

Grassroots Sport, Environment and Sustainability

Practical recommendations for sports clubs and associations



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FOREWORD

Dear readers,

Sports clubs in Germany have more than 28 million members – that's an impressive number. Sport brings people together, keeps them fit and healthy and encourages fairness and tolerance. And with so many people involved, it has a major impact on society. Non-Professional sports organisations are therefore key partners in environmental protection, climate action and nature conservation. Many people are already dedicated to making sport as sustainable as possible.

After all, sport is dependent on a healthy environment and nature. However, environmental conditions have been deteriorating for many years. Climate change directly impacts sport when training sessions or events have to be cancelled or sports facilities are damaged due to heat and extreme weather. And everyday sports activities have an impact on the environment: through noise, waste, the construction and use of sports facilities and the use of nature, energy and water that this entails. This is compounded by greenhouse gas emissions caused by the purchase of new sports equipment or sports-related mobility.

How can the environmental impact of sport be reduced? I am delighted that the Federal Environment Ministry has supported a project called "BUNA", which helps



sports clubs and sports associations find good solutions. Whether by switching to LED lighting, installing rainwater harvesting systems, using reusable instead of single-use dishes or organising swap meets and repair cafés: the recommendations are wide-ranging, practical and include examples. Their straightforward format should make it easy for the many volunteers to incorporate sustainability aspects into their work. These recommendations were developed in cooperation between the LAG 21 North Rhine-Westphalia working group and the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB). The slogan speaks for itself: "Your sport. Your future".

I hope that this brochure gives you lots of good ideas and suggestions for making your club or sports association ready to meet the challenges of the future. And of course, keep having fun doing sports!

Carsten Schneider

Federal Minister for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety



Dear sports friends,

from the first time we catch a ball to dancing in our senior years, sport often accompanies us throughout life. Whether alone, with friends or in a club: We exercise for health, community and sporting success. In doing so, we use resources every day: energy, water, transport, textiles and equipment. Each of us uses a small amount, but collectively, we use a lot.

The realisation that we need to reduce our consumption of resources as a society and do more to protect the climate and adapt to climate change is not new. However, it is more urgent than ever.

In the project “Grassroots Sport, Environment and Sustainability”, we asked ourselves: What contribution is sport already making to sustainable development? And what topics and levers are key to enabling effective action – in clubs, associations, and our personal lives?

Our surveys and interviews with stakeholders from sports clubs, associations, the scientific community and civil society have revealed an impressive variety of sustainable initiatives. Measures are being planned and implemented everywhere, on a small and large scale, that contribute to protecting the planetary boundaries. However, our aim was not only to gather and analyse scientific data, but also to derive

recommendations for action from the many discussions we coordinated together with the German Olympic Sports Confederation. We are now pleased to share these recommendations with you to support your work in clubs and associations.

Sport is a unifying element in our society. It has the potential to make a significant contribution to sustainable development. As in sport, it often takes just one small step to get started. And what could be more rewarding than reaching your goal? So, let's set off together on the road towards greater sustainability in and through sport. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and to the German Olympic Sports Confederation, for their support and constructive discussions. We would also like to thank everyone who contributed their expertise over the past two years to help shape these recommendations.

With warm and sporting greetings,

Dr. Klaus Reuter
Executive Board of LAG 21 NRW

Dear sports clubs and associations,

in times of social transformation, diverse challenges and growing division, we need places that connect, empower and inspire people. Germany's 86,000 sports clubs do exactly that for their 28.8 million members. Sports clubs are invaluable meeting places that enrich our coexistence and strengthen our communities. Here, people come together, overcome challenges, and share experiences — both on and off the field. Sport unites people regardless of their origin, age or culture; it connects generations, fosters cohesion and moves not only individuals but society as a whole.

Organised sport is a unique platform for shaping societal development, especially with regard to a sustainable future. The concept of sustainability has long been embedded in our everyday practices, encompassing ecological, social and economic aspects.

The project 'Grassroots Sports, Environment, and Sustainability (BUNA)', funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) and implemented by LAG 21 NRW, has now developed practical recommendations for sports clubs and associations. The aim is to support further and strengthen the sustainability efforts of organised sports.



In collaboration with the DOSB, a guide has been created that highlights sustainable practices and offers development perspectives for sports clubs and associations at all levels. They face numerous challenges and this guide provides them with practical support, proven tools, and inspiration for sustainable action.

Taking a sustainable approach secures existing structures, uses resources responsibly and strengthens sports' contribution to societal development. It is about shaping sport so that it remains a place of participation, education, integration and health for future generations. Sustainable sport secures its foundation and remains a reliable force in addressing societal challenges.

My special thanks go to the BMUKN for its support, as well as to everyone who contributed their expertise and commitment to the creation of this guide. I hope this publication will have a broad impact and provide tangible impetus for a more sustainable sporting landscape.

Thomas Weikert
President of the German Olympic Sports Confederation

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1. Your Sport. Your Future.

In our diverse society, the principle of sport for everyone gives millions of people access to exercise, health and social participation. From air sports to surfing, from world championships to club championships, from training for toddlers to senior citizens' sport, sports clubs and associations offer a wide range of activities. Sports clubs are places of social interaction and make a significant contribution to enhancing a society's quality of life and shaping its values.

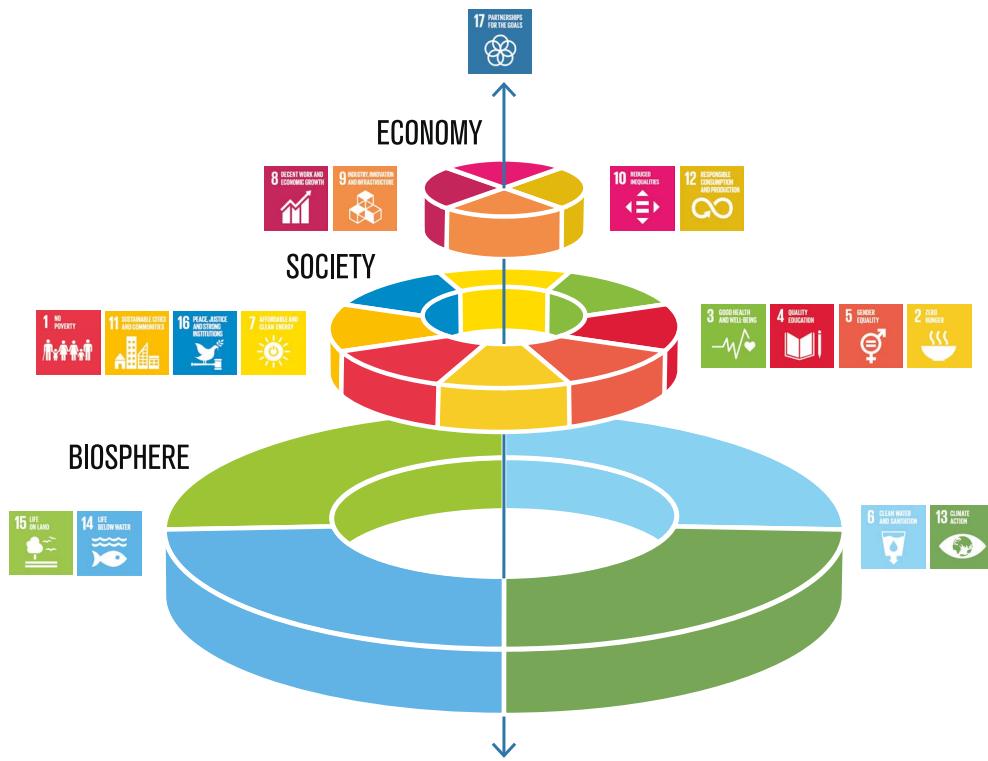
Sports clubs are supported under the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) by umbrella sports federations, their state associations and the state sports federations, which are referred to collectively below as sports associations. Among other things, they are responsible for allocation of funding, organisation of competitions, training, representation of interests and sports development. In this way, the sports associations contribute at various levels to securing and further developing the practice of sport in clubs, including in terms of sustainability.

The figures show what a profound impact grassroots sport has on society: around 86,000 sports clubs in Germany have almost 28.8 million members. The clubs are organised into 16 state sports associations, 69 sports federations and 17 associations with special roles. This makes grassroots sport the largest civic movement in the country and it has a considerable influence on society. At the same time, it is affected by key social trends such as demographic change, digitalisation and urbanisation – and by multiple crises, including climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, social inequality and economic uncertainties. This combination of wide reach and multi-layered involvement makes grassroots sport an important player in the area of sustainability. In a world increasingly beset by crises, sustainable action is no longer an 'optional extra', but an essential responsibility for minimising risks and ensuring your organisation is fit for the future.

1.1 Sustainability in grassroots sport

The 2030 Agenda, which the United Nations and its 193 member states adopted in 2015, provides an important guiding framework for sustainability. With its 17 global *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), it represents an internationally recognised compass for sustainable development.

Figure 1: Wedding cake model (SDG Wedding Cake)



Source: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm Resilience Centre.

In recent years, many sports clubs and associations have set out to promote sustainable development. There are already numerous sustainability initiatives – from measures for inclusion, resource conservation and health promotion to education about democracy and the environment. However, there has been a lack of overview of activities across Germany and a corresponding absence of analysis to date.

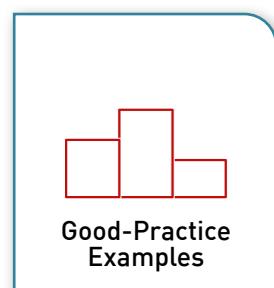
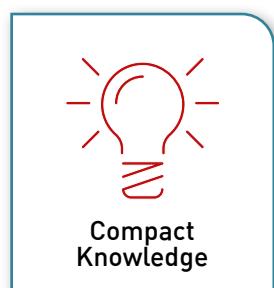
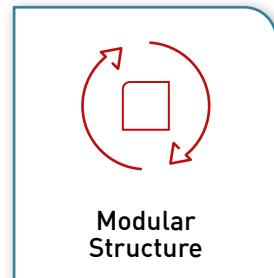
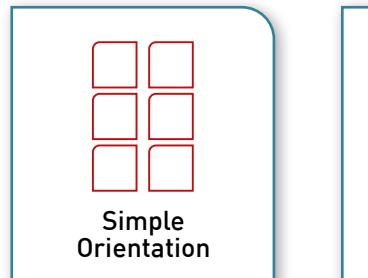
This is where the “Grassroots Sport, Environment and Sustainability” (BUNA) project came in: Between August 2023 and March 2025, we used various methods to analyse the existing commitment to sustainability in grassroots sport and the associated challenges and support needs. Through surveys, interviews and dialogue formats, we have collected a wealth of information with the aim of highlighting the existing commitment. Based on these analyses, we have developed practical recommendations for sports clubs and associations. These are intended to provide straightforward support for targeted promotion of sustainability in grassroots sport.

In the context of the recommendations presented here, sustainability in grassroots sport means shaping the practice and development of sport in such a way that it takes place within the limits of what our planet can support, while also being organised in a socially fair way. That means: on the one hand, the natural foundations of life are preserved through climate protection measures, preservation of biodiversity and conservation of resources. On the other hand, the positive effects of sport, including community integration, social participation and health, are strengthened. The aim is therefore to develop grassroots sport in such a way that none of the resources are overused – and that it can make a contribution to the sustainable development of our society, both now and in the future.

1.2 Structure of the recommendations

We have therefore developed and formulated these recommendations for action on the basis of the project results. They can be used flexibly and are aimed at sports associations and clubs that want to start with individual sustainability activities and those that want to professionalise their engagement further.

Advantages of the BUNA recommendations



Please note: External links usually lead to German-language pages. In some cases, you may be able to switch to English.



The recommendations summarise the knowledge gained from almost two years of research and are each supplemented by examples of good practice. They are divided into

1. **thematic areas** tailored to grassroots sport, in which sports organisations contribute to sustainable development with specific measures or projects, and
2. **systematic levers** that clubs and associations can use to anchor sustainability in their structures in the long term.

Thematic areas and levers, we know what you are thinking: too much to cope with in one go? Don't worry, our answer is: no.

The advantage of our approach lies in its flexibility: sports clubs and associations can either start directly with concrete measures in certain thematic areas and thus gradually develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy ("from project to principle") or start with the development of a sustainability strategy and implement it through specific measures ("from principle to project")





2. Let's take action together and get started!

At the start of the project, we identified eight thematic areas in an initial focus round based on comprehensive research into sustainability objectives in politics and sport and a discussion with experts. These topics are intended to relate sustainability to sport and consolidate content, particularly for sports clubs.

We briefly present each thematic area below and provide a brief insight into the results of our research work, which can be read in full in the [project documentation](#). For each thematic area, there are then recommendations for action for sports clubs in three development stages, as well as a specific Good-Practice Example from a club. Both the recommendations and the good practice are intended as examples and could, of course, be supplemented by other approaches. Finally, the role of sports associations as systematic initiators and drivers in the thematic areas in grassroots sport is explained.

2.1 Thematic areas of sustainability for sports clubs

2.1.1 Thematic area 1: Sports facilities



There are over 230,000 sports facilities in Germany. We define sports facilities¹ in the context of the BUNA project as the facilities for sporting activities themselves, as well as grandstands, clubhouses, car parks and other associated areas where applicable. The thematic area of "Sports facilities" addresses the fact that facilities should be built and operated with ecological, economic and social factors in mind. Sustainable sports facilities are characterized by resource-efficient and inclusive design, and they also help save costs in the long term.

Our results from the BUNA project show that many clubs are already focussing on saving energy, for example, by converting to LED lighting. Water is also being saved in many cases by using water-saving shower heads. Some clubs have gone one step further with energy-efficient refurbishment, installing a solar power system or switching to green electricity providers. Holistic approaches to sustainable sports facilities, including everything from predominantly sustainable materials, through accessibility, to unsealing surfaces, flood and heat protection measures, have been few and far between in practice. The reasons for this lie often in the funding bottlenecks for sports facilities.

In general, it is evident that clubs with their own sports facilities contribute more on average to sustainable sports infrastructure than clubs that train in rented facilities. This is precisely why public funding for sports facilities should take greater account of sustainability criteria in future and provide targeted incentives for sustainable construction and renovation measures. Investments in sports facilities offer the opportunity not only to maintain existing infrastructures, but also to make them fit for the future.

But whether a sports club owns its own facilities or not: every club can take measures to make their facilities sustainable.

¹ The term sports facilities often covers both sports grounds and sports opportunities. The latter term refers to areas that are not intended for sporting purposes but can still be used for sporting activities, such as mountain biking or canoeing. They include, for example, paths, trails, green spaces and water features. Recommendations for sporting opportunities are presented in the thematic areas of environmental protection and biodiversity.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Install LED lighting and motion detectors in the clubhouse to reduce energy consumption.
- ▶ Use water-saving shower heads and taps to reduce your water consumption.
- ▶ Check your plumbing for leaks and repair them.
- ▶ Check your sports facility for accessibility: are sports areas, changing rooms and spectator areas accessible for people with disabilities? Mobile ramps often help.
- ▶ Raise the awareness of your members and employees with posters and signs reminding them to switch off the lights or turn off the taps.
- ▶ If you use municipal sports facilities, speak to your local council.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ You can apply for a professional eco-check at a reasonable price from many regional sports associations.
- ▶ Switch to a sustainable and efficient energy supply, for example by installing a solar, regenerative or energy-saving heating system.
- ▶ During renovation: consider using environmentally friendly building materials.
- ▶ Convert your floodlight system to LED.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Take the latest energy efficiency standards into account for new builds or upcoming renovations.
- ▶ Use environmentally friendly building materials from fair supply chains.
- ▶ Promote holistic energy efficiency by systematically switching to intelligent control systems and renewable energy sources.
- ▶ Protect the environment with green roofs, rainwater utilisation systems or surface unsealing on and around the sports facilities.
- ▶ Adapt to climate change with flood protection measures and a heat plan.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Get your members, their needs and manual, technical and/or planning skills involved in these processes at an early stage.
- ▶ Find out about **funding opportunities** and don't forget the deadlines.
- ▶ Take advantage of an energy advice, for example from the relevant state sports association.
- ▶ The guides **Auf zu barrierefreien Sportstätten** (Towards barrier-free sports facilities) and **Nachhaltiger Sportstättenbau** (Sustainable sports facility construction) offer a wealth of helpful information in the thematic area of sports facilities.

CLUB



Sustainable reconstruction of the sports facilities after the flood damage



Tennis-Sport Erftstadt e. V.

In July 2021, the sports facilities, including the clubhouse, were destroyed by the flooding in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate. As the facilities are located in a landscape and water conservation area, the reconstruction was carried out under two central guiding principles: ecological sustainability and accessibility. As a recognised "Integration through Sport" base club, TSE stands for an inclusive and sustainable society. This brief description focuses on the sustainable reconstruction of our tennis courts.

Sub-objectives

- To save water with a completely irrigation-free surface that can be used all year round.
- To reduce operating and maintenance costs by installing energy-saving and insect-friendly LED floodlights.
- To ensure structural and sporting accessibility.

Budget

EUR 390,000

Participants

Club members and various contractors

Timescale

3 months

Address of the club

An der Schwarza 7, 50374 Erftstadt



Procedure

1

Planning: Target formulation and intensive market research.

2

Financing: Identification of funding, bidding phase, award of contracts.

3

Implementation: Construction phase and final evaluation.

4

Communication: Public relations work and participation in competitions to raise the profile.

Lessons learned

- Sustainability is not difficult, you just have to do it with the courage to move in a new direction.
- Financial challenges are not insurmountable barriers.
- Well thought-out planning is the key to good results.

Positive side effects

- Significant growth in membership and an increase in public awareness.
- Personal development through new expertise.
- The satisfying feeling of doing the right thing.



Contact person

Ferdinand Uhde

Chair

geschaefftsstelle@tennis-sport-erftstadt.de
0175/1873591

2.1.2 Thematic area 2: Mobility



Mobility



In grassroots sport, a large proportion of CO₂ emissions are caused by travelling to and from training and competitions. For example, the German Alpine Association's (DAV) emissions balance from 2022 shows that more than a third of the approximately 51,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent it caused came solely from travel to and from the almost 100,000 events. That is around 16,700 tonnes, comparable to the CO₂ emissions of almost 6,100 return flights from Frankfurt to New York. A particular challenge is that sports facilities are often not directly accessible by bus or train, especially in rural areas. This is why cars are the main means of transport. Active organisation of sustainable travel in grassroots sport can counteract this. The aim is to conserve resources and offer environmentally friendly transport options.

Individual clubs promote climate-conscious travel by subsidising job tickets for full-time employees, for example, or bicycle leasing offers for members, trainers and staff. Carpooling has a long tradition in grassroots sports and is already being optimised in some cases by online and software solutions. In addition, more and more clubs are promoting cycling by providing better bike storage on sports grounds or supporting e-mobility, for example with charging stations on site.

Our results from the BUNA project show: there are already a variety of solutions. However, there is a clear need for expansion in terms of breadth and effectiveness.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Encourage use of bicycles by providing (covered) bicycle parking.
- ▶ Encourage your members to form car pools.
- ▶ Tell your employees and members how to access the club premises by public transport
- ▶ Motivate your members and employees to use public transport or bicycles.

Advanced

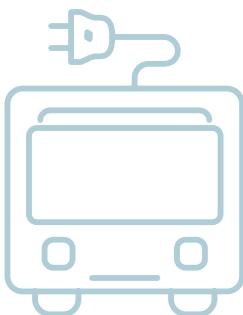
Set your sights higher

- ▶ Plan events and training camps close to your sports facilities to avoid long journeys.
- ▶ Start a small campaign to motivate members to travel by bike, for example by organising cycling competitions between the teams.
- ▶ Use organisational solutions such as **apps** to form carpools to travel to and from sporting events.
- ▶ Plan your own **events** so that they take the public transport timetable into account, or organise shuttle services for arrival and departure.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Install charging stations for electric vehicles to support the use of electric bicycles and cars.
- ▶ Offer subsidies for job tickets or company bikes for full-time employees.
- ▶ Purchase an electric club bus.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Involve parents in organising car pools: They have an intrinsic interest in it.
- ▶ Use existing **communication channels** to organise car pools.
- ▶ Check **funding options** for bicycle leasing, an electric charging station or purchase of an electric bus.

Mobility



You'll never drive alone!



TuS 05 Oberpleis e. V.

The project “You'll never drive alone! - Together against CO₂ pollution” was launched with the aim of reducing the number of car journeys associated with the club. Various measures were implemented in this context, including supporting carpooling through a carpooling app that identifies drivers and assigns passengers, a team challenge that rewards sustainable mobility alternatives and an awareness campaign to measure and further optimise the long-term impact.

Sub-objectives

- To reduce CO₂ emissions through sustainable travel to and from training and competitions.
- To promote team building through a team challenge in which the team with the most environmentally friendly travel is rewarded.
- To raise awareness of CO₂ emissions caused by mobility behaviour.

Budget

EUR 100 for personnel and advertising

Participants

Around 20 people, including club members, trainers, coaches and FSJ volunteers

Timescale
6 months

Contact person

Michael Weber
Managing Director
geschaefftsstelle@tus05-oberpleis.de



Procedure

1

Raising Awareness: Raising parents' awareness of the topic of CO₂ avoidance and setting specific goals.

2

Implementation: Formation of car pools via an app.

3

Competition: Establishment of team challenges for additional motivation for the project.

4

Evaluation: Review of the success of the project and reward for the “most ecologically sensitive teams” with a team evening.

Lessons learned

- The biggest challenge was to overcome the individual comforts of travelling by car.
- Especially for members with a company car, further persuasion was required because of the added costs.

Positive side effects

- The project promotes mutual trust and honesty, which should be a standard practice in sport.
- Many of those involved have realised that the project saves not only CO₂ emissions, but also money.



Address of the club

Humboldtstr. 3a, 53639, Königswinter

2.1.3 Thematic area 3: Environmental protection



Environmental protection



“ Our sport takes place in nature. Environmental protection therefore plays an important role for us – including for our own survival. We are already working on solutions everywhere in our association, be it optimising the competition calendar, digital meetings or sustainable sports facilities ”

Anonymous, Sports Association

Many sports, especially outdoor activities such as canoeing, surfing, climbing or scuba diving, are directly dependent on an intact and clean natural environment. The preservation of these natural sports areas is therefore essential in the interests of self-preservation. Sports that take place indoors or use facilities also have an impact on the environment, for example through energy consumption, space requirements and use of materials. Measures in these areas not only protect the environment but also reduce costs in the long term by saving resources.

Environmental protection is essential not only to protect sport, but also to maintain a world worth living in for future generations. In grassroots sport, the aim is to implement measures that reduce the environmental impact of sport and at the same time strengthen the positive effects on society and the environment, be it through clean air, clean water or adaptation to climate change.

Our research work on the BUNA project has shown that many organisations focus primarily on reducing water consumption and food waste. Environmental awareness campaigns are also becoming increasingly popular. In addition, more and more clubs are planting trees at their sports facilities and using them to provide shade. However, there is still great potential in sport for adapting to the consequences of climate change, such as extreme weather and heat events.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Reduce your water consumption by using water-saving shower heads and efficient taps.
- ▶ Use environmentally friendly cleaning agents and detergents that are biodegradable. Tip: The **Blue Angel** eco-label shows the most environmentally friendly products in various categories and can provide assistance here.
- ▶ Put up posters – preferably made of recycled paper – and use your digital channels to inform members about environmentally friendly behaviour in everyday club life.
- ▶ Use reusable crockery and introduce leftover boxes at events, for example. The leftovers can be eaten by the club members at home and the amount of waste is reduced.
- ▶ Encourage your members to use reusable drinking bottles.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Switch to a sustainable and efficient energy supply by installing a solar, regenerative or energy-saving heating system.
- ▶ Introduce environmental initiatives such as waste collection campaigns and workshops on energy and water-saving behaviour, for your employees, volunteers and members.
- ▶ Train cleaning staff in the correct use of environmentally friendly cleaning agents and water consumption.
- ▶ Install drinking water and sun cream dispensers on the club grounds as a climate adaptation measure, but also to reduce plastic waste.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Appoint an environmental protection (and biodiversity) officer.
- ▶ Use sustainable materials for sports equipment and sports gear to reduce the amount of microplastics entering the water.
- ▶ Collaborate with local environmental protection initiatives and projects that focus on reducing microplastics or food waste.
- ▶ Avoid or, if unavoidable, offset CO₂ emissions. There are various CO₂ calculators for sports clubs, from **myClimate** for example, that can help you with this.
- ▶ Climate adaptation: Develop protection concepts for extreme weather events such as flooding or heat.
- ▶ Climate adaptation: Promote a green infrastructure: plant trees and create green spaces to improve air quality, create shaded areas and reduce heat islands, especially in urban areas.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Get members involved. This encourages acceptance of environmental protection measures and raises awareness of the surrounding environment.
- ▶ Network with local or regional environmental protection organisations: they will be happy to support you with ideas and implementation options.
- ▶ Make use of funding programmes (note deadlines) and apply for awards.
- ▶ The brochure **KLIMASPORT** provides an overview of the opportunities for climate adaptation in sports clubs and the Federal Office for Radiation Protection supports sports clubs with practical tips on **UV-Protection**.

CLUB

Environmental protection



Environmental protection to reduce operating costs



Harburger Turnerbund von 1865 e. V.

Thanks to various environmentally friendly measures, the Harburg Gymnastics Club was able to reduce the constantly rising operating costs for electricity, water and heating significantly and secure its long-term economic viability. The measures include the installation of a heat pump and a solar thermal system for sustainable heat supply, installation of a photovoltaic system and use of rainwater for natural irrigation of the outdoor area. These measures led to a reduction in operating costs of almost 50 percent in some areas.

Sub-objectives

- To reduce operating costs for electricity, water and heating.
- To generate our own power and reduce CO₂-Emissions.
- To provide efficient and environmentally friendly irrigation of the outdoor area.

Budget

Approximately EUR 90,000

Participants

Specialist companies and club members

Timescale

3 to 4 years

Contact person

Torsten Schlage
Managing Director
info@htb65.de

Address of the club

Vahrenwinkelweg 28, 21075 Hamburg

**Procedure**

1

Analysis & Planning: Examination of the structural conditions and development of an implementation concept.

2

Tenders: Preparation and circulation of calls for bids from specialist companies.

3

Bid evaluation: Preparation of a price comparison and organisation of price negotiations.

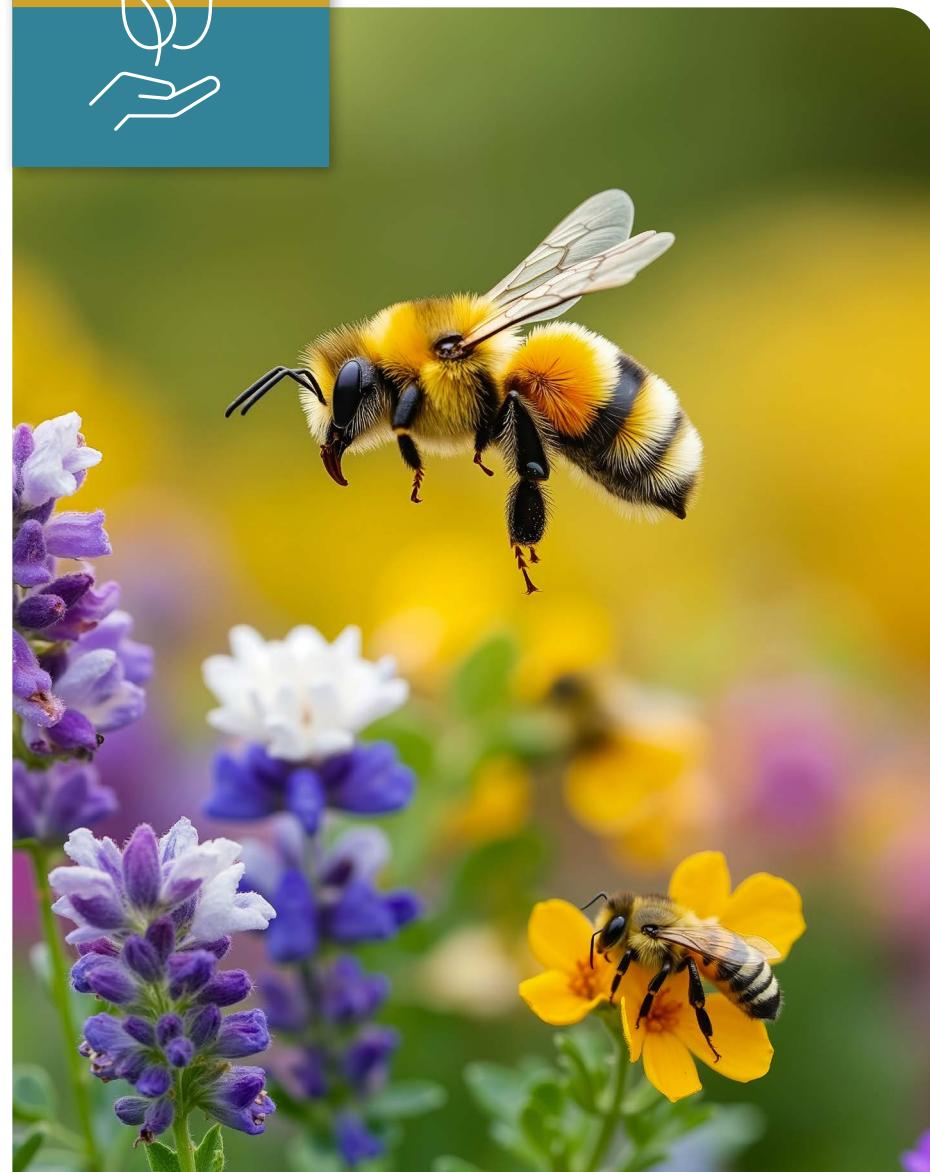
4

Implementation & Control: Commissioning of companies, organisation of construction supervision and checking of final invoices.



2.1.4 Thematic area 4: Biodiversity

Biodiversity



The term “biodiversity” describes the variety of life on Earth in its genetic diversity, species diversity, and diversity of ecosystems. Biodiversity creates the basis of life for us as human beings, it is the web of life that sustains us. Countless creatures, from bacteria, through wild bees, to trees, ensure that we have what we need to live: air to breathe, clean water to drink, fertile soil for food, medicine, building materials. In addition, unspoilt nature provides quality of life and opportunities for recreation.

Its protection is crucial as it is threatened by human activities such as deforestation, pollution and climate change. Conservation and restoration of biodiversity is therefore becoming increasingly important in grassroots sport too. On the one hand, this is because many sporting activities take place in nature. Nature-based sports such as sailing, skiing, horse riding and golf promote a deep awareness of biodiversity – especially of the unique habitats in which they are practised. Outdoor sports enthusiasts experience nature up close and know how valuable it is for their sport. They depend on nature. On the other hand, they are often passionate conservationists who actively contribute to the preservation of their sports and habitats.

However, the protection of biodiversity in sport is also becoming increasingly important because sports facilities have an impact on habitats, as does participating in sport. For example, fertilisation of sports fields, consumption of certain foods and use of specific materials have an impact on biodiversity.

The results of the surveys and interviews in the BUNA project show that some sports clubs are already taking care to practise sports in an environmentally friendly way, avoid pesticides and carry out tree planting campaigns. Fallow land is also increasingly being used for flowering meadows, while insect hotels and nesting boxes are being installed. The latter measures are often used in education for sustainable development courses in sport, especially for the young members of a club. Additionally, there is great potential for the majority of sports clubs to consider biodiversity when renovating and redesigning sports facilities by greening roofs or unsealing surfaces.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Learn more about possible biodiversity measures and training courses. To get started, we recommend the brochure “Sport und Biologische Vielfalt” (Sport and Biodiversity) from the DOSB (2015).
- ▶ Promote awareness among your members through information materials, for example in the digital media or on campaign days.
- ▶ Develop a code of conduct for nature-friendly sporting activities, such as “Stay on the paths! Protect delicate plants and animals by using the marked trails.”
- ▶ Implement initial low-threshold biodiversity measures, such as a tree planting campaign with native trees, insect hotels or nesting aids for birds.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Reduce the use of pesticides and maintenance work on club grounds. This promotes natural regeneration and can also save money.
- ▶ Identify fallow land on the club grounds and check whether it can be converted into wildflower meadows or a club garden.
- ▶ Draw up agreements or voluntary commitments to promote biodiversity in your organisation.
- ▶ Pay attention to environmentally friendly catering with a predominantly plant-based menu, regional and seasonal products, organic quality and as little **disposable packaging** as possible.
- ▶ Reduce light pollution by installing LED lighting and motion detectors.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Appoint a biodiversity (and environmental protection) officer.
- ▶ Use systems to collect rainwater and use it to irrigate the sports fields and plants on the club grounds.
- ▶ Consider specific measures to promote biodiversity when renovating or remodeling the sports facilities. This includes unsealing surfaces and green roofs.
- ▶ Develop long-term concepts for integrating biodiversity into the club strategy.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Get in touch with environmental and nature conservation organisations in your area. They are good sources of inspiration and support.
- ▶ Involve young members in specific measures.



Biodiversity



A Club Garden for FC Blau-Weiß Leipzig



FC Blau-Weiß Leipzig e. V.

FC Blau-Weiß Leipzig has created a club garden on its grounds, which is managed jointly by the members. The first pumpkins and courgettes are already growing there, demonstrating the success of the project. The garden not only promotes local biodiversity but also strengthens the sense of community and the club's commitment to sustainability.

Sub-objectives

- To raise awareness of biodiversity and nature conservation among members.
- To make sustainable use of brownfield sites to promote biodiversity.
- To involve members actively and open up the garden to the neighbourhood.

Budget

EUR 50

Participants

Sustainability Officer, three volunteer members and sponsorship teams

Timescale

2 months

Contact person

Peter Schön

Chair

kontakt@bwleipzig.de

Address of the club

Kantatenweg 39, 04229 Leipzig



CLUB

Procedure

1

Concept Development: Development of a sustainability plan with the club garden as a central component.

2

Project Planning: Creation of a project plan, including additions such as an insect hotel, sponsored trees and a herb spiral.

3

Implementation: Joint preparation of the club garden with the men's second team and voluntary helpers.

4

Maintenance & Utilisation: Regular maintenance, harvesting the vegetables and cooking together in the clubhouse.

Lessons learned

- The summer break is a challenge – junior players are responsible for watering during the holidays.
- We have installed a 1,000-litre rainwater tank to avoid the problem of carrying watering cans.

Positive side effects

- The project has brought the members closer together and conveys sustainable values that go beyond sport.
- The club garden requires planning, commitment and perseverance – qualities that are also important in football.



2.1.5 Thematic area 5: Consumption



Sustainable consumption means using products and services consciously and responsibly so that the environment is protected and social equality is promoted. Consumption in sport is extremely diverse and can be seen, in the purchase of sports-wear and sports equipment, but also in catering for holiday camps. An important aspect of sustainable consumption is respect for human rights in supply chains. Sporting goods, clothing and food are often produced under conditions that do not meet social and ecological standards. Associations and their members can choose environmentally friendly, fair, regional and/or repairable products with recognised seals and check external services for environmentally friendly and fair working methods. Conscious decisions help to promote decent working conditions worldwide and strengthen sustainable business practices.

In the context of our research, it became clear that the majority of clubs are already implementing measures – in some cases very creatively – to promote sustainable consumption. Upcycling old sports equipment, exchanges to swap equipment, second-hand offers and repair cafés not only create added value for members but also help to reduce costs. Sports clubs are currently less active when it comes to procurement of fair-trade sports equipment and clothing. However, the range of sustainable sporting goods on offer is growing steadily and recognised certifications can help with making conscious consumer choices.

There is also further potential for environmentally friendly measures in the area of catering, especially at sporting events. The increased use of plant-based foods from regional, seasonal and, where possible, organic sources is particularly effective. Such products are often more resource-efficient and, contrary to common assumptions, cheaper than animal-based alternatives. They also make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A plant-based diet therefore plays a central role in the transition to a climate-friendly catering concept and can make an important contribution to sustainable development in grassroots sport.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Find out about sustainable procurement topics that are relevant to you. An overview of various areas and options is provided by the **Nachhaltige Warenkorb** (Sustainable Shopping Basket).
- ▶ Raise awareness of the topic among your members, volunteers and employees with the help of information materials and digital media, for example.
- ▶ Replace single-use plastics with reusable drinking bottles, crockery and cups and switch to recycled paper and environmentally friendly bin liners in the club administration.
- ▶ Try a flea market or clothes swap, this will help you to find out which measures members will actually use.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Make a list of all the products and services used in your club. Research sustainable alternatives and start making the switch. You can find a selection of sustainable sports articles and clothing at **Sport handelt Fair** (Sport Acts Fairly).
- ▶ Set up structures for a repair café, a regular flea market or a clothes recycling option.
- ▶ Organise workshops and information events for members, volunteers and employees on sustainable consumption.
- ▶ Ask members if they are prepared to pay slightly more for sustainable products.
- ▶ Develop initial guidelines for sustainable procurement in your club.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Switch to completely paperless administration.
- ▶ Provide regional, seasonal and predominantly plant-based food for events and club operations and work with certified suppliers.
- ▶ Develop a long-term plan with clear, measurable goals for a full transition to sustainable products and services.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Clarify the needs of members in good time and emphasise the importance of sustainable consumption in sport too (for example: "Fair – like sport", "Healthy – like sport", "Local – like sport").
- ▶ Always think first about what you really need to buy new and what you can obtain second-hand or make yourself from old materials.
- ▶ The **Blue Angel** eco-label and the list of seals on **Siegelklarheit** (Seal Clarity) make it easier to recognise sustainable products and shop more consciously.



CLUB

THE JERSEY – a world première



FC Internationale Berlin 1980 e. V.

In autumn 2024, FC Internationale brought a modest world first onto the pitch with its new kit suppliers runamics and HAKRO - THE JERSEY. It is made exclusively from cradle-to-cradle certified materials, setting new standards in terms of material health, recyclability and a fair and transparent supply chain. It also has a clear anti-racist message. The shirt is intended to stimulate discussion about what the sports club of the future could look like.

Sub-objectives

- To move away from non-transparent supply chains in the sporting goods industry.
- To test recycling mechanisms and gather findings with all members of the club.
- To create a new standard and publicise innovation from the grassroots up.

Budget

Total in the mid five-digit range

Participants

Club members, suppliers, sponsor, UEFA EURO 2024 Host City Berlin, designers, producers, media

Timescale

1.5 years

Contact person

Anton Klischewski
Sustainability and Engagement Coordinator
post@inter-berlin.de



Procedure

1

Board resolution on the first tender for match and training clothing.

2

Preparing and communicating tender documents and evaluating bids received.

3

Decision in favour of new supplier construct, creation of a timeline including communication plan.

4

Official launch, final production, delivery and development of online fan shop.

Lessons learned

- The development of a new supply chain with partners outside the traditional football environment is very ambitious.
- Significantly more communication work was required in the club than expected.

Positive side effects

- There was media attention throughout Germany, and we were even contacted by some professional clubs.
- We have learnt an incredible amount and integrated a new sponsor into the project.



2.1.6 Thematic area 6: Waste management



Wherever people gather, there is usually plenty of waste. A lot of rubbish can be expected in sport, especially at events or in changing rooms. It is also not uncommon for discarded sports equipment to end up in the rubbish bin. The aim of smart, sustainable and simple waste management is to reduce the amount of waste and actively promote recycling of materials.

An important idea here is the circular economy. This means that things are reused or repaired for as long as possible. So instead of wasting resources, they are kept in the utilisation cycle for as long as possible. As part of the BMUKN project "Circular EURO 2024", a "[Maßnahmen- und Empfehlungskatalog](#)" (catalogue of measures and recommendations) was drawn up for sustainable waste management. The 12 measures according to the waste hierarchy of prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal are also transferable to the club's operations. Overall, this means for sports organisations, that with creative solutions and efficient use of resources, you can not only minimise waste, but also save costs and make a positive contribution to environmental protection.

Our research for the BUNA project shows that most clubs already pay attention to proper waste separation and disposal. Reusable rather than disposable systems are also often used and members are made aware of these options through information materials. Moreover, repair cafés and swap events are becoming increasingly popular in sports clubs, partly because they have direct added value for members. However, there is still room for improvement when it comes to waste avoidance at sporting events.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Reduce the use of disposable products and promote reusable systems, for example by using refillable water bottles.
- ▶ Set up clearly visible waste sorting stations (residual waste, packaging, organic waste, paper and glass). Place them at the important "touch points", i.e. wherever there are a lot of people – in the changing room, on the sports field, in the club-house, in the car park.
- ▶ Label the stations clearly and, if necessary, use pictures so that even young children can understand them.
- ▶ Inform your members about your waste separation system and about waste avoidance and reuse through information posters and in the digital media, for example.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Look for durable and recyclable products when buying new ones.
- ▶ Implement measures for the reuse of sports materials such as swap meets, repair cafés or passing on sports equipment.
- ▶ Organise clean-up and waste collection campaigns at your club and surrounding the sport facility.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Develop a zero-waste concept for sustainable waste management, according to the catalogue of measures and recommendations ([Maßnahmen- und Empfehlungskatalog](#)) of the BMUKN for example.
- ▶ Offer innovative upcycling projects: old sports equipment such as tennis/badminton rackets, nets, horse reins and balls can be converted into everyday objects such as doorstops, benches, dog toys or coat hooks. This could also generate additional revenue for the club.
- ▶ Plan the amount of food for events carefully and realistically. Invite members to bring leftover boxes to distribute what's left and thus counteract food waste.
- ▶ Develop joint projects with local waste disposal companies, food banks and environmental organisations.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Avoiding and reducing waste is a matter of habit – get everyone on board from the start and persuade them with the argument that everyone likes a clean environment, especially when participating in sport.
- ▶ **Communicate** openly and clearly to members and service providers.
- ▶ Think about how you can promote waste avoidance in your club in a playful way. For example, you can organise a [special joint event](#) selling upcycled products as an incentive to participate.



Waste management



Upcycling – sustainable benches



FC 47 Leschede e. V.

The “pensioner squad” meets once a week to implement various sustainability measures on the sports facility – including tidying up, renovation and repariments. As part of an upcycling project, the team was able to take over some old concrete frames from a local company free of charge and convert them into new, durable benches using wood-plastic composite boards. The idea was born at a joint breakfast where topics such as longevity and sustainable consumption were discussed. The benches are appreciated by members and guests alike – and perhaps they will inspire one or two people to give used items a second life.

Sub-objectives

- ➔ To produce low-cost seating
- ➔ To conserve resources by reusing old materials to avoid waste
- ➔ To promote voluntary commitment and raise awareness of sustainable consumption and waste behaviour

Budget

EUR 500

Participants

Approximately 20 volunteers

Timescale

4 weeks

Address of the club

Narzissenstraße 25, 48488 Emsbüren



CLUB

Procedure

1

Brainstorming and searching for old, reusable materials.

2

Material planning, request for quotation and funding application to the state sports association.

3

Funding approval, detailed construction planning and material procurement.

4

Draw-down of funding, construction of the benches and placement on the club premises.

Lessons learned

- ➔ Through detailed analysis of different materials, we have gained valuable insights that we can use for future sustainability projects of our “pensioner squad”.

Positive side effects

- ➔ Great approval from our club members and guest clubs.
- ➔ Lots of positive feedback on the recycling of old frames.



Contact person

Mathias Timmer

Executive Board Member

vorstand@fc-leschede.de

2.1.7 Thematic area 7: Participation



Grassroots sport has traditionally played a central role in enabling people to participate in sport and society, regardless of their abilities, circumstances or backgrounds. Whether it's inclusion, integration or promotion of democracy and gender equality – sports clubs are important places for cohesion and make a valuable contribution to the community. For good reason, grassroots sport is often described as the "cement that holds society together".

At the same time, sustainability is always a team effort and sport is therefore an ideal setting. Many organisations report that their strong social focus often also has a positive effect on their commitment to climate protection and nature conservation.

The results from our surveys and interviews illustrate the major role that sport plays in social participation: almost all clubs are taking action in this area. This includes free taster sessions and discounted membership fees for low-income groups, sports programmes for people with disabilities and inclusive courses for refugees, sports programmes for senior citizens and participation in anti-racism campaigns. However, associations have been less likely to carry out educational and awareness-raising work on social diversity and promote gender equality and anti-discrimination.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Get in touch with the experts at the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) and the German Disabled Sports Association, who have many helpful informations for integration and inclusion.
- ▶ Offer reduced membership fees for people on low incomes and/or free taster sessions in your club.
- ▶ Target people with a migration background, people with disabilities or other underrepresented groups, for example by providing targeted information materials or holding an open day.
- ▶ Take a stand against discrimination and racism on your channels – on site with posters, on Instagram, on your jerseys ...
- ▶ Create targeted programmes for girls and women through appropriate taster training sessions or separate sports courses.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Ensure accessible communication about events and training programmes and also about your other sustainability activities (such as waste separation, swap meets). This includes plain language versions, strong contrasts in design and translations into other languages.
- ▶ Organise workshops on participation and diversity for your coaches and trainers to raise their awareness in this regard.
- ▶ Organise a day of action, for example with an inclusive tournament or offers specifically for girls and women, to raise everyone's awareness of issues of participation, diversity and equality.
- ▶ Check whether sports courses can be offered for people with disabilities, ideally on an inclusive basis.
- ▶ Develop concepts for targeted promotion of women in sport through mentoring programmes for female coaches or female managers in clubs, for example.
- ▶ Think about how you can promote the democratic processes at general meetings and generate more participation within your organisation.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Make sure that your sports facility (especially changing rooms, bathroom facilities and spectator areas) is barrier-free. If necessary, enter into dialogue with your local council.
- ▶ Promote diversity in the club's structure, for example through an inclusion and equality officer.
- ▶ If possible, ensure that the composition of the committee is diverse so that different perspectives are represented.
- ▶ Establish long-term measures to promote girls' and women's sport, through cooperation with girls' sport initiatives such as **Scoring Girls** from Hawar Help.
- ▶ Integrate inclusion, participation and equality into the club's statutes.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Your club is probably already very diverse: approach members and get them involved. They are bound to have the best ideas on how participation can work.
- ▶ Find out about **funding opportunities**, especially with regard to making your sports facility low-barrier or barrier-free. There is also funding for education on democracy and anti-racism campaigns. Pay attention to deadlines.
- ▶ Further information materials on supporting democracy, for example, can be found at **Sport und Demokratie** (Sport and Democracy) and **Demokratiestärkung & Antidiskriminierung** (Strengthening Democracy and Anti-Discrimination).

CLUB

Participation



Inclusive playground - sustainable and innovative inclusion in practice



SV Vollmaringen e. V.

SV Vollmaringen has been working closely with Lebenshilfe Nagold since 1986 and has already completed many successful collaborative projects. One of these is the inclusive playground that was built on the grounds of the club. This project emphasises a commitment to inclusion and participation in sport. It shows how participation on an equal footing can be achieved through construction and structural cooperation with stakeholders in society – for children both with and without disabilities.

Sub-objectives

- To improve the participation of people with disabilities through barrier-free infrastructure.
- To raise awareness of the need for inclusion of people with disabilities in and through sport.
- To act as a role model for diversity, respect and cohesion for our young club members.

Budget

EUR 285,000

Participants

Approximately 20 club members, planning office, construction company

Timescale

2 years

Address of the club

Feldbergstraße 14, 72202 Nagold



Procedure

1

Basic considerations for creating an inclusive leisure programme.

2

Concrete planning, cost calculation and clarification of availability of subsidies.

3

Decision taken on construction, construction work carried out and coordination with partners involved.

4

Completion and ongoing operation, final billing and evaluation of the project.

Lessons learned

- The cooperation with Lebenshilfe was confirmed as a successful and valuable approach.
- It was also clear that we are simply stronger together than alone.

Positive side effects

- The project attracted media attention and raised the profile of the club.
- The sense of togetherness in the club was strengthened and we were able to attract new members.



2.1.8 Thematic area 8: Wellbeing



Exercise through sport is an important health precaution and not only promotes physical fitness but also has a preventative effect against obesity and cardiovascular diseases. Regular exercise supports motor development, especially in children and adolescents, and has a positive impact on personality development. Sport therefore makes a decisive contribution to a long, healthy life.

Grassroots sports clubs play a central role here: they provide access to a wide range of attractive options and make an important contribution to health and social well-being. Well-being therefore includes measures that promote physical, mental and social health in a safe environment and protect particularly vulnerable groups.

As health promotion is already anchored in the DNA of sport in many respects, the recommendations in this area relate in particular to protection against all forms of violence and abuse of power in sport. This protection is often brought together under the term "Safe Sport". This means creating a sporting environment in which all people – especially children, adolescents and other vulnerable groups – can feel safe, respected and protected.

Our results from the BUNA project show that many clubs already offer health and prevention programmes in addition to their original sports courses. Equally important are measures for safeguarding children and protecting the work of volunteers. It is striking that protection against interpersonal and sexual violence and targeted promotion of gender equality have tended to be given less consideration to date. There is a concrete need for action here to make grassroots sport safe and inclusive for everyone.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Find out more in the “**Safe Sport**” plan of the DOSB and German Sports Youth (2025) on the topic and the support programmes for clubs and associations.
- ▶ Educate yourselves on the legal situation regarding protection against violence and inform your members accordingly. The guide to legal issues (**Orientierungshilfe für rechtliche Fragen** (Guide to Legal Issues)) of the German Sports Youth provides an overview of the legal basis for a safe sport.
- ▶ Start with an initiative and awareness-raising campaign, for example through a poster campaign that promotes conscious use of mobile phones in the changing room.
- ▶ Inform members about health topics via digital channels and posters or organise smaller events. For example, use the general meeting.
- ▶ Check that all statutory occupational health and safety requirements are being met and make improvements where necessary.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Develop a policy and code of conduct for prevention of sexual assault.
- ▶ Include protection against sexual assault in the club’s statutes.
- ▶ Appoint a person of trust who will act as the first point of contact for victims.
- ▶ Explore health measures such as ergonomic workstations.
- ▶ Offer your members and volunteers action days and/or workshops on prevention of sexual assault, child safeguarding and health promotion that goes beyond the sports programme, such as nutrition.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Draw up a code of conduct that must be signed by all coaches, employees and trainers.
- ▶ Appoint a safeguarding officer for children and adolescents and for girls and women. Encourage this person to participate in further training.
- ▶ Plan and implement formats in which children and adolescents can actively participate in the development and implementation of child and youth protection policies in the club.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Involve parents in preventative work. Communicate transparently to prevent anxieties.
- ▶ Utilise the many existing support materials and contact points.
- ▶ Find out about **local networks** for prevention and health promotion.

Wellbeing



A sports club active in child safeguarding

SV GutsMuths Jena e. V.



In autumn 2017, the SV GutsMuths Jena applied for the newly introduced child protection seal of the Thuringia State Sports Association. The club set up a child safeguarding team with two contact persons. Both have put a lot of time and energy into participating in further training, drawing up a prevention policy and implementing various measures to lay the foundations for the successful award. The process strengthens preventative structures in children's and youth sport and has raised awareness of the issue in the entire club.

Sub-objectives

- To create a preventative effect to avoid potential risks.
- To establish long-term protective measures for the well-being of young athletes.
- To provide a model for other clubs in the area of child safeguarding.

Budget

EUR 500

Participants

Child safeguarding team, Vice President, Thuringia State Sports Association

Timescale

1 to 2 hours per week

Address of the club

Wöllnitzer Str. 40 07749 Jena



CLUB

Procedure

1

Application to the Thuringia State Sports Association for the child protection seal.

2

Training of child safeguarding officers.

3

Preparation and written composition of the child safeguarding policy.

4

Implementation in the club and effective public reporting.

Lessons learned

- The child safeguarding guidelines have provided us with clear orientation.
- The development of the child safeguarding policy and training of the child safeguarding officers took up most of the time.

Positive side effects

- We were able to raise public awareness and set an example for other clubs.
- Strengthening member recruitment through measures that build trust.
- We experienced a noticeable increase in awareness of the topic throughout the club.

**Contact person****Christoph Jury**

Vice President

kontakt@sv-gutsmuths-jena.de

2.2 One step at a time: Focus on your goals

Eight thematic areas. We know what you must be thinking: that's too much to deal with in one go. Don't worry, our answer is: no.

Sustainability is complex and, as the different thematic areas show, encompasses many factors. This can quickly become overwhelming. We therefore recommend to prioritise areas – especially if you are just starting out on this journey with your club.

It is advisable to focus on two or three thematic areas in order to avoid overstressing resources that are probably already limited and becoming bogged down in the detail. We have formulated a few questions that will help you to focus. At the first stage, these are as follows:

- ▶ What are we already doing and which thematic area do these activities belong in?
- ▶ What other measures in these areas could we implement quickly? What are the opportunities and risks?
- ▶ What resources do we have at our disposal?

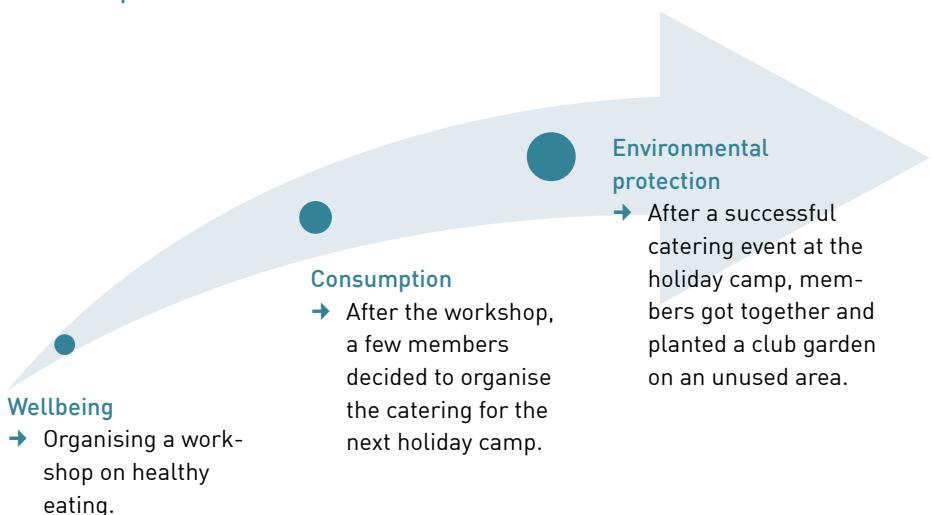
If your club has already made good progress, you can add the following questions:

- ▶ In which thematic area is our club not yet active?
- ▶ What are the interests of our members? What are the interests of the committee?

You can use these questions to prioritise areas, develop specific measures and then implement them. However, it is always important – as the results of the surveys and interviews show – to ensure that you have the backing of your committee and that your members are with you.

The results of the project also show that action in one thematic area often expanded in such a way that it spilled over to other areas. This is because the various topics are often connected/have overlaps. This gradual expansion can therefore develop into a holistic approach, partly because the subject areas are interdependent. The path to sustainability is a constant learning process that can trigger a cascade of positive developments/commitment.

One example:



To avoid getting lost in a patchwork of measures in the medium to long term, sooner or later sustainability needs to be anchored structurally in your sports organisation.

We have also formulated recommendations in this area, which can be organised according to eight central levers. These levers are essentially tools to help you integrate sustainable action into the basic structures and processes of the day-to-day life of your club or association. This will enable you to implement measures in the thematic areas as permanently and effectively as possible. How these levers actually work and how you can use them is explained in the third chapter.

2.3 Associations in the focus: Role models and driving forces for sustainable action

We have focussed on the sports clubs for the thematic areas, as they are largely responsible for implementing sustainability measures locally. However, sports associations also play a central role in the sustainable development of grassroots sports, albeit a different one. In order to understand their function in more detail, we engaged in detailed discussions with representatives of these organisations. The results show that they act as role models and driving forces for their member organisations:



“ We see ourselves in two roles: on the one hand as a role model. In this role, we look at what we can do ourselves, perhaps by installing a sustainable power supply or setting up a bicycle storage room. On the other hand, we see ourselves in the role of a supporter, actively helping our members with the planning and implementation of sustainability measures

Anonymous, Sports Association ”

- ▶ As a role model, they implement sustainability measures themselves – especially in their offices and their organisation of competitions. These include the use of environmentally friendly technologies, a switch to green electricity, paperless administration, barrier-free access to workstations and the optimisation of competition schedules to reduce travel costs. Many sports associations are already active in these areas. However, sports clubs are more likely to take action themselves if sports associations demonstrate a strong commitment to sustainability.
- ▶ As a driving force, associations support their member clubs in planning and implementation of sustainability measures. They offer training and advice, provide guidelines and promote dialogue between actors. Sports associations also create specific frameworks for sustainable engagement. These include financial support programmes that are linked to sustainability and representation of the interests of sports clubs on the political stage. Important topics here include the refurbishment of dilapidated sports facilities and measures to combat the increasing burden of bureaucracy on volunteers.



3. Deep dive: Anchoring sustainability

In addition to the topics mentioned above, we identified eight levers at the start of the BUNA project. While the thematic areas show you what you can do to implement concrete measures, the following levers will show you how to integrate sustainability into the long-term structure of your sports organisation. This helps to remain crisis-proof and work more efficiently towards sustainability. The levers can be used flexibly, i.e. they work across all thematic areas: For example, a “sustainability” working group in a sports club or association can organise environmental protection projects or carry out an anti-racism campaign. Below we first describe each lever and then supplement this with practical recommendations for both sports associations (role model and driving force) and sports clubs (beginners to professionals). Practical examples illustrate good practices in each case.

3.1 Lever 1: Club/Association structure



Sports organisations can take-on long-term responsibility by firmly integrating sustainability into their structures. The primary aim here is to create clear personnel responsibilities that are not tied to a specific person, or to incorporate sustainability as an objective in the articles of association. Many clubs and associations are predominantly organised on a voluntary basis and have limited personnel capacities – even in their original area of activity of organising sport. As a result, they have mostly acted on a case-by-case basis and without clearly defined responsibilities with regard to sustainability. Similarly, only a few sports clubs and associations have included sustainability as a concrete goal in their statutes or developed a mission statement that includes it.

However, results from the BUNA project show that organisations with a clear sustainability structure implement significantly more measures, as they work more efficiently and purposefully. This applies regardless of size, to both small clubs organised around volunteers and large, full-time associations. Another interesting finding from our surveys is that clubs that integrate sustainability into their structures are better at retaining and attracting new members. Nevertheless, recruiting and retaining volunteers remains the biggest challenge for most clubs.

Interested members, volunteers and employees can set up a "Sustainability" working group (WG) relatively easily. A working group of this sort organises regular meetings, plans projects, such as a flea market for sports equipment, and implements them in coordination with the club or association. It can also be helpful to

appoint a sustainability officer – either full time or on a voluntary basis. Some sports associations have already set up sustainability offices, which have launched online seminars on sustainability topics, developed training programmes for employees, and created guidelines for sustainable events.

A few sports clubs and associations solve the personal challenge by involving participants in a Voluntary Social Year (FSJ) or Voluntary Ecological Year (FÖJ). The latter has so far been utilised only rarely. As our results show, one reason for this is that awareness of the option of involving FÖJ participants is not yet sufficiently widespread among sports organisations. On the other hand, despite state subsidies, there are costs involved.

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Make sustainability your guiding principle: include the topic in your mission statement and, in the long term, in your articles of association.
- ▶ Set up a sustainability working group made up of interested and committed volunteers and/or employees. The **Sport handelt Fair** (Sport Acts Fairly) (2021) guidelines can help with this.
- ▶ Appoint a full-time or voluntary sustainability officer to coordinate the measures.

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Provide text modules for anchoring sustainability in the articles of association or mission statement.
- ▶ Many organisations would like to see better networking for sustainability:
 - get in touch with sustainability organisations and link them to your members.
 - Sustainability managers and contacts often feel they are fighting a lone battle → Bring them together and create job-sharing opportunities for sustainability officers

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Get an overview of people in the club who generally show a great deal of interest in and commitment to the subject and/or are already involved in specific areas related to sustainability in the club, such as athletes, parents or a board member.
- ▶ Approach these individuals specifically and ask whether they would like to get more involved – perhaps only selectively in the context of one sustainable event.
- ▶ Check your club's statutes for sustainability and environmental protection clauses.

Advanced

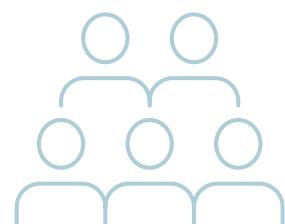
Set your sights higher

- ▶ Organise an initial meeting for the identified group of people and discuss an efficient way of working.
- ▶ Appoint a main sustainability contact in your club.
- ▶ Check whether there are cheap or free training courses and whether anyone would like to take part.
- ▶ Make sustainability your guiding principle: include the topic in your mission statement and, in the long term, in your articles of association.

Professional

Go all out

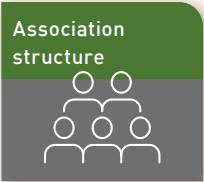
- ▶ Set up a sustainability working group with regular meetings to plan and implement sustainability measures. A good introduction to this can be found in the guide of **Sport handelt Fair** (Sport Acts Fairly), page 3 to 4.
- ▶ Offer opportunities to an FÖJ or FSJ. **Here** you will find helpful information from the German Sports Youth on voluntary services in sport.
- ▶ Create a full-time post for a sustainability coordinator.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Many young people are particularly motivated to plan and implement sustainability activities together.
- ▶ Members and committed individuals can contribute a great deal of knowledge and experience from different areas to the work of the club – make the most of it!
- ▶ Clear responsibilities and tasks and structured induction programmes for new volunteers increase the fun factor and lead to more efficient club structures.

ASSOCIATION



The Green Feather



Bayerischer Badminton-Verband e. V.

The climate crisis is not a temporary or political issue. It is an existential problem and it is our collective responsibility to find a solution. With the "Green Feather", a five-member working group for sustainability (Sustainability-WG), the Bavarian Badminton Association (BBV) has launched an innovative project that anchors sustainability structurally in organised badminton sport. The aim is to raise the awareness of clubs and active members of sustainable action through motivation and persuasion – not through instruction. "Green Feather" is part of the association's "BBV 2024" strategy and is in line with the mission statement: "For sustainable magical badminton moments in Bavaria".

Sub-objectives

- To adapt the association structures in order to modernise and simplify match operations in Bavaria from a sustainability perspective.
- To integrate sustainability into the associational statutes and regulations at Bavarian and national level.
- To raise awareness, motivate and inform children and adolescents through role models and examples.

Budget

EUR 1000 per year for further training and BahnCards

Participants

Sports director and four young volunteers

Timescale

4 meetings per year

Address of the association
80971 München



Procedure

1

Founding of the sustainability working group as part of the association's "BBV 2024" modernisation by the board.

2

Appointment of the working-group management and establishment of a young, committed team with its own budget.

3

Renaming as "Green Feather" and amendment of the BBV statutes with a focus on sustainable action.

4

Development of a nationwide guideline for sustainable tournament organisation and participation in amendment of the DBV statutes.

Contact person

Lukas Gunzelmann, Sports Director
nachhaltigkeit@badminton-bbv.de

Lessons learned

- Sustainability needs motivating, positive communication – leading by example instead of lecturing.
- Young people can be inspired to volunteer if structures are modern, open and trusting.

Positive side effects

- Recruitment of the next generation of volunteers through meaningful work.
- Amendment to the DBV statutes: sustainability as a nationwide association task.
- Cultural change for the entire board.



Club structure



Teamwork for a climate-neutral sports facility



SG Hünstetten 1947 e. V.

SG Hünstetten has developed new, modern sports club facilities on its grounds – including sports pitches, a clubhouse, car parks and a playground – all of which are designed to be climate-neutral and sustainable. At the heart of the project was the strong commitment of the board and the many club members who contributed their professional expertise – from architecture and electrical engineering to landscape design. Completing this work in-house has saved a considerable amount of money and created an innovative showcase project in a rural area. The climate-neutral sports facility was officially opened in June 2024.

Sub-objectives

- To make cost savings by carrying out work in-house through intensive involvement of members in planning and implementation.
- To increase self-efficacy and strengthen the sense of community.
- To offer an extensive range of sports.

Budget

Project as a whole:
EUR 2.5 million

Participants

10 board members with professional expertise and other committed club members

Timescale

4 years



Procedure

1

Early survey of the skills of club members and their willingness to participate in the conversion work by contributing their expertise.

2

Detailed planning and submission of funding applications.

3

Targeting of members, distribution of tasks, documentation of achievements.

4

Completion of work by club members: from LED floodlighting to smart building technology and ecological planting.

Contact person

Daniel Maiworm

1st Chair

vorstand@sg-huenstetten.de

Lessons learned

- It is important to approach members at an early stage to find out what resources are internally available.
- All individual contributions must be documented (e.g. via timesheets) to ensure eligibility for funding.

Positive side effects

- In our small community, we have created a modern, climate-neutral sports facility for everyone and can now offer new sports programmes.
- We have gained new members and strengthened their identification with the club.



3.2 Lever 2: Finances



Die finanzielle Lage im Breitensport bleibt herausfordernd, insbesondere wenn es um die Umsetzung von Nachhaltigkeitsmaßnahmen geht. Viele Vereine und Verbände benötigen stärkere finanzielle Unterstützung und wünschen sich klarere Informationen über verfügbare Finanzierungsmöglichkeiten mit Blick auf ihr Nachhaltigkeitsengagement. Im Folgenden stellen wir eine Auswahl an Möglichkeiten vor:

- ▶ **Public funding programmes:** The EU, the federal government, the federal states and local authorities offer various public funding programmes for sustainability projects in the broadest sense, which can also be distributed to sports clubs via sports associations. Some state sports associations also award grants for sustainability measures from their own budgets. Tip: The funding pots often focus on specific topics such as inclusion, energy-efficient refurbishment, sustainable sports facility construction or biodiversity. Helpful information can be found, for example, in the [funding database of the federal government](#) or from the [DOSB](#).
- ▶ **Foundations and lotteries:** Some sports foundations, state and education lotteries or citizens' and sustainability foundations offer funding for sustainability measures. In addition, bank foundations are increasingly supporting sustainability projects. Research can be worthwhile – not least because it can also be used to finance your own contributions for public subsidies, for example.
- ▶ **Crowdfunding:** Sports organisations are increasingly using crowdfunding to finance sustainable projects. This is an independent way of raising funds from a wider public through donations or a reward system. This is usually done via popular online providers. It is also a way to generate your own contribution for public subsidies.

► **Partnerships and sponsorship:** Partnerships between sustainable companies and sports clubs are still rare in grassroots sports, especially in-kind partnerships where goods or services are provided instead of money. They can be a good way to promote sustainability projects. Associations can attract sponsors who provide money for club work or for sustainable sporting events, but clubs can also actively approach companies themselves. It is important that both the club or association and the company act in a credibly sustainable way in order to avoid greenwashing or socialwashing. The members of the association often also have contacts with potential sponsors.

► **Independent financing approaches:** Individual clubs and associations are already using their own creative solutions to finance sustainability efforts within their organisations. For example, travel expenses regulations can be adapted so that travel to and from events is only subsidised for public transport. Internal CO₂-pricing is also effective. It is important that these approaches are agreed with the members transparently and with plenty of notice, as otherwise there may be acceptance problems.

As our surveys and interviews have shown, a growing number of clubs and associations are aware of and utilise funding and other financing channels for sustainability. Nevertheless, almost all respondents would like easier access, more straightforward conditions and clearer information about applicability.

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- Promote sustainable behaviour through targeted financial incentives: establish attractive regulations to support environmentally friendly mobility. This can take the form of full or partial reimbursement of travel costs when using public transport, the offer of a job ticket for full-time employees or the provision of job bikes.
- Try to find partners and sponsors who can support you with individual sustainability criteria.
- Introduce internal financing channels, for example through internal CO₂ pricing or a climate contribution paid by your members (see also our Good-Practice Example).

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- Offer support for the development of financing strategies, through a guide or webinars on applications and financial planning for example.
- Organise regular networking events at which sport clubs – together with companies – can share ideas, enter into collaborations and develop financing models.
- Provide information and advice on sports facility funding, for example on the binding minimum standards, and support the introduction of bonus funding for ambitious sustainability measures.
 - Develop a funding compass that lists relevant regional, national and international funding programmes to support sustainability projects in your associated sports clubs. Ensure that this is easily accessible to all, for example on your website or a member portal.
 - Examine the possibility of introducing your own micro-funding programmes at the association or state level in order to provide quick and uncomplicated support for initial measures in clubs.



Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Get an overview of financing options: Contact sports associations and state sports organisations and check databases of foundations, local authorities and other funding bodies for suitable programmes. In addition to the funding database (see above), SUPR-Sports, for example, has a helpful overview of **current funding programmes** from non-governmental funding organisations for sustainability measures.
- ▶ Check potential savings: identify areas where your organisation can make immediate cost savings, for example in water and energy consumption. Install simple solutions such as motion detectors or water-saving taps.
- ▶ Take the first step in member communication: inform your members about the value of sustainable investments and the long-term benefits for the organisation or launch an ideas competition.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Start a crowdfunding campaign or a fundraising campaign for specific projects. Or apply specifically to small funding programmes that are easier to access, such as those for new energy-efficient appliances.
- ▶ Conduct discussions with members on their willingness to increase contributions slightly to finance sustainable projects.
- ▶ Develop a sponsorship concept: look for specific partners who prefer to support sustainable initiatives. Think about suitable benefits in return, such as visibility at events or naming of the specific project.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Include sustainability as an integral part of the financial strategy: set specific budgets for sustainability measures in your club's annual planning. Setting up a reserve ("sustainability buffer") can help to attract investments in sustainable solutions in a forward-looking and plannable way.
- ▶ Develop financing mechanisms to support climate-friendly measures, such as reimbursement of travel costs for sustainable mobility options (public transport, cycling).
- ▶ Set milestones for financing your projects: create a comprehensive finance plan with clearly defined goals, deadlines for funding applications. Consider the contributions you need to find, as well as solutions such as crowdfunding campaigns or sponsorship.
- ▶ Apply for sustainability awards or themed competitions related to sport. Some sources give (earmarked) prize money. They also offer a good platform for raising the profile of your club.
- ▶ Invest in heat pumps, solar systems or other technologies to become energy self-sufficient in the long term and reduce your operating costs. Savings can then be used for other areas such as youth development.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Be creative in the application process and draw on the expertise of your members.
- ▶ Check how you can use AI and digital tools to support the application process. But avoid the classic copy-and-paste approach at all costs: always make sure that the information is correct and that you are using a register that suits you and your club.
- ▶ Network with local decision-makers, especially from the business world, and tell them about your commitment.
- ▶ Before installing PV systems, it is advisable to review the legal framework and seek professional advice.



Finances



Finanzierung von Klimaschutz beim DAV



Deutscher Alpenverein e. V.

To achieve the German Alpine Association's (DAV) ambitious goal of becoming climate-neutral "by fair means" by 2030, the association has set up a unique financing approach in organised sport: the project is being financed via an internal CO₂-prize and a climate fund. In essence, this enables the DAV to live up to its claim regarding its CO₂ emissions: avoidance before reduction before compensation. This was decided at the Annual General Meeting and included in the mission statement. It is based on a comprehensive climate protection concept that was launched in conjunction with the 356 sections.

Sub-objectives

- To introduce the Climate Euro: since 2021, all sections have been paying EUR 1 per full member into the DAV-wide climate fund.
- To set up a DAV internal CO₂ prize: EUR 90 per tonne of CO₂ (2023/24) and EUR 140 per tonne of CO₂ from 2025.
- To achieve climate neutrality by 2030 → development of a climate protection concept including emissions accounting.

Participants

DAV Federal Office (BGS), all 356 sections, climate protection project group, climate protection team at the BGS (approximately 6 full-time positions); climate protection coordinators from the sections

Contact person

Dominik Birnbacher

Climate Protection Coordinator
info@alpenverein.de

Timescale

2019 to 2030

Address of the association

Anni-Albers-Str. 7, 80807 München



ASSOCIATION

Procedure

1

Official resolution on climate neutrality at the Annual General Meeting and development of climate protection strategy, concept and measures.

2

Establishment of a climate fund to promote projects, including one Climate Euro per full member to promote climate protection measures.

3

Introduction of a CO₂-prize based on the results of emissions accounting.

4

Implementation of concrete measures in five areas of action: mobility, infrastructure, catering, communication and education.

Lessons learned

- Delivery of a project of this sort is challenging for a federal association with 1.57 million members.
- Success depends heavily on the size, professionalism and commitment of individual sections.

Positive side effects

- We were able to raise awareness of the issue of climate protection within the association
- We have increased the positive perception among experts and society at large.



CLUB



Next Level: A sports field for ALL



SG Olympia 1896 Leipzig e. V.

SG Olympia Leipzig used an innovative financing model in the "Next Level – A sports field for ALL" project: A successful crowdfunding campaign on the fairplaid platform made it possible to provide the club's own contribution to the construction of a year-round, sustainable training surface with a 100 per cent climate-neutral artificial turf surface. The focus is on the sporting development of the club's more than 350 children and adolescents – while taking responsibility for the environment. This won over the community, which participated in the crowdfunding solution to an overwhelming extent.

Sub-objectives

- To obtain funding of the investment costs by the City of Leipzig and the Free State of Saxony (90 per cent in total).
- To find a solution for self-financing of the remaining project costs.
- To install 100 per cent climate-neutral artificial turf with no microplastics and make savings in water, energy and fertiliser use.

Budget

Crowdfunding amount: approximately EUR 60,000

Participants

Project team of the club, members, parents, sponsors, City of Leipzig, Sächsische Aufbaubank, fairplaid

Timescale

24 months (crowdfunding preparation approximately 20 hours)

Address of the club

Waldstraße 177, 04105 Leipzig



Procedure

1

Needs analysis and preliminary planning of the project: Determination of requirements, initial cost framework.

2

Communication and coordination: Discussions with the City of Leipzig and internal consensus-building on financing.

3

Setting up of the crowdfunding campaign: writing texts, setting incentives, defining totals.

4

Running and promotion of the crowdfunding campaign.

Lessons learned

- Structured communication with the city, sponsors and the public is essential for large infrastructure projects.
- Crowdfunding is ideal for activating the community.

Positive side effects

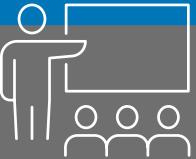
- Increasing the attractiveness of and identification with the club and an increase in membership.
- Environmental benefits thanks to resource-saving ground cover.



3.3 Lever 3: Education



Education



Values such as respect, tolerance and fair play, which are practised in sport, are closely linked to sustainability. Against this backdrop, sports clubs as extracurricular education centres offer ideal conditions for promoting sustainable thinking and action, especially among the very young. However, education in and through sport does not end with the young – it accompanies people throughout their lives: from playful learning in childhood, through teaching social skills in youth work, to raising the awareness of adults and older generations. Sports clubs are educational spaces for all age groups. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the concept that helps to teach social responsibility, environmental protection and sustainable economic behaviour. The German Sports Youth ([2025](#)) provides extensive information and practical approaches for anchoring ESD specifically in sport.

In practice, there are already some clubs that integrate ESD into their work: for example, they offer workshops or training courses on topics such as anti-racism, child safeguarding, health, democracy or environmental protection, organise holiday activities and sporting events that incorporate relevant content, or create posters and digital information materials on sustainable action.

However, our surveys show that many organisations would like further support in anchoring sustainability more firmly in their own structures through education. The state sports associations play a central role in this: they can provide support by continuously incorporating sustainability into their educational programmes. This is already happening to some extent – for example through regular green meetings,

online seminars and courses that are recognised in the training of trainers. For its part, the DOSB already offers sports associations and regional sports federations various training programmes on sustainability topics, including via the DOSB **Leadership Academy**.

Through Education for Sustainable Development, associations and clubs can train interested members to become multipliers, spreading the topic to others. This establishes sport as an important platform for sustainable action.

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Offer your employees further training on sustainability and set ESD targets for staff development (e.g. number of ESD-certified employees).
- ▶ Embed ESD as an integral part of the organisation's mission statement, statutes and strategy papers.
- ▶ Organise regular workshops or internal meetings to share knowledge and experience on sustainability.

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Offer general and specific training courses or seminars for volunteers, trainers and club managers on topics such as climate protection, resource conservation and social responsibility. To reach even more people, you can also organise webinars.
- ▶ Provide information and educational materials for clubs. These can include valuable tips for those responsible or be made available to clubs for their members.
- ▶ Establish a network of sustainability ambassadors in sport who can be points of contact for clubs or also provide testimonials to the general public (especially successful athletes).
- ▶ Launch an online education portal that brings together information about sustainability in sport. You can also highlight practical examples and current educational programmes here.



Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Start with quick information measures, such as posters or notices on your club premises, which specifically address sustainability issues such as health, child safeguarding or anti-discrimination.
- ▶ You don't have to reinvent the wheel: use existing materials, for example from the **German Sport Youth**, and make them available to your members and volunteers.
- ▶ Find out from sports associations and regional sports federations about further training courses that provide practical support for more sustainability in your club.

Advanced

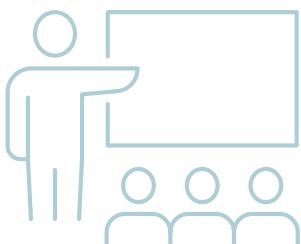
Set your sights higher

- ▶ Enable coaches, trainers and other volunteers to take part in online workshops or local educational programmes on sustainability topics – including political education.
- ▶ Organise an annual “ESD Day” on which you highlight various sustainability topics in workshops, activities and lectures. Involve young people in a targeted way.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Find role models in your club or in your region who can be ambassadors for certain sustainability topics.
- ▶ Cooperate with schools and kindergartens in your area and offer sports programmes for these educational institutions.
- ▶ Enable your volunteers or employees to take part in regional, national or even international ESD events and bring the knowledge back to the club.

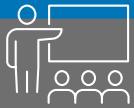


Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Work with schools, educational initiatives and environmental organisations, using their expertise and resources to enhance your offering.
- ▶ Remember: through your sports programmes and the values you teach, you are already making a contribution to education for sustainable development. Build on this.
- ▶ The topic of ESD is becoming increasingly important in the education and training of volunteers. Find out more from your regional sports association or the regional sports youth organisation.
- ▶ Involve young people and their ideas. They often have a solid base of knowledge, especially when it comes to climate protection and gender equality.

ASSOCIATION

Education



Training course: Resilience and sustainability in sport

Landessportbund Sachsen-Anhalt e. V.



As part of a two-day training programme, the Saxony-Anhalt State Sports Association brought together the topics of resilience and sustainability in the context of sport. They discussed how a healthy, responsible approach to challenges in everyday club life can lead to success and how the sports club can be made more sustainable at the same time – socially, ecologically and economically. The participating trainers, club managers and volunteers learnt about various practical methods for strengthening their own resilience and were given a variety of ideas for sustainable club development.

Sub-objectives

- To strengthen the resilience of trainers and club managers.
- To raise awareness of sustainability in everyday club life.
- To reflect on one's own actions and develop concrete ideas for everyday club life.

Budget

EUR 1200 (speaker's fee, costs of the regional sports school)

Participants

Two employees and one external speaker

Timescale

2 months (around 2 person days)

Contact person

Judith Filip

Education Officer

halle@lsb-sachsen-anhalt.de

Procedure

1

Scheduling in coordination with the target group and speaker.

2

Content design and methodological-didactic planning.

3

Invitation to tender via website and networks.

4

Running of the two-day educational event.

Lessons learned

- The combination of theory and practice promotes sustainable learning.
- Methods for strengthening resilience can be easily transferred to the sports context.

Positive side effects

- Change of perspective and an impetus for critical self-reflection in everyday association life.
- Interaction with other clubs motivates people to implement their own sustainability measures.

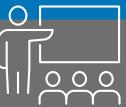
Address of the association

Maxim-Gorki-Str. 14, 06114 Halle/Saale

Ziele für eine bessere Welt



Education



Youth project: Lerchenberg Democracy Workshop

Arc-en-Ciel
Sport- und Kulturverein Mainz e. V.



The Arc-en-Ciel's project aims to motivate young people (aged 14-17) to get politically involved in their neighbourhood. In various modules, the young people work together with artists and activists to address their needs creatively with the aim of creating an agenda with concrete demands. The background of this project is the observed disenchantment with politics among young people and the structural disadvantages of the many who feel left behind. Social inequality, low social participation and growing frustration are the result. The "Lerchenberg Democracy Workshop" aims to turn existing frustration into new motivation and encourage young people to get actively involved in their neighbourhood. As part of the project, they learn to understand and utilise democratic structures. This gives their voices more weight and enables them to express their wishes and needs more clearly and effectively to political decision-makers.

Sub-objectives

- To strengthen personal skills by experiencing self-efficacy and encouraging critical, creative thinking.
- To promote social participation and involvement of young people (experiencing democracy as part of everyday life).
- To form a community from the diversity of young people (with/ without migration background, disabilities, etc.).

Budget

Not specified

Participants

Education officer, young people, local schools and social workers, artists and activists, Lerchenberg network, City of Mainz

Timescale

3 years with approximately 30 hours of project work per week

Address of the club

Rheinallee 1, 55116 Mainz



CLUB

Procedure

1

Build trust and strengthen group dynamics through age-appropriate team games.

2

Ideas workshop: development of joint projects and demands for the neighbourhood.

3

Neighbourhood tour: visit to Lerchenberg: What is missing, what is disturbing, what do people want?

4

Completing creative activities together with artists and activists

Lessons learned

- It takes a lot of time and patience to overcome the fear of contact and build a real community.
- Commitment is a challenge – especially in long-term collaboration.
- Girls need "safer spaces" to get involved.

Positive side effects

- Requests for co-operation from other associations and institutions due to growing interest in the project.
- The good feeling that we are fulfilling the social dimension of the sustainability goals.

**Contact person**

Larisa Skapur

Education Officer

info@arcenciel.de

3.4 Lever 4: Partnerships

Partnerships



Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals refers to the need for partnerships in order to achieve the global sustainability goals. In line with the motto “We are stronger together than alone”, partnerships create a lot of added value for everyone involved. For clubs and associations in grassroots sport, this can take the form of:

- ▶ **Resource sharing:** Through partnerships, clubs and associations can access additional financial, material and human resources that would not be available to them on their own.
- ▶ **Knowledge and expertise:** Sharing knowledge and expertise between partners can improve the quality and effectiveness of club and association work.
- ▶ **Network and reach:** Partnerships expand your network and reach, which can lead to greater visibility and recognition.
- ▶ **Innovations and new projects:** Different perspectives and strengths in joint projects lead to more innovative approaches.
- ▶ **Influence:** Cooperation between different stakeholders increases social and political influence. For example, a sports club or association can collaborate with other organisations to strengthen its position with politicians at the municipal, state or federal government levels.

Our research in the BUNA project shows that most sports clubs are already connected with other stakeholders, particularly in their region. Cooperation with regional sports authorities, other sports clubs, schools and local companies stand out in particular. These connections often result in remarkable projects that promote sustainability. For example, schools and clubs offer joint educational programmes, sports clubs support local refugee aid, companies help with the renovation of sports

facilities and associations promote various forms of interaction. However, when it comes to cooperation between sports organisations and environmental and nature conservation associations and stakeholders in development cooperation, there is

still some catching up to do. Especially, cooperations with local fruit and garden associations, the local world shop or local environmental initiatives could be strengthened.

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Develop guidelines for partnerships, sponsorship and cooperation agreements that incorporate sustainability criteria (e.g. carbon footprint, fair working conditions, social responsibility).
- ▶ Build targeted partnerships with professional organisations, environmental associations, universities and other educational institutions to share knowledge and resources. Consider: Who do we need to develop further? Who can we help with our knowledge?
- ▶ Focus on long-term and transparent partnerships that strengthen both your organisation and your partners.

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Create simple checklists and guidelines to help organisations find suitable partners for sustainability projects and offer templates for cooperation agreements that take sustainability criteria into account.
- ▶ Organise networking events that bring together associations and potential partners (e.g. companies, local authorities, environmental organisations).
- ▶ Emphasise successful partnerships between associations and sustainability-orientated companies, NGOs and foundations.



Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Think about who you should network with and for what.
- ▶ (Re-)activate existing partnerships or make contact with other associations, organisations, companies or the local council. Sit around a table and think about how you can work together to contribute to sustainable development locally. Tip: Club members often have a strong network of contacts – use this to find potential partners.
- ▶ Approach local companies to sponsor your sustainability activities. In-kind sponsorships and partnerships, such as providing sustainable solutions for your organisation's events, could also be an exciting option.
- ▶ Make use of the services offered by your local sports associations and regional sports federations. Engage in dialogue with them.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Share more expensive items such as sports equipment or premises with neighbouring clubs to save costs.
- ▶ Check whether job sharing could also be an option for you: one sustainability officer can work for two or three clubs. This would share not only the personnel costs, but also the knowledge.
- ▶ Develop project-related cooperation initiatives, for example with schools for environmental education or with companies for sustainable products in the club.
- ▶ Hold events together with other clubs or organisations where you highlight sustainability issues. This could be as part of a sports festival or competition, but could also be an environmental run or a specific day of action.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Network with local councillors to contribute to sustainability concepts in your area.
- ▶ Promote cooperation with research institutes and incorporate corresponding innovative approaches (e.g. for resource conservation or climate-neutral sports facilities) into your club's work. There may be an opportunity to participate in a pilot project.
- ▶ Cooperate with foundations or partners from the global south. This promotes their values and encourages cultural exchange, creates visibility and makes an important contribution to globally sustainable development, for example with a jointly organised charity run or participation in the **Sports 4 Trees** reforestation campaign.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Make sure you communicate honestly and clearly with your partners. This promotes trust and strengthens cooperation.
- ▶ An overview of nationwide nature and environmental protection organisations is provided by the **Deutscher Naturschutzbund** (German Network for Nature Conservation).
- ▶ Be creative and think outside the box: for example, co-operate with the local food bank to reduce food waste or work together with a craft business to set up a repair café and upcycling projects.
- ▶ Ask your members: someone probably knows someone who knows someone ...

Partnerships



Landessportverband
Baden-Württemberg e. V.



The N!-Charta Sport

Whether it's purchasing new sports equipment, organising club festivals or competitions – sports clubs and associations have many opportunities to act more sustainably. However, there is often a lack of resources and expertise. This is why the N!-Charta Sport was developed in 2019 in a partnership project between the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of the Environment, Climate and the Energy Sector, the Baden-Württemberg State Sports Association and specialist sports associations and sports clubs. The aim of the sustainability management system is to strengthen sustainable structures in sports clubs and associations through common guiding principles and a one-year implementation process. In total, the N!-Charta Sport consists of 12 guiding principles, four of which represent the areas of social issues, ecology and club success. Sports clubs and associations that sign the N!-Charta Sport adhere to at least one guiding principle from each of the three areas in their target concept for each process cycle.

Sub-objectives

- To network sustainability stakeholders from the Baden-Württemberg sports landscape.
- To strengthen the negotiating positions of the signatories vis-à-vis cooperation partners, sponsors and local authorities.
- To recognise and visualise special sustainability achievements by sports clubs and associations.

Budget

Process costs were covered by the state

Participants

Baden-Württemberg Ministry for the Environment, Climate and the Energy Sector, Baden-Württemberg State Sports Association, sports associations and sports clubs

Timescale

Development of the N!-Charta Sport: 1.5 years

Address of the association

Fritz-Walter-Weg 19, 70372 Stuttgart



ASSOCIATION

Procedure

1

Adaptation of the WIN Charter from the corporate sector to sport.

2

Development of twelve guiding principles taking into account the volunteer structures.

3

Design of a one-year cycle that functions individually and at the same time in a network-orientated way.

4

Development and publication of an overview page listing all sports clubs and associations that have signed up.

Contact person

Ulrike Hoffmann

Sports and Environment Officer

nachhaltigkeitsstrategie@um.bwl.de

Lessons learned

- A major challenge in the development of the N!-Charta Sport was consideration of the diverse sports club landscape. The experiences gained will continue to be taken into account in the process.

Positive side effects

- We have observed an increase in internal motivation in many sports clubs and associations.
- Knowledge building: Interaction with other sports clubs and associations has given rise to many new ideas.



Partnerships



Klimfit - climate management for sports clubs

CLUB

Sportvereinigung Feuerbach 1883 e. V.



In order to make an effective contribution to climate protection and climate adaptation, sports clubs need a systematic and practical concept for action. The "klimafit" project aims to address precisely this need and support other clubs on their way to climate neutrality based on the experiences of the Feuerbach Sports Association. A low-threshold climate management system was developed for this purpose, which is accessible via a digital platform. At the heart of the system are e-learning modules that enable club members to acquire basic knowledge about climate protection measures and apply it directly in their own club. The climate portal provides training opportunities, tools for climate assessment and the implementation of a programme of measures. The project is funded by the Climate Innovation Fund of the state capital of Stuttgart and is being carried out by a broad project consortium of four organisations.

Sub-objectives

- To empower organisation stakeholders to implement a climate management system independently.
- To strengthen and expand partnerships between sport, education and environmental stakeholders.
- To implement climate protection systematically and adapt measures in the Stuttgart region.

Budget

EUR 200,000 (personnel costs 85 per cent, platform 10 per cent, material resources 5 per cent)

Participants

Spvg. Feuerbach, KATE Umwelt & Entwicklung e. V., Schwaben section of the DAV, Sportkreis Stuttgart e. V.

Timescale

2 years (approximately 450 working days)

Address of the club

Am Sportpark 1, 70469 Stuttgart

**Procedure**

1

Needs analysis for sports clubs to implement a climate management concept.

2

Development of e-learning modules and creation of a digital climate management platform.

3

Trial with 25 pilot clubs from the region.

4

Roll-out and scaling of the concept to other sports clubs.

Lessons learned

- The best way to get started with climate management is in a practical, everyday, low-threshold way.
- Associations are motivated, but need concrete assistance with implementation.

Positive side effects

- The project has created new cooperation structures between sport and sustainability.
- CO₂ savings also mean that money is effectively saved if the price of CO₂ rises.

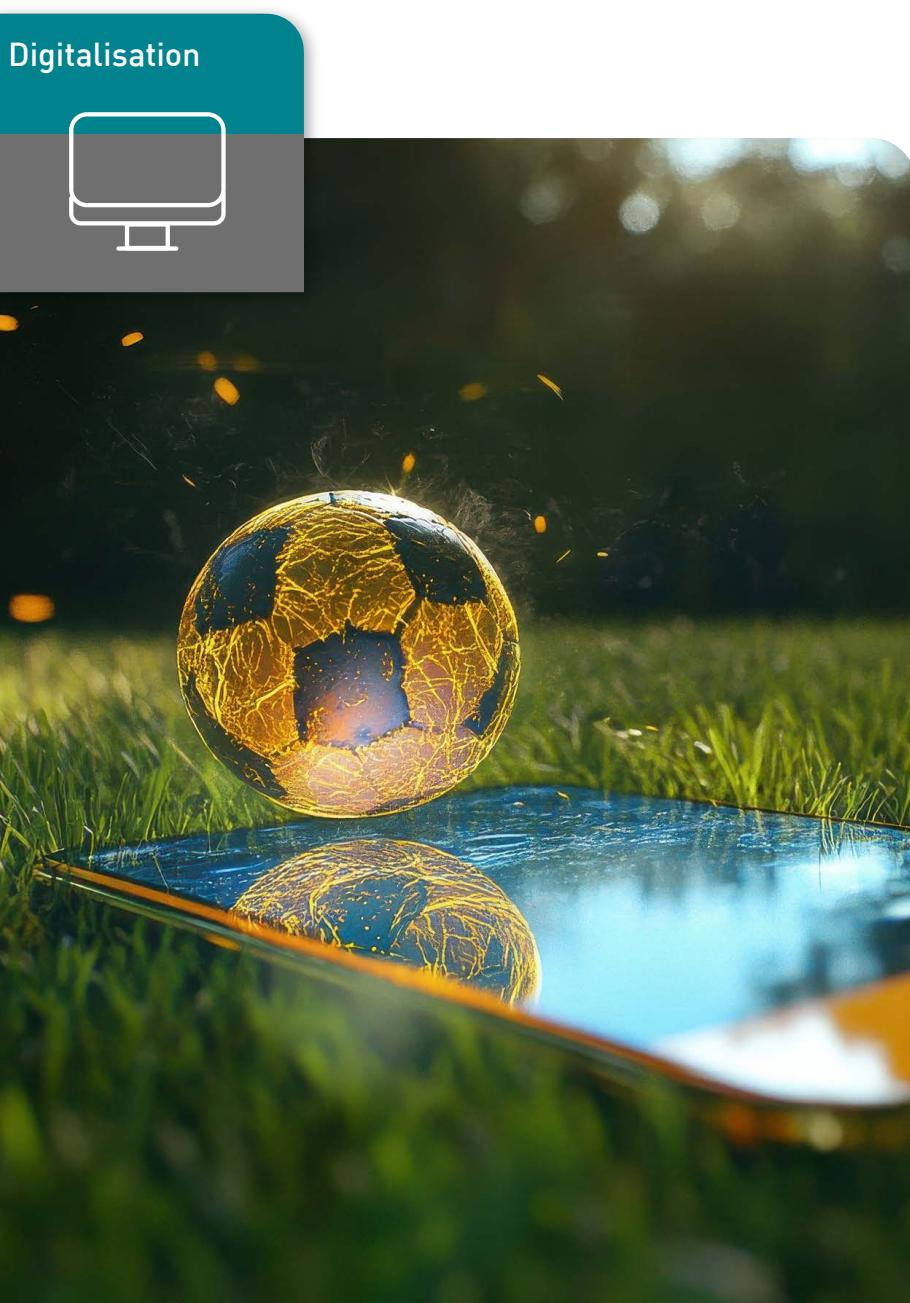
Contact person

Dr. Benjamin Haar

Chair

info@sportvg-feuerbach.de

3.5 Lever 5: Digitalisation



Digitalisation is shaping our times and influencing numerous areas of life – including sport. It opens up a variety of possibilities for improving the efficiency, modernity, accessibility and sustainability of grassroots sport:

- ▶ **Paperless club and association communication:** digital “notices”, apps and newsletters that replace traditional paper documents.
- ▶ **Digital car pools:** tools for organising joint trips to competitions or training sessions.
- ▶ **Sharing platforms:** apps or websites that simplify shared use of sports equipment or exchanging sportswear.
- ▶ **Energy-efficient building management:** smart systems for controlling lighting, heating and ventilation in sports halls or club rooms.
- ▶ **Online ticketing and access systems:** paperless solutions for events and members
- ▶ **Digital training plans and analyses:** apps and *wearables*² that document training progress digitally and optimise the use of materials.
- ▶ **Virtual sports courses:** location-independent sport, wherever you are.

Our survey has shown that many sports clubs have switched to digital solutions to maintain day-to-day sports operations, particularly due to contact restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Support for this came from sources such as the

2 *Wearables* are portable electronic devices such as fitness wristbands or smartwatches that count steps, track calories burned or measure blood pressure, for example.

REACT-EU programme of the European Union. However, the move towards more extensive digitalisation is also being reconsidered for sustainability reasons. For example, many associations organise car pools in chat groups or specialized apps and use digital solutions for paperless work. Our results also show that the training of coaches and referees is increasingly being carried out digitally. The many advantages are obvious: there are no more long journeys, which reduces CO2 emissions. The courses also reach more people, which counteracts the challenges of voluntary work.

However, digitalisation not only brings advantages, but also some challenges. Above all, it is important to ensure that nobody is excluded. Digital technologies can be an obstacle for some people, such as those who are less tech-savvy or have disabilities. As we discovered in the BUNA project, very few sports clubs have paid attention to making digital programmes inclusive, i.e. barrier-free. This presents a great opportunity: removing barriers enables greater participation and simultaneously increases the reach of the club.



Excursus: Artificial intelligence in grassroots sport

Artificial intelligence (AI) can support you in many ways, for example:

- ▶ in communication;
- ▶ in administration through automation;
- ▶ for tasks in finance and HR management.

Further information on possible AI applications in sport can be found here, for example: [Künstliche Intelligenz im Sportverein](#) (Artificial intelligence in sports clubs)

But: It is important not to use AI blindly. It comes with challenges in relation to data protection, high resource consumption and erroneous results. Especially with regard to AI-generated images and texts, it is important always to check them for accuracy and, if possible, to customise them so that the explanations are not too general and suit your needs. Since the end of 2024, the [EU AI Act](#) has been in force, which regulates the use of artificial intelligence in the European Union. The Member States have until the end of 2026 to transpose these regulations into national law. But we recommend that you take a look at the requirements for using AI now. The EU AI Act classifies AI systems based on their risk and places particular emphasis on the protection of fundamental rights. The Future of Life Institute offers a comprehensible and practical summary of the law on its website: [High-level summary of the AI Act](#).



Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Opt for environmentally friendly technologies and providers (including servers with green electricity, energy-efficient hardware and software).
- ▶ Promote digital solutions to enable flexible working models and minimise the environmental impact of business trips.
- ▶ Use digital tools for event and competition organisation.
- ▶ Utilise digital solutions for internal communication (intranet, etc.) to reduce paper consumption.
- ▶ Make all digital tools and platforms accessible and inclusive. A look at the **Accessibility Reinforcement Act** can help.

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Advise your member clubs on digital tools for membership administration, training planning or event management, for example.
- ▶ Support associations in the introduction of digital systems by providing advice on software and data protection.
- ▶ Organise webinars or online courses for your member clubs on the use of AI.
- ▶ Advise clubs on smart technologies for sustainable operation of sports facilities, for example energy-efficient building management or intelligent lighting.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Switch to email **communication**.
- Do not print out sets of documents for committee meetings or general meetings, but send them out digitally in advance or use the appropriate software.
- Introduce virtual meetings for various bodies or working groups such as committee meetings, sports department meetings or project planning meetings. This saves travel and time.
- Use digital tools to plan meetings or sports courses or to organise car pools. The **DOSB club app** helps with various digitalisation measures in sports clubs.

Advanced

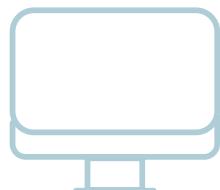
Set your sights higher

- ▶ Make sure that your website and other digital services are as accessible as possible, for example through strong colour contrasts, intuitive navigation, read-aloud options or translations into simple language and alternative texts for images.
- ▶ Use digital platforms for sustainability measures, such as clothes swaps.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Develop a holistic digitalisation strategy for paperless administration that focuses on resource-saving technologies and working methods.
- ▶ Work with external partners to utilise smart technologies to reduce energy and water consumption (e.g. motion detectors for sports facilities).



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Research funding for digitalisation measures, for example from the **Initiative Sportverein der Zukunft** (Sports Club of the Future Initiative), to receive support for your initiatives.
- ▶ If you are unsure about accessibility, involve people with accessibility problems in the development process. This is always good practice.
- ▶ Find out about practical tips and tools for digitalisation in sports clubs – for example on the website of the **NRW State Sports Association**, where you can find specific applications, funding information and guidelines.





DHB platform strategy



Deutscher Handballbund e. V.



ASSOCIATION

The German Handball Federation (DHB) is prioritising sustainability and digitalisation: with a modern website and standardised platform strategy, the association is strengthening the networking and accessibility of its online services and creating a future-proof digital infrastructure. Open-source technology, optimised usability and efficient communication solutions promote a sustainable infrastructure. Among other things, the aim is to attract fans and members and to strengthen their long-term loyalty to the sport of handball.

Sub-objectives

- To strengthen the sport of handball and its values through long-term usability of the digital infrastructure.
- To increase reach and membership numbers through greater accessibility and accessibility for all interested parties.
- To improve the fan experience through stronger networking of existing platforms.

Budget

Not specified

Participants

DHB's Digital Marketing department, external IT service provider

Timescale

6 years

Procedure

1

Development of a strategy for standardised digital platforms and structures in the DHB.

2

Development of target group-specific platforms with a focus on user-friendliness and sustainability.

3

Transfer and networking of existing platforms to the new standard design.

4

Continuous development of all digital platforms to engage target groups and strengthen the brand.

Lessons learned

- Integration of digital platforms is often more complex than expected.
- Meeting the needs of all target groups requires extensive analyses and flexibility.

Positive side effects

- We have become more attractive to sponsors through our modern digital brand presence.
- We have been able to save resources with the help of digital processes.
- The awareness of other institutions of the need for a more digital and sustainable approach has been raised.

Contact person

Matthias Lahr

Head of Digital

info@dhb.de

Address of the association

Strobelallee 56, 44139 Dortmund

CLUB



Digitalisation

Green on and off the pitch

SV 1919 Lemberg e. V.



The young, six-member board, with an average age of 29, has set itself the goal of streamlining the processes and structures at SV 1919 Lemberg e.V. (approx. 430 members) and adapting them to a modern way of communication and collaboration. With the switch to cloud-based solutions and a new membership software, the club's work has been made more efficient, transparent and up to date - both internally and in communication with external parties. For example, the club has created a 100 per cent paperless administration.

Sub-objectives

- To provide access to club documents for all board members irrespective of time and location.
- To introduce paperless processes such as digital membership applications and address changes through member self-administration.
- To improve member retention through automated birthday greetings and a modern newsletter system.

Budget

EUR 500

Participants

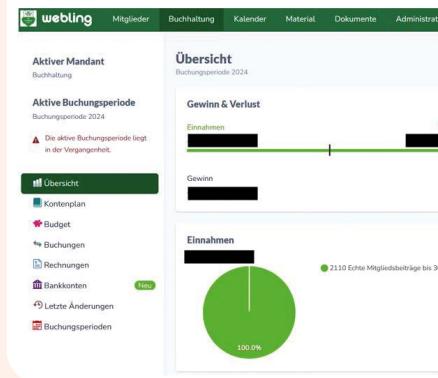
Three members of the board.

Timescale

6 months, approx. 3-4 hours per week

Address of the club

Laubbrunnerstr., 66969 Lemberg



Mitglied werden beim SV Lemberg



Wir freuen uns, dass du bei uns Mitglied werden willst! Füllle die nachfolgenden Daten bitte bestmöglich aus und übermittele deinen Antrag direkt online.

Vorname *

Name *

Anrede

Procedure

1

Comparison of various cloud systems and membership software providers.

2

Test phase for the selected cloud systems and member software.

3

Selection of Google Drive (cloud) and Webling (member software).

4

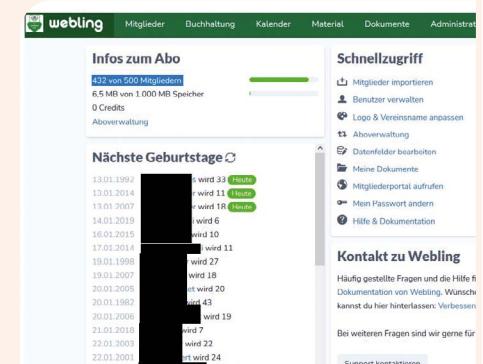
Set-up of all data on the respective systems and communication with the club members.

Lessons learned

- The wide range of systems makes decision-making difficult - a detailed requirements profile in advance is crucial (e.g. membership software with integration of accounting).
- Transferring the data took a long time, perhaps pay a student member of the club to do this.

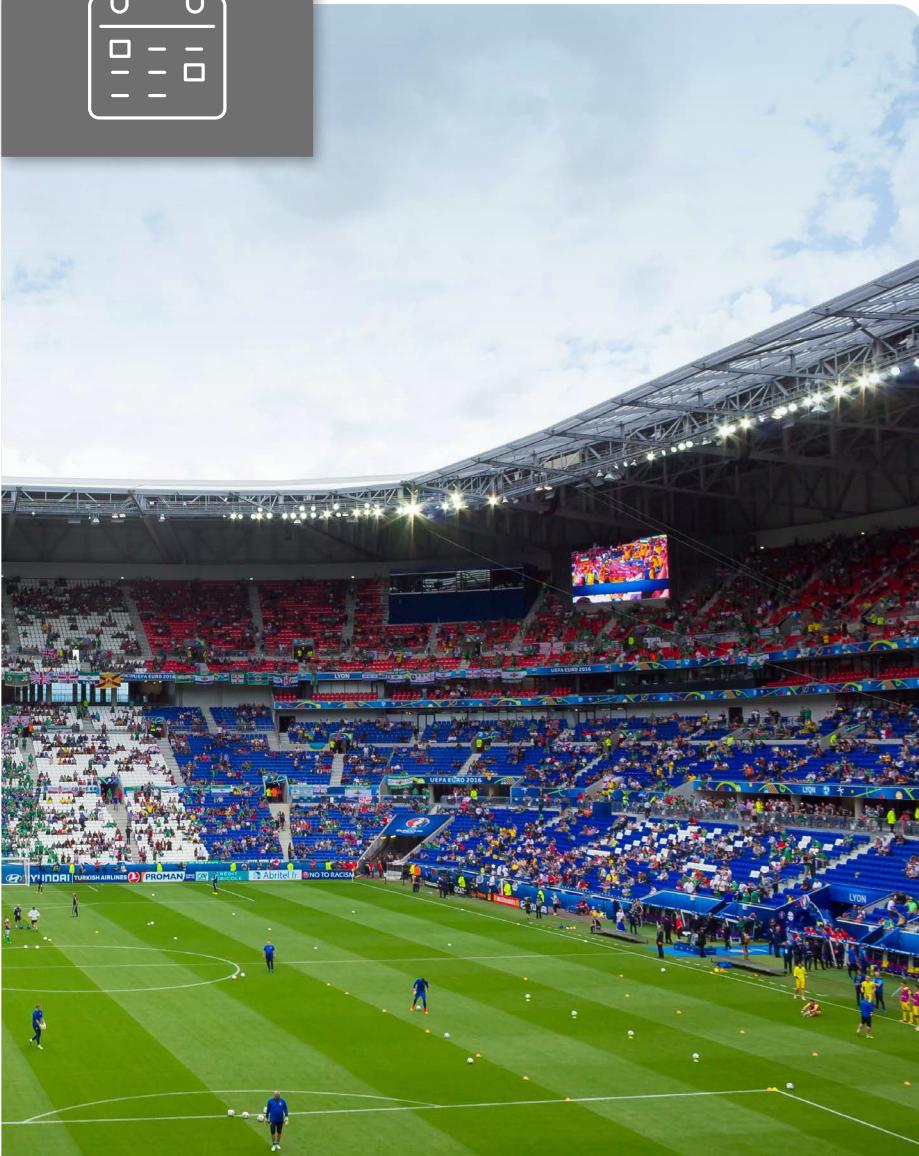
Positive side effects

- The club has raised its public profile.
- The board can now carry out its work from any location and include people who are not on site.
- We feel closer to our members through regular, personalised communication.



3.6 Lever 6: Events

Events



Numerous sporting events take place in Germany every weekend. They are often associated with high resource consumption and large quantities of waste. By organising such events in a sustainable way, you can promote conscious use of resources, set an important example for climate protection and assume social responsibility. Measures such as avoiding disposable materials, promoting climate-friendly travel and regional, fair-trade catering can significantly reduce the ecological footprint. Barrier-free access, reduced ticket prices for low-income households and inclusive tournament formats encourage participation. Your events can also serve as an educational platform to raise the awareness of participants, fans and the public in general to sustainability and motivate them to become active themselves.

However, despite the great potential of sustainable sporting events, our results from the BUNA project show that to date, only a few clubs have paid attention to the sustainability of their events. Some individual sports associations have switched to sustainable catering and are paying attention to environmentally friendly travel options, but there is still great potential for many of them.

Support for sustainable event organisation is provided by the portal www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/ (Sustainable Sporting Events). There you will find practical recommendations for all types and sizes of sports events and a helpful toolbox for concrete planning. This enables events to be organised in an ecologically responsible, socially just and economically viable way. As a result, customised sustainability strategies can be developed for sporting events of all sizes. The portal was created as part of the “Sustainable [major] sporting events in Germany” project, which was funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Ministry of the Interior and implemented by the DOSB, the German Sport University Cologne and the Öko-Institut.



Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Create your own guidelines that define binding sustainability criteria for your events on topics such as waste management, catering or mobility, for example.
- Integrate sustainability and human rights into the selection criteria for event venues and service providers (venues with public transport connections, catering with regional/vegan food, etc.).
- Find out more about other approaches at www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Provide templates for CO₂ calculations or draw attention to CO₂ calculators that clubs can use to analyse the climate impact of their events.
- ▶ List service providers who offer sustainable products and services for events and make the lists available to your member organisations.
- ▶ Support organisations with checklists and guidelines for sustainable events, covering topics such as waste management, energy saving and environmentally friendly travel. It makes sense to refer to the web portal www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Use reusable crockery instead of disposable products.
- ▶ Provide sufficient rubbish bins and pay attention to waste separation (clear signage).
- ▶ Encourage travel by bike or public transport, or organise car pools.
- ▶ Promote participation by offering people on low incomes free participation in your sporting events, for example. Offer inclusive formats.
- ▶ Find out more about other approaches at www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Look for criteria such as regionality, seasonality and fair trade when choosing service providers.
- ▶ Use digital platforms for registration, communication and reporting to minimise paper consumption.
- ▶ Develop internal guidelines for event organisation.
- ▶ Find out more about other approaches at www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Calculate the CO₂ emissions of your event and see where you can avoid emissions for subsequent events. Offset unavoidable CO₂ emissions through regional or global climate protection projects. There are various providers here. The Federal Environment Agency's guide to **voluntary CO₂** offsetting can help you choose a reputable provider.
- ▶ Integrate all the relevant aspects – from energy and mobility, through waste management, to social responsibility – into a comprehensive event concept and apply this to all your events.
- ▶ Find out more about other approaches at www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Organise one sports event with a specific focus on sustainability and see what you can incorporate into all events in the longer term.
- ▶ Communicate positive event experiences and demonstrate the added value from sustainable action.
- ▶ Start with smaller steps, such as switching to reusable crockery or proper waste separation. Develop from event to event.
- ▶ Work with environmental initiatives or local organisations that can help you with planning and implementation.
- ▶ Use the web portal www.nachhaltige-sportveranstaltungen.de/en/

Events



ASSOCIATION

Sustainability strategy for World Triathlon Hamburg

Deutsche Triathlon Union e. V.



As a sport that depends on nature, the triathlon has a responsibility for the preservation of sports and living spaces. Sustainability is therefore a crucial aspect of the triathlon. The German Triathlon Union (DTU) is therefore pursuing the goal of making its events more sustainable – as exemplified by the World Triathlon Hamburg. The aim is to significantly reduce the ecological footprint of this major event – ideally, the intention is to halve CO₂ emissions by 2030. To achieve this, a strategy was drawn up in close collaboration with various stakeholders. It comprises eleven areas of action, including energy efficiency, mobility, communication and sustainable procurement.

Sub-objectives

- To organise the event so that it is as energy efficient as possible, for example by using green electricity.
- To use sustainable materials and environmentally friendly solutions, for example in catering.
- To draw up a catalogue of criteria for stand operators to promote sustainable action across the entire event site.

Budget

Mainly personnel costs

Participants

One sustainable officer, organisation team, external consultants, sponsors, service providers

Timescale

5 months (around 10 to 15 hours per week)



Procedure

1

Appointment of a sustainability officer with primary responsibility.

2

Completion of a stakeholder and materiality analysis, resulting in an action plan.

3

Work carried out to persuade all stakeholders (e.g. team, sponsors, executive committee) to get on board.

4

Publication of the strategy and application for an award from the global organisation.

Lessons learned

- Sufficient personnel resources must be planned for implementation on site: “just doing it on the side” is difficult.
- Don’t be afraid to take the first steps. You don’t have to reinvent the wheel: it helps to adapt existing ideas to your own circumstances.

Positive side effects

- We have received a lot of positive attention from sponsors and athletes.
- We won an award from the global association and were finalists in the German Sustainability Award.

Contact person

Heiko Berger
Sports Development Officer
mail@triathlondeutschland.de

Address of the association

Otto-Fleck-Schneise 8,
60528 Frankfurt



Green Game Watson Cup

Polar Pinguin Berlin e. V.



With the Green Game Watson Cup, which took place for the first time in 2024, Polar Pinguin Berlin showed how sporting events can be organised sustainably and inclusively. The football tournament combines sport with a commitment to a sustainable future. Highlights included the stand rally, where players and spectators were given information about sustainable practices in sport, and the redistribution project, where EUR 650 in entry fees were donated. A self-organised reusable cup system made the event more environmentally friendly, while an awareness concept promoted inclusion. The event shows how sporting competition can go hand in hand with ecological responsibility and social commitment.

Sub-objectives

- To organise an ecologically sustainable and socially responsible event
- To complete educational and informational work on sustainability issues in and through sport
- To raise awareness about respect, diversity and anti-discrimination in football

Budget

EUR 12,000 (for stage/technology, band/presenting, material costs, expenses and personnel costs)

Timescale

3 months (10 hours per week of full-time coordination and approximately 20 volunteers for 5 hours each)

Participants

Approximately 20 club members, board, anti-discrimination officer, coaches, groundsman, caterers, player's band, service providers

Contact person

Leonie Bröcheler

Sustainability Working Group
nachhaltigkeit@polar-pinguin.de

Procedure

1

Collect ideas for sustainable action and apply for project funding via the organisation WEED.

2

Define areas of responsibility and establish working structures by appointing people responsible for them.

3

Budget planning and material procurement, agreements with service providers and coordination of volunteers.

4

Running of the event and subsequent evaluation.

Address of the club

Hochkirchstraße 3, 10829 Berlin



CLUB

Lessons learned

- Early planning (at least 3 months in advance) and a budget buffer are crucial.
- Request cooperation with external organisations at an early stage.
- It helps to mobilise as many volunteers as possible.

Positive side effects

- We have permanently adopted the reusable cup system and awareness concept in our operations.
- The cohesion and values were strengthened within the club.
- Award of the Silver Star of Sport .



3.7 Lever 7: Communication

Communication



“In terms of communication, we can improve even further by adopting the motto "Do something good and talk about it". This is why, for example, we introduced a "Sustainability Corner" in our association magazine in 2023, in which we report on sustainable initiatives by our member clubs on a monthly basis.

Anonymous, Sports Association

Transparent and targeted communication is crucial for successful implementation of sustainability measures. Internal communication promotes awareness, creates trust and improves cooperation between all those involved. This is particularly important in the context of the voluntary structures in grassroots sport. External communication in turn contributes to the external impact of the club or association and thus, among other things, to bringing in members and sponsors, and raises awareness of the issues across the board.

However, our surveys, interviews and research indicate that clubs and associations still communicate little about their own activities or about sustainability in general. The most frequently cited reasons for this are the limited human resources and concerns about falling into the greenwashing trap. However, those who are proactive in talking about their commitment to sustainability report positive results: They have seen an increase in memberships and have often gained new sponsors. Communication also encourages members to identify with the organisation.

There are a few steps to take on the way to successful and credible internal and external sustainability communication. We discussed this in a focus group with a number of experts and have summarised some examples of questions:

- ▶ **Establish the status quo:** Identify where and how you already talk about your sustainability activities and see what works well and what does not.
 - **Internal:** Do you inform your members about your sustainability activities or about individual topics such as environmental protection, participation or consumption? Do you use the general meeting to present projects and gather ideas? Do you have like-minded people in your club or association on whom you can call for support?
 - **External:** Do you have a website and is it up to date? Do you use social media? Do you post on them regularly? Do you network with the local media? Do you collaborate with (other) multipliers?
- ▶ **Set the goal:** Determine what specifically you want to achieve with your communication.
 - **Internal:** Do you want to encourage your members to get involved in sustainability in your organisation? Do you want to implement a measure that could lead to an increase in the membership fee? Who else in the organisation do you have to convince to make it work? And what benefits do you want to achieve for the club?
 - **External:** Do you want to attract new members? Are you looking for new sponsors and partners? Do you want to educate people about sustainability?
- ▶ **Know your target audience:** Think about who you need to get on board to achieve your goals.
 - **Internal and external:** Who do you want/need to get on board to achieve your goals? What is your target audience's level of knowledge and behavioural pattern with regard to sustainability? What is your target audience's perspective on the issue?

- ▶ **Identify "touch points":** Try to put yourself in the shoes of your target audience and think about where you can make contact with them.

- **Internal and external:** Would the target audience read a newsletter? Are its members often to be found at the sports facility? Are they active on social media or do they read the newspaper? Do they come to your events? Do they get their information from potential multipliers, such as the local council?



- ▶ **Plan and start communication:** Think about concrete measures for the touch points you have identified – always keeping the goal and the available resources (financial and time) in mind. These may include:
 - **Internal:** Informal discussions, internal club surveys or competitions, notices at sports grounds, in the clubhouse or office, workshops, general meetings, notice boards or future workshops
 - **External:** Articles on the website, social media postings, open days, posters, podcasts, competitions, discussions with companies
- ▶ **Evaluation:** Stop every now and then and review how your communication on sustainability is doing.
 - **Internal and external:** Have you been able to achieve your goal? If so, congratulations - build on this experience. If not, what was the problem? How can things run better?

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Carry out a survey of internal communication structures. Check which channels (newsletter, intranet, meetings) you are already using and whether or what you can improve.
- ▶ Determine the level of knowledge on the topic of sustainability in your club, for example through surveys or workshops.
- ▶ Formulate clear core messages that reflect your values in terms of cooperation and strategic orientation both internally and externally.
- ▶ Ensure authentic and transparent communication with your members so that you can act as a credible role model. Use the website, social media and public events to make sustainability measures visible to a wider public.
- ▶ Involve well-known athletes in your communications: they are often willing to get involved and can act as sustainability ambassadors for the public.
- ▶ Ensure that all your communication measures are barrier-free (e.g. clear language, alternative texts for images/graphics, colour contrasts).

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Share good, successful practice from your region or sport to inspire and motivate other clubs.
- ▶ Publish a regular newsletter or set up an online information portal in which, for example, good practice and new ideas on sustainability are presented. Your member clubs can also get involved here with guest contributions.
- ▶ Appoint a contact person or advice centre to support clubs in developing their sustainability communication effectively.
- ▶ Provide training and/or guidelines for clubs to improve their communication.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Start with a survey of the status quo and check which channels you already use for internal and external communication. What is going well, where could you make swift progress?
- ▶ Update your website and check that the important information about your commitment to sustainability is also included.
- ▶ If you have a newsletter or a member magazine: focus on sustainability in one issue.
- ▶ Put up information in the most frequented areas of your sports facilities.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Be clear about your goals and target groups: question why you want to communicate about sustainability and to whom. Be clear about whether you want to talk about your activities or educate people about sustainability in general.
- ▶ Conduct club surveys to ascertain knowledge levels, expectations and suggestions about sustainability, especially as a club activity.
- ▶ Use the general meeting as a pool of knowledge and simultaneously as a communication channel for sustainability in your club.
- ▶ If not yet in place: set up social media channels or use existing channels on a regular basis. Think carefully about where you need and want a presence with a view to your goals and target audience.
- ▶ Organise an open day at which you also present your sustainability activities.
- ▶ Check your materials and **digital channels** for accessibility and, if necessary, gradually switch to simple language, strong contrasts, alternative texts for images/graphics, simple navigation and larger fonts, for example.
- ▶ You might also have a good idea for a suitable sustainability mascot that also fits in well with your sport.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Implement all of the above steps for successful and strategic communication.
- ▶ Conduct comprehensive member surveys on sustainability issues and their importance in the club.
- ▶ Launch a campaign under a specific sustainability motto in which you present your achievements to the public. Use testimonials/ambassadors, connect with local media, be active on social media, organise events.
- ▶ Apply for sustainability awards. This can generate a lot of attention for your club.
- ▶ Publish a (regular) sustainability report in which you document your goals, progress and potential in the areas of environment, social issues and finance transparently.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Always be aware: your journey is also your destination! Nobody expects you to be perfectly sustainable. So report proudly about what you have already achieved, but also be transparent with regard to gaps and room for improvement.
- ▶ If you don't yet contribute much to sustainability yourself, you can always raise awareness of sustainability issues.
- ▶ Even if the steps appear to be large and complex, good preparatory work is important and will save resources later on.
- ▶ This also means: always think about where you can reach the most people who are important to you and your work.
- ▶ Especially in external communication: less is more – focus on a few channels and carry out targeted activities.

ASSOCIATION



website “Sustainability in Sports Clubs”

Landessportbund
Nordrhein-Westfalen e. V.



The “Nachhaltigkeit im Sportverein” page on the VIBSS website of the NRW State Sports Association is aimed specifically at sports clubs in NRW and offers a comprehensive introduction to the topic: from the first steps, through developing sustainability strategies, to specific tools, checklists and training programmes. Examples of good practice from clubs in NRW also show what sustainable commitment in sport can look like in concrete terms – practical and inspiring.

Sub-objectives

- To standardise the level of knowledge of sustainability in sport in North Rhine-Westphalia.
- To promote networking of sports clubs that are committed to sustainability.
- To highlight the positives: appreciation through publication of examples of good practice.

Budget

No separate budget

Participants

Three permanent employees from LSB NRW and Sportjugend NRW, additional support from member organisations, cooperation with RENN.west

Timescale

Approximately one-year set-up phase plus ongoing maintenance and updates

Address of the association

Friedrich-Alfred-Allee 25,
47055 Duisburg



Procedure

1

Research and collection of relevant content and materials.

2

Evaluation, selection and prioritisation of specific content for sports clubs.

3

Collection and editorial preparation of specific practical examples from sports clubs.

4

Website design and publication of content.

Lessons learned

- There is more content available relating to sustainability in sport than we would have expected.
- The description of good practices requires a great deal of content revision.

Positive side effects

- We can use much of the content we have identified elsewhere for workshops and events.
- New networks and contacts were created through cooperation in the area of sustainability.





Instagram campaign: “SVN on its way to climate neutrality”

SV Nordenham e. V.



SV Nordenham has visualised the topic of sustainability in sport in a creative and everyday way in an Instagram campaign lasting several weeks. In short, attractively designed posts, practical tips, successful club projects and hands-on ideas were communicated – from waste avoidance to sustainable cooking recipes. The content was developed with members of the club and FSJ volunteers with the aim of appealing to a young target audience in an authentic way.

Sub-objectives

- To raise awareness of topics such as waste avoidance and sustainable consumption.
- To support environmental projects (e.g. a butterfly garden at the primary school, with raised beds for the children).
- To encourage participation and imitation in the club and the surrounding area.

Budget

EUR 1,000

Participants

Managing director, FSJ volunteers, Social Media Officer, three dedicated club members

Timescale

Approximately 20 hours

Contact person

Stefan Plewka

Management Board

verwaltung@sv-nordenham.de

Procedure

- 1 Collecting ideas with members and FSJ volunteers.
- 2 Submitting funding application to the State Sports Association of Lower Saxony.
- 3 Development of the campaign: content, visual language, formats.
- 4 Composition and publication of the posts via Instagram including evaluation.



CLUB

Lessons learned

- The project has brought our young members together and given them a different perspective on the topic of sustainability and the environment.
- Sustainability can be communicated particularly effectively via social media if young people are actively involved.

Positive side effects

- We have managed to raise the awareness of our members about sustainability issues.
- As far as the administration is concerned, we are moving increasingly to a paperless office.
- In the future, additional working groups are to be set up, for example in the context of the environmental run.



3.8 Lever 8: Sustainability strategy

Sustainability strategy



“ The most important lever is strategy. I specifically want to present activism as something negative because, on the one hand, unstructured sustainability activity does not guarantee long-term sustainability; and on the other hand, it does not provide a sufficiently strong foundation on which to meet the challenges.

Anonymous, Sports Association ”

Let's move on to the most important discipline, strategy. Ideally it should stand at the beginning of your commitment to sustainability, as it provides you with an important framework and clear goals for your sustainability activities. However, a sustainability strategy can also develop from your individual measures.

In principle, a sustainability strategy helps sports clubs and associations to formulate long-term goals for sustainable development and implement specific measures to fulfil them within a defined timeframe. It helps to ensure that the often limited resources can be utilised in an effective way. A strategy ensures the long-term development of the sport.

Our surveys and interviews show that the majority of sports clubs and associations have not yet developed a sustainability strategy. However, there are individual pioneers who are already capitalising on the added value of a strategic approach. As an umbrella organisation, the **DOSB** is setting a good example: It developed a sustainability strategy in 2019 and updated it in 2024. Individual sports associations and clubs (see examples of good practice) have also embarked on a strategic path. Support with the development of sustainability strategies is offered, for example, by the Baden-Württemberg State Sports Association in cooperation with the Ministry for the Environment and Climate Action with the **N!-Charta Sport**.

A sustainability strategy usually follows this structure:

- ▶ **Introduction:** Brief introduction of the club or association and perhaps a welcome message from the general committee
- ▶ **Responsibilities:** Description of the working structure for the development of the sustainability strategy, comprising:
 - one or two contact person(s) in the club or association for coordination
 - a working group made up of club members or association employees to develop content
 - external stakeholders (such as local authorities, businesses, schools) who set priorities for the local community
- ▶ **Vision:** A common understanding of sustainability and a shared vision
- ▶ **Survey:** Presentation of existing measures and prioritisation of the sustainability topics relevant to the club or association (e.g. based on the eight thematic areas or by means of a materiality analysis)
- ▶ **Prioritised thematic areas:**
 - Guidelines: Description of the future target state
 - Strategic objectives: Specification of the guidelines over the long term for the selected thematic area

- Operational objectives: Concrete goals for short and medium-term realisation of the strategic objectives; these should be described in detail, be measurable and achievable, i.e. realistic, fit in with the values and role of the club or association and have a concrete timeframe in mind (so-called SMART criteria)
- Measures: Activities for achieving the operational objectives
- Resources: HR and financial planning to implement the measures



- ▶ **Resolution:** A decision by the board, general committee or management level; the strategy could also be formally adopted at the Annual General Meeting.
- ▶ **Evaluation:** Review of whether or to what extent the objectives have been achieved; building on this: Readjustment and conception of strategy as a continuous improvement process

Recommendations to Sports Associations: Role model and driving force

Role model

What you can do internally:

- ▶ Develop a sustainability strategy. There are already some sports organisations that you can use as a guide, such as the roadmap for creating a sustainability strategy from the EU project “**As sustainable as possible**”, or ASAP for short.
- ▶ Explore cooperation with environmental and sustainability organisations or universities. A particularly exciting idea: support students on relevant degree programmes, such as those at the **Bochum University of Applied Sciences**, with the development of sustainability strategies in sport as part of a Bachelor’s or Master’s dissertation.

Driving force

How you can support your member clubs:

- ▶ Involve your member clubs in your own strategy process, especially when it comes to setting priorities. This creates an awareness of the strategic approach in clubs.
- ▶ Identify those organisations that have already developed a sustainability strategy. Give them and their strategic approach visibility and connect them with other interested members.

Recommendations for Sports Clubs: From Beginners to Professionals

Beginner

Make a difference quickly

- ▶ Clarify responsibilities within your club: Who could organise a strategy process? Who would be interested in contributing to the content?
- ▶ Work together to develop a vision for your sports club. What should the sports programme and its design look like in 10 years?
- ▶ Carry out a survey of all sustainability measures. The eight thematic areas can provide guidance here.

Advanced

Set your sights higher

- ▶ Think about which organisations and people outside your club (external stakeholders) are important for your sustainability activities and therefore for your strategy. Talk to them and ask them to contribute their expertise.
- ▶ Together with the external stakeholders, select at least three thematic areas that you would like to focus on in the sustainability strategy for the time being.
- ▶ Develop guidelines, strategic goals, milestones and measures for these thematic areas within the club. Check the available human and financial resources.

Professional

Go all out

- ▶ Formulate the sustainability strategy in such a way that it can be published.
- ▶ Decide on the final strategy at the members' general meeting.
- ▶ Publish the strategy, start implementing it and communicate about it regularly.
- ▶ Evaluate what is working well after successful implementation and develop the strategy further in specific areas.
- ▶ For the professionals among the professionals: after a predetermined time, review what you have achieved and write a sustainability report. This helps you to stay on the ball and can be a valuable tool for communication and, above all, for recruiting members and sponsors.



Make things easier for yourselves:

- ▶ Involve as many members as possible in the processes, but don't get bogged down.
- ▶ Think about whether cooperation with academic institutions or sustainability organisations will benefit your work or present more of a challenge.
- ▶ Seek support from your sports associations and regional sports federations. Even if they have not yet developed their own sustainability strategy, they can still help with individual steps.

Sustainability strategy



ASSOCIATION

Sustainability strategy of the BTV

Badischer Tennisverband e. V.



By signing the N!-Charta Sport, the Baden Tennis Association (BTV) has set itself the goal of developing and promoting tennis in the region in a sustainable way. The focus is on representing the interests of its members. As a regional umbrella organisation, the BTV takes on a variety of tasks: it supports its member clubs in the implementation of sustainable measures – with a particular focus on member participation through club dialogues, the reduction of single-use plastic, optimisation of travel and the communication of values in sport. Associations are supported and motivated to realise their own sustainability projects in so-called convoys. The aim is to promote sustainable sports development continuously, strengthen the community and make tennis more.

Sub-objectives

- To reduce single-use plastic by using water dispensers and reusable bottles at the regional training centre
- To optimise travel distances when running competitions by efficient grouping of the teams
- To strengthen member participation through association dialogues that improve communication and involvement

Budget

Not specified

Participants

4 employees of the association

Timescale

Approximately 5 months



Procedure

1

Registration for the N!-Charta Sport.

2

Regular dialogue between the association, clubs and those responsible for the N!-Charta Sport.

3

Development and implementation of the sustainability strategy.

4

Evaluation and continuous development of the sustainability strategy.

Lessons learned

- The N!-Charta Sport has helped us to pursue a clear, structured strategy instead of getting lost in small, individual measures.
- The strategy has strengthened the effectiveness and longevity of our sustainability measures.

Positive side effects

- The project has also raised awareness of sustainability within the association and the clubs.
- We were able to motivate clubs themselves to make tennis more sustainable.



Contact person

N!Charta-Mail

n-charta@badischartennisverband.de

Address of the association

Jahnstraße 4, 69181 Leimen



“Greenminton” sustainability strategy

BC GW Obernzell von 1981 e. V.



As a small badminton club, the BC Grün-Weiß Obernzell (approximately 100 members) shows that even clubs with limited resources can make a major contribution to a future worth living. In 2023 an internal club sustainability strategy was developed under the title “**GREENMINTON**” and has been implemented step by step ever since. The strategy is based on four fields of action that take into account the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. It is implemented through concrete measures such as the digitalisation of club processes, production of alternative trophies made from tiles, tracking of trips, construction of a bee hotel by young people and measures to raise awareness. All information about the sustainability strategy is available online – as an invitation to work together to make our world more sustainable across all sports.

Sub-objectives

- To take a strategic approach to sustainable development in sports clubs to anchor measures structurally and to implement them in a targeted way.
- To anchor sustainability criteria in all internal club decision-making processes.
- To reduce emissions caused by the playing the sport and club events and to support young people and culture in a sustainable and holistic way.

Budget

Not specified

Participants

12 club members (board, two youth representatives, two player representatives, other committed members).

Timescale

Strategy development: 4 months



Procedure

1

Presentation of the idea to the club and assembly of a development team.

2

Meetings on risk analysis, vision, mission statement and framework conditions.

3

SWOT analysis, double materiality matrix, definition of areas of action and measures.

4

Publication of the strategy, implementation of the measures over 3 years, establishment of a control cycle.

Contact person

Fabian Lautner

Sustainability Manager

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Lessons learned

- The changes in our club are also having an effect on the association.
- It pays off if you apply your own strengths in a targeted manner and incorporate creative ideas of members.

Positive side effects

- The club's identity has been strengthened and new members and volunteers have been recruited.
- We now have a better local and national network and have been able to generate prize money and new funding.

Address of the club

Klangweg 2, 94130 Obernzell





4. The logic behind the thematic areas and levers: How they are mutually dependent

Sustainability is a dynamic process that requires constant adaptation and innovation: it does not have a fixed goal, but is a continuous path of further development. This is particularly true of grassroots sport, which is so diverse in terms of the types of sport, scale, regional integration, target audiences and structures: instead of a universal solution, there are many approaches that can be effective and achievable in different ways depending on the context.

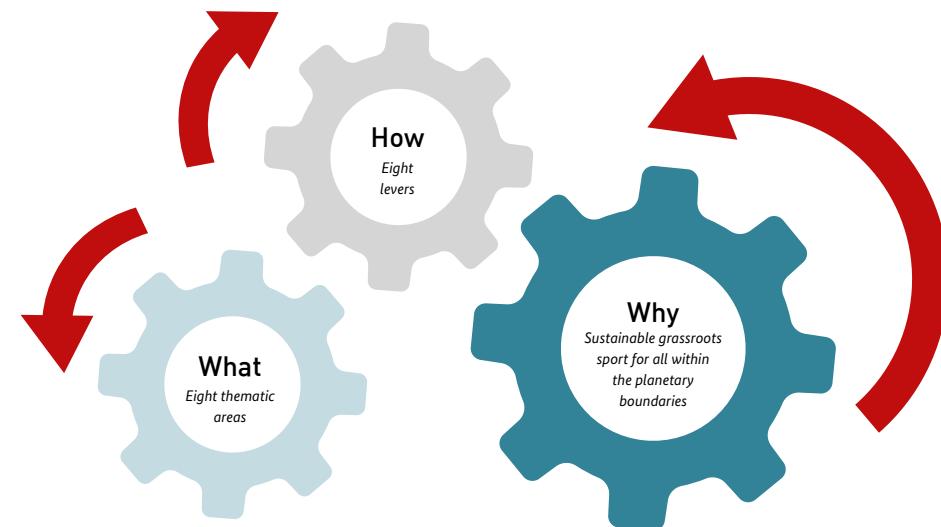
However, it is the specific content of your sustainability activities that unites everyone and everything. With the eight thematic areas presented, we have broken these down for grassroots sport – with a focus on environmental protection to save our planet. These areas serve as a guide to help you navigate the subject of sustainability more effectively and efficiently. The eight levers show you the tools needed to implement sustainability in your organisation and, above all, to anchor it in the long term.

Thematic areas and levers are therefore very closely interlinked and influence each other. For example, the design of sustainable sports facilities requires appropriate financial resources, while inclusion projects need strong voluntary support. Digitalisation makes resource conservation easier, and effective waste management is almost impossible to implement without good communication and education. Themes and levers should therefore not be viewed in isolation from each other. Together, they form a framework offering many creative opportunities to help shape sustainable development.



Figure 2:

Sustainability as an ongoing development process and interlinking of thematic areas and levers



We hope to inspire you with our recommendations and examples of good sustainability practice and to support you in your work. You are embarking as a team on an exciting and instructive journey – and there will undoubtedly be the odd setback. But just as in sport, your team will continue to learn and gain strength as a result. In this spirit, we will be able to master the challenges of sustainable development together and take sport to a new level. A level that is not only successful, but also sustainable.

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