



ACCESS

Achieving Circularity in Cities through
Environmental Sustainability of Sports

ENHANCING NATURAL HABITATS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Architectural biomimicry - designing
buildings and products that simulate or co-
opt processes that occur in nature



GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

The case of Manchester City Football Academy is a perfect example of this practice.

MCFA is an 80-acre estate and home to City Group's global headquarters. The world-leading training campus hosts 16.5 training pitches (the half pitch is for goalkeeper training), a hotel for the first team and visitors, as well as a 7,000-seater academy stadium.

Manchester City Club started its biodiversity improvements in 2014 by planting over 2500 mature trees, hedgerow and many acres of wildflower and wild grass meadows and established a series of swale and ponds across the City Football Academy site. These practices have contributed to local area regeneration in east Manchester and to reaching the city's ambitions for cleaner air. The Club has been working with idverde, the landscape team and contractor which has been maintaining the estate landscape including the maintenance of trees, grass, wildflower meadow, shrub beds and hedging. As part of ongoing improvements to the estate, idverde has been working with MCFC to make the site more attractive and suitable for local wildlife.

Staff from the Club has been engaged in creating new wildflower meadows within the Academy grounds and around the roadside boundaries. Idverde has developed a three-year improvement plan to create a range of different habitats to encourage biodiversity. They have also installed biodiversity conservation infrastructure, including solitary bee and wasp nesting boxes: beetle banks and bug hotels were introduced to protect species on site year-round (see figures).

Grass cuttings from all sites are included in the new (2021) anaerobic digestion facility – which returns composts and fresh produce from the receiving farm. A living plant wall adorns CFA's new TV studio.

The Club is also working with local schools and community groups to promote and develop opportunities in horticulture and greens space development.

As a result of this engagement, the football team received the IOG Ransomes Environmental/Ecology Project of the Year Award in recognition of the work they are doing to improve biodiversity by increasing areas of habitat, along with introducing a sustainable maintenance programme and raising awareness of local ecology in the local community.

CHALLENGE

Urban areas often suffer from a lack of green spaces and biodiversity, leading to reduced air quality, increased heat island effect, and limited opportunities for nature appreciation.

By actively participating in the creation and restoration of natural habitats, sports can help mitigate these challenges. Enhancing urban green spaces not only provides ecological benefits but also improves the well-being and quality of life for residents. It creates opportunities for recreation, promotes biodiversity, supports pollinators, and contributes to a more sustainable and resilient urban ecosystem. Additionally, it fosters community engagement, education, and awareness about the importance of preserving and restoring nature in urban environments.

RESULTS

The results of these actions are processes and will be collected over time. Today's results are mostly linked to the environmental awareness generated from these initiatives, that poses greater attention to the natural context in urban environments. This especially applies to sporting events that take place outdoors in urban contexts.



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

www.access-cc.eu

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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.



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