

Tackling environmental issues in Canadian sport

An overview of the field of play

Dan Wilcock - 3 March 2022

Overview

Sport & the Environment - issues, challenges and opportunities to tackle environmental issues in Canadian sport.

Topics

1. Background & context
2. Observations on the Canadian sport system
3. Achieving internal buy-in and generating momentum within an organisation

Discussion/Questions

(If time - Emerging issues in sport and the environment)

1. Background & Context

- International context: SDGs, Paris Agreement, COPs, IPCC
- Domestic context: Federal system and levels of government
- Role of the private sector
- Public activism
- Sustainability & sport
- 2030 Agenda:

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

2. Observations on Canadian sport

Historical focus on sport & environment

- Role of sport in Canadian society: a reminder
- Canadian Sport Policy 2012-2022: no substantive consideration
- Fragmented & *ad hoc* approach to new challenges
- Some early movers on sport & environment
- Need for alignment, expertise & role models on enviro issues

2. Observations on Canadian sport

Sport & environment gaining momentum

- United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework
- Canadian Alliance to S4CAF
- Ministerial Consultative Cttee on Greening the Sport Sector
- Inaugural Green Sports Day Canada - 6 Oct 2021
- New Canadian Sport Policy under development
- **Minister St-Onge's [mandate letter](#) (Dec 2021):**
Work with the sports sector to find solutions to reduce its environmental footprint as well as better involve our athletes in the conversation on the fight against climate change.

3. Achieving internal buy-in

Intrinsic motivations

- Leadership, staff, board
- Membership or athletes
- Financial considerations
- Role of an internal champion

Extrinsic motivations

- Moral/ethical pressures from customers, fans, stakeholders, peers
- Regulatory requirements
- Financial pressures (eg funding requirements)
- Sport system requirements (eg hosting requirements)

****START THE DIALOGUE!****

3. Achieving internal buy-in

How to make it stick

- Stakeholder consultations
- Determine a range of options and recommendations
- Develop a credible targets and implementation plan for the organisation, eg:
 - Environmental strategy
 - Environmental and social strategy
 - Sustainability strategy, or
 - Strategic plan adopts sustainability framework
- Establish accountabilities
- Measure and report on progress. Adjust.

3. Achieving internal buy-in

Overcoming Obstacles

- Resourcing gap - expertise and \$
- Perception enviro considerations are “non-core” issues
- Lack of an internal “champion”
- Concerns around financial implications
- Fear of criticism

Questions & Comments?



Centre for Sport Capacity



Emerging issues in sport & environment

- Sport sector's desire for growth vs environmental impacts
- Climate change mitigation vs adaptation
- Transportation emissions for athletes, support & fans
- Sport apparel & the environment
- Sport impacts on biodiversity
- Athlete activism and the link between sport & politics

Resources

- <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
- <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>
- <https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/pan-canadian-framework.html>
- <https://pm.gc.ca/en/mandate-letters/2021/12/16/minister-sport-and-minister-responsible-economic-development-agency>