

IPACS Benchmark Guidelines

Updated 10 May 2022, version 2

IPACS Benchmark D4 – The organisation respects principles of sustainable development, in particular regard for the environment

Definitions

- Sustainable development within the UN Sustainable Development Goals framework – (here) taking full account of environmental issues in decision-making; incorporating environmental sustainability in business strategy in all areas, including operations, events, procurement, infrastructure and communications; the United Nations Brundtland Commission (1987) defined sustainable development as: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”

See also the forthcoming IPACS sections on sustainability and human rights in relation to the Benchmark

Introduction to this Benchmark and its significance

- There is inter-dependency between healthy people and a healthy planet
- The practice of sport depends on natural resources, including clean air, clean water, available land, and healthy eco-systems ranging from oceans to green urban areas, mountains, lakes and rivers; climate change is already impacting on sport
- Climate change places the planet and future generations at risk; meeting the scale of the challenge requires action by all sectors, including sport, to achieve the goals of the current UN Climate Change Agreement

Commentary on the action to be taken

- The organisation should take full account of environmental issues in decision-making
- The organisation should ensure that its activities do not have harmful environmental impacts, in particular sports events should not contribute to environmental degradation and pollution
- The organisation should incorporate environmental sustainability in all aspects of its business strategy, including operations, events, procurement, infrastructure and communications
- The governing body should have overall responsibility for sustainability
- The organisation should sign up to appropriate international initiatives
- The organisation should monitor and report on work towards environmental sustainability targets
- See also Recommendations C7 (stakeholder representation), C9 (equality and diversity), D5 (social responsibility), D8 (legacy programmes), D9 (anti-discrimination) and D10 (inclusive sport)

Investment requirement - the level of investment should be proportionate to the specific nature of the organisation and the sport(s)

Guidance according to stage of organisation

Early stage

- The organisation has a specific reference to environmental sustainability among its objectives, which incorporate the principle of “do no harm”
- The organisation has ad hoc environmental initiatives

Developing

- The organisation has a policy or guidance on environmental sustainability covering its own activities and events
- The organisation includes specific environmental sustainability targets in its overall strategy
- The organisation’s governing body takes responsibility for environmental sustainability, in a clear and visible way

- The organisation is a signatory of appropriate international initiatives, such as the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework
- The organisation communicates with stakeholders on environmental sustainability issues

Advanced

- The organisation has a designated environmental sustainability strategy covering its full range of activity, influence and impacts
- The organisation monitors and reports publicly on environmental sustainability targets using recognised standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)
- The organisation links its work on sustainability to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and/or other recognised frameworks
- The organisation ensures that members and partners respect principles of sustainable development and regard for the environment, by conducting due diligence checks and providing appropriate incentives, such as funding or public recognition

Good practice examples

International Sports Organisations (from 2020)

- IGF - Sustainability features prominently in the [IGF Strategic Plan](#)
- [Details of activity](#) published on website
- World Sailing: [Sustainability Agenda 2030](#) provides detailed information with six key areas of focus
- BWF: There is a [sustainability policy](#) within the Statutes
 - Environmental and sustainability initiatives form part of the [2020-24 Strategic Plan/Implementation Plan](#) – see for example strategy 4.2 (Strategic Plan)
- FIS: [Environmental manifesto](#) and wide range of related activity.
 - Signatory of [UN Sports for Climate Action Framework](#)
- IIHF: [Environment and Social Responsibility Guidelines](#) plus other relevant activity, including an event manual and an annual sustainability award for national associations
- FIFA: The online [FIFA World Cup 2022 Sustainability Progress Report](#) describes how FIFA and Qatar are delivering against the initiatives of the sustainability strategy and highlights the key achievements

Overall standard among International Federations:

- 16 out of 31 members of ASOIF implemented a policy and measures on environmental responsibility with details published

National Olympic Committees

- Spanish Olympic Committee (COE): [Action on sustainability](#) in a number of areas
- French National Olympic and Sports Committee (CNOSF): The Label [“Sustainable Development, Sport is Committed”](#), managed by the CNOSF, certifies and promotes sports events that respect environmental, social, economic, ethical and governance criteria
- Netherlands Olympic Committee (NOC*NSF): [Range of activity](#) on sustainability

National Federations

- German Sailing Association (DSV): [Wide range](#) of environmental activity

Selected references

- [ASOIF GTF Questionnaire 2019-20, Indicator 5.4](#)
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, [Addendum to the report “Working towards a framework for modern sports governance”](#): Criterion 4.3: Environmental and social responsibility
- Geeraert, A. (2018). [Sports Governance Observer 2018](#). An assessment of good governance in five international sports federations. Aarhus: Play the Game / Danish Institute for Sports Studies, p.11-15: Principle 52: The organisation implements a policy for the promotion of environmental sustainability.
- IOC’s [“Consolidated Minimum requirements for Implementation of the Basic Principles of Good Governance for NOCs”](#):
- Theme 1 “Vision, Mission, Strategy”, Principle 2:
 - The mission should include:
 - Development and promotion of sport through non-profit organisations;
 - Promotion of the values of sport;
 - Organisation of competitions;
 - Ensuring a fair sporting contest at all times;
 - Protection of the members and particularly the athletes;
 - Solidarity;
 - Respect for the environment.

- [IOC Agenda 2020+5](#), particularly Recommendations 2: “Foster sustainable Olympic Games”, 10: “Strengthen the role of sport as an important enabler for the UN Sustainable Development Goals”, 13: “Continue to lead by example in corporate citizenship”
- [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- [UN Climate Change \(UNFCCC\) – Sports for Climate Action](#)

ASOIF indicator 5.4 – scoring definitions used in the 2019-20 assessment

- 0 – No
- 1 - At least some reference to environmental responsibility in official documents
- 2 - Official guidance on respecting principles of sustainable development and environment in Statutes and/or event hosting rules
- 3 - Policy and measures on environmental responsibility, evidence of implementation, details published
- 4 - State of the art policy on environmental responsibility, monitoring in place, details published