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Boosting sustainability in football

Fostering public and shared mobility, reducing private cars from a club and players perspective

Why is it important to involve the community in the sports club decisions regarding sustainability?



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Links to Website and social media channels



@sdgstriker



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Web:







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SDG Striker is a European co-funded project under the Erasmus+ programme that aims to implement and communicate the **Sustainable Development** Goals (SDG) for improving good governance in grassroot sports clubs and organizations resulting in positive impacts over the communities around them.

In the project there are three pilots addressing different topics on sustainability and therefore also different SDGs:





Energy efficiency and energy poverty







Photovoltaics potential and feasibility on sports facilities





Alternatives to conventional infill for artificial football pitches to reduce microplastic pollution

Other partners:





Technical partner



Technical partner





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Football with purpose: Sustainability practices in sport training centers and clubs



Written by: Francisca Araújo, Portuguese Football Federation

The world of football is increasingly aware of the importance of its role in society. The 2 main axes of this impact are the social and environmental vectors.

The football's industry impact on the environment and the society is of enormous volume, as football is one of the largest industries in the world which generates great monetary value. In this sense, football,

in addition to using its influence to change attitudes, also has the responsibility to change its own activities towards more social and environmental responsible ones. We already have excellent **inspiring international examples** of the high impact of the clubs' work in the promotion and the implementation of social and environmental responsibility measures.



The **Forest Green Rovers Football Club** has given inspiring examples, such as the exclusive offer of vegan menus in the club's restaurant for staff and athletes, or the use of 100% rainwater to irrigate the club's lawns. Being the first club with its activity certified as carbon neutral, their kit (official playing t-shirt and pants) is made from recycled coffee grounds and recycled plastic, and the energy used in their **stadium** comes from the solar panels installed on their facilities.













The **Vermont Green Football Club** uses 100% renewable energy and is a member of the international organization <u>One Percent for the Planet</u> by committing to donate 1% of their annual revenues to assist nonprofit organizations that protect land, forests, rivers, oceans and encourage sustainable methods of energy production.



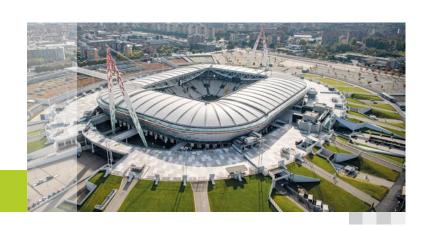






The **Juventus Football Club** for the last **5 seasons**, has been using only energy purchased from renewable sources.







The **Arsenal Football Club** is using reusable pint cups at all the stands of the **Ashburton Grove - Emirates Stadium** and is saving energy by using more efficient electric rotary mowers for the pitch's grass and by installing LED technology for lighting the pitches.













Finally, we have the case of the **Portuguese** Football Federation (FPF), which is looking to turn their activity totally environmentally sustainable by taking actions on:





Energy consumption:

FPF uses photovoltaic panels that supply green energy for heating, has installed LED lighting for energy saving in most of the *Cidade do Futebol* facilities, and has installed 3 double stations available for staff members to charge their electric cars.

Waste management:

FPF has installed Ecopoints in several areas of the FPF facilities, aimed at facilitating the separation of waste for recycling. FPF also has a partnership with an NGO to donate the food waste of the restaurant. Moreover, all the water consumed daily by the staff comes from filtering dispensing devices to avoid the use of plastic bottles, contributing to reduce plastic waste.

Water pollution:

all the green spaces are being fertilized by using 100% organic and chemical-free products. At the same time all products used in cleaning and laundry are environmentally friendly certified.







Also, football players are taking **action on sustainability.** This is the case of **Morten Thorsby,** who founded a platform named <u>We Play Green</u> which is a non-profit organization committed to creating a green chain reaction of sustainable attitudes within the global football sector.





The positioning of more and more football players, clubs and federations towards environmental and social responsibility is meant to improve the live conditions of the communities around by allowing them to receive benefits from sport and its positive actions towards sustainability. This positioning contributes to boost the international visibility of the clubs and the social and environmental causes they are fighting for, as well as boosting the interest of investors for this causes.



Interview with TERESA SANTOS

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER, FC PORTO

What does the club's environmental sustainability plan consist of?

What is its main focus?

The current climate emergency has placed on organizations the challenge and responsibility to integrate strategies and solutions that minimize their environmental impact and allow them to contribute to the transition, by 2050, to a carbon neutral society. Sports organizations are no longer an exception, having a direct impact through the consumption of resources necessary for the maintenance of facilities, and having an indirect impact through the entire range of activities associated with the organization and holding of sporting events.

Minimizing environmental impacts is a very important issue for FC Porto, which has been reflected in the architectural concerns considered in the design of its stadium facility and in the daily management of its operations and events. These objectives are only achieved through integrated management across all areas of the FC Porto Group and the involvement of all partners in a common strategy. Through responsible rationalization policies, FC Porto is committed to promoting the efficient use of available resources, aiming at the global reduction of consumption and the protection of the environment, which translates into the prevention of pollution and the mitigation of significant environmental risks and impacts generated during the activity.







Does the club develop and communicate campaigns associated with the topic to raise awareness among supporters for this issue?

As a socially and environmentally responsible club, it is also FC Porto's main objective to positively influence the community, applying good environmental practices in its daily actions and promoting socially sustainable development.

There are several environmental awareness campaigns that FC Porto has carried out over the years, addressing the various topics. As an example, we can mention the display of videos/messages on matchday at the stadium; raising awareness among supporters, through interactive games and the approach of hostesses/volunteers encouraging the separation of waste; the organization of conferences and workshops; and the promotion of smooth mobility, among other actions.



How to measure sustainability in football

A set of potential indicators





In football, we usually talk about the club, or the team. But teams and clubs are made up of individuals and we all have a responsibility as such. **UEFA** stats tell us that we are 18,5 million players across the associations, 1,2 million coaches, which means a much larger number if we count the administrations, the volunteers, the parents, and the spectators. **Together, we can drive change.**

Your choices make a difference

"End extreme poverty. Fight inequality and injustice. Fix climate change. Whoa. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are important, world-changing objectives that will require cooperation among governments, international organisations, and world leaders. It seems impossible that the average person can make an impact. Should you just give up?

No! Change starts with you. Seriously. Every human on earth—even the laziest, most indifferent person among us—is part of the solution. Fortunately, there are some super easy things we can adopt into our routines that, if we all do them, will make a big difference" (un.org. The Lazy person's guide to saving the world).



Inspiration from another Erasmus + project; **Greencoach**

The Erasmus+-project "<u>Greencoach</u> - Incorporating sustainability in the governance of sports organizations", is currently (June 2022) finalizing the creation of a user-friendly online tool to engage both the sports organization and the players, families, spectators, and staff in sustainable behaviours. The tool will enable clubs to measure the impact on mobility, energy, waste, waterconsumption, sport apparel, and give suggestions and tips on how to reduce emissions and their global impact.

The most difficult KPI¹? To change our pattern of behaviours sufficiently

The larger impact of sports from an environmental point of view is related to **mobility and transport,** even in grassroots sports (Triantafyllidi, 2018), which involves individual attitudes of both internal and external people. **You can take action!**

- 2 players in the car to the game? Double it, reduce the impact by 50%. Even better, ride a bus.
- Do you change apparel every second year?

 Make it every third and reduce the impact on both the environment and the wallet.
- Put a timer on your floodlights. Change to LED, reduce the use of energy by 25-30%.
- Do you usually shower until the hot water runs out? Compete on being the fastest instead. Some big changes. Some small.

1 • KPI refers to Key Performance Indicator, a measure of the level of compliance of a process.

Is it "Just do it"?

The 17 SDG's present us with dilemmas. Plenty of them. We want to grow the numbers of people playing football, but with the current solutions of energy, textiles, and travel, this will inevitably increase our carbon footprint. Rubber infill in artificial turfs is regarded as environmentally unfriendly. Some politicians want to ban the use of it, with no acceptable replacement in sight. We need to use the existing pitches more, but also need to reduce the amount of energy going to heating and floodlights. Football wants to become as positive a contributor to society as possible, without having too much of a negative impact on football itself. We measure the Social Return of Investment from grassroot-football, and, together, Norway, Scotland and Portugal contribute with more than 5 billion Euros each year (2020 figures). If the activity drops, the numbers drop.

Therefore, initiatives like SDG Striker are needed. **We must find new ways!**



UEFA wants to Inspire, Activate and Accelerate collective action

The new UEFA strategy on sustainability, <u>Strength Through Unity</u>, is formulated around 11 policies, each supported by topics, targets, and KPIs. The strategy will be implemented in five areas of action: Internal, Events, Member associations, Football Ecosystem and Partners & Society. Most of us being part of The Football Ecosystem.

The policies address the challenges both in the fields of human rights and the environment and come with a clear message: "We need to take our responsibility within the context of European football to help solve urgent issues that threaten our society and our sport" (Aleksander Ceferin, UEFA President). The key factor: We must measure, to see if we have any progress.



Measure, and report. The new routine

UEFA is requiring football to measure our impacts: ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards, GHG (Greenhouse Gas)-protocol, the UN Global Compact principles... this is your new vocabulary.

ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance² and is a reporting method used to encourage transparency and demonstrate how an organization contributes to sustainable development. ESG reporting is really about showing how our activities minimize negative impact and maximize positive impact on people, society, and the environment.

The **GHG-protocol**³ is developed by Worlds Resources Institute and World Business Council for Sustainable Development, is preferred by 99% globally, of all companies doing greenhouse gas accounting. **Scope 1** (direct emissions from fossil fuel consumption) and **scope 2** (emissions from purchased or acquired electricity, steam, heat, and cooling) are mandatory. Within **scope 3** (the value chain emissions) the emissions that are most relevant are selected, I. e. transport, accommodation, textiles, waste, electronics...

Football is no longer focused on only two goal posts, but 17 of them. **Good luck.**





- 2 The UEFA Grow SROI Model was developed in response to the challenge of proving the benefits of football participation to wider society. It provides a rigorous football specific social valuing model designed to establish the impact that, non-elite, mass participation in football has across a spectrum of 24 economic, health and social outcomes."
- 3 https://ghgprotocol.org/standards

Boosting sustainability in football

A practical guide on how to realize individual actions

Written by: **Johannes Lindorfer,** Energy Institute at the Johannes Kepler University of Linz, Austria



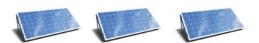
The SDG STRIKER project in total contributes to 8 out of 17 SDGs. By the compilation of a practical guideline the clubs become aware of potential technical measures: for example, on-site solar power generation, possibilities to become more energy efficient in their facilities (related to lighting, HVAC systems, buildings etc.) or to avoid microplastic from artificial turf materials. Concrete, easy-to-understand **recommendations** are provided to minimize the environmental impact and at the same time generate potential financial and brand benefits for the individual clubs at all levels.

The following short dive is providing essential recommendations for the three main fields of action of the SDG-Striker project:

How to succeed installing **photovoltaics** to self-power your sports facility⁴:

Focus on productivity vs. capacity

- For investigating the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of the system, focus on energy production rather than the capacity of the system to better align your goals with the actual system design.
- Energy production: Actual estimated energy the system will produce after all factors are taken into account.



4 • https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/stadium-solar-guide.pdf

Make friends with your utility



- Your local utility is an important partner in order to build a cost-effective project.
- Net-metering to receive credit for the electricity generated that is not consumed by yourself.
- Contact your utility at the beginning of the project.
- Research net-metering policies, local incentive programs and other services available.

Get creative with your financial model



- Use a combination of options to lower the total capital cost and minimize your system's payback period.
- Think about more than tax incentives, loans, and grants in your financial model.
- Consider options that can create win-win partnerships with corporate sponsors that are interested in reaching fans.

Engage your community



- Use your system as a tool to educate and engage your community through tours of the stadium, on-site educational programs, or partnerships with school programs...
- Determine your community engagement strategy at the start of the project.

In addition to technical energy efficiency, however, there are also social issues for which conceivably **less money-intensive investments** are necessary, but which have an identical sustainability significance. One sensitive topic that is too little discussed is **energy poverty.**

Energy poverty is defined as the inability to access enough energy so that a person or family is comfortable at home without jeopardizing their income or ability to pay for other basic needs. It is caused by a combination of high energy prices, low income, and low energy efficiency.

Football clubs can address the topic of energy poverty within their community to create awareness and potentially also reduce energy poverty

There are several possibilities to address energy poverty within your club's community:

- Sometimes spending time outside one's home is a frequent coping mechanism to deal with energy deprivation – football clubs give young people the opportunity to spend time outside one's home.
- Energy services in sport facilities: hot showers, hair dryers...

The creation of a safe network is vital to deal with the many inconveniences that arise from living in conditions of inequality by e.g.:

- Good social relations, which can enable access to energy services by overcoming the dynamics of oppression and discrimination (e.g., overcoming linguistic barriers to understand the energy bills...).
- Clubs can offer grants and facilitate the participation of low-income children, as low-income families often face financial barriers that limit children's sport participation – hence more money for energy is available for the families.
- **Provide workshops** on energy efficiency, energy bills...
- Offer consulting opportunities for those affected by energy poverty.
- Create awareness for the topic of energy poverty within your club and out of it (e.g., an awareness campaign).

Leave No One Behind

An essential infrastructure in thousands of sports facilities in Europe are **artificial turf** fields, which enable year-round sporting activities. In addition to the benefits of

artificial turf pitches, operators and users must also be made aware of their **responsibility for the ecological effects** that go hand in hand with them. To avoid potential future restrictions for your site especially concerning the infill material, which currently mostly is made from rubber, some points are to be considered when choosing the material:

Environmental Dimension



- What are the environmental impacts over the whole product life cycle (raw material to end-of-life)?
- Are there any reuse or recycling options of the material?
- What are the possible impacts if the infill ends up in the natural environment?

Technical Dimension



- What is the quality and durability of the material?
- How often is it needed to be replaced or refilled?

Social Dimension



- How safe and healthy is the alternative material for the players?
- How does it influence the playing characteristics?

Economic dimension



- · What is the price of the material?
- Is it economically feasible?

Are you interested in more specific recommendations for the hot topics of sustainability in football? We will inform you what is next and how the pilot activities are evolving!





Stay on the ball and follow us on social media!

Fostering public and shared mobility, reducing private cars

From a club and players perspective



Written by: **Bryan Lucas**, European Football For Development Network



In the recent years, we have seen the development of clubs in their environmental policy. Institutional organisations such as **FIFA** and **UEFA** have recently presented their objectives for the next years with a focus on sustainability in the football industry. Moreover, clubs are more and more concerned by this topic as they are directly involved at local, national, and European levels.

Indeed, many football clubs throughout Europe have shown their intention to become pioneer in terms of sustainability actions such as Forest Green Rovers, Real Betis Balompie, Hibernians FC, Southampton FC and more. These clubs play on the environmental field via CSR initiatives led by their sponsors on energy efficiency, waste reduction and raising awareness.

But what are clubs doing in relation to Mobility?

Recently, we have been able to see multiple initiatives in order to raise awareness about mobility, to address initiatives reducing the fans' carbon footprint as well as solutions that could be setup as a rule for all football clubs. Two clubs, a season ticket holder, and a player to talk about mobility were contacted.

Athletic Bilbao and their pathway to 100% sustainable

At the beginning of 2020, the foundation of Athletic Bilbao has been working in collaboration with the association Metropoli-30 and the city of Bilbao in order to develop solutions offering fans out of the city the possibility to get to the stadium easily and with a low carbon footprint.

Based on their strategy, we have contacted the club in order to have further information about the project, still under development due to the health situation of the previous months. **Asier Garcia** commented:

"The project is under development, in collaboration with Metropoli-30 association and the Bilbao City Council. Metropoli-30 brings together 30 Basque municipalities that consists of offering fans from outside the city a way to approach the field in a more sustainable and low-carbon way, through (1) applications in which they are grouped in shuttle buses and (2) incentives on public transport tickets for days outside the matches"

"Keep in mind that the Athletic Club stadium is in the centre of the city which has its disadvantages and its advantages with many fans who come from different villages of Euskal Herria, the Bask Countryside around Bilbao."

Mentioned Asier Garcia



Apart of this mobility strategy, the club is working on their sustainable strategy with the development of electric mobility, installation of 200 bicycle parking as well as working on other fields such as waste, water, and energy management.



Discussion with a season ticket holder of Fevenoord Rotterdam

Recently, we met a football fan who often uses the public transport network of the City of Rotterdam to go to the stadium. We asked him several questions related to the ease of using these options travelling to watch his favourite club. The fan of Feyenoord Rotterdam, the recent finalist of the UEFA Conference League, explained us the alternatives that are offered to him and its family to watch home games at **De Kuip:**

"Ticket holders benefit of free public transport 3 hours before the game and 3 hours after. Moreover, for supporters driving to Rotterdam, a park and ride parking is available for them in order to reduce the amount of traffic in the city centre. I have several options to go to the game which give me the choice and opportunity to go easily to the stadium."

Rick N. - Season ticket holder.











Bayer Leverkusen's Special buses and Free Use of Public Transport

Another example is the club of **Bayer Leverkusen** that set up the same action in its environment. All stadium tickets include free use of public transport (VRS & VRR), from 4 hours before the start of the match until 3am the following day. In addition, there are many special buses to all districts of Leverkusen and to the "Baverwerk" railway station. The "Leverkusen Mitte" and "Leverkusen Manfort" train stations are within walking distance of the stadium and are connected to regional transport (Cologne, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Solingen, Aachen, Bonn...).

Player's perspective



During the More Than Football Actions Week⁵, the European football for Development Network had the opportunity to meet a professional football player, **Christian Burgess**, that express his feeling about the Belgian cycling model of a city where he currently lives and would like to see more overseas.

"I love it that everyone cycles here in Belgium and in the Netherlands too! When I drive to the training, I see kids biking to school. Loads of them! You don't see that in England. It helps for their health, their fitness. It's so great and it's very sustainable."





Referring to the talk with a club, a fan, and a player, we can see the development of several mobility strategies offering multiple solutions to fans in order to get access to sustainable mobility. From the bike to bus, clubs are giving access to these options through partnership with cities and public transport companies.

5 • https://www.morethanfootball.eu/

Why is it important to involve the community in the sports club decisions regarding sustainability?



The United Nations Agenda 2030 contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adaptable to the different territorial realities and their levels. It is a voluntary International Action Plan that offers, for each SDG, a definition of the goals and their targets together with tailored indicators (United Nations). Environmental awareness is raising faster, and it's demonstrated by the number of actors that have taken the 2030 Agenda to their optical, from national governments, through local governments of large (and not so large) cities, to being able to find sustainable development strategies in institutions such as schools or companies, among others.

But...What is sustainable development? It is a concept born in 1987 and reconsidered in the Rio Conference (1992), when governments agreed that "sustainable development" aims to strike a balance between environmental, economic, and social development.

Years after the emergence of the concept, there is a need to define the **social pillar** and its link with the other two pillars of sustainable development, so as not to underestimate it. Let's remember that the 2030 Agenda is adaptable and voluntary... Do you think that **sports federations** can be drivers of sustainability by adapting the SDGs in their day-to-day activities? This article aims to help design sustainable development strategies from the social pillar perspective and to understand the importance of **involving the community** in clubs' decisions to achieve sustainable development objectives.

When designing sustainable development policies or strategies in the world of sport, there are social concepts that can be considered to ensure their integration: (Kevin Murphy, 2012, The social pillar of sustainable development: a literature review and framework for policy analysis).



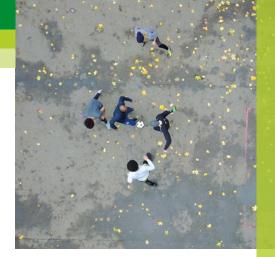
Equity

Society still has challenges regarding equality and equity, and sports can improve this perspective to end with the traditional roles that are reproduced. Some actions that can be carried out in the world of sports are:

- Tincrease the representation of women in managerial and technical positions.
- Encourage the participation of women and girls in sports activities.
- Breaking stereotypes and the segregation of feminized and masculinized sports.
- Prevent, detect, and act against genderbased violence in the world of sports.
- Guarantee safe spaces.
- Offer more visibility to paralympic sports.

And how can your team work on equity? Communication is the first key point to work on: you can integrate inclusive and nonsexist language in communication channels and add images that eliminate stereotypes. And when planning actions and projects, you can promote awareness and mixed





teams, among other things. In addition, your club can incorporate a "Sports and Gender" Action Plan, with the aim of introducing a gender perspective (Sport and Gender from Barcelona Institute of Sports).

Sustainability consciousness

Sustainability awareness is a key social concept in the sustainable development discourse. Sport events are an ideal space to **promote sustainability,** which can incorporate "green" advertising campaigns, offer only eco-labelled products for visitors, promote awareness by publicizing the adopted measures by clubs and incorporating sustainable development education programs or modules for players and family members of all ages.

Participation and local ownership

Considering the different existing points of view and the variety of opinions is not an easy task, but it is important for the promotion of social cohesion in your sports communities. Generating satisfaction or opinion surveys on your club's sustainability strategies is one way to foster a sense of belonging and more active involvement of your members.

Social cohesion

A club is not only made up of players and coaches, but incorporates many different positions, the functions of which are essential, including maintenance people, those who work cleaning or even recognizing that families, friends, acquaintances, and spectators in general are part of these **big sport communities**.

"Sport is another important enabler of sustainable development. It increasingly contributes to realizing development and peace by promoting tolerance and respect, and which also supports the empowerment of women and youth, individuals, and communities, as well as health, education, and social inclusion goals" 6.

What can your club do to strengthen its community? Make the entire community feel a part of the club's vision for sustainability by encouraging and facilitating participation and increasing the means and language of communication, creating a bond of commitment between the two sides.

Do you think involving the community in your club can strengthen your club's sustainability strategies? We think so! Besides, the main purpose of the 2030 Agenda is to... **Leave no one behind.**



6 • United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 70/1, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"











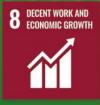
































Sports for **Sustainability**