Front cover photo: Yannick Tissières, winner of the Sport-Handicap race at the 2015 ISMF World Championships which was organised for mentally disabled children up to 14 years of age.
Foreword

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Since last year’s edition of the AISTS IF Sustainability Study, we have witnessed burgeoning interest in Sustainability - undoubtedly connected to its inclusion in the IOC’s roadmap, Olympic Agenda 2020.

We embrace the spotlight the Agenda has thrown on this area.

With attentions shifting to how best to improve social equity, economic soundness and environmental integrity in sports, this can only mean positive things. We are slowly seeing the topic elevated to strategic-level discussions, greater resources committed to the area and organisations more thirsty to gain an understanding of this rapidly-evolving subject.

Now an annual study, the results of this 5th edition of the AISTS IF Sustainability Study shows encouraging signs of sustainability practices within IFs clearly progressing and becoming more sophisticated. Yet as you will see, the survey results also indicate that despite the positive trend, the struggle continues to successfully integrate sustainability into the organisational strategy, culture and psyche.

Enjoy the read and feel free to share your comments, thoughts and feedback with myself and the rest of the AISTS team at info@aists.org

About the IF Sustainability Study

The AISTS (International Academy of Sports Science and Technology) has conducted the International Federations Sustainability Study (IF Study) since 2008. This study represents the 5th edition. The objective of the IF Study is to get a pulse on the level of integration, trends and needs of International Federations (IFs) with regards to their sustainability programs.

A total of 105 federations (97 IFs and 8 continental federations) were invited to participate in the 2015 study, resulting in a total of 42 federations who completed the online survey. Respondents included 54% of all Olympic Federations. The 40% response rate was slightly up from the 37% response rate of the previous (2014) edition.
Sustainable Sport and Events

A sport is sustainable when it meets the needs of today’s sports community while contributing to the improvement of future sport opportunities for all and the improvement of the integrity of the natural and social environment on which it depends. A sustainable sport event carefully balances its impact on ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ to contribute positively to social equity, environmental integrity and economic efficiency.

The term sustainability has recently celebrated its 300th anniversary and has over the last few decades secured its place in the world of sports. The first major sports event that raised the issue of sustainable development or sustainable event management at a global level was the 1992 Albertville Olympic Games.

“Sustainability is a triathlon: if you want to be a winner, you need to be good at all three disciplines”

The 1992 Olympic Winter Games in Albertville are often seen as the first major sports event that raised global attention to the topic of sustainability within the Olympic Movement. Two decades later ‘sustainability’ has become a critical issue to the entire sports industry and was identified by IOC President Thomas Bach as one of the core focus areas for IOC’s Olympic Agenda 2020.

Strategy and Commitment

Between the years 2008 and 2010, the percentage of IFs who indicated that they include sustainability in their corporate strategy exploded from 32% (2008) to 83% (2010). However, 2014 and 2015 saw this figure dip to 71%. In 2015, three of the responding Olympic Federations did not have sustainability integrated into their organisational strategy. All three, however, expressed their objective to realise this integration within the next two years.

Promoting Sustainability

IFs promote sustainability the least among ‘fans and spectators’ and ‘sponsors and other partners’, a trend that has not changed since 2010. Almost 30% indicated that they did not promote sustainability at all to their fans and spectators. Engagement of athletes by IFs is another low-scoring area with 73% promoting sustainability ‘somewhat’ or ‘not at all’ to athletes.

The majority of IFs (95%) promoted sustainability at their events, with half having event guidelines related to sustainability.

The number of IFs that have a person responsible for sustainability has quadrupled since 2008 (from 11% in 2008 to 45% in 2015). This figure has been stable since 2010.

3. The term sustainability was first used by Carlowitz (1713), who called for the constant, long-term and sustainable use of resources in forestry.
Areas of Sustainability

‘Food and beverage’, including healthy food, alcohol prevention and promotion of local food, was indicated as the most important focus area for IFs. In comparison, in 2014 the highest importance was given to athlete and community engagement.

Lowest priority was given to ‘sustainability management’ (including sustainability measurement and reporting).

Olympic Agenda 2020

67% of IFs believes IOC’s Olympic Agenda 2020 has an important impact on their current sustainability initiatives. For Olympic IFs, this is predictably higher at 79%.

"IOC prioritising this helps increase the profile and move it up the agenda.”

World Curling Federation

Pain Points and Levers

Paint Points

‘Lack of resources’ and ‘conflicting priorities’ remain the biggest barriers for IFs in implementing sustainability initiatives, with a respective 55% and 40% of IFs indicating these to be among their major ‘pain points’. The lack of standardised reporting or impact measurement (50%) completes the top-three of ‘pain points’. Interestingly, ‘language and cultural differences’ with local event organisers or member federations is quickly becoming one of the key ‘pain points’ for IFs.

For Olympic top-three ‘pain points’ are similar. However the reporting or has become the main hindrance (see figure 1).

Levers

When asked about the levers used to successfully implement sustainability initiatives, federations responded that ‘engagement of volunteers’ was most important (57%). Other top levers included ‘top down support’, ‘best practices’ and ‘partnerships with hosting cities or NGOs’. ‘Media pressure’ together with ‘sponsor’s interest or demand’ - both in 2014 and 2015 - were considered the least useful levers for IFs.
IFs engaging with volunteers to support their sustainability initiatives have doubled over the past year (28% in 2014 compared with 57% in 2015). In particular, non-Olympic IFs rely heavily on their volunteers (see Figure II) for the success of their sustainability initiatives (74%) but much less on their athletes (42%). The availability of a knowledge repository with 'best practices from other organisations' is one key to success for seven out of ten Olympic Federations.

Figure II - Percentage of Olympic Federations relying on 'volunteer engagement'.

Sustainability Initiatives

Nearly all IFs (95%) were able to cite concrete examples of sustainability initiatives within their organisation. Examples given of environmental sustainability initiatives mainly relate to 'transport', 'waste management' and 'procurement'.

“At the end of each competition day, our athletes help volunteers to clean up the venue by picking up garbage left by the spectators”

International Sumo Federation

IFs often use sport events to address a variety of social issues, such as alcohol and tobacco prevention (tennis, korfbal, weightlifting) and supporting underprivileged groups within a community (bowling, cycling, ski mountaineering). Several sports (rugby, football, athletics) use their events to address global issues such as poverty reduction and peace building.

“We run Beat the Streets - a community based movement that provides access for youth to wrestling in order to develop the full human potential of participants.”

United World Wrestling

Waste reduction, reduced printing, less traveling and re-using materials are some of the sustainability initiatives that lead to cost savings for IFs. Other economic sustainability initiatives mentioned by IFs aim to create value for the local economy of the event’s host city or region.

“We save annually an estimate amount of USD 75’000 by re-using competition and branding equipment over several years”

World Archery
Management and Support

Although ‘lack of standardised report and measurement’ is considered as one of the main ‘pain points’, IFs show good progress in measuring their sustainability initiatives. The 2015 IF study shows that 38% never or rarely measure their sustainability impact, compared to 69% in 2014. Despite this positive trend, almost 40% of surveyed Olympic Federations still rarely or never measure the impact of their sustainability programs.

Almost half of the IFs rarely or never report on their sustainability activities, which is a slight improvement, compared to 2014. Several IFs who measure their impact, claim to rarely or never report on their sustainability initiatives.

ISO20121 is an international management standard for sustainable events. Where only 57% was familiar with ISO20121 in 2014, this percentage has increased to 83% in 2015. Despite this increase in awareness, only one out of every six Olympic IFs is or was considering using ISO20121 for their organisation.

Where IFs did not indicate a clearly preferred method of support in 2014, the results of the 2015 study gives more insight. Online resources and guides with case studies are perceived as most valuable, closely followed by workshops or seminars. Webinars and one-on-one consulting are considered least valuable.
**About the AISTS**

The AISTS (International Academy of Sports Science and Technology) engages and empowers the sport sector with knowledge and tools to incorporate sustainability and convene successful and sustainable sport events.

Working alongside partners, including the International Olympic Committee, SportAccord, European Athletics, the City of Lausanne, Event Scotland and the City of Richmond on initiatives such as the SSE Toolkit and an e-learning module, the AISTS offers the following resources:

**SPORT SUSTAINABILITY E-LEARNING**, an online course to equip participants with necessary knowledge to initiate, manage and report on sustainable sport events. The course consists of four modules: The Business Case for Sustainability, ISO 20121 Management System, Reporting and Impact Assessment.

**SSE TOOLKIT**, a practical “how to guide” for organisers of domestic and international sports events as well as cities and sports federations.

**CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY OPEN MODULE**, a three day educational module which takes place on the EPFL campus in Lausanne (Switzerland). The Open Module provides participants with insight in best practices and trends as well as hands-on experience through groupwork on a case study.

**RESEARCH & CASE STUDIES** covers a wider range of topics such as Sustainability, CSR, Youth & Sport, and Sport for Development.

For more information, visit www.aists.org/sse