The Sustainable Sport and Events Toolkit has been created as a means to promote a more sustainable approach towards sports and events. The toolkit integrates best practices in terms of management and sustainability recommended by renowned organisations such as the International Olympic Committee (Olympic Agenda 2020), United Nations (UN Sustainable Development Goals), the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI).

The toolkit was jointly created by the AISTS (International Academy for Sports Science and Technology) and the Organising Committee of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Using the hosting of the Olympic Games as a catalyst, Vancouver decided to highlight their commitment to sustainability. This focus on sustainability in the city was also seen to be part of the soft legacy of the Games and contributed to creating a healthier environment and a more equitable society.

The toolkit itself is an online guide developed for organising committees of national and international sport events and for any national or international sport federations. The toolkit gathers more than 150 sports-related examples. The topics covered range from waste management, office management, sites selection and construction, food and beverage management to alcohol consumption, healthy choices and supply chain management. Event organisers are provided access to a vast amount of information on how to be more sustainable in many different ways.

The initiative is supported by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the city of Lausanne and the city of Richmond, all of whom also participated by sharing best practice models that were integrated in the toolkit. The toolkit is accessible free-of-charge.

That the legacy of Vancouver 2010 is still very much alive, is shown by the continued use of the SSE Toolkit. It has been used in the past years to support medium-size sport events, such as Ski Mountaineering, developing a pragmatic sustainability strategy. Furthermore, the city of Richmond has derived several resources from the SSE Toolkit to encourage both sport and non-sport events to implement sustainability programmes (see additional information below).
OBJECTIVES

Promote social and constructive behaviour

The objective of the 2010 Vancouver Organising Committee was to leave a legacy that would reflect the spirit of the Games. Vancouver, led by its mayor, was on a campaign to become the “Greenest city in the world” and that was reflected in the attention given to and investments made into the area of sustainability. The goal was to make citizens of Vancouver more aware and responsible in their lifestyle.

Develop human capital and generate social cohesion

Hosting the Olympic Games was the perfect opportunity to promote the Olympic values within the community and to make it last for generations to come. Educating the population about the importance of sustainability and being able to provide event organizers with a practical how-to-guide, was a powerful objective that the Games helped deliver. Social cohesion is generated around the promotion of sustainability and human skills are developed in this perspective.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Internal & External Stakeholders

Vancouver Organising Committee of the 2010 Olympic Games (VANOC)
International Academy of Sports Science and Technology (AISTS)
International Olympic Committee (IOC)
European Athletics
Lausanne – the Olympic Capital
Richmond
Richmond Olympic Oval
Event Scotland

Finance and Cost

The development and production of the toolkit costed approximately US$12,000.
Use of the Olympic Brand

The principal partner of the Sustainable Sport and Events Toolkit is the International Olympic Committee. The presence of Olympic branding is limited to the IOC logo featured in the Toolkit.

Human Resources and Time

The project was delivered over 4 months by two part-time (50%) staff.

EVALUATION

The toolkit is evaluated through qualitative and quantitative feedback. Qualitative feedback is received directly from the members. In addition, a limited set of data is collected from the organisations that sign-up for the toolkit.

Further, an advisory board of experts has been set up in order to monitor the progress of the toolkit and to suggest improvements where needed.

KEY CHALLENGES

Gathering the information

The main key challenge was to gather information, examples and best practices from partners and stakeholders. As the SSE toolkit was the first of its kind, it is proved to be hard to find good and relevant information on the topic which, at the time, was still new to the sport world. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games was the first Games to try to be completely sustainable which brought the topic to the forefront, giving it a great amount of media attention and generating interest.

Due to the lack of existing information about sustainability in sport, the team in charge spent a lot of time analysing and converting information from other sectors into more relevant cases for sport. In addition, they had to search to find examples from the world of sport that had been doing good practices but had not tabulated them into reports and conduct interviews to be able to use this information as cases for the toolkit.

Making information relevant to local event organising committees

The SSE toolkit was created in an Olympic Games mind-set. It was important to keep in mind that the toolkit needed to be useful for a large audience and not only for events such as the Olympic Games. The scope of what was expected from the users of the toolkit, therefore had to be managed properly. It was also important that the information was put into a simple format and could be understood by any user of the toolkit, rather than filled with high level scientific jargons.
KEY LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Do not reinvent the wheel

The Toolkit is accessible free-of-charge to National Federations, International Federations, National Olympic/Paralympic Committees and cities interested in improving the sustainability of their (sport) events. As such, rather than focusing on trying to create a similar toolkit to achieve the same goals, the focus should be more on improving on what exists and on stronger implementation practices. Attention should be given to educating event organisers on how the toolkit can be used and help them to achieve sustainable goals.

Build a team of experts

Going forward, building a team of (volunteer) experts that know how to use the toolkit and how to implement the various sustainable practices at events could be useful. These experts could be assigned to different events and assist organising committees to implement sustainable concepts. This would maximise the efficiency of the toolkit and at the same time encourage organisers to really make sustainability a key part of their event delivery.

CONTACT

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Additional information can be found through the following links:
City of Richmond's Sustainable Event website: http://richmondsustainableevent.ca/
Compilation of 2017 Sustainable Sport & Events open module: https://youtu.be/j5K_22iSE8s
Case Study: ISMF (Ski Mountaineering) World Championships 2015: https://www.aists.org/applied-research/clients/getting-ioc-recognised