

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SESSION 2 – Sustainability: A call for action

Somesh Dutt, FEI Manager Events Classification & Sustainability opened the session mentioning that the last time the Sustainability session was held at the FEI Sports Forum was 10 years ago, which included the launching of the first FEI Sustainability Handbook. He emphasised that Sustainability has evolved considerably since, as a whole, as well as in its relevance in sport. Somesh Dutt then introduced the panellists, followed by the first presentation of the session, by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

IOC

Fabrizio D'Angelo (IOC Sustainability Manager) started by informing the delegates about the Olympic Agenda 2020 and 2020+5, where in Sustainable Development is one of the five strategic priorities of the IOC. He provided a brief of the Environmental aspects that covered Climate Action, Biodiversity, and Circular Economy. The specifics of IOC's commitments on reducing emissions in line with the Paris agreement, compensating more than 100% of residual emissions, and using their influence to encourage stakeholders and Olympics fans to take action against climate change, were emphasized upon.

Fabrizio delved deeper into Carbon emissions figures and targets, and shared how the IOC will have decreased their business travel emissions by 30% in 2024, from a baseline of 2019. He also informed the delegates on a comparison of the overall emissions statistics of different Games from London 2012 to the estimations of Paris 2024.

Fabrizio recommended three main areas of actions where National Federations can contribute in contributing to sustainable development, and advised starting off by developing sustainability strategies (covering environmental, social, and economic aspects), climate and nature action, and sustainable sourcing and circularity. The key closing message was that implementing initiatives within the sport's world that work towards this broader definition of sustainability need to not only focus on matters from an elite competition level, but to think the process through right down to the national level, starting at the grassroots.

This was followed by a discussion wherein idea to organise the Games at a specific location were discussed, however how it would also require the core concept of universality be retained.

Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA)

Somesh Dutt invited Barbara Silva (Head of Sustainability, FIA) for the second presentation of the session. Barbara introduced the FIA's structure and highlighted the core identity enablers for the FIA as Leadership, Innovation, Technology, Community, and Sustainability. The delegates were also informed that the FIA's Environmental Strategy, launched during 2021 coincided also with the introduction of the off-road electric SUV series (Extreme E).

Barbara then delved further in the FIA Environmental Strategy mentioning the three main objectives as 1) Accelerate net-zero transformation, 2) Foster sustainable and innovative solutions, and 3) Drive sustainable change – combinedly aligning with 7 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Just as for the IOC, Barbara explained that 73.5% of the FIA's carbon footprint was from business travel, and presented the measures that form the core of the reductions' focus, namely travel, logistics, procurement, energy, waste, on-site safety, and awareness & influence. She cited the example of FIA's environmental

seminar and e-learning module as an example of upskilling the member associations for them to be partners in the environmental sustainability journey.

Emphasis was also laid on 'push your championships' / events, which the FIA is currently doing by creating criteria to be met, for example whether the event has a green energy application plan, whether sustainability is considered in supplier selection, etc. Each criterion has a certain weight and outcome score of Process and Performance, which are then scored on a grade of 'F1' (highest) to 'Karting' (lowest). Barbara also explained how the FIA has a legacy of championing and spreading innovation that delivers transformative solutions to worldwide challenges, through their global reach and influence to drive decarbonisation of road transport, and upholding their vision of safe, sustainable mobility that is accessible for all. She highlighted that with access to 80 million road users, the FIA has a unique perspective to bring to the table – understanding and representing the views and experiences of road users all over the world, and actively engaging with them to drive positive change.

Upon a question from the delegates, Barbara explained that while the FIA has an aim of using Hydrogen or other Sustainable fuels or 100% electric vehicles in different championships across the board from F1 to FE to Karting, however the actual carbon savings from this shift alone will be little, as the great majority of emissions still occur from the travel of people and logistics of all equipment.

Barbara was also asked how the FIA moved from a one person sustainability team around 2020 to a seven people team today with all seven working solely on sustainability. To which she explained that alignment with top management (led by the support from the FIA president) was key to pursuing this direction.

5T Sports Group

Somesh then welcomed Aileen McManamon (Founder and Managing Partner of 5T Sports Group, a global sports management firm). Aileen's presentation was about discussing the transformative shift in sports partnerships, driven by emerging opportunities in sustainability, and she opened by sharing the macro trends that show consumer and fan sentiment to strongly favour brands that demonstrate corporate citizenship, diversity, and environmental awareness.

This shift is driving new norms and expectations in sports partnerships. Aileen shared some statistics such as 81% of consumers expect public declarations of corporate citizenship from their preferred brands. Furthermore, 70% are more likely to choose brands that promote diversity and inclusion, while 61% prefer brands for their environmental activism. Similarly, about cause marketing where there is a significant increase in interest - with 86% of global sports fans expressing interest, up from 42% in 2020. This indicates a growing demand for partnerships that align with social and environmental causes.

The key message around sport partnership evolution was that these are evolving to focus on values-aligned collaborations. Poor due diligence in the past has led to reputational risks, highlighting the need for better alignment between brands and sports properties. Sustainable partnerships are becoming growth engines. Data from private studies show substantial annual revenue growth for properties with a strong sustainability agenda. Brands are shifting their messaging to emphasize social equity and climate themes, leveraging sports sponsorships as platforms for values-based marketing. A number of brands/sport properties that have leveraged this were shared such as UEFA, Atlanta Hawks, WNBA, Angel City FC, and others.

Next Aileen shared some case studies with the delegates, such as **Pepsi and UEFA** wherein Pepsi has renewed its partnership with UEFA to collaborate on sustainability projects. Their goal is to achieve Zero Waste Champions League Finals by 2026, with ten participating clubs collecting data and developing best practices; **DHL and F1** wherein DHL is optimizing shipping weight and volume while showcasing sustainable fuels.

Focus then changed to measuring impact and Aileen introduced two tools, namely Sports Partner Score Card that tool assesses partnerships based on a 60-point analysis of business performance, corporate citizenship, and risk management, ensuring alignment with sustainability goals; and Fan Mobilisation Playbook that helps brands engage with fans on purpose-driven campaigns, amplifying their impact.

Aileen summarised at the end with the four key takeaways for the delegates: 1) market opportunity is on a sharp growth trajectory, esp. for properties with the right assets and a global audience, 2) rightsholder entertainment is a leading innovator and a top performer in sustainability with a strong portfolio of assets to leverage, 3) brands are increasingly assessing the sustainability performance of their sports partners, and 4) fans & consumers care – a lot. Aileen congratulated the FEI for the work it has done so far in producing the bespoke sustainability tools for its stakeholders and recommended to leverage these as the FEI could have several open partnership categories to pursue, and 'shovel-ready' projects to pitch.

Swedish Equestrian Federation

The next presentation from the panel was from Johan Fyrberg (Secretary General, Swedish National Federation). Johan started with a brief overview about equestrian sports in Sweden which has the second highest horse population density after Iceland, and where equestrian is the second largest sport among young people, there are around 450 riding schools, and 841 non-profit clubs.

Johan impressed that Sustainability has to be a constant and much long term consideration. The SWE NF launched their sustainability strategy in 2021 and that marked a greater intensification of their efforts. The strategy is based on five of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely Good Health and Well-being, Gender Equality, Climate Action, Life Below Water, and Life on Land. Primarily covering three areas: equestrian sports for all – throughout life, Climate-smart equestrian sports, and equestrian sports on environment's terms.

Johan then highlighted the key efforts that have been undertaken. The SWE NF partnered with Lövsta Future Challenge and launched an environmental certificate for equestrian competitions. They also undertook specific research on microplastics concentration in artificial arena footing, in response to an anticipated EU ban on such fibres expected in 2031. Johan highlighted that they have a vision of working actively together with all stakeholders and getting all concerned to be engaged on sustainability matters by 2025, and emphasized the importance of working together with the FEI and EEF, such as launching a sustainability handbook in 2023 having consulted the second version of the FEI Sustainability Handbook (also launched in 2023).

The delegates, especially NF representatives, appreciated the presentation and echoed the message that 'the more you do the more you engage', and remarked that even if we are sport governing bodies we can drive engagement beyond the sport competitions. Johan fully agreed and mentioned that while in time aspects on this topic could be driven by government regulations as well as commercial endeavours, it is essential that we focus on

inspiration. Johan emphasized the need to include young people in decision making, and that the SWE NF now have two young people in the Board.

FEI

Somesh Dutt then made the final presentation of the session focussing on the specific topic of Green House Gases (GHG) Emissions measurements. He briefly introduced the established scientific categorisation and principles behind GHG calculations. Somesh emphasised that it is important to know the starting point to determining a meaningful and measurable strategy of reducing one's carbon footprint and how the FEI first undertook this exercise in 2019 and has continued since. He shared the break-up of the FEI's footprint from 2022 showing that 94% of it was Scope 3 of which 82% was business travel alone. Somesh explained that to become aware of such details is key to determining mitigation actions, which is how the FEI was able to then determine its carbon roadmap (2022-2030) to come as close as possible to reducing its emissions by 50% in line with its commitment to the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework.

To enable measuring and developing mitigation strategies across our sport, he explained it was important that a standard measurement tool was developed and used by all. As the existing carbon tools and services in the market were not consistent, or covered all aspects and stakeholders, required paid subscriptions, and most importantly were not relatable and representative of an equestrian context, the FEI decided to build a custom carbon / GHG emissions calculator for our stakeholders that would work equally for NFs (for calculating their corporate footprint, for equestrian events whether International or National, and equally for riding clubs/facilities that may or may not be organising equestrian events.

Somesh informed the delegates of how the tool was developed with scientific consultancy from Quantis, and detailed feedback and workshop with the organisers of Burghley, Gothenburg, Helsinki as well as GL events. The resulting tool has a maximum of 82 different inputs clubbed across different areas such as travel, accommodation, venue infrastructure, etc. He then delved deeper into explaining the different question types which either require an input based on estimates, or an accurate input, or an input based on spending. He then illustrated how the results are presented by the tool in the form of a Dashboard where it is possible to have a high level view of the emissions as well as the possibility to dissect individual areas. He also remarked that the tool has been finalised and currently is based in MS Excel that calculates the footprint and generates summary charts automatically from the input, however efforts are underway to make this available as web-based tool, which will have the additional functionality of recommending specific reduction measures from the already existing FEI Sustainability Handbook according to the hot spots that are identified from the emissions calculations.

The delegates had a positive reaction to the introduction of this tool. Organisers of both Gothenburg and Helsinki horse shows were in audience and commended the utility that such a tool offers and how it has helped them to consider reduction initiatives in line with the emissions measurements they've made year-on-year.