



# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030



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# FOREWORD

High performance sport inspires millions. It brings people together and shows what's possible. But the very conditions sport depends on - safe environments, reliable seasons, and healthy ecosystems, are being disrupted by climate change and ecological decline. Athletes are already feeling the effects:



Three quarters of elite athletes say climate change is affecting their health and performance.

# 85%

say their sport is experiencing consequences.

# 1.5°C

If global temperatures rise beyond 1.5°C, half of all former Winter Olympic hosts would no longer be able to stage the Games.



The International Paralympic Committee warns the future of snow sports is now a "permanent concern".



Some events are already cancelled or postponed due to a lack of snow, and 90% of Italian ski slopes now rely on artificial snow.



“

The athletes' concern is loud and clear. We must act on those concerns and use our influence to help drive meaningful change”

Sebastian Coe, President, World Athletics



According to a British Journal of Sports Medicine report, a total of 15 out of 45 sports featured in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games were identified as having high, very high, or extreme heat-stress risk due to climate conditions.

Athletics, cycling and marathon swimming were identified as the sports with the highest number of incidents. At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, 100 out of 567 athletes were treated at clinics for heat related illnesses.

For UK Sport, environmental sustainability is no longer separate from the future of high performance sport - it is central to it. If our sporting system is to stay relevant, trusted and world-leading, and if athletes are to continue inspiring the nation, we must help protect the conditions that make sport possible. Through this strategy, we are setting a new ambition:

2026 -

2027 -

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AMBITION

To move beyond Net Zero and achieve a Net Positive Environmental Impact by 2040 - leaving the environment in a measurably better state through the way we operate, the choices we make, and the influence we have. This is how we will protect the future of sport - and help secure the future of our planet.



# ABOUT US

We are the UK's trusted high performance experts, powering our greatest athletes, teams, sports and events. Our purpose is to enable high performance sport to deliver extraordinary moments that enrich lives.

UK Sport supports high performance sport through strategic leadership and investment of National Lottery and Government funds. We've seen incredible progress since we began in 1997 - leading to the UK winning more Olympic and Paralympic medals than ever before and being recognised as one of the top nations in the world for event hosting capabilities.

2026

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2028

# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Environmental sustainability sits within our 10 year strategic plan and our ambition to inspire positive change across well being, diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY VISION

To harness the power and platform of sport to deliver a Net Positive Environmental Impact, leaving the environment in a measurably better state through the way we operate, the choices we make and the influence we have.

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# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE



By 2040 we aim to be globally recognised for:



Measurable gains in nature, biodiversity, resource efficiency and resilience



Aligning performance with planetary health, embedding sustainability in programmes, decisions and events



Inspiring action beyond our boundaries mobilising athletes, fans and partners to live and act more sustainably

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# OUR PROGRESS SINCE 2023

## UK SPORT SUSTAINABILITY ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME

In 2023 UK Sport partnered with Sporting Giants and Useful Projects to deliver a two-year sustainability programme becoming the world's largest multi-sport national sustainability project: the Sustainability Accelerator Programme.

This groundbreaking initiative supported 30 Olympic and Paralympic National Governing Bodies to embed sustainability into elite sport. It's the largest initiative of its kind.

In 2025 the programme won the Climate Reduction Award at the BASIS Sustainable Sport Awards.



# 84%

of participants now view sustainability as a long term priority

2028

# 100%

of participants feel more equipped to take meaningful sustainability action

2029

2030

# OUR PROGRESS SINCE 2023

## MAJOR EVENTS

Every Pinnacle Event that UK Sport invests National Lottery or Government funding into, must design action plans with social impact at their heart. This is now a requirement.

This is to help deliver meaningful, lasting change across areas including health and wellbeing, employment skills and EDI, alongside embedding environmental sustainability into event operations.

Recent events, from the **2023 Para Swimming World Championships** to the **2023 ICF Canoe Slalom World Championships**, have trialled impact measurement tools. Others, such as the **2023 World Athletics Indoor Championships** in Glasgow, achieved (Platinum World Athletics) international sustainability accreditation.

To support these action plans, we made a strategic commitment in our [events strategy](#) **Making Live Sport Matter** to take off some of the pressure on event organisers by providing support to embed social impact, by securing partnerships with specialists in the field.

# OUR PROGRESS SINCE 2023

## PROCUREMENT

We now use an EDI and Sustainability Procurement Guide, to leverage our buying power to drive improved practices within the supply chain.

All suppliers are now required to complete an EDI and Sustainability questionnaire.

All tenders above £30k include criteria for sustainability and EDI. Our pension provider, Cushon, has market leading Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) credentials.

## MEASUREMENT AND REDUCTION

Despite an Olympic year, in 2024-25, we achieved:

**50%** (approx) reduction in Scope 3 CO<sup>2</sup> travel emissions

**80%** reduction in domestic flights

**89%** drop in IT emissions due to simplification and consolidation

## POLICIES

Our travel and subsistence policy prioritises sustainable options and restricts domestic flights.

Our travel provider reports CO<sub>2</sub> emissions at the point of booking.

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# OUR PROGRESS SINCE 2023

## MAJOR EVENTS (CONTINUED)

In March 2025 we launched our first-ever Event Social Impact Partners - four organisations who share our vision to use the platform of major events to power positive change. By using these partners' expertise and networks, events will be able to turbo-charge existing programmes that would continue to exist beyond the live event.

The social impact partners are engaged in live discussions are actively supporting half of our hosting target list (16 events - as of 2026). Alongside this, we are developing a centralised framework to be able to measure social impact.

The 2025 Women's Rugby World Cup embedded sustainability into delivery and provided £10,000 grants to each of their eight venues to support environmental improvements, including refill points, EV charging points and biodiversity enhancements.



# FROM NET ZERO TO NET POSITIVE

**Sport is about pushing limits. That mindset now needs to shape how we think about environmental impact.**

For years, “Net Zero” has been the focus across sport, business and government. It’s still essential, but the term has often become narrow and technical. It can feel like a target owned by spreadsheets and offsets, not people and places.

**So we’re raising the bar.**

Climate change is already reshaping sport, through flooded pitches, event disruption, extreme heat, poor air and water quality, and shifting seasons. These aren’t just environmental issues.

**They’re performance issues.**

**“Net positive” shifts thinking from minimising harm to maximising benefit. It’s shifting from compliance to proactivity. It’s about creating a legacy, rather than simply compensating for damage. Net positive isn’t a slogan. It’s our next performance edge.**



# WHAT NET POSITIVE MEANS

## NATURE AND PLACE

Improving biodiversity and creating habitats around venues and events. Wimbledon and Brentford FC— are showing what’s possible.



## CIRCULARITY

We will work with partners to eliminate waste, extend the life of kit, merchandise and event infrastructure, saving money and emissions before they occur.



## INFLUENCE AT SCALE

Sport’s true power is its reach. Through our events and athletes, we can mobilise millions of people to act.



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# WHAT NET POSITIVE MEANS

Net Zero remains important, but within the sporting world it has limits. Net Positive Environmental Impact reframes our purpose around outcomes that resonate with athletes, fans and the communities we live.

We're not replacing Net Zero but repositioning it as one pillar within a broader positive agenda that UK Sport and the wider sport system can support and help deliver.

## FOR EVENTS AND VENUES

This means focusing on higher recycling rates, resource efficient operations and nature positive legacies, alongside emission reduction.

## FOR PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS

It means climate risk assessments for training environments and resilient scheduling and infrastructure.

## FOR SUPPLY CHAINS

It means circular kit and merchandise, take back and repair, and standards that reduce waste by design.

## FOR ATHLETES AND FANS

It means measurable, verified actions at scale-travel choices, food and waste behaviours that add up to real environmental benefit.

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# WHAT NET POSITIVE MEANS

It still includes reducing our own footprint, but goes further by:

- Reducing our operational footprint while still delivering our overall objectives.
- Enhancing biodiversity and restoring nature, across events we host, our World Class Programmes and our work with National Governing Bodies.
- Reducing waste across sport by helping embed circularity across the sports sector – from procurement and kit to event materials and food systems.
- Preparing for climate risks by making sure our venues, systems and communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Inspiring fans to take action, by using the reach and influence of sport to encourage more people to make environmentally positive choices.



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# OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030

Achieving a Net Positive Environmental Impact requires a clear, transparent way to measure. Our strategy between 2026-2030 will focus on three priorities, each underpinned by measurable actions and KPIs. This year (2026) we will publish a national Net Positive Environmental Impact framework, with clear metrics for carbon, nature, circularity, resilience and influence



## OPERATIONS:

Define, measure and embed net positive across the high performance system.



## PARTNERS:

Align expectations, strength governance and empower partners.



## PLATFORM:

Use our voice and visibility to accelerate change beyond our own footprint.

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# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030

Focus area	Objective	Key Actions (2026-2030)	Key Actions (2026)
<p><b>Operations (Net positive environmental impact)</b></p>	<p><b>Define, measure and embed net positive across the high performance system.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a clear Net Positive Environmental Impact (NPEI) framework for the UK sporting system</li> <li>Integrate NPEI considerations into UK Sport investment and event decisions</li> <li>Be a Net Zero organisation by 2030</li> <li>Investigate relevant programme(s) to achieve 'net positive environmental impact'</li> <li>Strengthen measurement, monitoring and reporting of environmental performance</li> <li>Integrate sustainability standards into core governance, risk and procurement systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish a sector-wide definition and measurement framework for NPEI, aligned with UN guidance and practical for National Governing Bodies and Events.</li> <li>Develop offsetting protocols and standards for us and the wider sector.</li> <li>Create an NPEI dashboard to track carbon, nature, circularity and pollution.</li> <li>Continue our annual greenhouse gas inventory (Scopes 1-3) and identify further reduction opportunities.</li> <li>Publish annual action plans and our year on year progress.</li> <li>Invest in carbon offsetting projects to help us reach Net Zero by 2030.</li> <li>Explore UK nature based and climate projects that support net positive environmental impact.</li> <li>Complete climate risk assessments for Elite Training Centres and priority venues, and develop adaptation plans.</li> <li>Set up an NPEI Steering Group with annual Board reporting, supported by quarterly progress reviews and a risks log.</li> <li>Embed sustainability activities and KPIs into our Annual Operating Plan and into roles across UK Sport; support colleagues to lead internal projects and champion initiatives.</li> <li>Build NPEI considerations into Investment Panel papers and decision templates for Major and Mega Events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the Net Positive Environmental Impact definition and measurement framework</li> <li>Launch the NPEI dashboard</li> <li>Establish the NPEI Steering Group</li> </ul>

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030

Focus area	Objective	Key Actions (2026-2030)	Key Actions (2026)
<p><b>Partners (Collaborate and align)</b></p>	<p><b>Align expectations, strengthen governance and empower partners.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build shared sustainability standards across the Home Nations</li> <li>Require annual sustainability reporting for all funded National Governing Bodies</li> <li>Facilitate sector-wide collaboration on macro-climate issues effecting sports such as travel, kit, and policy</li> <li>Establish joint governance and data-sharing mechanisms to accelerate progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish a shared position on sustainability reporting and minimum standards for funded bodies.</li> <li>Promote adoption of the NPEI framework across National Governing Bodies and Events.</li> <li>Explore stronger environmental requirements in the next Code for Sports Governance review.</li> <li>Require annual sustainability reporting from National Governing Bodies.</li> <li>Introduce annual KPI pulse checks for National Governing Bodies and the World Class Programme, shared with the Board.</li> <li>Set up a cross sport working group to lead on major sustainability issues (for example travel, kit, procurement) and coordinate sector policy asks to Government.</li> <li>Provide tailored support to help National Governing Bodies deliver stronger sustainability outcomes.</li> <li>Work with International Federations to share UK sustainability leadership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish joint sustainability expectations with Home Nations</li> <li>Introduce KPI pulse checks for NGBs and World Class Programmes</li> <li>Re establish and co chair the Sport Environment Climate Coalition</li> <li>Launch tailored sustainability support for NGBs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Platform (Events, athletes and fans)</b></p>	<p><b>Use our voice and visibility to accelerate change beyond our own footprint.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the embedding of sustainability requirements in major-event planning, delivery and evaluation</li> <li>Use events and athletes as visible platforms for positive environmental action</li> <li>Engage fans and communities through campaigns that connect sport and sustainability</li> <li>Showcase UK Sport’s leadership internationally through evidence and storytelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build sustainability into investment decisions and ensure commitments are delivered at events.</li> <li>Partner with an environmental Social Impact organisation to use events as a platform for sustainability.</li> <li>Work with the British Olympic Association, British Paralympic Association and National Governing Bodies to create athlete advocacy opportunities on climate, nature and inclusion.</li> <li>Embed fan engagement activity at UK Sport-backed events.</li> <li>Support a cross sport national sustainability campaign reaching beyond events.</li> <li>Capture and share success stories from UK hosted events.</li> <li>Continue progressing our commitments under the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework and collaborate with the IOC and IPC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief the Major Events Panel on the new strategy</li> <li>Ensure sustainability is considered at every stage of major event investment</li> <li>Build sustainability expertise into panel membership</li> <li>Invest in a sustainability specific Event Social Impact Partner</li> </ul>

# WORKING WITH THE SPORTING SECTOR

**At the heart of this strategy is a simple truth: UK Sport cannot achieve a Net Positive Environmental Impact on its own. Challenges like climate change, pressure on natural resources and biodiversity loss are too big for any single organisation to solve.**

Sport is a system made up of many organisations and people. Real progress will only happen if everyone works together.

UK Sport's role is to bring the system together and help lead the response. We will support shared ways of working, encourage collaboration through groups like the Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC), and bring partners together to move faster.

We are well placed to connect National Governing Bodies, event organisers, athletes and funders behind one shared vision of a Net Positive Environmental Impact.



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# ALIGNMENT

**High performance sport works best when everyone moves in the same direction. The same is true for environmental action.**

That means working towards a shared understanding of what Net Positive Environmental Impact means, using common tools and learning from each other so that the impact of our work is greater than what any organisation could achieve alone.

Together with Sport England, we will require all UK Sport funded organisations to have strong sustainability action plans in place by March 2027 as a condition of funding.

UK Sport and Sport England will review these plans jointly so partners have one clear set of expectations and a single, consistent approach.

# COLLABORATION

**To encourage greater collaboration, we will revive and strengthen the Sport Environment and Climate Coalition (SECC) as the main platform for joint action across the sector.**

The Coalition was created in 2022 to coordinate sport's response to climate change and environmental sustainability.

**Under UK Sport and Home Nation leadership, it will become the place where the sector comes together to:**

- **Connect organisations across sport**
- **Run joint campaigns (for example on circular kit, lower-carbon travel and fan behaviour)**
- **Share practical tools and guidance**
- **Build communities of learning and best practice**
- **Help shape government policy where sport has a role to play**

# EMBEDDING GOVERNANCE AND SYSTEMS

**We will build sustainability into how decisions are made across UK Sport and the wider system.**

Environmental considerations will form part of funding decisions and the way we assess and invest in major events.

**We will also strengthen oversight and accountability by introducing:**

- Annual sustainability reporting from National Governing Bodies and key partners
- A Net Positive Environmental Impact Steering Group to oversee progress
- A shared dashboard to track key measures
- Transparent public reporting
- Assurance processes for major projects

This will ensure sustainability is part of everyday decision-making, not a separate activity. UK Sport and Sport England will also consider whether environmental sustainability should be strengthened within the Code for Sports Governance when it is next reviewed.

# SUPPORTING CAPACITY AND LEARNING

We will help our partners deliver on their sustainability commitments by providing practical support and shared learning.

We will help our partners deliver on their sustainability commitments by providing practical support and shared learning. This will include:

- Practical resources and guidance
- Peer learning networks across sport
- Toolkits to measure environmental impact
- Templates for circular procurement
- Travel carbon calculators

We will also work with ParalympicsGB and Team GB to support athletes to become ambassadors for environmental action, helping them use their voices and platforms to inspire change.





# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Through our strategy between 2026-2030 we aim to see:

- UK Sport backed events creating nature positive and high circularity standards.
- Climate resilient elite training environments through risk assessments and adaptation plans.
- Hundreds of thousands of fan actions and clear evidence of avoided emissions
- A sector speaking with one credible, inspiring voice



# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2026-2030

Get in touch with any questions, comments or progress updates: [environmentalsustainability@uksport.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalsustainability@uksport.gov.uk)

