

Updating the Sustainability Program and Sustainability Regulations for the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF)



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Introduction

World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) is the sole governing body for dance and all DanceSport related activities recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) (*World DanceSport Federation, 2022a*). WDSF is responsible for promoting, regulating, and administering DanceSport related events and competitions internationally and represents DanceSport in the Olympic Movement (World DanceSport Federation, 2022b). In 2020, the IOC officially announced that the first DanceSport discipline to participate in the Medal Programme of the Summer Olympic Games will be Breaking, at the 2024 Paris Summer Olympic Games (*Breaking Officially Added to Olympic Games Paris 2024, 2020*) (WDSF Breaking for Gold & World DanceSport Federation, 2022).

WDSF must meet the ongoing requirements set by the IOC to participate in the Olympic Games. A new key priority and one of the three pillars of the Olympic agenda set by the IOC is the IOC's 2022 enhanced programme for Sustainability (*IOC Sustainability Strategy, 2017*)(*IOC Sustainability Report, 2021*).

This document will serve as an overview, recommendation, and implementation of sustainable practices, and as the basis for a new Operating Policy for WDSF to use as a tool to amend existing WDSF Presidium Operating Policies.

The IOC has committed to reducing its carbon footprint in accordance with the Paris Agreement by reducing travel emissions by 30% for the Paris 2024 Olympic games, with a short-term goal of reducing 50% of carbon emissions by 2030 and finally, the long-term goal of net-zero carbon-emissions by 2040. The Paris Agreement is an international effort committed to trying to prevent global temperature rise above 2.0 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels and to reach net-zero emissions globally by 2050 (*Sports for Climate Action, n.d.*) (United Nations, 2015).

The IOC's commitment is broken into its *Three Spheres of Responsibility* which encapsulates its accountabilities as (1) an organisation; (2) the owner of the Olympic Games, and; (3) the leader of the Olympic Movement (*IOC Sustainability Report, 2021*). For each goal, regardless of term length, the IOC has created a list of objectives to reach its target.

The importance of incorporating Sustainability into the foundations of how sporting organisations are operated is due to clear evidence that climate change is having and will continue to have detrimental effects on the sporting world as well as on the future of our planet and generations to come. The IOC has mandated that regardless of size and impact levels, all international sport federations (IFs), including WDSF must adopt policies to save the future of sport (*Sports for Climate Action, n.d.*).

The world of sport draws major global attention repeatedly and across each sector and therefore has the potential to set a huge example and to inspire others to implement

Sustainability measures. It has been recommended that a Sustainability policy strategy or climate action report be implemented and followed to ensure success (*Carbon Footprint Methodology for the Olympic Games, 2018*) (*Plastic Game Plan for Sport, n.d.*).

In 2016, the WDSF Annual General Meeting Adopted its first iteration of the WDSF *Environmental Sustainability Menu* addressing its willingness to incorporate Sustainability into its governing practices (World DanceSport Federation, 2016a). Building on that original work, the new Operating Policy will:

- (1) first review the IOC literature and supporting documents;
- (2) assess WDSF's position as a leader in Sustainability practice;
- (3) analyze some opportunities and challenges associated with implementing a Sustainability framework; and finally
- (4) provide a list of recommended goals and policies to be incorporated into the new updated **WDSF Sustainability Policy and Action Plan**.

Background

For WDSF to incorporate Sustainability policies into its strategic framework, an assessment of what is currently being done by the IOC as well as a look into other IFs as examples must be undertaken. This section serves as an overview of such as well as defines the role of sport in the practice of Sustainability.

In the effort to aid sporting organisations with incorporating Sustainability policy, the IOC has not only developed numerous programs, but has released supporting documents which can be used as guides for the organisations to follow (*IOC Sustainability Report, 2021*).

This includes the Sports for Climate Action Framework which the IOC in conjunction with the United Nations for Climate Change (UNFCCC) division created in order to urge sporting organisations to participate and pledge towards the predominant goal of reaching net zero emissions as soon as possible (United Nations Climate Change, n.d.). There are five key principles involved with pledging:

- (1) to promote environmental responsibility;
- (2) to reduce climate impact;
- (3) to educate for climate action;
- (4) to promote sustainable consumption; and
- (5) to advocate for climate action through communication.

These five principles will be used to serve the recommendations that will be applied to WDSF's policy goals.

Currently, 188 signatories have agreed to this framework, including the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) as well as 13 unique world sport federations. Amongst these signatories, 95 have pledged under the Race to Zero which includes the IOC as well as the Paris 2024 Olympic Games (*Participants in the Sports for Climate Action Framework | UNFCCC, n.d.*).

As for the IOC itself, it has made further pledges such as eliminating single-use plastic from events and organisations. This pledge began in 2018 and the number IFs signing it has increased. Further efforts by the IOC include sequestering its calculated carbon emissions through reforestation (i.e. planting trees) as well as 'afforestation'¹ (*Afforestation - Energy Education, n.d.*).

On top of these works, the IOC has created a platform alongside the Global Association of International Sport Federations (GASIF) which provides nearly a thousand resources for organisations to access and aid towards their individual Sustainability action plans (*IOC Sustainability Report, 2021*).

It is well recognized that each of the independent IFs come in different sizes and that sport leaders should therefore create an action plan that best suits their available resources. A study done in 2022 assessed these differing Sustainability practices and found that regardless of available resources, an IF will choose to approach Sustainability through the utilization of one of the following tactics (Moon et al., 2022):

- (1) by launching Sustainability pilot events;
- (2) by partnering with NGOs;
- (3) by partnering with Sustainability consultancies;
- (4) by creating a Sustainability committee and/or;
- (5) by launching a comprehensive Sustainability strategy.

Each strategy comes with its own sets of hurdles to overcome and as such should be considered when deciding on the best path forward.

¹ The process of introducing trees and tree seedlings to an area that has previously not been forested.

Assessing WDSF’s Position and Role in the World

The following section will apply the principles discussed into assessing WDSF’s position and pole in the world, answering appropriate questions and identifying components WDSF will have to take into consideration whilst undertaking the updated policy framework.

The IOCs’ three spheres of responsibility, as:

- (1) an organisation;
- (2) the owner of the Olympic Games; and
- (3) the leader of the Olympic Movement, can be matched by WDSF on a smaller scale.

Similarly, WDSF has a responsibility as:

- (1) an organisation to reduce its emissions, to source any procured materials responsibly, and to ensure its staff and athletes are educated in the updated Sustainability framework;
- (2) the governing body of DanceSport events which requires promoting sustainable travel and consumption by spectators, staff, officials, and athletes; and
- (3) an IF with the power to encourage athletes to raise awareness and create visibility around Sustainability through sport.

The table below highlights key questions and their key components that should be considered by WDSF.

Key Questions	Key Components
Are there aspects of WDSF activities that might have an impact on the environment?	Travel & transportation, waste, venues, catering, spectators, sponsors, suppliers
Does WDSF have existing initiatives related to Sustainability?	The existing 2016 WDSF Sustainability Menu
Is DanceSport at risk from the impacts of climate change?	Air quality, water quality, temperature rise, outdoor venues
What resources does WDSF have?	Athletes’ voices, stakeholders, funding, marketability

“Sustainability should not sit apart from how the organisation is run. It needs to be integrated into the organisation as much as possible. Even if organisations get to the point of having a well-thought-out Sustainability vision and strategy, there is often a gap between this and what needs to happen to make it a reality.” (Sustainability Management in Sport, 2020)

The 2016 WDSF Sustainability Menu offers a good starting point for WDSF, but it lacks a clear set of up-to-date goals and provides no mechanism to collect evidence of implementation. The major theme of the menu acknowledges energy efficiency, water usage and waste as the three major contributors to emissions. Although some mitigation tactics are suggested such as utilizing energy efficient appliances, wasting less water, and encouraging good recycling behavior, none provides when and how they will be applied.

Additionally, the mantra of “do it now, do it soon, do it later” gives no clear timeline as to when WDSF’s goals are to be met. The predominant guideline utilizes the voice of athletes as well as the organisation with the power of social platforms to spread sustainable messaging. No system was defined in this initial WDSF policy for social participants to acquire the knowledge to inspire and influence others to adopt sustainable practices (World DanceSport Federation, 2016a).

The following presents a more comprehensive recommendation list that will then be applied to some of the existing ideas from the 2016 Sustainability Menu.

Recommendations

As previously discussed, the IOC has established a list of objectives to meet each of its emissions reduction goals by a certain time. Between 2017 and 2020 there were 18 goals and 15 were met. The next objective list is to be completed by 2024 and contains 17 new goals, either building on previous goals or adding new ones (*IOC Sustainability Report, 2021*).

The following tables contain goals similar to those of the IOC, however for WDSF Members’ convenience they are helpfully integrated with the more familiar 2016 WDSF Sustainability Menu. Each table is assigned a category of concern as highlighted in WDSF Sustainability Menu.

The categories are as follows:

Table 1 (energy use and transportation),

Table 2 (waste and water),

Table 3 (communication and education)

Table 1 – Energy use and transportation

Sustainability Objectives	Details
Increase energy efficiency of WDSF and WDSF Members’, supporters’, and producers’ building appliances, heating systems and cooling systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replace inefficient appliances with energy saving and efficient devices such as but not limited to smart sockets, LED lightbulbs, smart thermostats, smart lighting - Replace fossil fuel burning heating systems with non-fossil-fuel-based electric heating

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install external shading outside window fixtures such as manual or automatic awnings to be utilized in the summer months
Reduce WDSFs’ travel impact by staff and athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Determine carbon footprint of any WDSF related travel by athletes and staff of WDSF - Encourage rideshare or carpooling where possible - Encourage virtual meetings for non-event purposes - Encourage working from home
Determine greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the same carbon footprint calculator chosen by the IOC to determine GHG emissions
Reduce GHG emissions according to the Paris Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying for carbon offsetting projects - Actively implementing sustainable policies outlined in the updated Sustainability Menu

Table 2 – Waste and Water

Sustainability Objectives	- Details
Avoid single-use products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the use of re-usable products including but not limited to cutlery, dishware, cups, and water bottles, with suitable hygiene advice - Do not distribute single-use products at events - Prioritize water re-fill stations
Transition to materials with a lower environmental footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switch to bio-based or recyclable products at events and venues
Encourage recycling at all venues and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide waste stations at all venues and buildings that promote recycling over discarding
Merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage/ require retailers not to sell single-use plastic items at events
Encourage the rule of no permanent fixtures and no new venue sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any new venue sites should have removable fixtures unless the new fixtures directly benefit the host city - Any new construction must encourage, protect, and enhance natural sites and biodiversity

Table 3 – Communication and Education

Sustainability Objectives	Details
Include Sustainability at all meetings, practices, and competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Replace in-person corporate events with virtual events - Ensure Sustainability is addressed at all events
Build partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop agreements with NGOs
Develop a Sustainability committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Require at least one member or staff to take on the roll as Sustainability officer and to implement effective Sustainability actions - Ensure continuous reporting and updating of the Sustainability progress made by WDSF on an annual basis
Establish an ambassador programme including the athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise awareness on Sustainability in sport - Educate athletes on the importance of Sustainability in sport - Athletes and WDSF social profiles are leveraged, and voices are raised on the topic of Sustainability - Athletes have the power to inspire millions of people
Develop a training programme for all WDSF members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent educational opportunities for staff, members, and athletes of WDSF on Sustainability - These educational sessions be either; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) held annually and virtually or in person at conferences and presidium meetings or; (2) submitted as a report annually
Join the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pledge to the UNFCC to adhere to the five principles with a goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050

(IOC Sustainability Strategy, 2017)(Moon et al., 2022)(Sustainability Management in Sport, 2020)(Sports for Climate Action, n.d.)

The following section will discuss the inherent opportunities and challenges associated with establishing an appropriate Sustainability plan.

Opportunities

International sporting federations “...may use Sustainability to expand or protect their sport ... they (IFs) can play a leadership role both in their sport and in host communities” (Moon et al., 2022)

The implementation and transition towards Sustainability cannot become true action without a cost, Sustainability although necessary, comes with a price tag. Sustainability can be affordable and regardless of scale responsible, sustainable practices can be phased in. Change does not occur immediately and should therefore be met with a realistic timeline. The following section applies the recommendations above to a useable and realistic schedule.

Annually, WDSF professional division (PD) members, presidium members, and competitors pay a fee to be able to plan and participate in WDSF events and competitions. This includes licenses for athletes, the rights to attend seminars and the rights to organize all WDSF competitions (World DanceSport Federation, 2016b). An increase in annual fees can be applied and a percentage of said fee used towards the implementation of the recommendations stated above.

Section 3.2 of the *Financial Regulations of WDSF Professional Division* discusses Organisers providing travel expenses for any and all travel as well as tariffs. This could present an opportunity for WDSF to instead reimburse partially for travel involving fossil fuel emissions that cannot be offset and fully reimbursing for travel that has been met with an offsetting strategy or sustainable action such as carpooling and utilizing electric or hybrid vehicles.

Furthermore, section 6 discusses penalties involving the refusal or neglect of fees which could be broadened to include the refusal of use of sustainable travel (World DanceSport Federation, 2018).

As stated in the *WDSF Operating Policy for Presidium Meetings*, WDSF outlines the various compensations for Presidium members attending Presidium meetings such as travel, accommodation, and food and beverage. This document could be further updated to include WDSF offsetting strategies applied to best meet the above recommendations (World DanceSport Federation, 2013).

Creating a Schedule

As progressive as these initiatives stated above are, the emissions targets cannot be met without an implementation plan.

Present to 2024 Paris Olympic Games

Sustainability Details	Implementation
Energy efficiency measures (small scale)	- Replace any remaining inefficient appliances with energy saving and efficient devices such as but not limited to smart sockets, LED lightbulbs, smart thermostats, smart lighting
Encourage rideshare or carpooling where possible	- A Sustainability Memorandum will be written and circulated amongst WDSF members and competitors detailing recommendations
Encourage virtual meetings for non-event purposes and working from home	- Included in Sustainability Memorandum described above; action will include adding relevant terms to WDSF's current agreements for WDSF title grants and for various kinds of WDSF licensing ("new Sustainability texts and terms")
Begin to use a carbon calculator to determine known GHG emissions ¹	- The IOC employs carbon calculators to determine carbon footprint, these should be used as a rough estimate until WDSF has the resources to undergo a carbon audit. ² (<i>Energyland - Energy Audit and Carbon Audit</i> , n.d.)
Encourage the use of re-usable products including but not limited to cutlery, dishware, cups, and water bottles, with suitable hygiene advice	- Included in memo described above; new Sustainability texts and terms
Provide waste stations at all venues and buildings that promote recycling over discarding and prioritize water re-fill stations	- New Sustainability texts and terms
Ensure Sustainability is addressed at all events	- New Sustainability texts and terms

¹ <https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

<https://offset.climateneutralnow.org/footprintcalc>

² A carbon audit is a means of measuring and recording the GHG emissions of an organization within a defined system.

Require at least one member or staff to take on the roll as Sustainability officer and to implement effective Sustainability actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend the WDSF Presidium Operating Policy Re: General Secretary
Raise awareness on Sustainability in sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athletes have the power to inspire millions of people and their voices can be leveraged through their social media platforms as well as in interviews or public conferences. - Athletes as well as WDSF members must be first educated on Sustainability and should be encouraged to attend educational meetings virtually by WDSF. - New Sustainability texts and terms

Present To 2030

Sustainability Objectives	Implementation
Energy efficient measures (medium scale)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Install external shading outside window fixtures such as manual or automatic awnings to be utilized in the summer months
Investing in carbon offsetting projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once carbon calculations are completed by WDSF Sustainability Officer – offsetting projects are considered, and investments can begin - Continuous reporting and updates are to be done by the Sustainability Officer on Sustainability progress made on an annual basis
Food and beverage material transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Switch to bio-based or recyclable products at events and venues by requiring onsite retailers to no longer sell or distribute single-use products at events
Sustainable venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any new construction must encourage, protect, and enhance natural sites and biodiversity
Join the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit the UNFCC to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050¹

¹ <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>

To 2050 and Net Zero

Sustainability Objectives	Implementation
Energy efficient measures (large scale)	- Replace fossil-fuel-burning heating systems with non-fossil-fuel-based electric heating
Offset all carbon emissions	- Using carbon-offsetting measures as well as continuing the efforts from the recommendations. This can be accomplished by partnering with NGOs and establishing a Sustainability team.

Conclusion

In summary, the transition towards Sustainability is of course not simple or easy to accomplish quickly but with the right tools, policies, and regulations, it is possible. This document serves as a tool for WDSF to implement and follow in accordance with the Paris agreement as well as the IOC to ultimately reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and beyond.

WDSF is in a unique position to adopt Sustainability as one of its main pillars of governance. WDSF has been an established sport federation since 1957. However, being a ‘newcomer’ to the Olympic Games for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games puts WDSF in a position where the federation can lead by example not only for other sporting federations seeking to participate in the Olympic Games but for sporting federations already participating in the Games.

The economic and environmental costs of incorporating Sustainability into an organization are not insignificant and indisputably come with a certain level of controversy and politics. Climate change is not only apparent on a global scale, but already critically damaging the sporting world. Without an attempt to mitigate the climate crisis, there will be much less of the sporting world to save or build.

Difficult as it may seem, a lot can still be done to combat and alleviate the effects of climate change. By implementing a Sustainability program and establishing an appropriate and realistic timeline which smooths the transition towards a net-zero emission future for WDSF, the world of sport can maintain a healthy and responsible balance and ultimately benefit for many generations to come.

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