



ACCESS

Achieving Circularity in Cities through
Environmental Sustainability of Sports

ENGAGING VISITORS IN WASTE COLLECTION OPERATIONS

Visiting a sport venue? Treat
someone's house as you would
treat your own



In parallel to the measures aimed at minimising the production of waste (e.g. less materials used, reuse of materials, etc.), event organisers should ensure the correct disposal of waste for recycling during events. Proper separate waste collection bins should be placed in stadia and at event locations. Since every personal act counts, it is important to directly involve spectators in waste collection, conveying specific informative and educational messages on this topic and promoting mechanisms to increase separate waste collection during sporting events.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

Many sport venues are establishing programs or expanding current recycling efforts. In addition, factors such as laws or ordinances requiring waste reduction and recycling are driving the implementation of recycling programs. Finally, many fans expect recycling containers to be available, and are willing to put extra effort into placing recyclables in their proper place. Below we present two case studies where fans have been involved in recycling programs.

The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, established the Copa Verde ("Green Cup"), an annual football competition played by 24 teams from the North and Midwest regions of Brazil. Since its creation in 2014, Copa Verde has been committed to sustainable practices and the preservation of the environment, turning football into an educational tool for sustainability: the competition is based on the complement of a set of actions that foster environmental awareness of fans through activities such as recycling materials.

As part of the Copa Verde initiatives, fans can exchange PET bottles for tickets before and after match events, through an innovative exchange machine. In 2016 a total of 1,951 kg (about 14,000 lb) of plastic bottles were exchanged for 13,000 tickets. The waste was sent to four recycling cooperatives affiliated to the National Recyclable Waste Pickers Movement.

The Chicago White Sox baseball team launched the "Hit for the Cycle" recycle program using fans to assist in collecting as many plastic cups as possible at its stadium Guaranteed Rate Field (capacity of 47,098 seats). In addition to the collection of cups during a bowl sweep by a crew of stadium workers, fans are challenged to collect plastic cups from the seating area. Cups are brought to a designated area where they are exchanged for tickets which can be redeemed for prizes. The program uses public announcements to advertise to fans over the big screen, and players encourage supporters to "Pitch in" while explaining the program. The stadium estimates over 50% recovery rate of plastic cups and bottles.



CHALLENGE

Waste management is key to reduce environmental pollution and climate change. The waste sector is the fourth largest GHG emitting sector in the EU-28, after energy, agriculture, and industrial processes, contributing 3% to total GHG emissions in 2017.

Stadiums are contributing to these trends since they are among the biggest and most crowded places: tens of thousands of people gather to watch games, concerts, and other events, and some are designed to host 100,000 people (the size of an entire town).

The EPA reports that each year, the Super Bowl (the US annual final play-off game of the National Football League) generates nearly 40 tons of trash. Spectators of sporting event alone generate around 39 million pounds of trash per year in the U.S.

Implementing separate waste collection operations and a sound recycling program in stadiums is therefore key to address this challenge. In this perspective, collaboration with contractors is key, but the engagement of participants is also important to increase the efficacy of separate waste collection during events.

RESULTS

The environmental benefits of adopting this practice are linked to a reduction of the amount of solid waste and an increase in the amount of waste separation for recycling.

This practice also contributes to increase of supporters' environmental awareness: by engaging fans and educating them on the importance of separating waste and recycling, we create change within the community.

The indirect economic benefits for the sport venues that adopt this practice are linked to the increased rates of recycling: depending on local waste disposal and recycling market conditions, recycling can lead to a reduction in solid waste management and disposal costs.

REPLICABILITY POTENTIAL

In order to be successful, recycling programs should be accompanied by communication and awareness raising campaigns in stadia targeting supporters. Communicating and educating fans on the environmental impact of waste and on the availability of recycling containers as well as what items should or should not be placed in them is key for an effective sustainability and waste management program and for increasing the replicability potential of this practice.

Campaigns could be carried out through the use of digital in-stadium billboards and giant screens, also by incorporating athletes as testimonials into the stadium's environmental campaign and tying giveaways to participation.





ACCESS

Achieving Circularity in Cities through
Environmental Sustainability of Sports

This factsheet is a part of a larger collection of good practices available on the project's website

www.access-cc.eu

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them

The **ACCESS project** is one of the latest European projects which explores and challenges environmental sustainability and environmental management in sports. Co-funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, ACCESS is looking at narrowing the gaps between the current environmental performances of sport organisations, their strategies, and practices on one side and strategies and targets of their respective cities or regions with the overall objective – making these sport organisations a reference point for sustainability in sports in their countries and turning them into replicators of solutions for achieving it.



Sant'Anna
School of Advanced Studies - Pisa



Co-funded by the
European Union