



Stepping Up the Game

Driving Sustainable Change through Sport

*A technical report on sport and its role
in sustainability based on the Sport
Sustainability Summit by the Spanish
Olympic Committee*

February 2024

#WeAreSustainableSport





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OPENING REMARKS

Reflecting on my journey since 2005, my vision was to change the dynamics of the Spanish Olympic Committee (COE). I envisioned reshaping the Committee into the home of all Spanish athletes – a place for their training, assistance, and an athlete service office. This goal became a reality through the creation of the ADO Programme, and it fills me with immense pride when I hear an athlete referring to COE as their home. Moreover, I wanted us to become a meeting ground for federations, and a vehicle for empowering our country through sports, turning Spain into a country of values.

However, Olympism is more profound than these structures and programs. It is a force that breaks down walls and overcomes obstacles. Olympism is a global movement that generates light and is the home of everyone who practices and feels sports.

It cannot be forgotten that the International Olympic Committee was created at a university and, even then, based its creation on three fundamental pillars: education, culture, and sports. The environment joined as a fourth pillar not long after, 129 years ago.

Currently, we strive to place sustainability at the core of our operations. Events like the Sport Sustainability Summit are pivotal in our growth, allowing us to engage exceptional speakers whose expertise, passion and dedication leaves a lasting impact. The essence of sustainability – addressing both present needs and future challenges – becomes unequivocally evident.

When people mention the biggest sporting events worldwide, they talk about the Olympic Games and, in second place, the FIFA World Cup. We have the privilege of contributing to the coordination, definition, and implementation of this bid, within which we need to articulate sustainability. This is our objective, our challenge.

However, we cannot face sustainability alone. We've sought guidance from Deloitte, scientific research leaders in sustainability, and other experts to be the basis for future organizations. This exciting challenge is what places us in a position that a few years ago seemed almost unthinkable. We have moved forward, recognised by the IOC, and now find ourselves in a position where emotions overcome us, while commitment keeps us doing the right thing and thinking of it 24h a day.

I firmly believe that our unity, collective dreams, and collaborative endeavours will propel Spain to unsurpassed heights. Together, we can achieve the extraordinary, shaping a future where Spain remains undefeated.

Alejandro Blanco, President
Spanish Olympic Committee



INTRODUCTION

On October 18 and 19, 2023, the Sport Sustainability Summit took place at the Spanish Olympic Committee's (Comité Olímpico Español – COE), headquarters in Madrid, Spain.

This year's edition consolidates as the IV Sport Sustainability Summit, which is organized annually by the Spanish Olympic Committee in collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), Banco Santander Spain (COE's global sustainability partner), and with the support of the Superior Council of Sports (Consejo Superior de Deportes – CSD). The annual objective of the Summit is to present to the sports community and its wide array of stakeholders the progress being made in the Spanish Olympic Committee's sustainability strategy, as well as showcase global sustainability trends, initiatives, and challenges in the sports industry.

The Summit included keynote speeches with national and international top-performing representatives, round tables, and workshops around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and innovative solutions to tackle climate change. This year's Summit also presented an exhibition show to showcase sustainable solutions for sport industry properties, from energy and water solutions to sustainable equipment or textiles.

During the two-day Summit, over 400 people attended, making the most of the interesting panels, keynote presentations, workshops, and plenty of opportunities for networking. The Summit covered themes such as biodiversity and regeneration, the pivotal role of science in sustainable practices, the organization of sustainable events, and the responsibilities of private investment in fostering sustainable sports, among others. The various ideas and efforts from key players and leaders in the world of sports and sustainability have set the stage for transformative actions that will have a lasting impact well after the Summit.

This report aims to present a holistic view of sustainability in the sport industry in the present, the short, mid, and long-term. The publication compiles three main sources of information:

- Results from the "Sport and Sustainability Questionnaire" filled out by professionals that attended the Sports Sustainability Summit (SSS)
- Conclusions obtained from presentations and roundtable discussions at the Sport Sustainability Summit
- Secondary Information, including case studies, academic publications, and industry reports.

The subsequent report has benefited from the collaboration of the Spanish Marketing Association (AMKT) and specifically the Sports Marketing Committee (CEMDE), led by Carlos Cantó – CEO of SPSP Consulting. The report is specifically tailored to address the Spanish and European markets. Hence, most findings, challenges, and solutions presented are from these regions. Nevertheless, the report's conceptualization considers global studies, current events, best practices, and findings to offer a comprehensive perspective.





Sport Sustainability Summit

#SomosDeporteSostenible

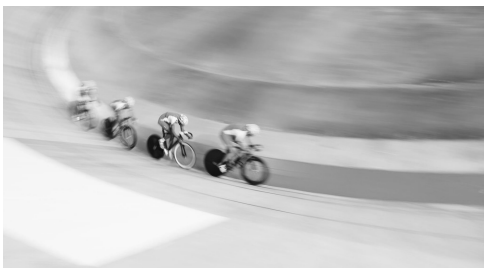


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Sustainability in Sport – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The United Nations has defined sustainability as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations, 1987). Nowadays, nearly 140 developing nations across the globe are actively pursuing strategies to address their development requirements. However, the increasing threat of climate change, social inequalities, and economic turbulence, are posing significant challenges in ensuring that current development doesn't negatively affect future generations. These challenges must be tackled in unison; creating collaborative strategies between entities and institutions that have the power to make a difference.



Given the Report's nature, it goes without saying that sport has the capacity to undertake these challenges, and make a positive impact on sustainability, encompassing all three dimensions – environmental, social, and economic. Entities, institutions, properties, and brands (among other stakeholders) must leverage the popularity and influence that sport can play in addressing some of the most pressing global issues.

Sport serves as a source of entertainment, fostering team spirit, and building a sense of community. Sport promotes physical health, well-being, discipline, and gratification. Sport events can draw large audiences and exert substantial societal influence. Notably, sport has evolved into a thriving industry, contributing 3.3% to Spain's GDP, and creating 235.400 jobs in Spain in 2022, representing a 1,2% YoY growth (Consejo COLEF, 2023).

The evolution of the traditional sport industry to a 'sportainment' industry – ran by professionalized management practices, made up of a wider range of fans, with focus on satisfaction and engagement leading to monetization, operating in a global scope, and through a 'phygital' manner – broadens opportunities. This framework has seen global adoption whilst remaining dynamic to meet consumer behaviour and demands. Hence, sport should be leveraged as a platform to advocate sustainability and drive progress across the three key sustainability dimensions: environmental, social, and economic. Sustainability isn't a trend that will diminish in importance, it is a necessity that is here to stay and will continue to grow in significance. Hence, anyone that is not willing to place sustainability in the core of their business strategy, will eventually lose operating capabilities.

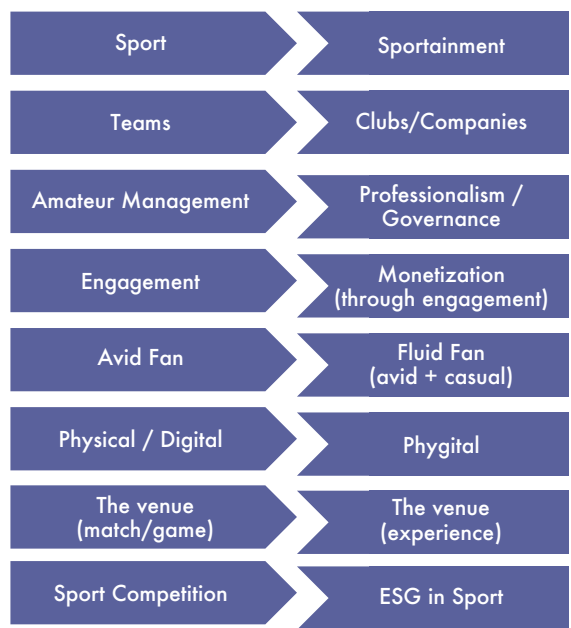
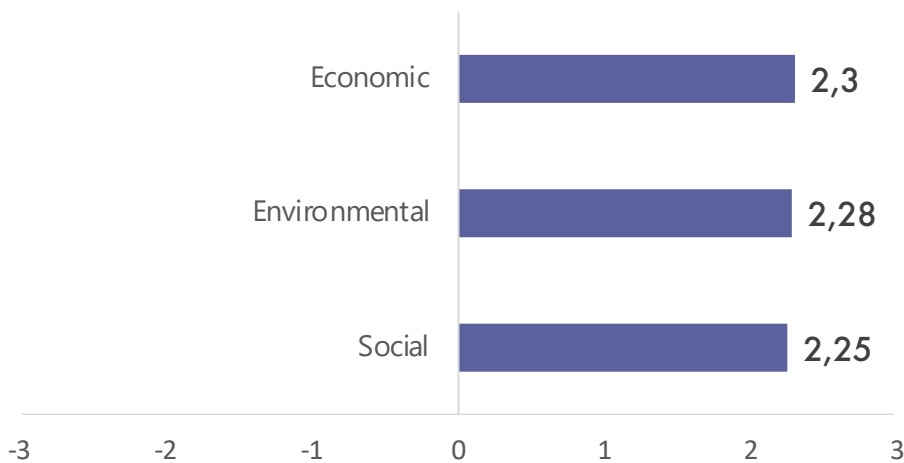


Figure: Sport industry trends (partial) elaborated by SPSG Consulting

Assistants at the 4th edition of the Sport Sustainability Summit, organized by the Spanish Olympic Committee, were asked to estimate on a scale of -3 (maximum decrease) to 3 (maximum increase), the degree of evolution regarding the importance of sustainability for stakeholders in the sports sector in the following 5-10 years. The results were very clear: sustainability is no longer an option – it is a requirement.

Sustainability Axes



The intricate interconnection among the three pillars of sustainability underscores the vital need for coherence and balance between these dimensions. It is not solely about individual progress within each pillar, but about their collective advancement in sync. The graph vividly illustrates this essential integration.

For instance, environmental regeneration relies on both economic development and social cohesion. These pillars are interdependent, influencing and enhancing one another's growth.



The following sections present a deep dive into each of the three pillars, their importance, challenges, solutions, and best practices from sport stakeholders.

Sustainability – THE THREE PILLARS

i. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Economic Sustainability refers to the capacity of an economy to maintain and improve its overall well-being over time. It involves the ability to manage resources, promote economic growth, and ensure that present and future generations will encounter a stable and prosperous economic environment. To reach economic stability, sport stakeholders must carry out responsible resource allocation, financial transparency, and a qualified governance, among other aspects.

The European sports sector has experienced a high influx of investments in the past decade. Driven by the professionalization and commercialization of the industry, while at the same time propelling it, investor interest in sport is at an all-time high. Moreover, rights holders aim to leverage these investments to finance expansion strategies, while investors are actively pursuing the integration of sports, technology, and entertainment portfolios (Deloitte, The Future of Sport, 2023). Notably, over 220 Merger & Acquisition transactions were completed in the sports sector in 2022. 52% of worldwide transactions were done in Europe, and 32% in the USA. (Deloitte, The Future of Sport, 2023). This trend is also applicable to brands that are looking to diversify their sponsorship portfolio.

In May 2022, **Real Madrid C.F.** established a long-term partnership with **Sixth Street**, securing €360 million allocated for investment across the club's diverse activities. In return, Sixth Street gained exclusive participation rights in new business opportunities of the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium for the following 20 years (Sixth Street, 2022).

In August 2022, **RedBird Capital** announced the signing of the acquisition of Serie A club, **AC Milan**, for a total of €1.2 billion (AC Milan, 2022).

In August 2023, **Qatar Sport Investment** acquired the **World Padel Tour** to form a unified Premier padel Tour under the governance of the International Padel Federation (World Padel Tour, 2023).

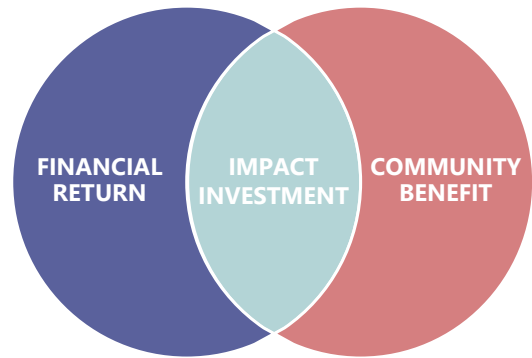
In 2022, **EA Sports** became sponsor of the **UEFA Women's Football** and established the 'Starting XI Fund', a US \$11 million Accelerator Fund intended to propel the growth of the game. This commitment aims to enhance the partnership and advance women's football (EA Sports, 2022).

In January 2023, **Viacom** paid US \$116 million for the media rights of the **Women's Indian Premiere League** (WIPL) for five years (SportsPro, 2023).

In September 2023, **Ares Management** invested US \$500 million in **Chelsea FC** (ESPN, 2023).

Significant shifts and trends in financial markets are reshaping the landscape of financing sports projects. In the past 20-30 years, a revolutionary transformation has occurred in the financial market, marked by the dominance of institutional investment capital over individual investors. This shift has far-reaching implications, introducing changes in rules and regulations. There is a growing emphasis on responsible investments, particularly driven by younger generations, advocating for considerations beyond monetary profits, such as the environmental and societal impacts of investments.

The concept is understood as 'Impact Investment', signifying a departure from profitability being the sole determinant in financial market logic. Factors such as computable positive social or environmental impact are key measures for Impact Investment. Currently, the size of the impact investment market value stands at USD 1.164 trillion in assets under management (AUM), showcasing the immense potential for sports to enter this market, provided that the projects bring tangible value to the table (Global Impact Investing Network, 2022).



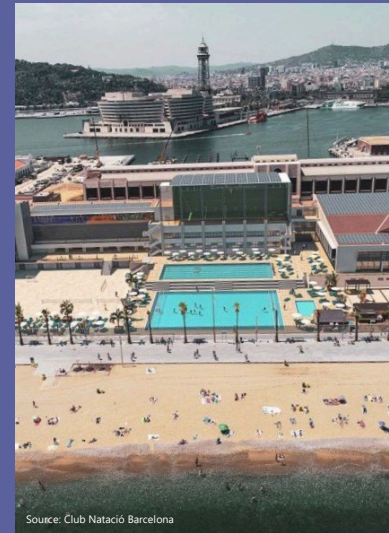
In response, regulatory bodies, organizations, and governments have been actively involved in establishing new regulations aimed at fostering a sustainable future, focusing on environmental, social, and economic pillars. These efforts extend to compelling investors to adhere to new legislation, transitioning from SDGs to the more detailed and stringent Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) requirements and rules outlined by the Paris Agreement on the Environment. Despite these advancements, challenges persist in measuring certain aspects, particularly social impact. The European Commission is addressing this by developing new regulations to establish specific metrics, standardize benchmarks and tools, and provide a taxonomy of industries with varying risk levels for environmental and social impacts.

Compared to two decades ago, the market is now more regulated and standardized, with clear goals for both capital managers and corporations to collaborate on. This convergence is shaping the emerging world of impact investment, wherein investments serve a dual purpose—achieving economic returns and meeting ESG criteria. The collaboration between private and public funding is intricate, involving numerous stakeholders and legal considerations. For mutual benefit, it is essential to develop dual-purpose projects that focus on social and environmental aspects while ensuring profitability. Projects of this realm are already emerging in Spain, supported by international investment.



As an example, Club Natació Barcelona (CNB) – Barcelona Swimming Club, in English – has recently announced the allocation of EU 1,8 € Million to modernize its sport facilities. The club will use this amount from the European Union’s Next Generation Program to start its technological efficiency project as part of the club’s remodelling project: CNB S-XXI. The remodeling of the club is supported by an investment of EU 12 €Million from the Mexican group Green Track (2playbook, 2023).

Sustainability is placed at CNB’s core strategic axis, with the premise that economic viability and sustainability work together. As an example, part of CNB’s project involves the renovation of their historical 1922 outdoor swimming pool to reuse existing materials and drive performance, enjoyment, and accessibility. As Xosé Carlos Fernández, CEO of Club Natació Barcelona, shared during the IV Sport Sustainability Summit, the water sustainability project is based on four pillars. First, providing the club with pools and water infrastructure of quality to compete at the highest level. Secondly, complete mobility and accessibility across the club. The third point involves opening the swimming pool to the outside public, to become more permeable to the public and promoting co-existence with CNB; giving back to citizens and allowing everyone to enjoy the installations. Finally, CNB wants to combat the water scarcity issue by implementing measure to ensure drinking water in its facilities is preserved and cared for (Fernández, 2023).



Source: Club Natació Barcelona

CNB’s remodelling project is a clear example of Impact Investment, as it looks for financial viability through sustainable practices.

Real Madrid FC is another excellent example of a sustainable club, and its work tackling the three sustainability axes has placed them on the podium of the Brand Finance Ranking of most sustainable sport properties. The club is also in top positions of the ranking on best governance. In the IV Sport Sustainability Summit, José María García, HR Director and Sustainability Manager at Real Madrid, stated that *“the success in governance is mostly attributed to the intense focus on compliance with the recent exponential growth of regulatory frameworks. Real Madrid has a clearly defined strategy to abide by these. We have a moral responsibility to abide by the law, pay taxes, fight corruption, and ensure the wellbeing of their stakeholders (García, 2023).”*

Real Madrid’s remodelling of Santiago Bernabéu champions sustainability: reusing structures, partnering with Ecoembes for recycling, innovating in gardening for eco-friendly maintenance, collecting rainwater, and repurposing old stadium elements through the 'Memorabilia' project. Furthermore, the club has adhered to the movement of becoming a multifunctional stadium, designed to host various events and functions beyond football matches.



Revenue Diversity

Event Variety

Innovative Amenities

Community Engagement

The multifunctional nature of stadiums provides numerous benefits. Firstly, it enables revenue generation beyond football matches, offering opportunities for diverse events that contribute to the financial sustainability of the club while creatively engaging sponsors. Secondly, these stadiums cater to a wide array of events, from concerts to American football matches, maximizing their utilization and versatility. Additionally, they are designed with innovative facilities and amenities, enhancing the overall experience for fans and attendees. Finally, by hosting events attractive to diverse audiences, multifunctional stadiums foster widespread community engagement and support.

Remodelling a club requires a substantial initial investment, which might not be accessible to all properties. Nonetheless, when executed effectively, it becomes a form of Impact Investment, yielding economic returns, aligning with ESG criteria, and – essential to sport properties – enhancing the overall fan experience.

Good governance is an essential pillar when discussing sustainability—economic, social, and environmental. It is shaped by a company's senior management, organizational culture, control, and compliance metrics, all of which must function transparently within legal frameworks. Governance and compliance need to align with present-day business realities, encompassing both financial and non-financial governance aspects.

The board of directors assumes a pivotal role in a company's success. Efficient boards serve as not only the CEO's safety net but also as drivers of the company's survival. Therefore, they should develop and share a long-term organizational goal to maximize value. Hence, a well-prepared board, possessing extensive internal company knowledge and external market understanding, is indispensable. Moreover, it is important to include advisors that are external to the company, to have an unbiased and detached perspective.

Considering the increasing significance of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG), boards should prioritize incorporating ESG factors and metrics. To enforce compliance, and in response to the growing importance of sustainability for investors and stakeholders, more companies are integrating ESG objectives into the incentives for top company executives. Such incentives not only enhance shareholder value but also foster a longer-term focus among executive directors, elevate the company's value, and increase the adoption of environmental and social incentives within the firm.

"The success in governance is mostly attributed to the intense focus on compliance with the recent exponential growth of regulatory frameworks." J.M.García

ii. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental Sustainability refers to the responsible use and conservation of the Earth's natural resources to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves making choices and taking actions that consider the long-term health of ecosystems, biodiversity, and the well-being of the planet. This concept encompasses a broad range of practices, policies, and strategies designed to address environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity.

Sport is not alien to the environment, interacting in various ways and significantly impacting biodiversity



When asked their top concerns, Gen Z listed “Climate Change” as their second most pressing concern, behind “cost of living” and prior to “unemployment” and “mental health of my generation (Deloitte, Deloitte Global Gen Z Survey, 2022).” Furthermore, the study found that the vast majority (90%) of Gen Zs trying to reduce their personal impact on the environment. However, they don’t believe business and governments are as strongly committed, and many are pushing their own employers to act sustainably (Deloitte, Deloitte Global Gen Z Survey, 2022). It is important to note that Gen Z will soon surpass Millennials as the most populous generation on earth, with more than one-third of the world’s population counting themselves Gen Z. Hence, stakeholders must act responsibly if they want to remain attractive to fans and users.

The Spanish **Olympic Committee**, together with Banco Santander and FEMP, has inaugurated in Pamplona the first Spanish Olympic Forest (Bosque Olímpico Español) in order to compensate the carbon footprint caused by the Spanish Team in the Tokyo2020 Olympic and Paralympic games (COE, 2023).

SailGP has established a parallel ranking, the ‘Impact League’, that solely evaluates sustainability and inclusion KPIs and awards contestants accordingly (SailGP, 2023).

World Triathlon is constantly pushing local authorities to improve water quality because their standards for water quality are high and specific. They are currently committed to helping clean the Senn, not only for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, but as a legacy project for citizens (World Triathlon, 2023).

Coordinated by the **Spanish Olympic Committee**, the project ‘Green Flame’ presents a gamified digital carbon footprint measuring tool for sports. The project is being financed by the European Commission and has the support of the Portuguese and Romanian NOC, with the supervision of the IOC and IOC Young Leaders. (Europapress, 2023)

Real Betis Balompié’s project ‘Forever Green’ encompasses a wide variety of sustainability projects, tackling various issues such as mobility, recycling, climate change, diversity and inclusion. (Forever Green, 2023)

McLaren has substituted the carbon fibre seat in its F1 car with one crafted from renewable textile fibers (flax). This alternative guarantees a 75% reduced carbon footprint, is 9% lighter, and provides superior vibration damping. (McLaren, 2020)

LEWaterpolo, Spain’s first sustainable league, secured the Bureau Veritas COE seal. On economic matters, it seeks to help clubs devise ways to reduce costs, particularly in water, energy, and human resources. Environmentally, the league prioritizes exploring alternative energy sources to heat their swimming pools (LEWaterpolo, 2023).

The **Ladies European Tour** (LET) promotes environmental sustainability through the project ‘Celebrating the Green’ presented by Dow. The initiative amplifies the positive work occurring across the tour, providing a communication platform with stakeholders, and promoting green practices and leadership among their promoters (LET, 2020).

At **Bàsquet Girona**, all activities are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the club’s governance structure. The commitment is such that before the start of the season, they involve players and have them decide which SDGs they want to focus on throughout the season (Bàsquet Girona, 2023).

In addition to the aforementioned efforts, it's noteworthy to highlight the continuous involvement of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in fostering sustainability strategies within the entire Olympic Movement. Julie Duffus, IOC Senior Manager in Olympic Movement Sustainability, highlighted during the Sport Sustainability Summit that *"the IOC collaborates with 205 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and engages thousands of athletes worldwide, each with varying capacities, sizes, and resources."* Moreover, the IOC is studying each sport individually, acknowledging their impacts in different environments.

Sports in direct contact with the environment are urged to become biodiversity conservation stewards because it affects their environment, training grounds, and competitions. Collaboration among institutions, properties, and brands is necessary to implement these strategies, hence creating partnerships that yield positive returns and ignite a sense of purpose.



We are currently living in the era of 'profit with purpose'. As Enrique Arribas, president of the Marketing Association of Spain and former VP Director of Brand and Corporate Marketing at Santander, quotes in his book 'Marcas ConFianza', *"a company that neglects to fulfil its business mission excellently and generate profit for its shareholders is as untrustworthy as one operating in the market without regard for ethical and responsible practices. We live in the era of 'profit with purpose'."* Consequently, in the development of business and sponsorship strategies, it's crucial to align with brands and properties that prioritize sustainability at their core.

Evolution of the Importance of Environmental Sustainability



Figure: Environmental Sustainability in Sport Marketing, published by the Spanish Marketing Association in July 2022. The graph answers the question "on a scale from -3 (maximum negative evolution / maximum decrease) to +3 (maximum positive evolution - maximum growth), estimate the degree of evolution of the importance over the next 5 years of environmental sustainability in sports marketing."

As an example, the Association of Spanish Handball Clubs (ASOBAL) and Plenitude, an energy company owned by Eni, have a strategic sponsorship agreement that links both brands until the 2024/2025 season. With this sponsorship, Plenitude wants to support the handball league in its commitment to a responsible and sustainable use of energy. ASOBAL, which has signed the United Nations' Sport for Climate Action, is committed to modifying the practices of its associated clubs, professionals, players, coaches, and equipment through the 'Huella 0' project. The goal is to become Spain's first professional league with a zero-carbon footprint.

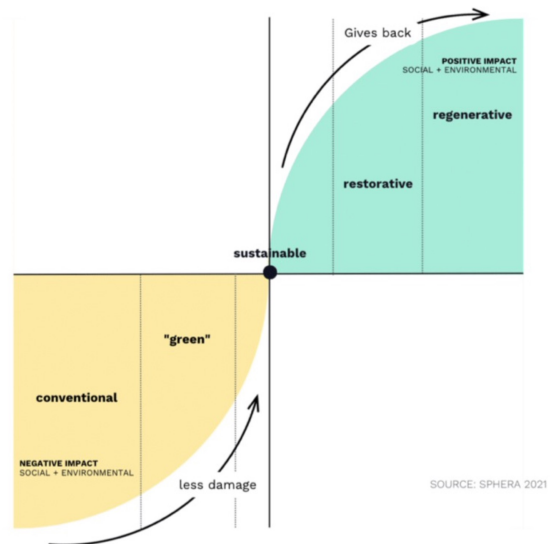
Sponsorship partnerships enable both properties and brands to create significant value and contribute to society. As presented in the study 'Environmental Sustainability in Sport Marketing', experts foresee a rising trend regarding properties including more assets related to sustainability for sponsors to activate. Simultaneously, sponsoring brands are expected to increasingly engage with those brands that prioritize these aspects (CEMDE-AMKT, 2022).

As Manuel Parga, Marketing, Sustainability and HR Director at the Spanish Olympic Committee, recently stated, *"Nobody is 100% sustainable, but we strive to ensure that sporting events reduce their carbon footprint. Achieving a completely zero carbon footprint would be sustainable, yet impossible; what we can do is minimize it as much as possible and compensate for what cannot be reduced through green carbon (reforestation) and blue carbon (sea reforestation) (Parga, 2023)."*



Consequently, organizers of renowned events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024 are diligently collaborating to achieve carbon neutrality in the construction of infrastructure and sports operations. The Paris 2024 Games intend to avoid creating infrastructures that become white elephants. Construction models will aim to have the least impact and a positive effect on the biodiversity of their environment (Parga, 2023).

A new trend is arising regarding environmental sustainability; it is time to talk about a change of paradigm and aim towards the regeneration of natural capital. Regenerative sustainability is not simply about reducing harm or reversing damage, it is a net-positive approach that reconciles ecological, social, economic, and political spheres, contributing positive, mutually reinforcing, enduring benefits to human and ecological systems (Royal Roads University, 2023). As Carlos Duarte, Professor of Marine Science, and speaker at the Sport Sustainability Summit presents assures *"sustainability means neutrality and balance, and the current state of the planet requires for more than balance to recover. A positive, restorative, regenerative impact is necessary (Duarte, 2023)."*



Nowadays, there are already successful case studies that demonstrate the commitment of sports properties to biodiversity regeneration, exemplified by properties like Xtreme-E and Formula-E. Previously, the motorsport racing industry was highly polluting due to its nature, but has undergone a transformation. In the case of the mentioned properties, their commitment to regenerative impact is evident in every location where they race. They have reintroduced a nearly extinct frog in Atacama, planted trees in the Amazon rainforest, rewilded a river in Scotland, and even rewilded a coal mine after completing racing activities there. Another example is Professor Carlos Duarte's collaboration with Iberostar Hotels to create the project 'Waves of Change', dedicated to repairing coastal dunes, coral reefs, and green spaces (Duarte, 2023).

**"THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PLANET REQUIRES MORE THAN BALANCE TO RECOVER"
A POSITIVE, RESTORATIVE, REGENERATIVE IMPACT IS NECESSARY. "**

Notably, the investment in regenerative activities exceeds that of the actual competition itself. Nonetheless, not investing today in sustainability, means not being able to operate in the near future. Although the road to acquiring a regenerative mindset is complex, Professor Carlos Duarte has devised a simple, clear plan and bases to regenerative sport :

1. Ensuring sport is healthy for people and planet
2. Focusing on specific SDGs, these being 2-Zero Hunger; 12-Responsible Consumption and Production; 16-Peace, Justice and a Strong Institution, 17-Partnerships for the Goals. Consequently, biodiversity increases, and the achievement several other SDGs is possible (such as 3-Good Health and Well-being, 5-Gender Equality, 8-Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9-Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 10-Reduced Inequalities, 11-Sustainable Cities, 13-Climate Action, 14-Life Below Water, and 15-Life on Land)

In conclusion, the intersection of sustainability and sports heralds a new era of responsible action within the industry – where regenerative actions are gaining great importance. As stakeholders increasingly prioritize environmental responsibility, the transformative power of sports to drive positive change becomes more evident. Embracing sustainability not only enhances brand value but also fosters a future where sport serve as a catalyst for global sustainability efforts.



iii. SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

As defined by United Nations Global Impact, Social Sustainability involves recognizing and handling the positive and negative effects a business has on individuals. The quality of a company's connections and

interactions with its stakeholders is pivotal. Whether directly or indirectly, companies affect what happens to employees, workers in the value chain, customers, and local communities. Proactive and responsible management of these impacts is crucial (UN Global Impact, 2023). Given its influence and power in society, sports must harness its impact to concentrate on social responsibility and inclusivity.

Sport has the capacity to transcend beyond the day of the sporting event; consequently, it must be used as a tool to improve not only the present but, above all, the future. Clubs, athletes, and sports organizations are increasingly embracing the crucial role that sports play in society to create greater well-being for all. These projects are constantly growing, both at a national and international level.

The **Adidas** Breaking Barriers Project is a pan-European gender equality program that focuses on enhancing the sports industry's capacity in Europe to better serve women and girls. In collaboration with experts in gender equality and sports such as Common Goal, Women Win, and Soccer Without Borders, the project aims to positively impact the lives of 50,000 women and girls by 2025 (Adidas, 2023).

Naomi Osaka teams up with Modern Health to destigmatize mental health and boost resources in underserved communities. As the lead advocate for Modern Health Community, Osaka crafts tailored meditation tools, organizes mental health events using sport for girls, and trains underrepresented providers to improve access to mental health care in marginalized regions (Modern Health, 2021).

Real Betis Balompié, in partnership with ONCE, has launched an application through Moovit to facilitate stadium access for visually impaired individuals on match day (ONCE, 2023).

The **Homeless World Cup**, an annual global football tournament, aids those vulnerable to social exclusion in overcoming poverty. The first edition took place in Graz in 2003 with 144 players from 18 nations. Since then, it has visited 15 cities worldwide, has grown to accommodate 64 teams with a total of over 500 players (Homeless World Cup, 2023).

Since 2013, the **Gasol Foundation** has been committed to eradicating childhood obesity under the banner of 'Zero Childhood Obesity.' They achieve this by researching, developing and implementing health promotion programs, and raising public awareness (Gasol Foundation, 2023).

The **Spanish Olympic Committee** has included the PLUS category in its sustainability seals. This category consists of recognizing and valuing the social actions that a sport event can implement in connection with the celebration of the event and around SDG#1 and SDG#2: donation of a percentage of the turnover to social causes (NGOs), food collection program, transfer of spaces to NGOs to promote their purposes during the event, etc. (COE 2021).

In addition to the efforts by brands and properties, it's crucial to highlight athletes' contributions to social sustainability. As prominent figures in society, athletes possess significant influence and visibility, making them powerful advocates for social sustainability. Their platform allows them to inspire and influence fans, particularly the younger generation, towards positive social behaviours and causes. By leveraging their broad reach through media and sponsorships, athletes can amplify messages, raise awareness, and drive action for social change. As Sergio Garrote, elite paracycling athlete and paralympic medallist, declares "*the responsibility of an athlete as a social 'icon' already entails, implicitly, a sustainability axis* (Garrote, 2023)." Moreover, the Spanish cyclist highlights how sports can directly contribute to eight of the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, with indirect connections to the remaining nine.

Nonetheless, achieving this requires communication between stakeholders of the sports sector and the different disciplines. As Marc Gasol, elite basketball player, NBA Champion and President of Bàsquet Girona, states "*sustainability, adding value to the sport, and mental health improvement, occur faster and better when everyone is coordinated and included* (Gasol, 2023)." The exchange of dialogue fosters wellbeing, the sharing of values, and the dissemination of knowledge. Extending this practice transversally could greatly benefit all stakeholders in sports.

At the Sport Sustainability Summit, workshops engaging key sports industry stakeholders were conducted to ensure the event's impact went beyond mere information and awareness. Under the guidance of Rocío Rivera, Head Coach at High Performance Inc., these workshops focused on Diversity and Inclusion, and Social Action and Sustainability, among other topics.

The 'Diversity and Inclusion' workshop addressed the commitment of sports organizations to the diversity of participants in sporting events and in the sports sector in general, as well as the inclusion of minority groups, regardless of their background, race, gender, sexual orientation and identification or disability. Through the method of 'Open Innovation' participants contributed to the elaboration of the strategy at the Spanish Olympic Committee to be implemented.. Key insights from this session included:

- Ensuring equality of conditions between male and female athletes
- Creating means for people with disabilities to integrate into the sports community.
- Acknowledging and rewarding not only sporting achievements but also values.
- Recognizing sport as a tool for social inclusion.
- Emphasizing the enforcement of existing legislation.
- Designing professional plans for Paralympic athletes, steering away from "paternalistic" attitudes (although well-intentioned) and providing financial support.



The 'Social Action' workshop addressed the commitment of sports organizations and athletes to sustainability, highlighting new and ongoing partnerships. It specifically focused on combating child poverty in an altruistic way (linked to SDG 1 and 2) and incorporating the criteria for obtaining the Spanish NOC (COE) Seal of Sustainable Sports Entity and Event. Key highlights from this workshop included:

- Encourage adolescent girls to find joy and social connection through sport to combat dropout rates.
- Advocate for gender equality in sport programs across media platforms.
- Involve active athletes in ongoing processes rather than one-time actions. Hence, enhancing impact when, for example, the adolescent girl is an active subject and participates.
- Evaluate programs based on established objectives.
- Establish Olympic ambassadors (athletes pursuing education), to support disadvantaged groups in multifaceted roles.
- Facilitate funding through sporting events (such as marathons, etc.).
- Provide visibility to young refugee athletes through the COE.
- Receive local support, without leaving the family environment of the minority athlete.
- Training coaches to work effectively in disadvantaged environments.

Sport holds significant power in addressing prevalent societal issues. It serves as a platform for advocating social causes, promoting inclusivity, equality, and justice. Discrimination in any form is detrimental; therefore, social sustainability aims to foster cohesion and inclusion by addressing various inequalities. When effectively implemented, sport can leave diverse social legacies in society, including fostering health and well-being, building community cohesion, enhancing education, influencing culture, and contributing to economic growth through major sporting events and organizations.



The workshop “sustainable procurement”, addressed the reality of the consumption and procurement model of sports organizations and sporting events. The workshop’s focus was on Sustainable Development Goal #12 and the need to define and implement sustainable purchasing policies within organizations. Current European regulations are rapidly advancing in legislation addressing the challenges of the circular economy. Despite the growing importance of creating a sustainable industry, and the efforts made by stakeholders to provide sustainable goods and services to the sports sector, the key lies in the behaviour of the final consumer. Workshop participants concluded the following points:

- **Engage all stakeholders, especially athletes:** The need for comprehensive involvement was recognized, with a particular emphasis on the voice and experience of athletes.
- **Hire local suppliers with local production:** The importance of minimizing the impact of transportation emissions by opting for local suppliers was highlighted, allowing for greater control over the manufacturing process.
- **Recycle leftover items:** The need to implement effective recycling practices to manage excess items sustainably was underscored.
- **Use sustainable procurement as a transparent marketing tool:** It was proposed to leverage the sustainable approach as a transparent and effective marketing tool to strengthen corporate image.
- **Communicate the pride of doing things right at the corporate level:** The importance of internal and external communication to share sustainable achievements as a central element of COE personnel identification with the organization was emphasized.

Scope 3 of the carbon footprint covers all inputs from organizations and events and is where the largest percentage of the carbon footprint is generated. Hence the need to address user behaviour in their consumption. It should be about consuming only what is needed (consume quantities responsibly), using products and services whose production process and availability to the end consumer emit the least carbon footprint (consume sustainable products), minimizing generated waste (which can be the product itself or the product packaging), and reusing products or giving them a second life are some of the aspects to be addressed.

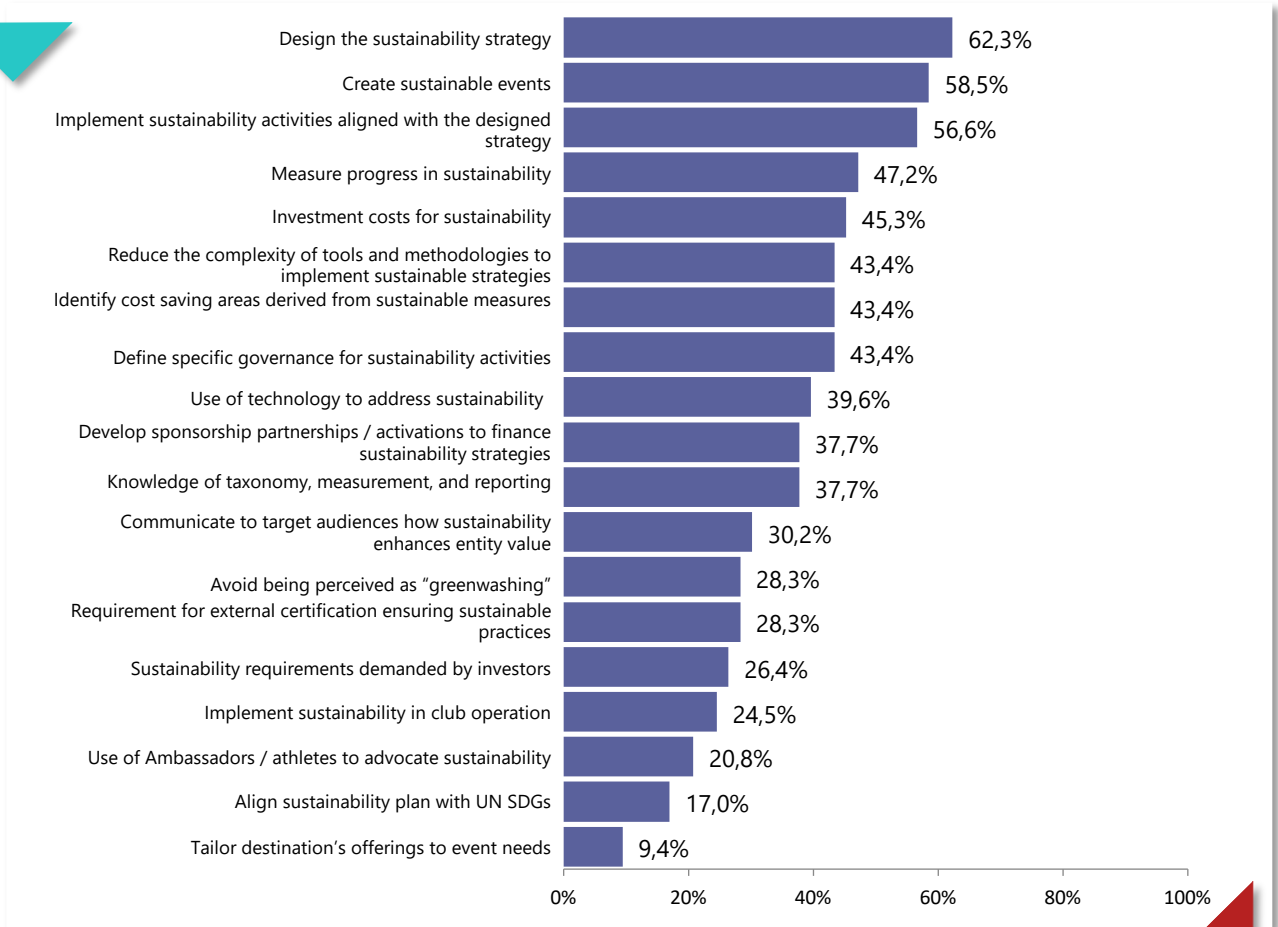
Fortunately, the sports industry is making efforts to offer sustainable products and services to the sector, thanks to increasingly demanding regulations in this regard and, on the other hand, certain brands that have seen sustainable procurement as a new market. In this context, the goal of airlines to achieve the decarbonization of their sector by 2050 through SAF (Sustainable Aviation Fuel) is noteworthy. This objective is crucial given the high emissions from air mobility in the sports sector.





Challenges & Barriers – OVERVIEW

Assistants at the Sport Sustainability Summit were asked to indicate, from a determined list, the seven aspects they believed were the major challenges in the sports sector regarding sustainability (economic, social, and environmental). The results were the following:



THE SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

According to survey respondents, designing the sustainability strategy is the most significant challenge. However, this task stands as the cornerstone for building a sustainable future and is directly interconnected with the other presented challenges. It marks the initial milestone in designing a framework capable of achieving the outlined objectives. As Deloitte states, *"true sustainable transformation calls for a strategic approach to determine the right mix of goals, measures, management, and governance systems (Deloitte, 2023)."* To craft a sustainable strategy, it's crucial to conduct a thorough internal analysis of capabilities. This process lays the groundwork for creating a roadmap to achieve specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based goals (SMART). With these goals in place, forming partnerships and fostering collaborations becomes essential to reaching milestones. Finally, organizations must place special focus on reporting and regulations, to track targets and evaluate results.



Recent years have witnessed an exponential growth in regulatory requirements regarding sustainability. Although the EU Taxonomy applied to the Sports Ecosystem is complex, these strict frameworks provide clarity on expectations and structure for reporting. Amidst organizational challenges, more companies focus on assisting firms in adhering to complex frameworks, leading to a stronger overall sustainable impact.

Implementing sustainability activities aligned with the designated strategy also emerges as a significant challenge, addressing both conceptual and economic aspects. Survey respondents underline the investment magnitude and associated costs of these actions as additional barriers. However, avoiding sustainability investment jeopardizes future operational capacities. Despite initial financial demands, successful execution yields economic, social, and environmental returns. Moreover, investment can be mitigated through partnerships that can help finance sustainability initiatives. Notably, sponsors are increasingly interested by partnerships extending beyond brand visibility. Reports like 'The Sports Sponsorship Barometer' by SPSG Consulting underscore the rising significance of 'improving brand reputation,' 'brand prestige,' and 'brand value association'.

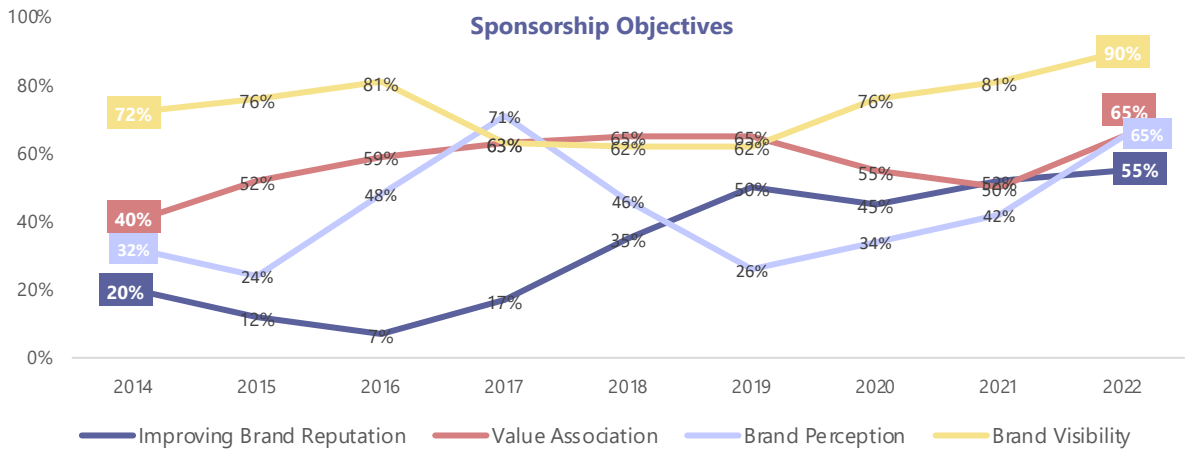
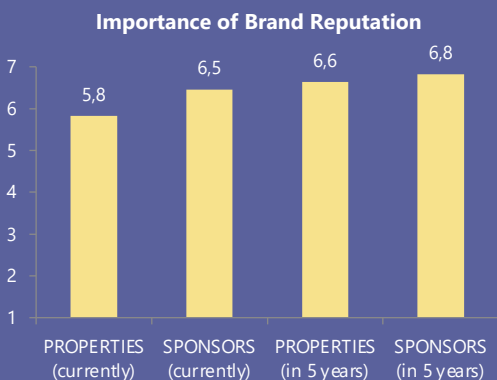


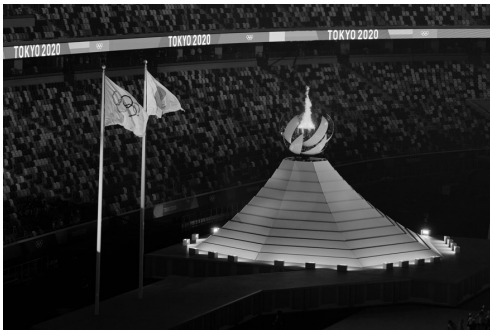
Figure: Sports Sponsorship Barometer by SPSG Consulting – recompilation of yearly results from 2014 to 2022, answering the question "most important sponsorship objectives" (multi-response). Note: the figure only presents the partial results, with the objective of highlighting the growth of selected elements.

The Spanish Marketing Association's study on 'Environmental Sustainability in Sport Marketing' emphasizes the rising importance of brand reputation for both sponsors and sport properties. Current perceptions already exert significant influence over consumer choices and loyalty, making a robust sustainability strategy essential.



This trend is projected to intensify in the coming five years as consumers seek authentic sustainability commitments from brands. Thus, for sponsors and sport properties, authentic sustainability initiatives are no longer optional but strategic necessities. Visible actions like reducing carbon footprints, embracing renewable energy or promoting sustainable events can position them as responsible and forward-thinking entities, enhancing their brand reputation.

Figure: Environmental Sustainability in Sport Marketing, published by the Spanish Marketing Association in July 2022. The graph answers the question "indicate, on a scale of 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum) the importance of brand reputation for properties and sponsors, currently and in 5 years."

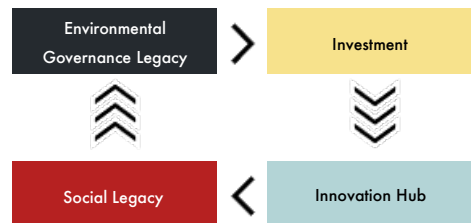


CREATION OF SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

The image of a sport event holds immense importance in the public eye. With sustainability at the top of the minds of consumers, acting in a sustainable manner is crucial. The existing dichotomy of mass sports events suggests that they are economically beneficial but traditionally very wasteful. Nevertheless, this can be tackled through the implementation of sustainable practices.

In October 2023, the FIFA Council announced the FIFA 2030 World Cup will be hosted by Spain, Portugal, and Morocco in a joint bid. Additionally, Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay will host three games given the Centenary Celebration. This decision extends the 2030 FIFA World Cup across three continents and six countries. While it envisions to *“invite the entire world to join in the celebration of the beautiful game, the centenary and the FIFA World Cup itself”* (FIFA, 2023) this expansive event raises concerns about the environmental cost, particularly regarding travel-related emissions. Hence, it is essential that stakeholders and collaborators implement practices that can mitigate the environmental impact.

Antonio Laranjo, Managing Director of the FIFA 2030 World Cup Bid Spain, Portugal and Morocco, presented the sustainability strategy at the Sport Sustainability Summit. The strategy – 2030 Bid Pillars – is made up of four intertwined pillars, with a dominant focus on society and its social legacy.



The Environmental and Governance Legacy pillar, owing to its significance, involves a partnership with Deloitte and the Spanish Olympic Committee to address crucial elements like aligning with the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. The bid emphasizes a holistic approach to environmental, social, and economic progress, surpassing FIFA's basic sustainability requirements. The Investment pillar emphasizes the significance of justifiable investments focusing on long-term societal impact. Investments beyond stadiums, transportation, healthcare, and mobility, are crucial for societal advancements. Furthermore, the bid includes an Innovation Hub pillar aimed at advancing sports practices and stadium experiences through research, focusing on engaging private partners for research and technology development. The Social Legacy pillar highlights the bid's aim to promote physical activity, diversity, and social transformation. It aims to drive public investments in sustainable infrastructure and transmit values of commitment, resilience, and inspiration.

These pillars – all intertwined – must be implemented in unison to create an event that aims to be sustainable and create a positive impact (economic, social, and environmental) on the regions involved. The model adopted by the 2030 FIFA World Cup can be implemented among several other sport events.

As a final remark, it is important to highlight the important role that governments have in the creation of sustainable events – specifically in the areas of mobility, healthcare, security, and volunteering. In aiming for sustainability, public and private properties must work together to achieve optimal results for all parties involved.



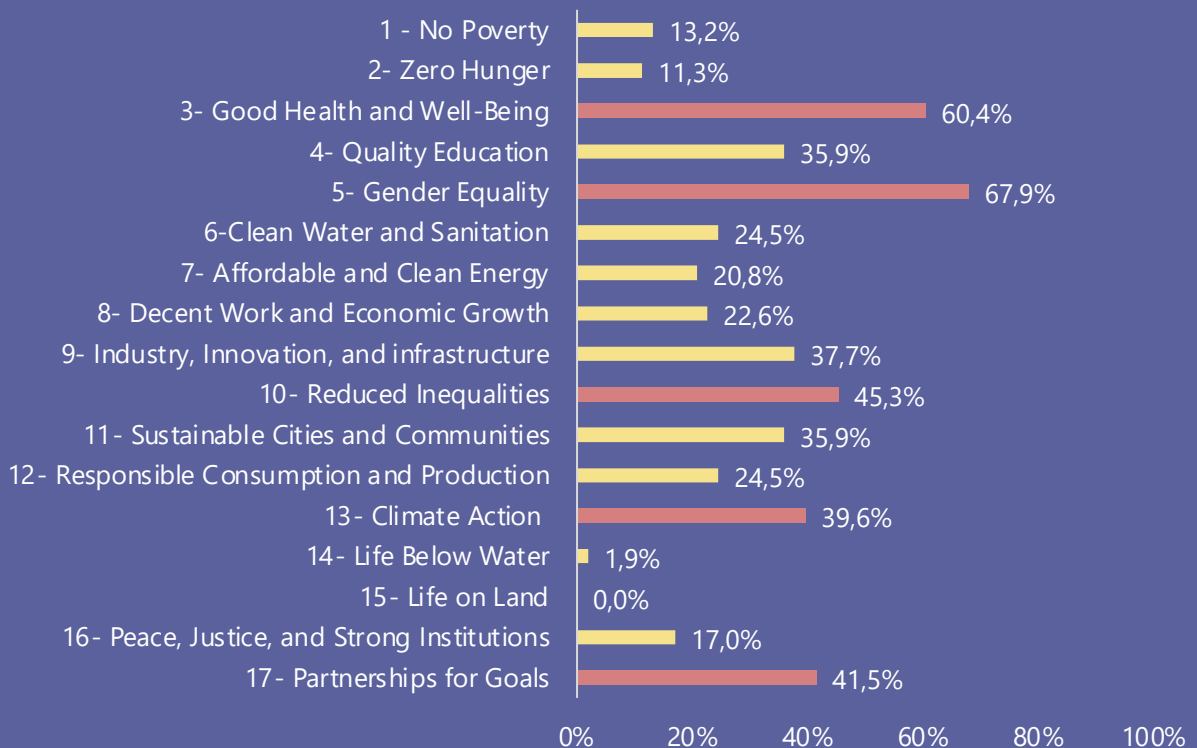
THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY IN SPORT – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These goals are a universal call to action among all countries – both developed and developing – to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030.

They cover a broad range of interconnected issues, aiming to address the most pressing global challenges we face today. Attendees at the IV Sport Sustainability Summit were asked to select from among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, the 5 SDGs they consider will have a greater application in the sports industry in the next 5-10 years.

Sustainable Development Goals



GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality in sports has gained substantial importance in the last few years yet there remains significant progress to be made. Nielsen's 2022 Global Sports Marketing Report highlights a significant rise in sponsorship spending linked to women's sports. In 2019, this spending grew by 159% over the previous year, in 2020 by 27% (affected by the pandemic and event cancellations), and in 2021 by 146%. In Spain, brands such as Iberdrola, CaixaBank, Endesa, Telefónica-Movistar and Banco Santander have played notable roles in this trend.

However, it's crucial to note that sponsorship of women's sporting events won't thrive without increased media coverage. Brands invest not only for their CSR strategies but also for exposure and media attention. Therefore, the involvement of major media groups in these initiatives is essential. For instance, DAZN's acquisition of Women's Champions League rights, offering free exposure via YouTube until 2025, aims to expand the sport's reach to a broader audience. Moreover, The Athletic and Google have established a joint initiative to



elevate professional women's sports journalism. The project involves The Athletic dedicating more resources, staff, and Google tools to expand its coverage of women's sports, particularly focusing on the WNBA and professional women's soccer. This expansion aims to provide in-depth analysis and storytelling, moving beyond game highlights to spotlight moments and athletes through comprehensive reporting (The New York Times, 2022).

In 2023, former World Padel Tour (now Premier Padel after the acquisition of QSI), became the first competition worldwide to distribute equal prize money to the male and female leagues. Nonetheless, reducing the salary gap depends on the business generated by the sport properties which greatly depends on the broadcast reach, fan interest and sponsor presence. The capacity of reducing the salary gap involves the whole sport ecosystem, hence stakeholders must collaborate to continue making positive progress.

Sponsors can greatly benefit from collaborations promoting gender equality, and the time to make the investment is now. If progress continues to be made as in the past few years, the next 5 to 10 years will be marked by significant equality implementations. Nonetheless, the time to invest, strategize and conceptualize these projects and activations is in the present. It is important for sponsors to understand that sponsorship goes beyond brand visibility, and there are several projects that can be carried out that yield great return for both parties. Similarly, less visualized sports or teams should be aware that having sustainability projects can act as a source of income or be an attractive asset for sponsors.

Sponsorship investment in women's sport increased by 146% in 2021

In golf, the Ladies European Tour, places significant importance on sustainability, specifically on the social power of the sport. Golf, in the case of the LET, has proven its positive impact on local communities, as well as being an incredibly powerful communicative device for environmental causes, especially when a partner is involved in the projects. Given they operate in 30 different countries every year, Eva-Lotta Stromlid, Commercial Manager at the LET, explains that she *“always asks the local administration what their needs and main highlight is at the time of the tournaments (Stromlid, 2023).”* This conversation allows LET to establish specific actions and strategies. For example, when LET was touring in Sweden, where the focus was on the promotion of Sweden as a sustainable, family-friendly, socially responsible living destination, they used the opportunity to promote responsible waste management in citizens and had a recycling event with children. These projects transcend the sport terrain, leave a legacy in the community, and create a stronger and more renowned name for the Ladies European Tour.

Less visualized sports or teams should recognize that having sustainability projects can serve as a source of income or become an attractive asset for sponsors.



GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

An already growing trend is sport organizations assuming a more influential societal role in promoting health and wellbeing, driving awareness, and delivering more equitable opportunities for everyone to engage with sport (Deloitte, The Future of Sport, 2023). The correlation between sports and health is inseparable; they complement each other and lead to the overall well-being. Though this has been a known fact for some years, its significance has been more pronounced in the past years. According to the survey ‘Sports Habits in Spain 2022’, 57.3% of the population over fifteen years of age practiced sport in 2022, either regularly or on a one-off basis. This represents an increase of 3.8 percentage points compared to the last pre-pandemic study, in 2015 (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte & Consejo Superior de Deportes, 2022). Notably, those who practice sports do so frequently: 23.8% of respondents said they do it daily and 52.5% at least once a week.

Despite this progress, there remains considerable ground to cover. In terms of gender, sports practice continues to be higher among men than women, with rates standing at 63.1% and 51.8%, respectively, on an annual basis. However, this gender gap has slightly decreased since 2015, reducing from 12.3 percentage points to 11.3. Concerning education, the highest rates of sports practice are found among those with higher education (74.1%), followed by those who have passed the second stage of secondary education (60.8%) (Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte & Consejo Superior de Deportes, 2022). These main challenges present an opportunity for stakeholders – properties, institutions, sponsors, etc. – to develop projects involving these groups, with the objective of increasing their participation in sports, while promoting its benefits and the values it encompasses.



Mental health has been a trending topic in the past few years, helping to reduce stigma around it. Recently, the importance of mental health has been brought up by many athletes, opening about their own struggles and hoping to inspire society. The events of recent years have contributed to the increase in mental health problems; 1 in 4 experience mental health issues each year (Mind); 70-75% people with diagnosable mental illness receive no treatment (MHFA); and poor mental health costs UK employers up to £56 billion a year in 2022, an increase of 25% since 2019 (Deloitte, The Future of Sport, 2023).

Within the field of prevention, medical experts emphasise the importance of practicing sport: it prevents obesity and sedentary lifestyles, increases self-esteem, and helps regulate negative emotions. In this domain, there's significant potential for companies in the industry to develop initiatives. These projects have the dual purpose of raising awareness about the significance of mental health, breaking down stigmas around it, and simultaneously contributing to the prevention and enhancement of mental well-being. In this regard, the '+Esport a l'escola Program' (More Sport in School, in English) is a project promoted by the Trinidad Alfonso Foundation, in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Sport, which aims to promote sports disciplines among students in 3rd and 4th grade of primary schools in the Valencian Community (Comunitat de l'Esport, 2023). Similarly, the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024 have seized the opportunity and worked with the French Government to establish 30 minutes of daily physical activity in elementary schools across France.



"WITHIN THE FIELD OF PREVENTION, MEDICAL EXPERTS EMPHASISE THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICING SPORT"

CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13 - Climate Action, holds significant importance within the realm of sport due to its potential to leverage the influence of sporting events, organizations, and athletes to drive environmental awareness and action. Moreover, there is an increasing acknowledgement of the connection between sport and climate change as sport both affects and is affected by this crisis (United Nations, 2022). The carbon footprint from transportation to/from events, the construction and use of various sporting venues, and the supply chains for sport-related equipment all play an important role in affecting the world's climate. It has been estimated that the 2016 Rio Olympics released 3.6 million tons of carbon dioxide, while the 2018 Russia World Cup released 2.16 million tons (United Nations, 2022). In a cyclical manner, the sport sector is impacted by the consequences. For example, it is an urgent matter for winter games, and a threat in terms of training for athletes.

Sport, as a contributor and a victim of global warming, occupies a unique position in offering solutions. Its expansive social reach serves as a catalyst, engaging billions globally. Moreover, sport serves as a crucial educational tool, effectively raising awareness about climate change and broader environmental concerns while advocating for sustainable living. Climate Action is a top priority for the Olympic Movement led by the IOC, and consequently for the Spanish Olympic Committee. The COE's sustainability strategy branches into 10 lines of action:

1. Sport is the best mean to adopt an active and healthy lifestyle.
2. Exclusive use of renewable energy sources.
3. Promotion of sustainable mobility in all operations.
4. Aim of reducing waste and utilizing it as a resource.
5. Prioritization of protection biodiversity to preserve and restore terrestrial and marine ecosystems.
6. Utilize the power of sport to educate, inspire change, and raise awareness while providing training on social and environmental sustainability.
7. Active promotion of charity initiatives during sporting events and encouraging social activism among athletes.
8. Strive to reduce water footprint and work towards optimizing existing water resources.
9. Utilize digital transformation as the most effective driver for a sustainable model.
10. Advocate for gender equality within the sport industry.

With the aforementioned lines of work comprising their sustainability strategy, the Spanish Olympic Committee consistently develops and implements initiatives and projects that aim to tackle these pressing issues. As an example, the Spanish NOC has partnered with ACCIONA to prioritize efficient water management. Together, they have developed the Water Footprint Calculator - *Calculadora de la Huella de Agua*, in Spanish – that aims to understand both visible and invisible water footprints, measure consumption, its impact, and identify actions for efficient management.



Balancing priorities among SDGs is challenging, yet acknowledging their collective relevance for a sustainable world is crucial. Among these, SDG 14 - Life Below Water stands out significantly, emphasizing the preservation of oceans and marine life. With oceans covering 71% of the Earth's surface and holding approximately 96.5% of its water (USGS, 2019), the importance of sustaining such ecosystems becomes evident. Nonetheless, a lack of awareness persists, presenting an opportunity for stakeholders to develop projects and initiatives that tackle this issue.



Roadmap – TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

ACCOUNTABILITY

Sustainability is not a destination; it is a long journey that needs the collaboration of all sport sector stakeholders. We have seen the complexity of sustainability in the previous sections, and there are a lot of pieces of the puzzle that need to be placed together to leave a decent planet for future generations. There is no doubt collaboration and co-creation is the key in searching for viable solutions, but who needs to take the reins of the situation? Sport Sustainability Summit assistants were asked to indicate which stakeholders they believe should have a higher involvement in the development of sustainability in the sports industry (maximum indicate 3). Assistants believed the three stakeholders with major responsibility are government institutions, sport properties (clubs, events, leagues, competitions...) and the International Olympic Committee. Following, sponsors (brands) should also be highly implicated in the development of sustainability.

“SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A DESTINATION; IT IS A LONG JOURNEY THAT NEEDS THE COLLABORATION OF ALL SPORT SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS”

Given their influence and power, these stakeholders must be role models for others to follow. As presented along the report there are various actions being undertaken to mitigate the impact on climate change, create social sustainability, and reach economic stability. The Olympic Movement has always been much more

than sport: willingness to improve, perseverance in adversity, and fighting for the gold. However, this cannot be done by one sole player, it must be done in a team. Hence, the collaboration strategy between the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees, UN Sport for Climate Action, and their sponsors, among others, is essential to tackle the pressing issue of our time.

Once top-tier organizations work together, they can influence and create awareness among society. As a catalyst for change, sport stakeholders must collaborate to achieve optimal results.



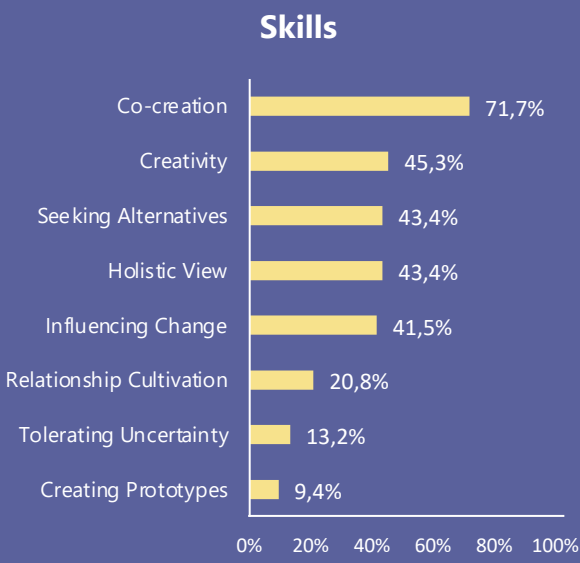
SKILLS FOR COLLABORATIVE CHANGE

The ‘Skills Map User Guide’ – launched by the Q Improvement Lab – serves as a tool for reflection and empowerment. It is crafted to assist individuals, teams, or organizations in contemplating the skills and attitudes regularly utilized in their work and identifying areas that may benefit from development. Moreover, it is applicable across various sectors, including the sport industry. While there is no singular prescribed way to use it, its efficacy is heightened when utilized by a team, as empowered and well-balanced teams are catalysts for change. However, it can also be employed as an individual tool for personal reflection.

The 'Skills for Collaborative Change: A Map and User Guide' offers a structured framework that underscores the significance of these principles in a holistic manner. Although all aspects of the map are highly important and can be applied in various situations, the 'Sustainability Questionnaire', completed by participants of the Sport Sustainability Summit, aimed to highlight those of the highest priority.

The skills map illustrates the foundational skills and attitudes essential for collaborative and creative problem-solving. The inner hexagon refers to the key attitudes that nurture creative and collaborative problem-solving. While attitudes can evolve, they are deeply rooted and resistant to swift or easy change. Developing certain attitudes requires a significant investment of time. Surrounding the central hexagon are three additional hexagons, highlighting the core skill areas crucial for collaborative and creative problem-solving: bringing people together, learning by doing, and initiating change. Each area contains three specific skills. Notably, skills are more accessible to learn and develop compared to attitudes (Q Improvement Lab, 2020). This tool can be of use to several stakeholders in a wide array of situations regarding sustainability in the sports sector: when developing sustainability strategies, selecting talent, creating a team, or evaluating potential partnerships.

To understand the most important strategic skills, assistants of the Sport Sustainability Summit were asked to answer the three (maximum) skills they consider most necessary to tackle social, environmental, and economic sustainability.



Co-creation, often interchanged with the word collaboration, is a key aspect towards sustainability. 72% of respondents agreed co-creation to be the key skill to tackle environmental, social, and economic. Meeting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its encompassing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for co-creation capabilities between various sectors and entities coordinating efforts, pooling financial resources, knowledge, and expertise. Co-creation transcends the mere operation of businesses or governments acting individually, it involves entire industries collaborating, at time with competitors, to redefine standards and create a better future.

Consequently, **creativity** is an essential skill for collaborative change. Due to the complex nature of sustainability, it is important to be open minded and support others in sharing their ideas, being able to combine them with your own to reach the optimal solution. By encouraging openness to diverse ideas, even those differing from established norms, stakeholders can foster collaboration and creativity, paving the way for more innovative solutions.

Furthermore, having a **holistic view** and **seeking alternatives** are also selected by attendees as crucial attitudes to tackle sustainability. These attitudes complement each other in reaching the optimal solution. A holistic view – or seeing the wider system – encourages reflection on what is not functioning optimally across an entire system and promotes the observation of the issues from various perspectives. This type of systematic thinking facilitates finding the root cause of complex problems and develops comprehensive solutions. Likewise, seeking alternatives encourages looking beyond the immediate context to consider a diverse possibility of options, methods, and tools. This approach fosters innovation and helps explore innovative solutions to challenges.

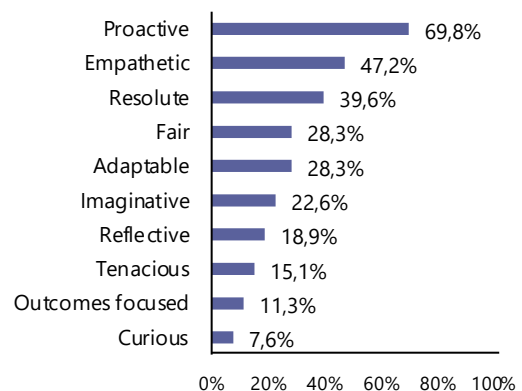
To optimize solutions, it's crucial to combine previously mentioned skills with the right attitudes. To identify the latter, attendees were asked to state the three attitudes (at most) they consider most necessary to tackle sustainability.

Questionnaire respondents agree that being **proactive** is fundamental to tackling sustainability challenges. Proactivity embodies a holistic and forward-looking approach that is necessary for creating lasting positive impacts on social, environmental, and economic well-being. Similarly, respondents indicated the importance of being **resolutive**. Given the complexity of sustainability and all it entails, problem solving capacities is necessary to face difficulties with determination, not allowing the fear of failure to drive strategic decisions.

The second most important aspect is **empathy**, an attitude whose importance cannot be emphasized enough. Teams with emotional intelligence gain a competitive advantage, with experts emphasizing empathy as a crucial trait in recruitment. The ability to show concern for the emotions of both teammates and customers, coupled with understanding their feelings and thoughts, frequently enhances productivity and revenue. Moreover, empathy and emotional intelligence demand self-awareness and enable better listening, leading to improved communication.

Finally, integrating attributes like **fairness**, **adaptability**, and **imagination**, among others, is equally pertinent. When combined with the mentioned skills, these attributes empower individuals to approach sustainability challenges holistically, collaboratively, and with a problem-solving mindset. Hence, creating more effective collaboration, innovative solutions, and tangible impacts on some of the most pertinent issues of our time.

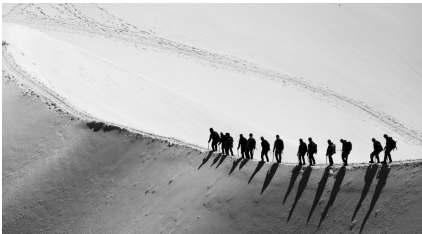
Attitudes



Conclusion – FINAL REMARKS

Nuance exists in defining sustainability, depending on the stakeholder, the sector, and the region, the answer can vary. It is subject to the purpose and impact of each individual or company. However, the similar theme revolves around the necessity to consider it as an urgent matter and in a collaborative manner.

The synergy between sustainability and the sports sector presents a powerful force for positive change. As highlighted in this report, sports not only serve as a source of entertainment, but also hold the potential to significantly impact environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Leveraging the immense reach, influence, and evolving nature of the sport industry, the sector can serve as a catalyst for advancing sustainability goals globally. Embracing sustainable practices within the sports sector isn't merely an option; it's a crucial step toward ensuring the balance between meeting present needs and without compromising future aspirations. The transformative power of sports presents a unique opportunity to advocate sustainability, setting a precedent for industries worldwide and paving the way for a more conscientious, inclusive, and lasting future.

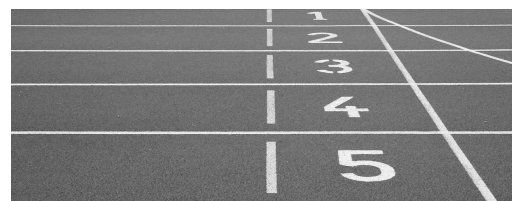


Moreover, the need for stakeholders to collaborate seamlessly in the pursuit of sustainability within the sports sector cannot be overstated. The challenges presented regarding environmental conservation, social equity, and economic resilience, require co-creation, creativity, and contribution from diverse stakeholders. Each stakeholder – be it sport properties, federations

institutions, brands, athletes, or fans – brings unique strengths. Collaborative efforts allow for the pooling of resources, knowledge, and influence, fostering innovative solutions that transcend individual capacities. By forging alliances and partnerships, stakeholders can amplify their impact, creating a collective momentum capable of implementing meaningful and lasting change.

To summarize, sport has the capacity to transcend beyond the day of the sporting event. **It would be a missed opportunity not to use this to create a better world.**

Collaborative efforts allow for the pooling of resources, knowledge, and influence, fostering innovative solutions that transcend individual capacities.



ABOUT US

The Spanish Olympic Committee – Comité Olímpico Español (COE) – is a private association governed by its own statutes and regulations, in accordance with the principles and rules of the International Olympic Committee, which oversees and controls its activities.

The Spanish Olympic Committee was established in 1912 and is recognized by the International Olympic Committee itself.

Throughout its more than 100 years of existence, the Spanish Olympic Committee has undergone numerous changes in line with historical evolution, highlighting sporting and organizational successes in its recent past. It has consistently contributed to the promotion and dissemination of the Olympic ideals.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Links of Interest

- Official website of the [Sport Sustainability Summit](#)
- Summit recordings at [COE TV](#).
- Spanish Olympic Committee [Sustainability](#).
- International Olympic Committee [Sustainability Strategy](#).

Contacts

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COMITÉ OLÍMPICO
ESPAÑOL

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