

# World Athletics Sustainability Report 2020-2021



## Our Organisation's vision

To use the power and accessibility of athletics and our athletes to create a healthier and fitter world.

## Our Sustainability vision

To become the leading international sports federation in delivering best in class sustainable events.



# Contents

- A Message from World Athletics President Sebastian Coe. . . . . 4
- Executive Summary. . . . . 6
- The World Athletics Sustainability Strategy. . . . . 11
- Progress Report – Leadership in Sustainability. . . . . 15
  - COP26: ‘We can still fix this’ . . . . . 21
- Progress Report – Climate Change and Carbon . . . . . 24
  - Oslo Bislett Games . . . . . 29
- Progress Report – Sustainable Production and Consumption . . . 31
- Progress Report – Local Environment and Air Quality . . . . . 34
  - Air Quality Project in Nairobi . . . . . 37
  - Run Smarter City Challenge . . . . . 38
  - Clean Air Collaborations . . . . . 39
  - Select Air Quality and Athlete Safety Research Published in 2020-21 . . . . . 39
- Progress Report – Global Equality . . . . . 41
- Progress Report – Diversity, Accessibility and Wellbeing . . . . . 45
  - World Athletics announces safeguarding policy . . . . . 48
  - World Athletics publishes Online Abuse Study covering Tokyo Olympic Games . . 48



# A Message from World Athletics President Sebastian Coe



When we published our Sustainability Strategy in early April 2020, we unveiled an ambitious framework for the organisation, our Member Federations and our event organisers on how to produce tangible, meaningful and measurable results on environmental, social and economic sustainability. To help combat climate change, one of the great global challenges we face today, a central piece of the strategy is to achieve carbon neutrality across all our operations by 2030.

At the time, the COVID-19 pandemic was already forcing us to face, head on, another massive challenge. We witnessed country after country enter various stages of lockdown as the deadly virus rapidly spread. Hundreds of competitions and events were postponed and cancelled. Our work, and that of our partners across the sport, was stalled in many areas.

But I'm happy to report that in spite of those challenges, we have made some meaningful progress which is detailed in this, our very first Sustainability Annual Report.

When we launched our strategy, I said our ambition is to be a leader in organising sustainable events as we go forward. That ambition will already bear fruit in 2022.

More than 100 one-day meetings and events were represented at a series of workshops we held in December to introduce our Sustainable Events Management System and Athletics for a Better World Charter, which will be piloted by several dozen one-day meetings, including each of our five World Athletics series events, in 2022. The system, which works in tandem with the certification charter, offers best practice guidance across all aspects of an event's delivery, and will make a measurable difference in the environmental and social impact of our events. Over the next two years, the system will be embedded into our bidding and sanctioning processes, giving sustainability a much more important role in how and where our competitions are staged.

Meanwhile, we are engaging with all our stakeholders on the issues. We continue to build partnerships, both within and outside of our sport, joining forces with those who are forging a similar path towards a more just, equitable and sustainable world. We committed to the UN Sport for Climate Action Framework and are encouraging our Member Federations and local organisers to join us. They are, with our Kenyan federation being the first member federation to

take up the baton and the World Athletics Indoor Championships Belgrade 22 being our first local organising committee signing up in April 2021.

We were well represented at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow last November where sport, with its near unprecedented global influence and reach, was rightly identified as an industry with an increasingly important role to play in the battle against climate change.



I am especially proud of the way our athletes have added their voices and passion to the battle against climate change, the greatest challenge facing us today. Through the video we produced and survey we conducted ahead of COP26, our athletes connected athletics to millions of like-minded people around the world. They have made a difference. They continue to challenge us as an organisation and as a sport to deliver on their concerns. We should pay attention. And we will.

We're under no illusions - 2022 will continue to throw challenges our way. But we're better prepared, better informed and better equipped to continue to meet those challenges. I'm excited about what this coming year will bring.



Sebastian Coe  
President, World Athletics



# Executive Summary



World Athletics launched its Sustainability Strategy in April 2020, a ten-year road map with a central goal of making the organisation carbon neutral by 2030. The strategy addresses global issues that pose a threat to the quality of our lives, including climate change, air pollution and inequality, using the power of sport and athletics to create a better world for communities.

Through the strategy, which was designed to deliver tangible benefits across environmental, social and economic sustainability and promote diversity and wellbeing, World Athletics committed to embracing sustainability principles and practices within its operations, its Member Federations and the organisation of future World Athletics Series events.

The strategy's launch also coincided with the onset of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic that rapidly spread around the world, forcing country-wide lockdowns, the cancellation or postponement of hundreds of events and competitions and sending shockwaves through the global economy. The pandemic's impact was felt across all areas of our sport as well and impacted the start of the strategy's implementation.

In spite of those challenges, meaningful progress was made, much of which is detailed in this first annual report.

Many of the key deliverables from 2020 and 2021 are highlighted below.

### Competitions

World Athletics aims to embed sustainability principles into the sanctioning process for all the events that it owns, such as our World Athletics Series (WAS) events, and all the events that it sanctions – those that make up the Wanda Diamond League, the World Athletics Continental Tour, the World Athletics Indoor Tour, the World Athletics Cross Country Tour, the Combined Events Tour, the Race Walking Tour and the World Athletics Label Road Races.

To help guide the process, two tools have been developed and shared with event organisers in 2021:

- a Sustainable Events Management System (SEMS) which provides best practice guidance for organisers to incorporate into their event planning and implementation; and an Event Standard, a scorecard which includes a set of expectations based upon the guidance from the SEMS which will measure an event's level of achievement in sustainable practice.

The SEMS will be piloted in 2022 and launched across our sanctioned Tours in 2023 and 2024.





### Leadership and Credibility

- World Athletics marked Earth Day 2021 by signing on to the United Nations Climate Change (UNCC) Sports for Climate Action Framework, an initiative supporting and guiding sports organisations to measure, reduce and offset their carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN’s Race to Zero ambition. Signatories of the framework pledge to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2040. In August Athletics Kenya became the first Member to join us as a signatory.
- The COP26 United Nations Climate Summit, hosted by Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November, highlighted how the sports industry is taking an increasingly active and important role in the climate change and sustainability debate. World Athletics figured prominently among the sports represented in Glasgow both in formal and informal discussions and through our partnership with Sport@COP, which centred around an all-day interactive training event organised by the Sport Ecology Group, an organisation of academics producing ground-breaking research into the intersection between climate change, sustainability and sport.
- World Athletics designed, developed and released a series of e-learning modules to help stakeholders better understand the key areas of the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy. Those are now

available to any registered user.

- The World Athletics leadership team delivered key note speeches, research findings, position papers and future planning talks across many public platforms and forums and continue to be sought after as speakers by those involved in sustainability an sport.

### Engaging with Athletes

- World Athletics surveyed athletes to gauge their attitudes about Climate Change and sustainability in the lead-in to COP26, the only sport to do so. Among the findings: 77% of athletes are very concerned or extremely concerned about climate change, 52% say that Climate Change has impacted them directly and 71% say that Climate Change has impacted our sport.
- Fourteen athletes, including Olympic champions Eliud Kipchoge and Neeraj Chopra, lent their voices to a powerful video World Athletics produced for COP26 which was viewed more than 100,000 times across our platforms, screened widely during the conference and featured on the BBC. It continues to be screened at events on our 2022 World Indoor Tour.
- An Athlete Sustainability Ambassador working group is being established to engage athletes around our WAS events and one-day meetings.



## Outreach

Athletics for a Better World, the social responsibility programme of World Athletics, was given stronger prominence on the organisation's website through a substantial expansion and redesign. Accessible from anywhere on the site via a top tier 'Better World' tab, the mini-site features sections dedicated to the organisation's sustainability initiatives, air quality project and its Athlete Refugee Team. The aim of the sustainability section is to become a leading resource for all things related to sustainability and athletics through regularly updated news stories, features and interviews that highlight best practice examples from around the sport.

## Health & Science

- World Athletics' Health & Sciences Department continued to develop and deliver ground-breaking works around air quality and athlete safety.
- Collaborations with other organisations including Sport and Sustainability International, an organisation committed to accelerating sustainability in and through sport, were created.
- The Run Smarter City Challenge, a pilot project aimed to help communities promote physical activity, raise awareness about air quality issues and encourage action to impact policy, was run

in 2021. Several successful models were identified that can be staged solo or incorporated into World Athletics Series events and larger campaigns.

## Corporate and Headquarters

- A broad educational outreach programme was conducted to introduce the strategy to our Member Federations and World Athletics staff
- Initiatives continued to embed the sustainability strategy across the entire organisation to involve and include every staff member from every department
- The headquarters waste management system was updated
- A thorough review of our travel policy was begun
- Preparations began for ISO 20121 Sustainable Events certification
- The organisation's carbon emission inventory was updated and modified to ensure better accuracy and to help identify a more optimal overall reduction plan.



## Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing

- World Athletics launched a Safeguarding Policy which defined specific roles and responsibilities of Member Federations, Area Associations and the global governing body in protecting athletes and other participants in our sport
- Published findings of an online abuse study conducted during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games to identify and address targeted, abusive messages sent to athletes via social media.
- Coinciding with International Women's Day, World Athletics launched #WeGrowAthletics, a campaign designed to build on the strides the sport has taken towards gender equity.

## Looking Forward

Studies released after the Tokyo 2020 Games illustrated once again that athletics remains the No. 1 Olympic sport. That standing also offers an important opportunity for World Athletics to lead, often by example, in delivering sustainable events. Those efforts will continue across our strategy's six main pillars in 2022. Some of the key deliverables looking ahead are detailed in the report.



# The World Athletics Sustainability Strategy



World Athletics is the global governing body for the sport of athletics which today encompasses track and field athletics, race walking, road running, cross-country, mountain and trail running. Boasting 214 national Member Federations – 17 more than the United Nations – World Athletics has significant global reach and is responsible for the worldwide development of the sport of athletics.

World Athletics is committed to ensuring that all its athletics events - those it owns and those it sanctions - which are held all over the world, and its headquarters, based in Monaco, are fully aligned with the principles of sustainability. This is in recognition of but not limited to the growing environmental challenges that the world faces today, specifically, climate change, air pollution and our over consumption of resources and materials alongside the social issues of global inequality and unequal opportunities. All these global issues pose a serious threat to the quality of our lives and communities.

World Athletics defines sustainability within athletics as driving the practices and behaviours of individuals and organisations developing the sport in such a way that it:

- Accounts for the needs of future generations;
- Provides a fair and level sporting platform based on sound ethical

principles;

- Actively involves interested parties and is open about decisions and activities; and
- Ensures actions take a balanced approach to their social, economic and environmental impact.

Putting in place a robust sustainability strategy ensures that World Athletics and its partner organisations have a framework for delivering tangible benefits across the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic.

Embracing those principles and practices, World Athletics unveiled its Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030, a ten-year plan that provides a framework for the organisation, its Member Federations and its event organisers on how to produce meaningful, tangible, and measurable results on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

### United Nations Sustainable Development Goals addressed by the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy



The strategy was developed and built with input from all sectors of World Athletics as well as a wider stakeholder audience that included event organisers, manufacturers and practitioners with a sound understanding of the sustainability issues and opportunities that World Athletics faced. That feedback was then aligned with established international sustainability standards.

The strategy was based on key areas of impact recognising that some are under World Athletics control and others under its influence through its sanctioning process. Aligned to all aspects is the importance of working with the stakeholders, in particular across the permitted and licensed events.

The strategy sets out World Athletics' commitment to accelerating athletics towards a sustainable future, contributing to a better world. In some areas, this will require a change from 'business as usual'. In others it will be about influence and specification and in others it will be around developing partnerships to deliver scalable change.

The key benefits of the strategy include:

- better management of the sport's social and environmental risk factors;
- identification of opportunities benefitting the sport and engaging a wider group of stakeholders;

- more efficient use of resources delivering lower operating costs enabling greater investment in the sport; and
- wider activation platform for partnerships to bringing significant economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities.

Components of the Sustainability Strategy include a plan to reduce World Athletics' carbon output by 10 percent each year, a switch to 100 percent renewable energy at its headquarters, the introduction of a sustainable procurement code and travel policy and to develop best practice guidance for its event organisers and its 214 Member Federations.

The strategy is divided into six pillars, each of which contain actions and targets for the organisation to pursue:

- Leadership in sustainability;
- Sustainable production and consumption;
- Climate change and carbon;
- Local environment and air quality;
- Global equality; and
- Diversity, accessibility and wellbeing.

Driving sustainability across the sport is a significant undertaking, requiring a robust, structured programme that maps out a journey towards World Athletics' vision. To deliver on this aim, the sustainability programme is taking a two-tiered approach:

- addressing the areas in World Athletics' direct control, enabling World Athletics to lead by example and set a framework to be adopted across the sport at regional, national and local levels, and
- focusing on, engaging and inspiring stakeholders influenced by World Athletics, including Member Federations, its sanctioned events, its supply chain and its athletes to drive change more





The action plan identified is aligned to six World Athletics operational business areas to deliver sustainability across each of its six sustainability pillars. The business areas are:

- World Athletics Corporate – leadership including headquarters and operations;
- Events – both World Athletics Series (WAS) and sanctioned events;
- Member Federations and governance;
- Coaching, training and development;
- Technical and venue standards; and
- Partnerships.

The Sustainability Strategy sets out a clear ten-year roadmap of actions starting in 2020. This report shares the progress made across each of its six pillars, by highlighting achievements and illustrating case studies, and then offers a look at what is to be developed and implemented in 2022. The report, while not exhaustive, does aim to be transparent about progress, some of which has been considerably impacted by the restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic during the first 20 months of its implementation in 2020-2021.

# Progress Report – Leadership in Sustainability





## OBJECTIVES



## 2030 TARGET



## DELIVERY THROUGH

Be a recognised driver in sports sustainability

- Promote sustainability across athletics and sport
- Ensure delivery showcases best practice
- Visible commitment and credible evidenced action across a range of sustainability targets for World Athletics and through influence across the sport

100% World Athletics, sanctioned events and Member Federations are aware of sustainability implications and start to take action

- 100% Sanctioned events commit to World Athletics Sustainability Charter
- 100% World Athletics Series (WAS) events deliver to ISO20121 standard and deliver continual improvement
- 100% corporate partners are engaged and activating around an aspect of sustainability

World Athletics corporate, World Athletics events



## 2020

### Sustainability Strategy launched

Having accepted responsibility for its activities and committed to the development and implementation of a Sustainability Strategy, World Athletics set out to demonstrate solid leadership in this sphere by proactively addressing the transition to a more sustainable future and showcasing what is possible across events, technology and general operations. The strength of an international federation that embraces sustainability is the broad reach it can achieve by setting examples through existing systems of permitting, licencing and selection of venues, through the bidding process for its world championship events and in supporting its athletes.

Underscoring its commitment to a cleaner, greener, healthier and more equitable world, World Athletics launched its Sustainability Strategy on April 7, 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic, which began to take less than two months earlier, had already left a slew of event cancellations and postponements in its wake by then, and would go on to have a serious impact on many of the strategy’s first year deliverables. Despite the setbacks and challenges brought on by the global pandemic, some notable accomplishments were achieved.

A broad educational outreach programme began in order to

introduce the strategy to Member Federations, organisers of upcoming World Athletics Series events and World Athletics staff. These workshops and webinars continued in 2021.

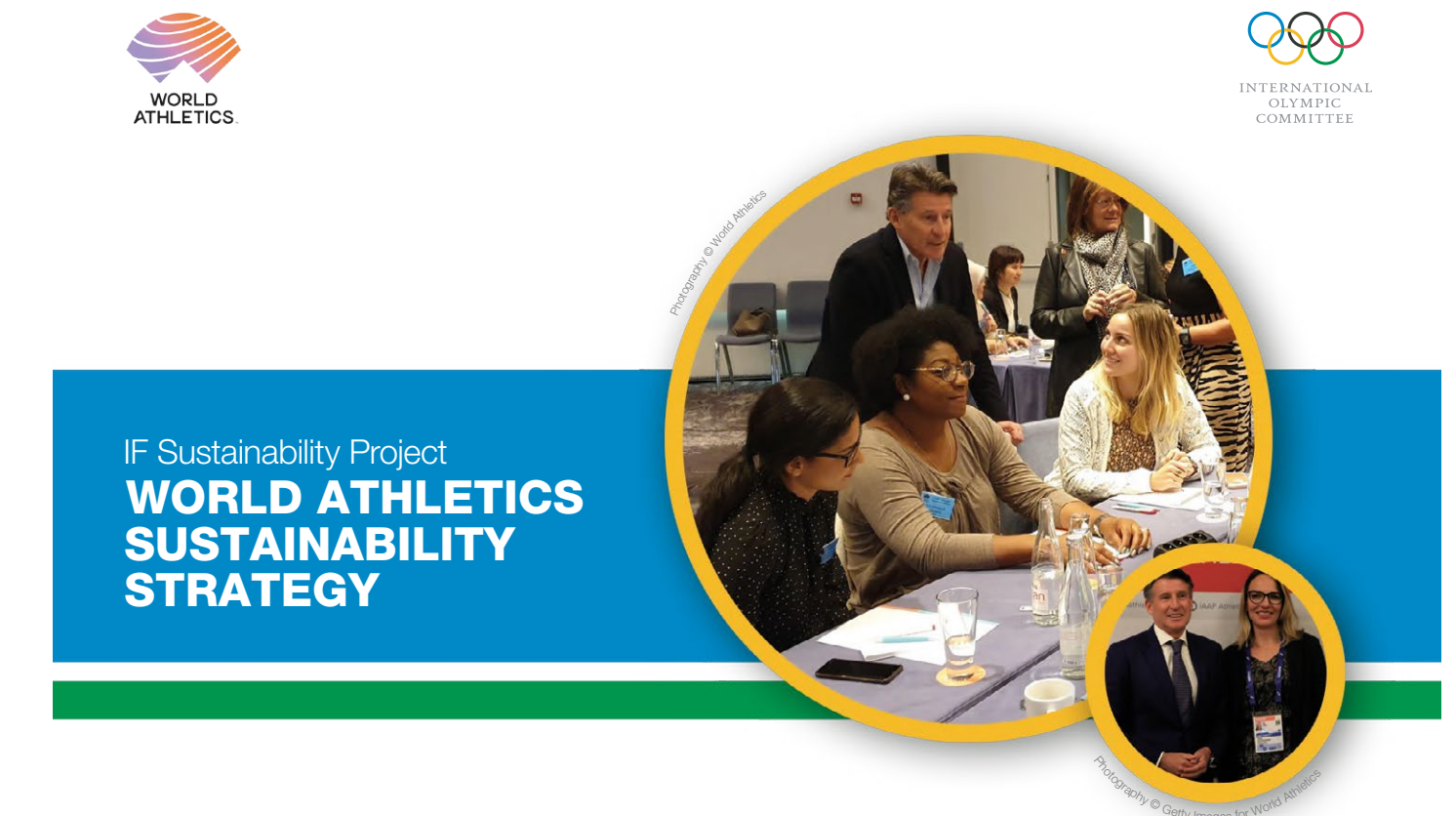
The organisation began an initial carbon emission inventory across its headquarters operations in Monaco to develop a baseline from which to measure tangible progress. This was expanded in 2021 to cover the travel to key World Athletics Series events.

### e-learning modules

World Athletics designed, developed and released a series of e-learning modules to help stakeholders better understand the key areas of the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy. The four modules - Understanding the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy, Understanding Carbon Emissions, Understanding Sustainable Procurement and Impacting Air Quality – provide a solid base of introduction to help Member Federations and event local organising committees design and develop their own carbon mitigation and sustainability strategies. The modules were made more available in 2021 to all registered users of the [World Athletics elearning platform](#).

### IOC recognition

The course set by World Athletics, a holistic approach to sustainability that incorporates social, environmental and economic objectives, is one that few international sports federations have embarked upon. That ambition was noted by the International Olympic Committee when it recognised the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy as one of its [standout sustainability case studies in 2020](#).



The IOC's case studies highlight international federations that are aligned with one or more of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a common framework for organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle key global sustainability challenges.

### 2021 – Making its Mark Across the Sport

In April World Athletics hired a full-time Head of Sustainability, making the organisation one of only a small handful of international sports federations with a dedicated full-time resource to drive its sustainability strategy forward.

Meetings and workshops were held with all World Athletics departments to help staff become acquainted with the sustainability strategy broadly, and more specifically on how it applies to their own areas of expertise, concentration and operations. Informal working groups, which meet regularly, have been established to further involve staff from the health & science, competition & events and communications teams.

The organisation also reached out to involve stakeholders throughout the sport, with a particularly strong focus directed towards organisers of the events it owns and sanctions.

### World Athletics Events - Developing a Sustainable Events Management System

World Athletics aims to embed sustainability principles into the sanctioning process for all the events that it owns, such as its World Athletics Series (WAS) events, and all the events that it sanctions – those that make up the Wanda Diamond League, the World Athletics Continental Tour, the World Athletics Indoor Tour, the World Athletics Cross Country Tour, the Combined Events Tour, the Race Walking Tour and the World Athletics Label Road Races.

To help guide the process, two tools have been developed and shared with event organisers in 2021:

- a Sustainable Events Management System (SEMS) which provides best practice guidance for organisers to incorporate into their event planning and implementation;
- and an Event Standard, a scorecard which includes a set of expectations based upon the guidance from the SEMS which will measure an event's level of achievement in sustainable practice.

The Sustainable Event Management System has been developed with feedback and input from key stakeholders, including event organisers and the World Athletics competitions and events teams, to provide a clear actionable checklist, aligning to a “plan, do,

**“Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time. We are witnessing irreversible changes that are impacting our sport across the board – from the quality of the air our professional athletes and recreational runners breathe to our ability to hold events safely. It is critical that sport is seen as a major player in the battle against climate change and a driving force for solutions.”**

– World Athletics President Sebastian Coe

check, act” framework, which is broken down into 13 sustainable planning topics: sustainable procurement, waste management, energy management, food management, water management, travel planning, accommodation, carbon neutrality, accessibility & inclusion, health & safety and wellbeing, digital, IP rights and data protection, monitoring and reporting and communication.

It has also been designed in compliance with ISO20120, the international standard for event sustainability management systems, developed during the 2012 Olympic Games which provides a credible robust framework for delivering sustainable events.

The Event Standard is scalable so that any event at any level,



from a local park run or club track meet all the way up to a World Championship should be able to achieve the highest standard of sustainable event achievement.

The Standard will be tiered, with gold, silver and bronze level achievements initially, with a higher platinum level added later. World Athletics will eventually require that all of our events - WAS events, sanctioned ‘tour’ events and national/local events - achieve a certain level as part of the sanctioning process. The Standard will be piloted in 2022 and 2023 across all of our sanctioned events prior to implementation in 2023 and 2024. Input and feedback from event organisers will be crucial to help us define what the final standard will look like and what those levels will be.

Three introductory workshops were held in December 2021 with representatives from more than 100 events participating. More specific workshops, covering specific planning topics, will be held throughout 2022 beginning in February.

The SEMS is available for download in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#). More translations will be added throughout 2022.

## Joining the UN Sport for Climate Action Framework

World Athletics marked Earth Day by signing on to the United Nations Climate Change (UNCC) Sports for [Climate Action Framework](#), an initiative supporting and guiding sports organisations to measure, reduce and offset their carbon emissions in line with the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN’s Race to Zero ambition. Signatories of the framework pledge to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2040.

World Athletics became involved in two Sport for Climate Action signatory working groups: Reduce Overall Climate Impact and Educate and Advocate for Climate Action. The latter explores ways in which athletes can become better advocates for sustainability in general and more specifically in the battle against climate change.

On 19 August 2021, Athletics Kenya became the first Member Federation to join World Athletics as a signatory of the framework. The announcement by the nation’s athletics governing body comes just 10 days after the release of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report that concluded that some impacts of global warming are now unavoidable and warned that the impacts will worsen dramatically if efforts to curb additional warming fail.

“The IPCC report last week served as a vivid reminder of what is

at stake,” said Athletics Kenya President Jackson Tuwei. “We are already seeing the devastating impact of climate change in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa. We all have an important role to play and the time to start doing our part is now.”

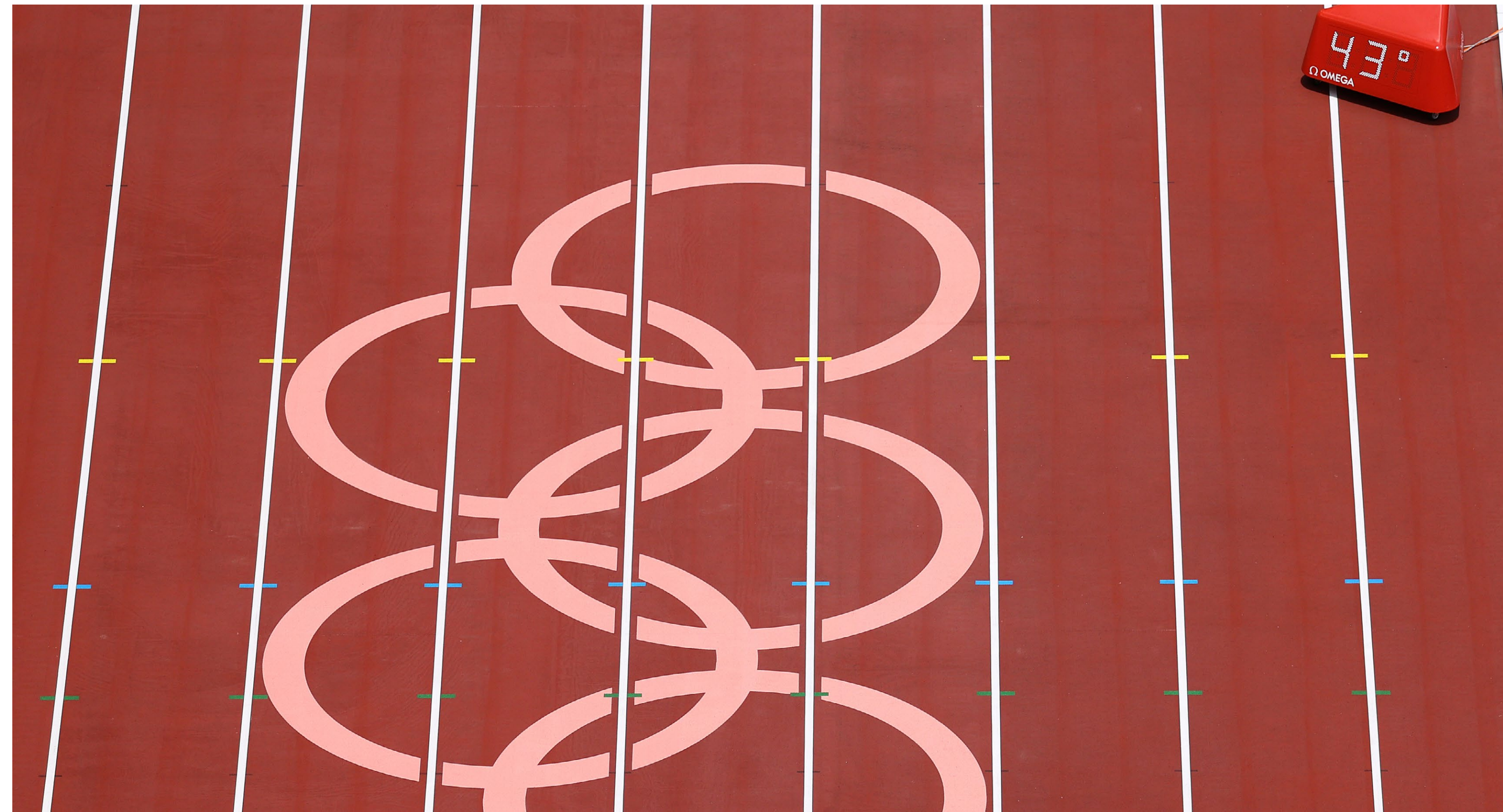
[More.](#)

### **Amplifying Athletes Voices**

Involving and reaching out to our sport’s athletes, those competing internationally at the highest level, and the hundreds of millions around the world who run regularly, is a core component of the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy.

An athlete survey conducted in the lead-in to COP26 identified more than 100 athletes who expressed interest in acting as Athlete Sustainability Ambassadors for World Athletics Series or sanctioned events, participating in social media campaigns around sustainability issues or participating in climate communication trainings. Those trainings will begin in 2022.

Meanwhile, athlete surveys will become a regular feature at sanctioned one-day meetings throughout the year in order to identify and reach out to more athletes who are interested in engaging on sustainability issues.



## COP26: ‘We can still fix this’

The eagerly anticipated UN COP26 Climate Summit, the world’s largest gathering of international leaders in 2021, brought parties together in an attempt to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

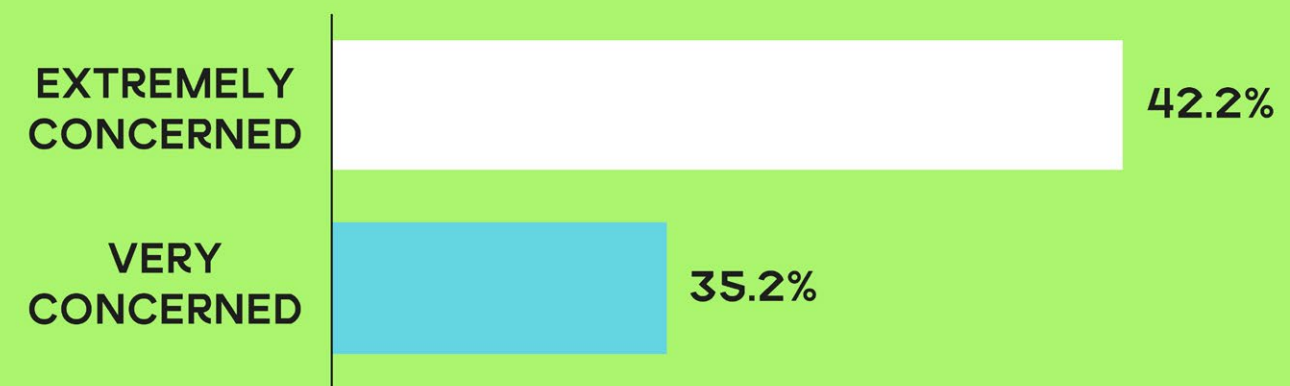
The event, hosted by Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November, also highlighted how the sports industry is taking an increasingly active and important role in the climate change and sustainability debate. Several events with sport as the centrepiece took place in both the UN-controlled blue zone and the UK government-controlled green zone while some globally renowned sports stars – Kenya’s Olympic marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge among them – represented their national delegations during the talks.

World Athletics also figured prominently among the sports represented in Glasgow.

In the lead-in to the summit, World Athletics conducted a [survey](#) to gauge the attitudes and level of concern that elite level track and field athletes have about global warming. It found that 77% of the respondents said they are either very concerned or extremely concerned about climate change. No other sport had surveyed its athletes in a similar way, making World Athletics the first to both ask athletes about their concerns and report on them.

# 77.4%

of the respondents are either **VERY CONCERNED** or **EXTREMELY CONCERNED** about **CLIMATE CHANGE**





Coinciding with the start of the summit, World Athletics also released a powerful [four-minute video](#) comprised of passionate personal messages from athletes urging their fans, fellow athletes and others to rise to the challenge to combat climate change. It was screened repeatedly at various events in both the blue and green zones through the duration of COP26.

World Athletics also partnered with [Sport@COP](#), an all-day interactive training event organised by the Sport Ecology Group, an organisation of academics producing ground-breaking research into the intersection between climate change, sustainability and sport. One hundred and twenty-two athletes participated in a climate communication workshop, several of them from the sport of track and field.

The World Athletics Air Quality project was also given centre stage during the event with Paolo Emilio Adami, Medical Manager at World Athletics' Health and Science Department, highlighting some of the pioneering work his team has produced since the inception of the project in 2018. The event concluded with the announcement of the winner of the first Global Sport Sustainability Hackathon, a competition for undergraduate and masters level university students to ideate and pitch their best ideas for sustainable sports solutions to global industry leaders. Miguel Escribano Hierro of Kunak Technologies, the manufacturer of the air quality monitoring devices used in the World Athletics Air Quality project, served as the competition's head judge.

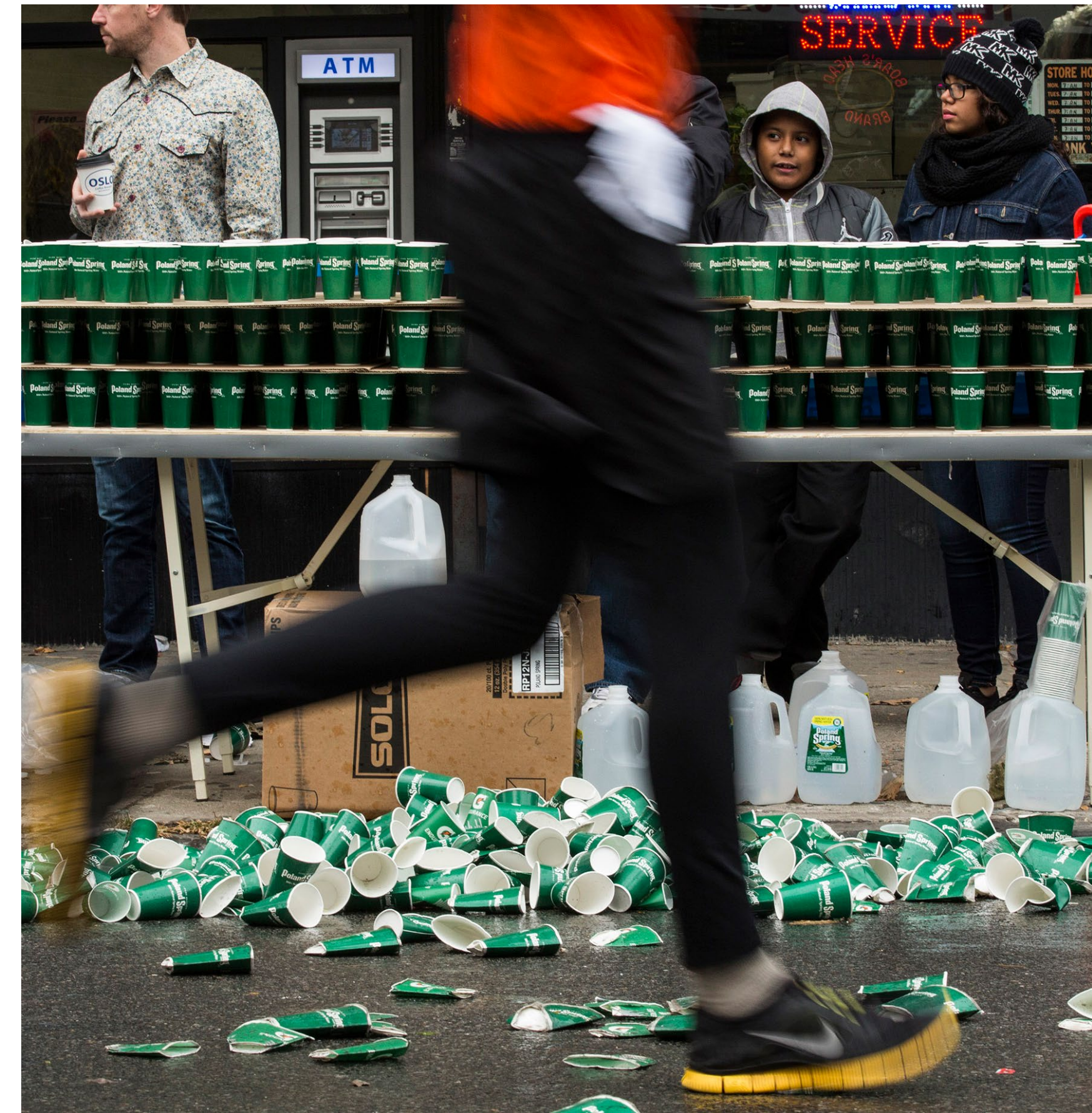


### Athletics for a Better World website expansion redesign

Athletics for a Better World, the social responsibility programme of World Athletics, was given more prominence on the organisation’s website through a substantial expansion and redesign. Accessible from anywhere on the site via a top tier ‘Better World’ tab, the mini-site features sections dedicated to the organisation’s sustainability initiatives, air quality project and its Athlete Refugee Team. The aim of the sustainability section is to become a leading resource for all things related to sustainability and athletics through regularly updated news updates, feature stories and interviews that highlight best practice examples from around the sport.

### Looking Ahead to 2022

- Successfully pilot the Sustainable Events Management System and Standard across our sanctioned event series and tours, as well the five World Athletics Series events scheduled to take place in 2022
- Prepare and achieve ISO 20121 Sustainable Events certification
- Incorporate sustainable delivery obligations into the bidding process and structure for World Athletics Series event hosts, to be implemented for some events beginning in 2024.
- Athlete Sustainability Ambassadors to participate in activities and activations at each of our five World Athletics Series events set to place in 2022, as well as other sanctioned World Athletics Tour events.
- World Athletics will continue to encourage and support Member Federations and annual one-day meetings to join the UN’s Sport for Climate Action Framework.
- Continue to provide sustainability workshops to Member Federations
- Establish an Area Association Sustainability Working Group
- Launch a global awareness campaign on air quality



# Progress Report – Climate Change and Carbon







## OBJECTIVES



## 2030 TARGET



## DELIVERY THROUGH

Transition to carbon neutrality by 2030

- Minimise carbon emissions across World Athletics activities
- Identify credible means to offset unavoidable emissions

Achieve 2030 carbon neutrality across World Athletics operations and WAS events (annual 10% reduction in carbon emissions from 2019 baseline)

- 100% sanctioned events commit to carbon neutrality targets

Events, World Athletics operation

Climate change, driven by accelerated global carbon emission, is already impacting our lives. And, as was vividly illustrated in 2021, our sport as well.

One particularly brutal example was the ‘heat dome’, an area of high pressure that traps hot ocean air in the same area for days or even weeks, that caused record high temperatures in the Pacific Northwest in June that coincided with the US Olympic Track and Field Trials in Eugene. The heat was so severe that organisers had to suspend two of the morning sessions. That’s never happened before at a US national championship. That week resulted in record high temperatures across that entire part of North America.

In Sapporo the heat forced a change to the start of the women’s marathon, one of the endurance road events that had already been moved 900 kilometres north of Tokyo where conditions were deemed unsafe. In Tokyo trackside temperatures at Olympic Stadium reached 41 (C) between sessions.

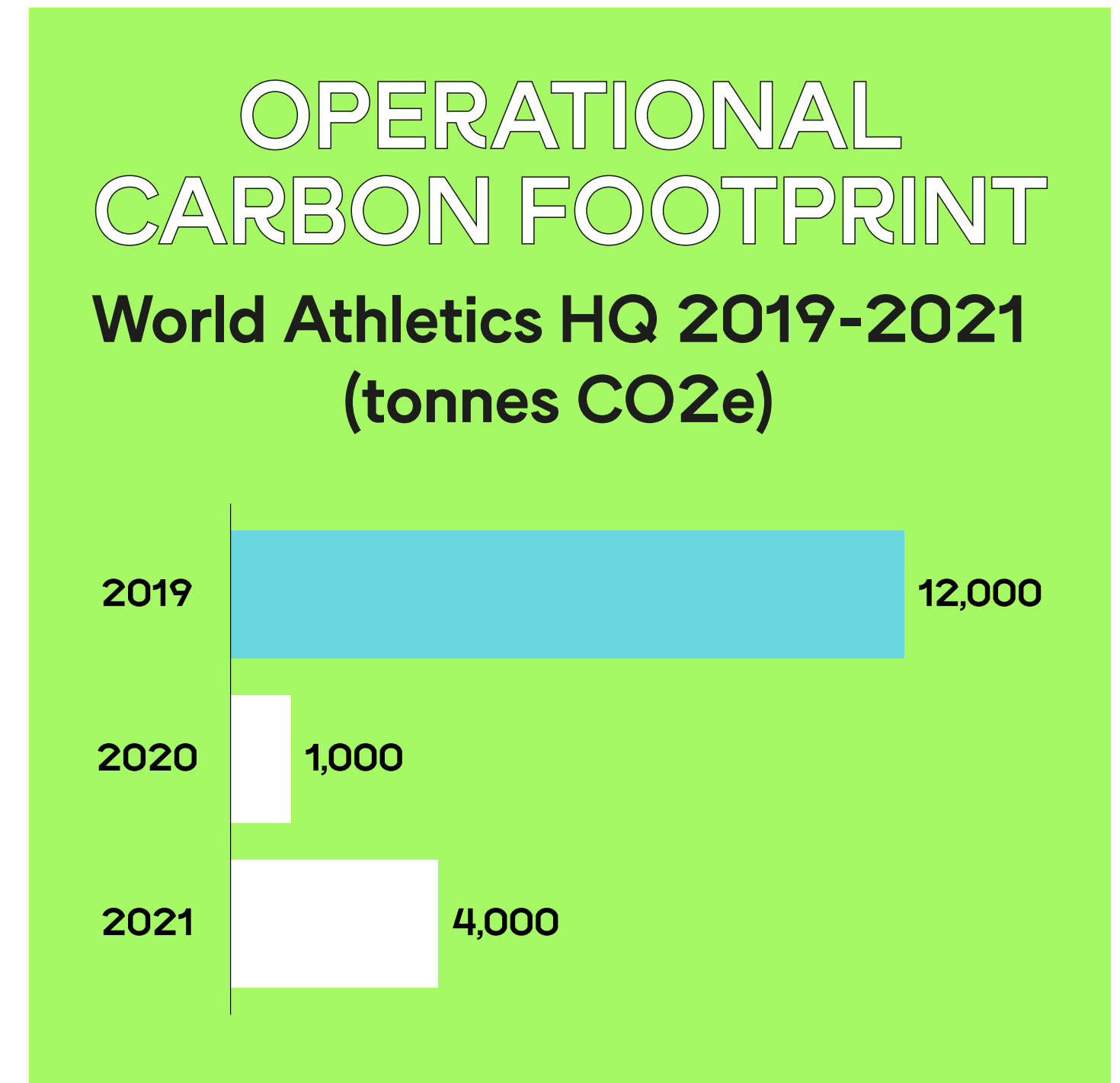
As an international sports federation, World Athletics produces a significant carbon footprint that contributes to climate change - particularly through its championship events. However, it also well placed to inspire change by using its events to drive the technology that in turn helps drive the transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy.

The World Athletics Sustainability Strategy calls for the organisation to reduce its carbon footprint across five main areas: travel - including flights, ground transport and freight; energy consumption - which includes heating, cooling and power used at permanent and temporary venues and at its headquarters; and resources - food and beverage and waste, all considered with the sustainable production and focus area.

### 2020-21

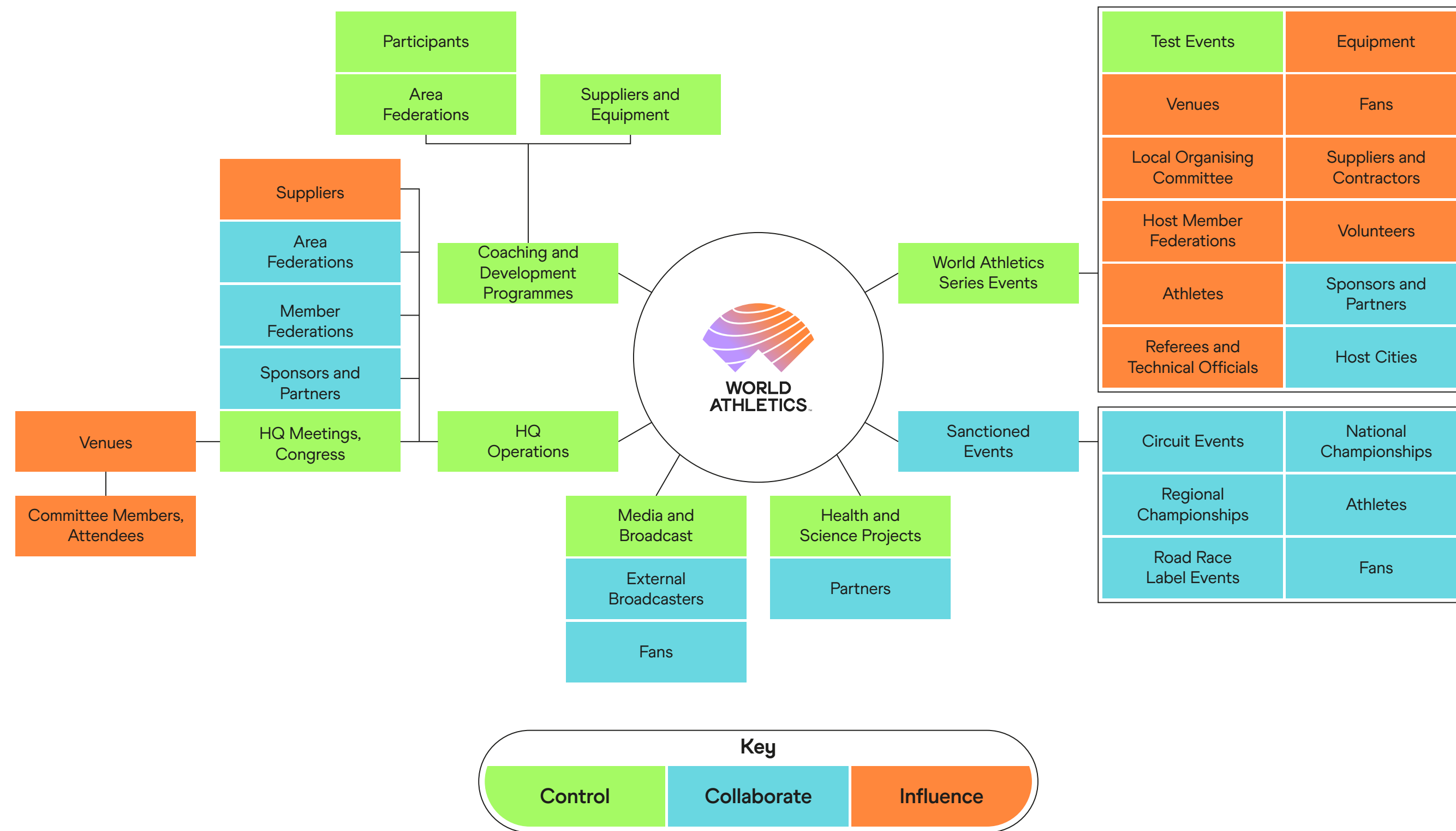
World Athletics undertook an initial carbon emission inventory in 2019, focusing on its headquarters operations and highlighting the impact of both electricity and travel on the carbon footprint of the organisation. The inventory used a hybrid method of both actual data, including travel and electricity, and the actual spend in specific categories, such as supply chain, transportation and fuel.

That initial inventory was modified to include other areas that are considered to be under the federation’s direct control (indicated in green in the diagram below), such as athlete travel to World Athletic Series events and coaching and development programmes. That scope will be broadened going forward to provide an even more accurate inventory of the organisation’s travel footprint to help identify a more optimal overall reduction plan.



### World Athletics Sustainability: Carbon Plan

### Carbon Neutral by 2030



Other actions taken:

- World Athletics headquarters switched to a 100% renewable energy tariff in early 2020, which guarantees that all its electricity is sourced from 100% renewable resources.
- Travel was dramatically reduced in 2020 and 2021, but that was largely due to COVID-19 restrictions, event postponements and cancellations.
- A preliminary travel assessment was conducted in 2021 to help develop a new travel policy to be implemented in 2022 with a strong sustainability component as its backbone.

**CERTIFICAT**  
«acheter de l'électricité verte»  
**egeo**  
La Société Monégasque de l'Électricité et du Gaz certifié  
que l'équivalent de la consommation d'énergie électrique de  
**WORLD ATHLETICS**  
a été produite à partir de sources d'énergie d'origine renouvelable  
pour l'année 2020

Fait à Monaco, le  
22 février 2021

L'Administrateur Directeur Général

**Certificat d'origine renouvelable egeo**

Installations de production	Caractère renouvelable de la source d'énergie utilisée	Puissance installée (MW)	Code postal	Ville	Quantité d'énergie utilisée (MWh)
Centrale STE TULLE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	54,2	04220	SAINTE TULLE	8327
Centrale ST MARTIN DE VESUBIE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	52	06450	SAINT MARTIN VESUBIE	13983
Centrale VALABRE	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	33,1	06420	ROURE	4748
Centrale VINON	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	34	83560	VINON-SUR-VERDON	3480
Centrale-BANCAURON	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	52	06420	CLANS	7267
Centrale-MANDONQUE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	50	04100	MANDONQUE	22238
Centrale-STE-CROIX	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	114,6	04500	Sainte-Croix	13618
Centrale-VINON	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	34	83560	VINON-SUR-VERDON	18882
Centrale-SALIGNAC	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	87,2	04290	SALIGNAC	24453
Centrale-ST-DALMAS	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	49,9	06430	TENDE	8047
GU de l'Argentière	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	38	05120	L'Argentière la Besée	37618
Centrale-BEAUMONT	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	40,6	84120	BEAUMONT-DE-PERTUIS	38436
Centrale-PEAGE-DE-VIZILLE	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	46,3	38220	VIZILLE	28371
Centrale-CARBONNE	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	26	31390	CARBONNE	11100
Centrale-BIOSE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	21	74500	VINZEL	8119
Centrale-BEAUFORT	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	23,3	73270	BEAUFORT SUR DORON	9474
Centrale-ALZAT	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	29,1	09220	ALZAT	4460
Centrale-BEYSSAC	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	30,1	48000	BEYSSAC	10710
Centrale-hydroélectrique d'Artigues	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	26,1	65100	ARTIGUES	3587
Site des BREVERES	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	104,6	73320	TIGNES	14963
Centrale-ARVAN	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	30	73130	SAINTE-MARIE-DE-CUINES	10310
Centrale-CASTELNAU	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	41	12500	LAZZARIS	6106
Centrale-CURBANS	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	139	05130	TALLARD	54399
Centrale-MALLEMORT	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	92	13370	MALLEMORT	17870
Centrale-VALABRES	installation hydroélectrique / Fil de l'eau	33,1	06420	ROURE	10190
Centrale-QUINSON	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	40,7	04480	QUINSON	3914
Centrale-ST-CHAMAS	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	140,5	13250	SAINT-CHAMAS	7212
Centrale-CASTILLON	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	52,1	04120	DEMANDOLX	2398
Centrale-BRILLIANNE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	25,6	04180	VILLENEUVE	2197
Centrale-BELVEDEIRE	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	19,8	06540	BELVEDEIRE	425
centrale hydroélectrique de la Chaudanne	installation hydroélectrique / Ecluse - lac	23,5	04120	CASTELLANE	738

En 2020, l'électricité verte achetée en Principauté de Monaco avoisine 75% de la consommation totale.

Volume d'énergie consommée par le client (KWh)	219 906	Cumul des volumes egeo dont les droits ont été réservés à la SMEG (MWh)	390 000
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Le présent certificat d'origine renouvelable atteste que les volumes d'énergie électrique ont été produits à partir de Sources d'Énergie Renouvelable pendant la période contractuelle mentionnée et injectés sur le réseau électrique, et que les droits attachés à ces volumes d'énergie et liés à leur caractère renouvelable ont été affectés au bénéfice exclusif du Client.

### Climate Change and Carbon: An Opportunity for Partnerships

As the impacts of climate change grow, corporations are increasingly committing to carbon reduction strategies. Associated with that has been a growth of 'partnerships with purpose' with corporations, through their sponsorships, choosing to align with sport organisations that share common values and messages.

With a strategy that is aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, World Athletics is working to secure new partnerships around its sustainability strategy, to add both momentum and resources to its implementation. Using its sustainability focus areas as a starting point, World Athletics commercial strategy will continue to identify business sectors and, subsequently, brands for a targeted commercial approach.

The Oslo Bislett Games, one of the most historic one-day athletics events on the planet, provides a strong model of how ending one corporate sponsorship helped drive a transformation that redefined its own purpose, one driven by robust sustainability initiatives.



## Oslo Bislett Games

A focus on sustainability is ‘Smart environmentally, economically and reputationally’

When the Oslo Bislett Games found itself without a title sponsor after its 2016 season, meeting director Steinar Hoen was faced with a critical decision. Should he seek out another title sponsor to replace Exxon Mobil, a partner of the previous 29 years, or should he steer one of the world’s premiere one-day meetings – and Norway’s biggest annual sporting event – on an entirely different direction?

Choosing to usher in a new era, Hoen went with the latter, forging a path that would turn the Norwegian capital’s historic Wanda Diamond League fixture into the most environmentally sustainable track and field meet on the planet.

Over the course of just three editions (2017-2019), the Oslo meeting has managed to reduce its carbon emissions by nearly 40 percent and its travel costs by a third. And that’s just the start of what has resulted from an operating decision that Hoen insists was simply “a no-brainer”.

[More.](#)



## Looking Ahead to 2022

- The climate change and carbon roadmap will continue to be developed to align with the targets set in the Sustainability Strategy as well as those of the UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action Framework which calls for a 50% reduction in absolute emissions from the 2019 baseline and carbon neutrality by 2030.
- Climate Change and Carbon are a key component of the Sustainable Events Management System (see page 18) which will be piloted by dozens of our sanctioned events in 2022.
- World Athletics will encourage and support more Member Federations and one-day meetings to sign on to the United Nations Climate Change (UNCC) Sports for Climate Action Framework
- World Athletics will prioritise developing commercial partnerships based on sustainability principles.



# Progress Report – Sustainable Production and Consumption





## OBJECTIVES

- Positively manage the impact of procurement
- Minimise any social or environmental impact from procurement of products and services
  - Maximise local economic impact around events
  - Establish sustainable procurement code and 3rd party assurance of world athletics procurement



## 2030 TARGET

- Technical and event standards account for social and environmental impacts as well as performance requirements
- Baseline of impact at WAS events and action plan for all events established
  - 100% compliance with sustainable procurement code across World Athletics activities
  - 100% compliance with sustainable procurement code at sanctioned events



## DELIVERY THROUGH

World Athletics event delivery partners, sponsors, suppliers, technical standards



Optimising the lifecycle of materials, reducing waste and the management of supply chain issues are one of the most effective ways to embed principles and practices of sustainability into an organisation's operations. This begins with developing and implementing a sustainable procurement policy, applicable to a broad range of products, services and operations. Identification of suppliers able to support the delivery of sustainability goals is also crucial.

### Event delivery

Sustainable production and consumption is a core requirement for the delivery of sustainable events. As such, a priority in 2021 was to develop the Sustainable Events Management System (SEMS) that will be piloted by several dozen World Athletics sanctioned events and World Athletics Series events in 2022. The system addresses crucial problem areas in event delivery, such as the use of temporary structures, clothing and food sourcing, waste reduction and the better management of fan and athlete travel. When the pilot phase has concluded, alignment with all aspects of the SEMS will play a decisive factor in the sanctioning of events.

### Headquarters

Work-at-home orders and recommendations and a temporary furlough programme in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic meant staff time spent at headquarters was limited. That provided an opportunity to explore options for an updated waste management system which was implemented in 2021. That included the removal of some single use items and an entirely revamped recycling system developed and designed in line with local waste management options and solution and putting each staff member at the centre of the process as individuals sharing collective recycling stations. Further reductions in line with the waste management hierarchy will be implemented in 2022.

Development of a sustainable procurement code also began with an aim to implement it across headquarters operations in 2022.

### Looking Ahead to 2022

- Development of a sustainable procurement code for World Athletics
- Development of a sustainable procurement code for World Athletics suppliers
- Continue to promote sustainable sourcing through the SEMS Best Practice Guidance and On-line training already available
- Working to embed sustainability principles into the World Athletics web shop to be launched in 2022
- Further develop waste prevention and reduction system at headquarters
- Review technical standards, recommend requirements to embed sustainability criteria for equipment
- Establish best practice guidance for sustainable manufacturing aligned to sustainable procurement code
- Identify areas of collaboration across events for an event reuse programme

# Progress Report – Local Environment and Air Quality





## OBJECTIVES

Ensure environmental conditions enable individuals to participate safely

- Maximise venues for safe participation in athletics where air quality is safe for athletes and communities
- Minimise impact of events and venues on local environment



## 2030 TARGET

- Venue, event and equipment standards incorporate environmental factors
- Venue and event standards minimise impact on surrounding environments
- 100% host cities establish low emission zones around stadia and athletics arenas
- Air quality targets are understood, set and monitored protecting runners and athletes



## DELIVERY THROUGH

Events and Host City partnerships, technical and venue standards

Air pollution poses a major threat to both health and climate. Globally, it's responsible for the deaths of more than seven million people per year, according to the World Health Organisation. Athletes, both professional and recreational, are disproportionately impacted since they breathe in more air during their training. For athletes who train in large urban settings, where pollution is greater than in rural areas, the risks are even greater.

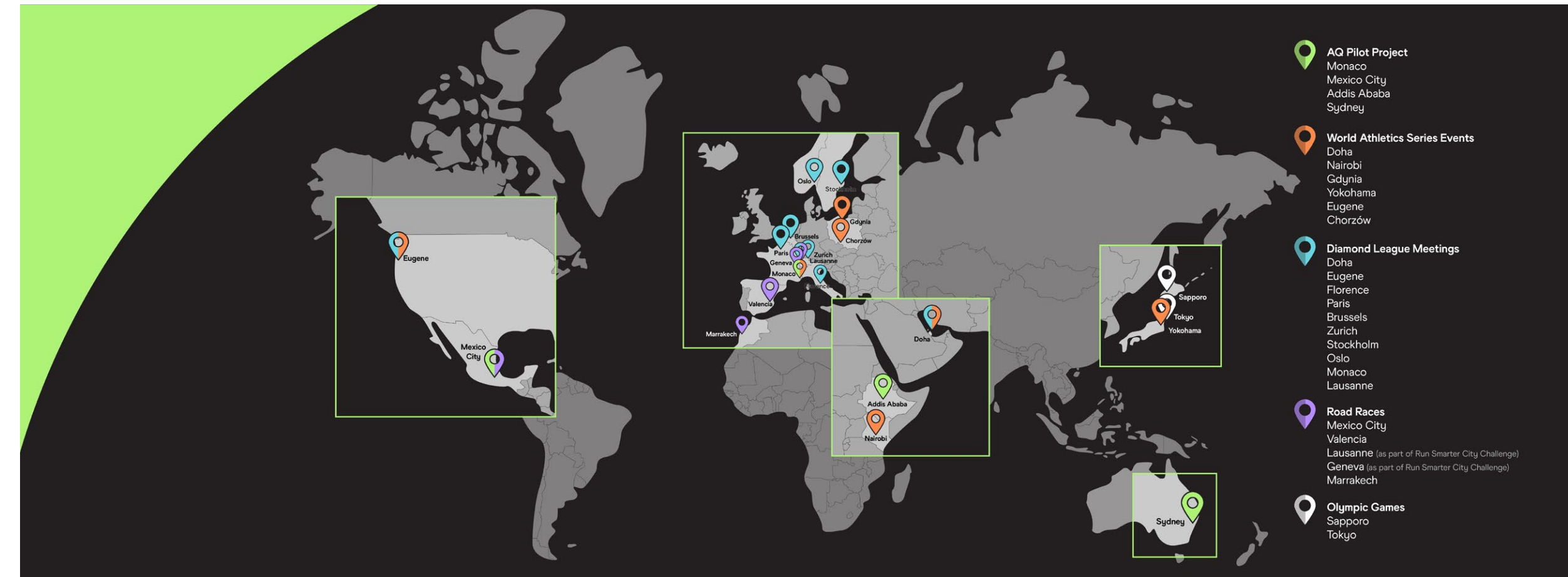
Given the direct connection to our sport and our athletes, World Athletics launched its Air Quality project in 2018 as part of a broad campaign to raise awareness about air pollution around the world and the impact it has on the health and performance of elite and recreational athletes. Across the globe, that means nearly 1.4 billion people who participate in athletics regularly.

Since the project's launch, World Athletics has been working closely with a growing number of cities, sporting venues and events around the world to install a network of monitors that collect air quality data in real time, information that is critical in both identifying sources of local air pollution and in finding the best solutions to combat it. It has since become one of the most identifiable pillars of the World Athletics Sustainability Strategy.

## 2020-21

Even with the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Athletics Health & Sciences team managed to expand its Air Quality Monitoring Network with the installation or use of 27 devices in 21 cities in 16 countries in 2020 and 2021. Those include past or future World Athletics Series host cities Doha, Nairobi, Gdynia, Yokohama, Eugene and Chorzow.

The data collected will assist research into the correlation between air quality and performance and will help determine the best times to schedule competitions or exercise in locales whose air is being measured. For communities that host World Athletics events and championships, it's an important environmental legacy that the organisation can create. It's also a way for the global governing body to best use the influence it has to advocate for and impact clean air policy in communities around the world.



## Case Study

### Air Quality Project in Nairobi

World Athletics' ground-breaking Air Quality project made a big leap forward with the Phase 2 launch of its research efforts in the Kenyan capital Nairobi in 2021.

As part of World Athletics' pilot programme to measure and analyse air quality at sporting venues around the world, an air quality monitor was installed in 2020 at Kasarani Stadium, the host venue of the World Athletics U20 Championships. That installation, used primarily to assess the feasibility of maintaining high-end air quality devices in remote locales, paved the way for the deployment of a wide range of technologies that will enable researchers to collect and analyse more data than ever before.

The set-up in Nairobi included a perimeter of 20 passive dosimeters at the stadium that helped map the area and detect potential hotspots. Two sensor-based stations were installed in the warm-up area and at the stadium, just a few metres from where athletes generally gather, to collect data that will contribute to the Health and Science Department's research on the correlation between air quality and performance. These hyperlocal monitoring stations are equipped with sensors to measure nitrous oxide, ozone and carbon monoxide, along with wind speed and direction and heat stress.

[More.](#)



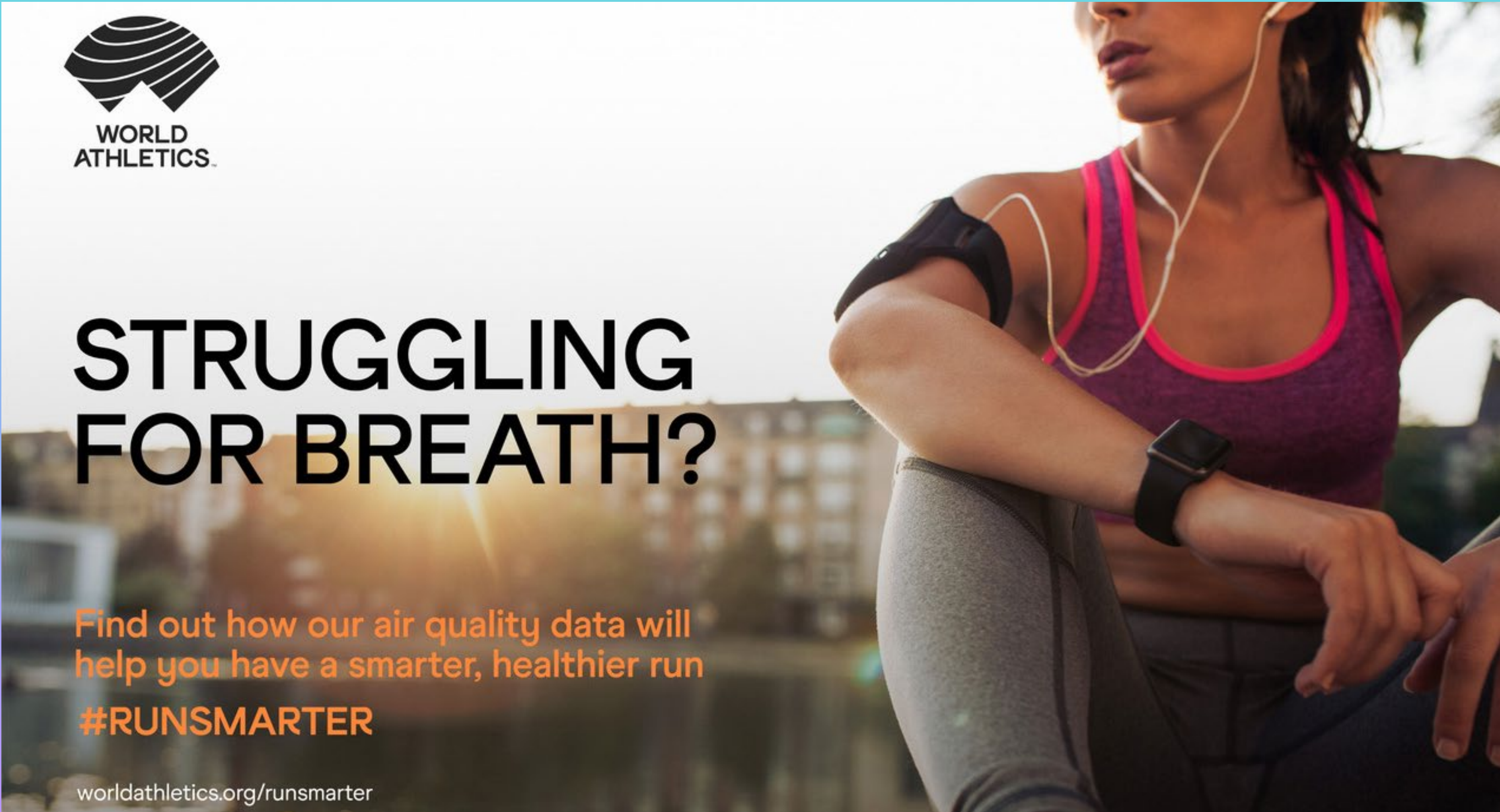

## Case Study

### Run Smarter City Challenge

Road races in urban settings are uniquely placed to provide a treasure trove of data to scientists and researchers, given the amount of time runners spend on the course, and the varying environmental conditions they're exposed to over that time. So are popular public trails, roads and parks where runners regularly exercise, which is why World Athletics chose to reach out directly to recreational runners and invite them to help collect data from their communities through the Run Smarter City Challenge, which was launched in the Swiss cities of Geneva and Lausanne on 5 June 2021, World Environment Day, and piloted throughout that month.

The Challenge aimed to help communities promote physical activity, raise awareness about air quality issues and encourage action to impact policy. A key goal of the air quality monitoring network is to help build the capacity of local governments to better manage air pollution in their urban areas by providing them with critical data.

[More.](#)



**STRUGGLING  
FOR BREATH?**

Find out how our air quality data will help you have a smarter, healthier run

**#RUNSMARTER**

[worldathletics.org/runsmarter](https://worldathletics.org/runsmarter)

## Case Study

### Clean Air Collaborations

#### World Athletics and Sport and Sustainability International join forces to lead sport industry air quality working group

In September 2021 World Athletics and Sport and Sustainability International (SandSI) announced the creation of the Air Quality & Sport Working Group, a coalition of international sports organisations dedicated to solving air quality issues that impact global sport. The working group will be the first ‘lab’ to operate within the Sustainable Sport Lab, a programme powered by SandSI that is focused on exploring, experimenting, and engaging sustainable initiatives that advocates for high impact systematic change across the global sport sector.

This announcement aligns with the UN Environment Programme’s International Day for Clean Air for Blue Skies and its 2021 theme, ‘Healthy Air, Healthy Planet’, which was celebrated earlier this month. The day was established to focus attention on the impacts of air pollution on health, particularly during the global Covid-19 pandemic, and to facilitate solutions and urge action to clean our shared air.

Partnering with SandSI and World Athletics on this global initiative are the European Sports NGO (ENGSO), ENGSO Youth, Formula E and the International Cycling Union (UCI).

[More.](#)

## Select Air Quality and Athlete Safety Research Published in 2020-21

- **Air quality monitoring during city marathons: a pilot study.** El Ulzurrun, M Escribano, M del Mar Viana, PE Adami, J Fernandez. Greencities, 11<sup>o</sup> Foro de Inteligencia y Sostenibilidad Urbana: Actas del XI International Greencities Congress / coord. por María Luisa Gómez Jiménez, Olga Romero Guisado, 2021.
- **Athletes’ exposure to air pollution during World Athletics Relays: A pilot study.** *Science of the Total Environment.* 2020 May 15. Reche C, Viana M, Van Drooge BL, Fernández FJ, Escribano M, Castaño-Vinyals G, Nieuwenhuijsen M, Adami PE, Bermon S.
- **Prehospital management of exertional heat stroke at sports competitions for Paralympic athletes.** *British journal of sports medicine.* 2021 Oct 7. Hosokawa Y, Adami PE, Stephenson BT, Blauwet C, Bermon S, Webborn N, Racinais S, Derman W, Goosey-Tolfrey VL.
- **Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Games of innovation and resilience.** *The Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness.* 2021 Jun 22. Pelliccia A, Adami PE.
- **The innovative role of Olympic sports and exercise in the promotion of health, gender equality and sustainability. Past achievements and future challenges.** *The Journal of sports Medicine and Physical Fitness.* 2021 Jun 22. Adami PE, Fitch K.
- **Hydration and cooling in elite athletes: relationship with performance, body mass loss and body temperatures during the Doha 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships.** *British Journal of Sports Medicine.* 2021 Feb 12. Racinais S, Ihsan M, Taylor L, Cardinale M, Adami PE, Alonso JM, Bouscaren N, Buitrago S, Esh CJ, Gomez-Ezeiza J, Garrandes F.
- **The use of infrared thermography for the dynamic measurement of skin temperature of moving athletes during competition; methodological issues.** *Physiological Measurement.* 2021 Aug 27. Aylwin PE, Racinais S, Bermon S, Lloyd A, Hodder S, Havenith G.

## Looking Ahead to 2022

- Continue air quality monitoring at each World Athletics Series event, some World Athletics Indoor Tour meetings and at several mass participation road running events.
- Work to develop minimum air quality standards for events where practical
- Use data collected through monitoring to drive local air quality improvement policies as a legacy of World Athletics Series events
- Work closely with development, launch and implementation of a global awareness campaign on air quality





# Progress Report – Global Equality





## OBJECTIVES



## 2030 TARGET



## DELIVERY THROUGH

Demonstrably share skills across the world

- Build technical, event management and performance capability across wider geography
- Build global pipeline and capacity of female leaders to achieve World Athletics Council minimum gender targets by 2027

100% World Athletics geographic areas are capable of hosting high quality sustainable international events in at least one city

- 100% World Athletics geographic areas have recognised opportunity pathways for both genders in all professions in athletics across athletes, coaches, technical officials, administrators
- Annual female leadership seminars conducted in all Areas

World Athletics events, training and development

## 2020-21

Aligning with one of the core World Athletics values, universality, World Athletics has a responsibility to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in athletics. This is applicable to individuals and, also, to the ability of Member Federations to have the opportunity to secure World Athletics support and recognition for events. The opportunity is significant through procurement, mentoring and building skills to close the global inequality gap.

At the corporate level, World Athletics has 98 full time equivalent staff from 26 countries and continues to recruit globally whenever it can. It also accesses a wide global network of consultants and freelancers with the aim of hiring resources locally to support events and activities. In addition, through its events, both owned and sanctioned, and its training and development courses organised in concert with its area associations and Member Federations, World Athletics can and does meaningfully contribute to building capacity and expertise across the globe.

## Online learning

World Athletics launched its own online learning platform in November 2020, a channel designed to make the sport more accessible to its key stakeholders and the greater global community. Courses cover a variety of areas, from general information about the sport, to gender leadership workshops dedication to our Member Federations to coaching and technical official training.

The World Athletics elearning platform also includes a four-part series of sustainability modules, initially aimed at our Member Federations and local organising committees. In 2021 access to the sustainability modules was opened to any registered user and has become a popular tool for organisers of our one-day meeting series preparing to pilot the World Athletics Sustainable Events Management System and Sustainability Standard. The modules will be update as needed.

While the pandemic has negatively impacted some of the organisation's activities, it has helped accelerate the acceptance of both online meetings and online learning platforms.

## Events and Global Equality

Through its events World Athletics represents a platform to build the capacity, skills and experience of event professionals both locally and across the globe, ensuring that the next generation of event organisers are equipped to deliver sustainable events and create platforms for wider messaging through skills development programmes.

The World Athletics Sustainability Strategy also underscores the organisation's intention to stage events in different parts of the world in order to deliver skills development programmes and offer best practice guidance to conduct events sustainably. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted the organisation's ability to do both over the last two years.

World Athletics was able to stage just one World Athletics Series event in 2020, the World Half Marathon Championships in Gdynia, Poland, in October. Two were staged in 2021: The World Athletics Relays in Chorzow, Poland, in May and the World Athletics U20 Championships in Nairobi in August. All three were delivered successfully, albeit under strict restrictions due to the pandemic.

## Looking Ahead to 2022

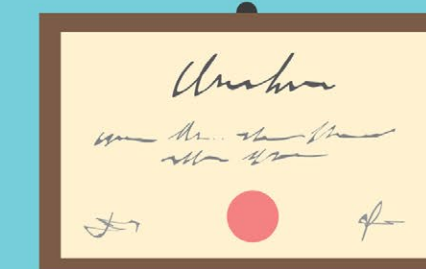
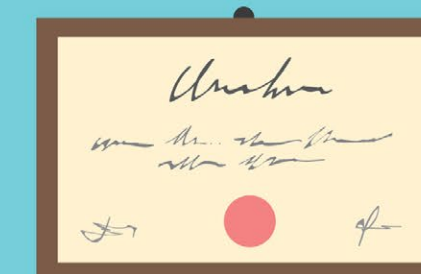
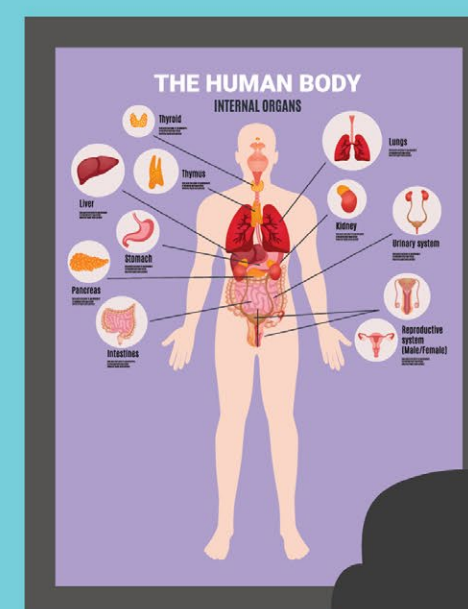
- Identify and develop new on-line training resources to build on the existing modules
- Review the uptake of on-line coaching and training resources and ensure promotion to less represented groups
- Continue to support roll out of the sustainability training to events and Member Federations
- Identify support and upskilling for smaller Member Federations
- Support development of officials mentoring and training programme at events to build skills capacity across diverse gender and geography.



# Progress Report – Diversity, Accessibility and Wellbeing



WAITING ROOM  
HEALTH CHECKS





## OBJECTIVES



## 2030 TARGET



## DELIVERY THROUGH

Ensure athletics is open to everyone

- Maximise participant awareness around health and wellbeing risks
- Ensure diverse workforce and fair treatment of staff and those working at and on our events, and for our suppliers and partners
- Facilitate a collaborative approach to developing disability in athletics programmes catering to a range of disabilities across Member Federations

- 100% athletes competing at international events have standardised basic health checks
- 100% awareness and implementation of diversity policy throughout the sport
- 100% MFs have established collaborative disability in athletics programmes
- 100% implementation of staff wellbeing policy and World Athletics process to deal with issues.
- 100% implementation of an athlete and related officials' policy, and World Athletics processes to tackle harassment and safety.

World Athletics events, technical standards, training and development, venue, suppliers and partners

World Athletics has long been a leading international federation to champion equal access to competition. However, while many nationalities, genders, races and religions are celebrated with athletics, there remains an imbalance, particularly in relation to retention and progression within the sport as administrators, technical officials, referees and judges. While programmes are in place at either end of the participation spectrum, World Athletics will continue to innovate to achieve diversity across the athletics world, working to create a well-signposted, inclusive pathway into the governance and practice of the sport.

Everyone also has an equal right to be able to participate in athletics, without fear of discrimination, verbal or physical abuse, and in an environment conducive to sporting achievement, at all levels. The ability to attract all spectrums of society is testimony to the power of sport to unify.

## 2020-21

In March, coinciding with International Women's Day, World Athletics announced the launch of [#WeGrowAthletics](#), a campaign designed to build on the strides the sport has taken towards gender equity. Through the campaign, World Athletics pledged to commit to further advance the role of girls and women in athletics in three core areas of the sport: empowering women in leadership positions, breaking with traditions and shining a spotlight on women's stories across its platforms.

To help address abuse and exploitation with the sport, World Athletics launched Safeguarding Policy in 2021 which defined specific roles and responsibilities of Member Federations, Area Associations and the global governing body in protecting athletes and other participants in our sport.

In November, World Athletics also published an online abuse study that covered the period of the Olympic Games whose findings received extensive high profile coverage by national and international media outlets.

## World Athletics announces safeguarding policy

In November World Athletics launched its [Safeguarding Policy](#), designed to ensure that those in positions of authority in athletics adopt practices that actively prevent harassment, abuse and exploitation within the sport. The policy aims to create a safe and welcoming environment at all levels of the sport, where everyone involved is respected, valued and protected.

This policy is founded on the principles that everyone has the right to participate and enjoy athletics in a safe inclusive environment, that everyone has the right to have their voice heard in raising welfare and behavioural issues, and that everyone involved in planning and delivering programmes for children is responsible for the care and protection of those children.

It defines the specific roles and responsibilities of Member Federations, Area Associations and World Athletics in protecting athletes and other participants in our sport.

The Safeguarding Policy can be downloaded [here](#).



## World Athletics publishes Online Abuse Study covering Tokyo Olympic Games

In line with its commitment to making athletics a safe and welcoming environment for everyone, World Athletics published findings of a study conducted during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games to identify and address targeted, abusive messages sent to athletes via social media.

The study revealed disturbing levels of abuse of athletes, including sexist, racist, transphobic and homophobic posts, and unfounded doping accusations. It also unequivocally highlights the greater levels of abuse female athletes receive in comparison to their male counterparts.

These results, which follow the launch of World Athletics' Safeguarding Policy earlier in the month, raise concerns that existing safeguarding measures on social media platforms need to be tougher to protect athletes. Online abuse may cause trauma for the affected individual and can heavily impact athletes' performances – both in training and during competition.

The study was carried out in collaboration with Threat Matrix, an initiative by data science company Signify Group Ltd and sports investigations company Quest Global Ltd, and was developed to understand the size, scale and gravity of online abuse targeted at Olympic athletes on Twitter. It builds the foundation for the action World Athletics is taking and provides a basis for World Athletics to work more closely with social media platforms to tackle this issue.

[More.](#)



## Looking Ahead to 2022

- Continue to promote diversity, accessibility and inclusion through the SEMS Best Practice Guidance and on-line training already available
- Providing guidance and safeguarding policy template documents for Member Federations to equip them with all the policies and processes needed to deal with any safeguarding issues that arises.
- Build upon the pledges and commitments made during the 2021 #WeGrowAthletics launched on International Women's Day
- Continue to engage Area Associations and Member Federations in the implementation of the Harassment Policy.





This document can be found in the publications section of the Athletics for a Better World section of [worldathletics.org](http://worldathletics.org)

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