PREAMBLE

Across industries, the future is being dictated by a focus on ESG – environmental, social and governance issues. Sports are no exception.

It is well known that sport bears a huge environmental and social impact on the world. Sport has an enormous societal impact but judo is one of the best sports when it comes to educating younger generations.

Judo has a meaningful impact in societies all over the world and the International Judo Federation has implemented, on a global scale, various programmes, like Judo for Children, Judo in Schools and Judo for Peace, in order to spread its unique moral values and principles: friendship, honesty, courage, resilience and mutual aid.

1. Philosophy

Because solidarity is more important than ever, the IJF has proven that when we come together, we can have a positive impact on our environment and on each other. That’s why the judo family has pledged to build a better and safer planet for our children and our future. As the world is going through an unprecedented climate change process, sport becomes increasingly preoccupied by and involved in sustainability issues.

Although judo is not by definition one of the sports with a high environmental impact, as judo competitions take place indoors and competitions have a limited duration, the global judo community must take action in the fight to achieve carbon neutrality.

In order to achieve this goal, the International Judo Federation studied the impact of its events and activities, as well as the situation of its members in terms of sustainability. As a global organisation, our member federations are situated in different regions and belong to nations with different economic circumstances. Geographical situation and financial power are key factors in determining the sustainability level of each federation.

While some national federations, in line with their national strategy, have a strong focus on sustainability, others, with reduced means and knowledge, are only taking the first steps to address climate change and their impact on the environment.

In order to implement any type of general rule or requirement, the IJF must make sure that all its member federations are well informed and aware of the global emergency with regards to climate. Educating and advocating are our most important operations, used to raise awareness, in all judo circles. Small and simple activities have been designed in order to mobilise and attract the largest number of judoka, with the best possible results.
2. Education

Thus, on World Judo Day 2019, the theme of the international celebration was “Plant a Tree.” The project was met with great enthusiasm in 75 participating countries, involving 200+ initiatives from clubs, associations or individuals. As a result more than 5300 trees were planted around the world as a sign of unity in judo. Due to its success, the IJF is planning a phase 2 of the project, which will have a set challenge of planting a given number of trees, in a joint effort to mobilise all clubs and federations, on all continents.

As the pandemic has only allowed sports to function in a limited format, our climate change focus shifted towards the digital frame. In 2020, the International Judo Federation launched an online climate change quiz for children, with over 5000 participants, followed by the Climate Champion Challenge, offering distinct tasks to be performed over several months. 2000 children from 16 countries participated and each participant received a judo card signed by the two IJF Climate Ambassadors: Sabrina Filzmoser (AUT) and Flavio Canto (BRA).

In our attempt to have a meaningful and global response to climate change, the IJF is monitoring the sustainability measures and activities of all its members who are also competition organisers.

3. Advocacy

In 2021 the IJF looked at sustainability measures taken by our local event organisers, who are also IJF member national federations, in areas such as athletes, accommodation, arrivals and departures, communication, food and beverages, general measures, inspection visits, spectators, transport, venue and workforce. We were pleased to find that without exception, all organisers did put in place some sustainability measures and were actively looking at ways to improve and deliver more green events.

Thus, almost all organisers used the IJF sustainability posters, included the sustainability dimension in the draw and most organisers also provided selective waste opportunities to participants. Similarly, all organisers chose hotels which have a sustainability policy in place and where possible, they were within walking distance of the venue. Also where possible, our local organisers grouped delegations by arrival and departure, using fewer transfers. Without exception, federations had a sustainability plan in place and they engaged local communities and trained their workforce in this sense. Efforts to reduce the use of printed materials and paper in general were made, most equipment was rented, multi-use signage was applied (without date), accreditations were recycled, unused office supplies were donated and where possible, external contractors with a sustainability policy were engaged.
Most organisers used ecological packaging and local products for food, recyclable cups, bulk water and in some cases the surplus food was donated and waste composted. All hotels which were not within walking distance were, however, close to the venue and shuttles were prioritised over individual transport. The workforce was composed in almost all cases of local volunteers and staff and some of our organisers even used sustainable uniforms.

In terms of venues, it is not always easy to find the most eco-friendly version and organisers must work with what they have at their disposal in the given city. All venues used were already existing and with a sustainability strategies in place, also being located close to public transport. A few of them had bicycle parking and charging for electric vehicles. It is notable that, wherever possible, organisers used chemical-free cleaning products in the venue.

As this year we were still restricted in terms of spectator attendance at judo events, less efforts were invested in spectator incentives, but one organiser did offer free public transport as an incentive and without any exception all our organisers used electronic communication and e-tickets.

In order to support the efforts of our federations, the IJF also cancelled inspection visits and prepared the event exclusively via electronic communication. This was followed by the local organising committees also including sustainability in all their communications.

In the months and years to come the IJF will also provide documentation and guidelines for the national federations to be able implement their own strategy for sustainability at a local level.

Finally, in 2022, the IJF will renew its membership of the UN Sports for Climate Action Coalition, with a pledge to reduce its emissions by 50% by 2030, with a net-zero emissions target by 2040. The IJF will also start to measure its annual climate footprint and emissions reductions progress consistently.