2006) ruling have shaped the EU's influence on sport. The European Court of Justice made a ruling that sport, whenever constitutes an economic activity, has to comply with EU law.

The White Paper on Sport set the basics of the development of the EU sport policy, followed by the 2009 entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and adoption of three EU Work Plans for Sport by the Council of Ministers (2011-2014, 2014-2017 and 2017-2020).

In the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024) 2020/C 419/01⁴ one of the guiding objectives is to:

“Increase participation in sport and health-enhancing physical activity in order to promote an active and environment-friendly lifestyle, social cohesion and active citizenship”.

One of the Priority areas: “Socio-economic and environmental dimensions of sport” includes;

“**Green Sport**” with aims of:

- Education for sustainable sport,
- Environmentally friendly sports practice, facilities and events
- Evolution of sport and its practice in the light of climate change.

In 2001, the EU adopted a regulation allowing both public and private organisations to implement the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme ([EMAS](#)).

In 2000, the EU adopted a regulation on a revised Community [Eco-Label Award Scheme](#). The Commission has also adopted a non-binding handbook on environmental public procurement (“[Buying green!](#)”). This document is particularly pertinent for local authorities that are planning to award contracts for the construction or renovation of sport facilities.

Where plans or projects are necessary, e.g. urban development projects such as the construction of infrastructure for the organisation of sport events, competent authorities and concerned parties need to implement the [Environmental Impact Assessment Directive](#) and the [Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)⁵.

⁴ Resolution Of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42020Y1204\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:42020Y1204(01)) Last visited: 07.06.2023.

⁵ Commission of European Communities; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52007SC0935&from=FR> Last visited: 07.06.2023.

The EU's "Green Deal" and the European Green Deal's Just Transition Mechanism emphasise the need for sustainable practices across different sectors, including sports. The Sport Sector's can also benefit from Policy Measures under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and other programmes like Erasmus+.

The EU fosters the idea of improvement of the general well-being, overcoming societal issues (e.g., racism, social exclusion, gender inequality, etc.), and economic benefits through sport. Sport policy plays important role in the EU's external relations within three aspects:

- the societal role of sport;
- its economic dimension;
- the political and legal framework of the sports sector.

These objectives were endorsed in the first comprehensive initiatives on sport: the White Paper on Sport and the Pierre de Coubertin Action Plan, developed in 2007.

For further information of directives and policies at EU level with a special focus on the ones in Italy, Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Belgium, go to [Sport and Environment Training Package – Module 3](#).

Examples of international sport initiatives and stakeholders

- UNESCO - [International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport](#)
- United Nations - [Sports for Climate Action Framework](#)
- [Olympic Charter](#)
- [Youth Ideas Labs 2022](#)
- [SHARE - Green transition and sport at all levels](#)
- [European Olympic Committees](#) – EOC the umbrella body for Europe's 50 NOCs committed to spreading Olympic values and inspiring sporty lifestyles.
- [ENGSO](#) (European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation)
- [International Sport Organization](#)
- [Olympic Movement's Agenda 2020](#)
- [Green Sports Alliance](#)
- [Sport and Sustainability International](#)
- [World Sailing Sustainability Agenda 2030](#)
- [FIFA's Sustainability Strategy](#)

Stakeholders

Today, it is no longer possible to meet today's environmental challenges alone. An integrated approach is needed to achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda: sports associations and clubs must work together with organisations, companies, institutions, associations and the entire community to achieve a broader goal of respecting and protecting the environment and generating impact.

Organisations

Stakeholder engagement is a process used by any organisation to achieve a common outcome. Stakeholder engagement also enables an organisation to better identify and understand their sustainability concerns and expectations and respond to their actions and decisions.

The process is divided into 4 phases:

1. The first phase concerns the definition, identification and mapping of significant stakeholders, that are those social actors that are part of various organizations on the territory, establishing adequate indicators and sharing through listening to the sports management, the parents' group and other networked organizations.
2. The second phase consists of planning, i.e., devising the right strategies and choosing the right tools, considering all internal and external resources. At this stage, it is useful to anticipate possible risks related to stakeholder involvement in the operational phase, remembering that the process is never static but dynamic.
3. The third phase involves the development of a detailed plan for the operational management of stakeholder involvement. Three levels of involvement are envisaged for this phase: monitor, inform, collaborate based on the degree of stakeholder participation (from passive to active).
 - A. Monitor the social needs and demands of the organisations and the sports world, through digital tools;
 - B. Consult and inform the most relevant stakeholders, through reports and events to be advertised through social networks;
 - C. Involve and collaborate for the realisation of common projects on sports issues in harmony with the environment and other possible useful initiatives for liaison work;
4. The fourth and final phase consists of reflecting on the initiatives and evaluating what has been learnt in order to refine and improve it for use in subsequent stakeholder engagement processes.

Local Community

A community is a group of people who share common characteristics or interests, it is not only a part of territory, land or city. Examples of local community are:

- The school with families;
- Universities campus;
- Sport clubs with families;
- Groups of volunteers;
- Clerical communities;

A community can be so defined by interest in common, geographical location, age, occupation, affinity or other common ties, in our case a mission for environment and interest for sport.

Communities also include local authorities, that are citizens (or specific associations, organisations) who have a role in making decisions and having influence at a wider level.

For this reason, the strengthening of the role of each part of the local community can be fundamental to fit into a system of environmental impact of its own initiatives, as a sport organisation.

But in order to play this role to the full, it is necessary for each actor in the local communities to be able to develop networks and involve the local community:

Step 1: Involve community.

Community involvement is a dynamic and complex process that is often associated with different concepts such as "community participation", "mobilisation", "empowerment".

22

Step 2: Create new networks (or reinforce existing ones).

Networking requires involvement at all stages, especially in the definition of objectives and the planning of interventions. The process of networking is always bilateral: co-participation (such as, in the events organised by each part) and co-planning, for new initiatives or strategies.

Co-planning is not easy since requires experience, but it is one of the challenges to make all the protagonists feel part of the network.

The perspective is therefore collaboration among institutions, local authorities, environmental organisations, families, schools, citizens, civil and religious associations, that:

- create alliances
- collaborate
- participate
- co-plan
- share ideas

With sport clubs or organisations to carry out green initiatives or events but especially work on direction and strategies to generate environmental and sustainable impact.

Tips for sport organisations:

Step 1. Follow the social media pages of organisation active in environmental issues.

Step 2. Go to events, initiatives organised by them.

Step 3. Invite relevant citizens or associations during your initiatives.

Step 4. Start a collaboration: put the basis for alliances.

Step 5. Be persevering.

Supporting partners

In the light of the above, associations and organisations sensitive to issues of respect and environmental protection are able to make alliances on the territory and to propose co-projects to apply for funding to local authorities and private foundations that support initiatives in favour of sport and the environment.

In Europe there are a lot of financial programmes that allow funds for activities about the environment and ecological transition, which could be a useful strategy to transform one's own sports organisation in the light of greener addresses.

The search for funds, moreover, can regard a relationship with sponsors, that is private (usually companies) that economically support events, ideas, laboratories on environmental and sports issues.

One idea could be to strengthen contacts with some prominent national, regional or local association (such as UICN, Greenpeace, WWF and so on) to receive support, sharing ideas for joint initiatives or personal events planned by own sports association, in order to start the change and create new initiatives more environmentally friendly.

Remember: networking and partnership are essential in the funded projects!

Incentives and benefits

Going green is a path that requires different efforts depending on the sports club. For a small club that often does not have many resources, going green means overhauling everything. It can be quite expensive financially, and the argument that the cost of "doing it right" is not valid due to lack of resources, so it is good to examine what is gained by going green, beyond being more environmentally friendly. The benefits of going green are many and can be financially advantageous. There are many international and local incentives to go green. In the following, we will look at international, national and local incentives.

International

[UN Climate Change](#) launched an initiative called "sport for climate action" that aims at supporting and guiding sports actors in achieving global climate change goals. This gives sports organisations the opportunity to be leaders in the world's green movement. This will unite sports organisations and their communities to be an example for future generations. The UN asks organisations to commit, but offers no financial gain for adopting a green approach; however, it represents a public relations opportunity and can draw attention to sports organisations. If approached in the right way, it can be an opportunity to win over both domestic and international fans, which can create long-term revenue, as well as create a network of clubs that share the ideals of ecology and can help in the long run to have a close association with the club.

When you commit to going green you are becoming an example for others, both people and organisations. Going green is not a national problem or local problem, it is an international problem and people are more aware of it every day. Your change can line you with a bigger target group.

National

What help is available to go green varies quite a lot from country to country. The biggest impact nationally is, as stated before, that it is that you are a role model for. It depends on how large the organisation is; however, this can elevate the sports organisation to the public eye with their actions.

Local

At the local level, sports organisations can engage in various activities to create a positive impact within the community. Recognising that local communities play a vital role and that changes in mentality within the organisation can foster a sustainable environment, sports organisations can initiate transformative changes that go beyond the club itself.

Sports organisations can become agents of positive change within the local community. A change in mindset and attitude within the organisation can create a ripple effect, transforming the culture of the sports organisation and positively influencing the entire community. Through inclusive programmes, outreach efforts and partnerships, sports organisations can actively contribute to the betterment of the local community and inspire other organisations to embrace similar changes.