



INTERNATIONAL  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE

# FACTSHEET

## THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UPDATE – JULY 2009

### **THE ENVIRONMENT: AN INTEGRAL DIMENSION OF OLYMPISM**

Recognising its responsibility towards the promotion of sustainable development, the IOC considers the environment as an integral dimension of Olympism, alongside sport and culture. The IOC thus ensures that the Olympic Games take place in conditions that take into account the environment in a responsible way, and collaborates with the relevant public or private authorities, with the aim of placing sport at the service of humanity.

### **THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE OLYMPIC CHARTER**

Following the Centennial Olympic Congress, Congress of Unity, organised in 1994 in Paris, the IOC recognised the importance of the environment and sustainable development, and, in 1996, added a paragraph on environmental protection to the Olympic Charter.

“[The IOC’s role with respect to the environment is:] to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly.” Chapter 1, Rule 2, Paragraph 13 of the Olympic Charter, in force from 7 July 2007.

### **MISSION OF THE SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**

Created in December 1995, the main goal of the Sport and Environment Commission, chaired by Mr Pál Schmitt, an IOC member since 1986, is to advise the IOC Executive Board on the policy to be adopted by the IOC and the Olympic Movement on matters related to environmental protection and support for sustainable development in relation to sport.

### **AGENDA 21 OF THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT**

Taking into consideration the decisions adopted in 1992 by the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro regarding Agenda 21, the Olympic Movement decided to establish its own Agenda 21. Adopted by the IOC Session in 1999, the aim of this Agenda is to encourage its members to participate actively in sustainable development. It presents fundamental concepts and the general actions to be undertaken to attain this objective.

### **IOC GUIDE TO SPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

This Guide was developed by the IOC in collaboration with all 35 Olympic International Federations to help the different members of the Olympic family transform the Agenda 21 recommendations into concrete actions and programmes.

The Guide offers methodological and practical tools to the sports community, based on the major principles of sustainable development. It provides an easy way to move from theory and concepts to practical initiatives and behavioural changes; and an easy way to understand the global challenges and needs for environmental protection while considering local specificities coming from diverse geographical, socio-economic, cultural and sports contexts.

### **AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

The IOC and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) signed a Cooperative Agreement in 1994 to conduct various activities to raise awareness and educate people on environmental matters in sport.

Amongst other things, UNEP has participated in the IOC World Conferences on Sport and Environment, IOC regional seminars and in the



production of information materials on sport and environment, such as the Agenda 21 for the Olympic Movement. UNEP has also developed working relationships with Organising Committees for the Olympic Games in Athens (2004), Turin (2006), Beijing (2008) and Vancouver (2010) to promote environmental issues in the Games. A Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and Sochi 2014 was signed in June 2009.

The biennial World Conference on Sport and Environment brings together representatives and partners of the Olympic Movement, as well as representatives of other entities involved in this field, such as governments, international and non-governmental organisations, industry and business sectors, research institutes and the media.

The aim of the conferences is to regularly assess the progress made in the field of sustainable development by the Olympic Movement; give an opportunity to provide new knowledge on these issues by sharing experiences and expertise from different sectors of society; and encourage cooperation in, and further the development of, environmental policies in sport.

Regional seminars are organised in cooperation with Olympic Solidarity, whose mission is to plan, organise and control support programmes for National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The seminars are adapted to local conditions and designed to raise awareness among NOCs and advocate the need to use sport as a tool for sustainable development in their countries. They also provide an opportunity to share experiences on initiatives implemented by NOCs and their Sport and Environment Commissions, to identify major issues to be resolved and to obtain their commitment on relevant measures and actions to implement at a national level.

## **GAMES THAT RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT**

The IOC works to ensure that the Olympic Games are held in conditions that demonstrate responsible concern for the environment.

To this end, it works with the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) and the competent public or private authorities and organisations responsible for organising the Games.

Within the Applicant and Candidate City procedure and questionnaire documentation, environmental and sustainable development guiding principles and requirements are included across many areas.

Statements provided by Candidate Cities are verified by an Evaluation Commission, which includes an environmental advisor appointed by the International Olympic Committee.

Once elected, the Host City is provided with assistance and guidance in its preparations by the IOC Coordination Commission, which also includes an environmental advisor.

The IOC's objective is that during the staging of the Games the environmental risks are avoided and reduced where possible, and the positive impacts and opportunities of the event are maximised. The ultimate objective is to bequeath a positive Olympic Games legacy to the Host City, its region and country, in which the positive impacts outweigh the negative ones.

## **The Olympic Games Impact study: OGI**

The hosting of an Olympic Games has a significant impact on the Host City and its community. From tangible infrastructure construction such as competition venues and transport improvements, through to the evolution of the image of a Host City, the event acts as a vehicle and catalyst which leave a lasting mark on the city, host country and its people through its economic, urban, social or historic influence. To what extent, with what results and with what benefits have been the subject of a long-lasting debate.

To answer these questions and to assist the Olympic Games Organising Committee (OCOG) in this area, the IOC created the Olympic Games Impact (OGI) study. The principal



objectives of OGI are: to measure the overall impact of the Olympic Games; to assist bidding cities and future Olympic Games organisers through the transfer of strategic directions obtained from past and present Olympic Games; and to identify potential legacies, thereby maximising the benefits of their Olympic Games.

In order to measure the impact of the Olympic Games, concrete tools were needed. More than 100 research "indicators" were created and grouped into the three internationally recognised spheres of sustainable development: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. The OGI indicators cover a vast range of activities, from those that are a direct result of the staging of the Olympic Games, such as the construction of competition venues or the Olympic Village, to others that are a more indirect consequence, such as the evolution of transport and accommodation infrastructure. Other indicators facilitate the monitoring of contextual data within a Host City and its region, such as crime rates, sports participation and water quality.

Since the establishment of the OGI study in 2003, the IOC has asked all OCOGs to conduct the study. Future Olympic organisers are informed of the OGI study during the Applicant and Candidate City phases through IOC candidature documentation. At present, four OCOGs are conducting the study: the Beijing Olympic Organising Committee, the Vancouver Organising Committee, the London Organising Committee and the Sochi Organising Committee.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL GAMES-TIME INITIATIVES**

### **Sydney 2000**

The key environmental achievements included public transport access, solar power applications, good building material selection, recycling of construction waste, energy and water conservation and wetland restoration.

Between 1998 and 2000, four million trees were planted in sites throughout the Australian continent. The Organising Committee and the Olympic Coordination Agency won the 2001 IOC, environment and sustainable development / July 2009

UNEP Global 500 Roll of Honour Award for their environmental efforts.

### **Salt Lake City 2002**

In the framework of planting programmes at the venues and "Plant it Green: The Global Trees Race", over 100,000 trees were planted in Utah, and more than two million throughout the world. The energy recycled from the curling hall's air conditioning unit heated the showers and the bathrooms at the venue. This system used ammonia, which does not destroy the ozone layer.

### **Athens 2004**

By the end of the Games, over a million large bushes, 290,000 trees and 11 million small trees had been planted throughout the Greek capital. Environmentally-friendly building materials and new energy technology were used, and the global protection of natural resources was taken into account. Athens 2004 set up a series of initiatives and programmes for the environment, including the following:

- conception of a recreational eco-excursions programme in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature
- use of environmentally-friendly vehicles that conform to ecological requirements
- creation of the Olympic Environmental Alliance, with the aim of establishing effective cooperation and dialogue between all the bodies concerned, and the parties actively involved, and establishing a conclusive decision-making procedure (Ministry of the Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works, or the National Meteorological Service).

### **Turin 2006**

The environment was a key element of the Turin Olympic Winter Games. The Turin Organising Committee (TOROC) was the first OCOG to obtain both an ISO 14001 international environment standard certification and an EMAS certification for its environmental systems and programmes (the European equivalent).

TOROC also developed the HECTOR (HEritage Climate TORino) programme, aimed at raising awareness on climate change issues and



offsetting the amount of greenhouse gases produced during the 2006 Winter Games through financial investments in reforestation, energy efficiency and renewable energy source projects.

In addition to this, TOROC's environmental programmes included environmental audits of venue building sites and eco-compatibility of temporary venues. A Strategic Environmental Assessment system for the planning and monitoring of Games activities was also conducted, and guidelines for the application of EMAS to all sports events as well as green procurement criteria for suppliers and a system of recognition for sponsors demonstrating environmental commitments were developed.

### **Beijing 2008**

Improvement, protection and awareness were the key focus areas of the Beijing Organising Committee (BOCOG)'s environmental programme.

Environmentally friendly and energy-saving building materials were used in the construction of the Olympic venues and the Olympic Green. Significant efforts were made in the Beijing and surrounding areas to expand afforestation, improve air quality and enhance public sewage and waste treatment systems.

### **Vancouver 2010**

During the Vancouver bid for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the not-for-profit society "2010 Legacies Now" was created. The aim of the society was to create more than a "bricks and mortar" legacy for the host communities. The society's mission is "to work in partnership with community organisations, non-government organisations, the private sector and all levels of government to develop sustainable legacies in sport and recreation, arts, literacy and volunteerism; and to actively assist communities to discover and create unique and inclusive social and economic opportunities leading up to, and beyond, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games."

The Vancouver Organising Committee (VANOC) is the first OCOG to create a Sustainability Department. For VANOC, sustainability means managing the social, economic and environmental impacts and

opportunities of the Vancouver Olympic Games to create lasting benefits both locally and globally. To achieve this, VANOC has established a set of six corporate-wide sustainability performance objectives:

- Accountability
- Environmental Stewardship and Impact Reduction
- Social Inclusion and Responsibility
- Aboriginal Participation and Collaboration
- Economic Benefits
- Sport for Sustainable Living

### **London 2012**

The London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG), building upon the commitments set out in its Candidature File, has produced the London 2012 Sustainability Plan. The Plan is a framework for how LOCOG and its partners will address sustainability, and reflects the Organising Committee's ambition to deliver truly sustainable Olympic Games. The Plan is structured according to five priority themes:

- Climate change
- Waste
- Biodiversity
- Inclusion
- Healthy living

### **Sochi 2014**

In meeting the challenges of sustainable development, Sochi 2014 has developed an ecological strategy and General Functional Plan (GFP) incorporating the elements of:

- green standard in Olympic venue development
- use of alternative energy sources
- carbon neutrality
- zero waste.

## **THE VIII WORLD CONFERENCE ON SPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

After Lausanne in 1995, Kuwait City in 1997, Nagano in 1999, Rio de Janeiro in 2001, Turin in 2003, Nairobi in 2005 and Beijing in 2007, the 8<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Sport and Environment was organised by the IOC with the Vancouver Organising Committee for the XXI Olympic Winter Games in March 2009.

With its main theme, "Innovation and Inspiration - Harnessing the Power of Sport for Change", the 2009 World Conference recognised the power of the sports movement to trigger



innovative solutions to the challenges it faces, and to inspire people to pursue a more sustainable world.

The assembled delegates, representing the IOC, NOCs, International Sports Federations, the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations entities, non-governmental organisations, research institutions, Organising Committees for the Olympic Games, Applicant Cities, Olympians, the, International Paralympic Committee, partners and other members of the Olympic Movement, sports and recreation event organisers and sporting goods manufacturers put forward the following specific conclusions and recommendations:

**1. National Olympic Committees (NOCs) play an increasing role in ensuring continuous involvement of the sports world in sustainable development**

• It is acknowledged that NOCs have to tackle different challenges within their own environments. Nevertheless, it is essential that NOCs recognise their important role as a major conduit for action to further the Olympic Movement's sustainability agenda.

• NOCs are encouraged to continue to develop their understanding of the programmes, practices and legacies of Olympic Organising Committees, as well as of the proposals and objectives of candidate cities. It is recommended that NOCs identify and reach out to domestic and external partners with specific projects that could be supported within their own communities, and consider including provisions for sustainable actions in their contractual arrangements.

• NOCs are encouraged to form partnerships with local government entities in order to implement specific environmental projects.

**2. International Sports Federations are critical to advancing sustainability within sports organisations around the world**

• Each International Federation is encouraged to adopt a policy and supporting programme to advance the principles of sustainability through its sport, and to promote such principles to national sports federations.

**3. OCOGs are a key source of innovation in the planning, delivery and legacy of sports facilities and events**

• The examples provided by OCOGs and Candidate Cities should be studied by others in

the sports world for possible application at an appropriate scale in their own programmes.

• OCOGs have the ability to utilise the latest innovations and technology to create and promote Games of the highest standards of sustainability and legacy.

• Sharing and transferring these best practices is essential in ensuring that the sustainability of the Olympic and Paralympic Games is continuously advanced.

• The Games present a unique opportunity to raise environmental awareness and develop a new environmental approach within a community, and to implement a "green code", thereby achieving a set of new local standards of higher quality.

**4. Corporate sponsors of the Olympic Movement continue to play a valuable role in creating sports events which mutually benefit sport, the community and sponsors**

• The Conference encourages sponsors of the Olympic Movement to share their sustainability practices and technology with the Olympic family, and channel available resources for educational purposes to increase environmental awareness and to engage and empower young people. **Community-based organisations** are an essential component of sport and environment activities, as they are central to the promotion of local involvement, innovation and inspiration, and the spreading of best practices.

**Athletes** are important role models, as their commitment to promoting the sustainability agenda has the potential to influence and inspire others, particularly young people, to take action.

The Conference concluded with the words of a participating athlete: **"There are no minds more innovative than the minds of young people. No one is more attuned to the environment than young people."**

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