



Drafting Your Dream Team:

A Guide to Sustainability Frameworks and Partnerships in Sports

Organizations around the world have developed frameworks, standards, and partnerships to help guide sustainability efforts. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a widely recognized starting point but they're just one piece of the puzzle. This guide highlights frameworks that address critical areas like water conservation, biodiversity protection, and waste reduction—so you can focus on what matters most to your organization and community, while still aligning with global priorities.



*TripleWin is a proud member
of Green Sports Alliance
since 2024*

Many sports organizations are setting ambitious sustainability goals—from reducing emissions to engaging fans and strengthening community impact. But with so many frameworks and partnerships available, it can be challenging to know where to start or who to work with.

The good news: you're not starting from scratch.

Frameworks Are Not One-Size-Fits-All

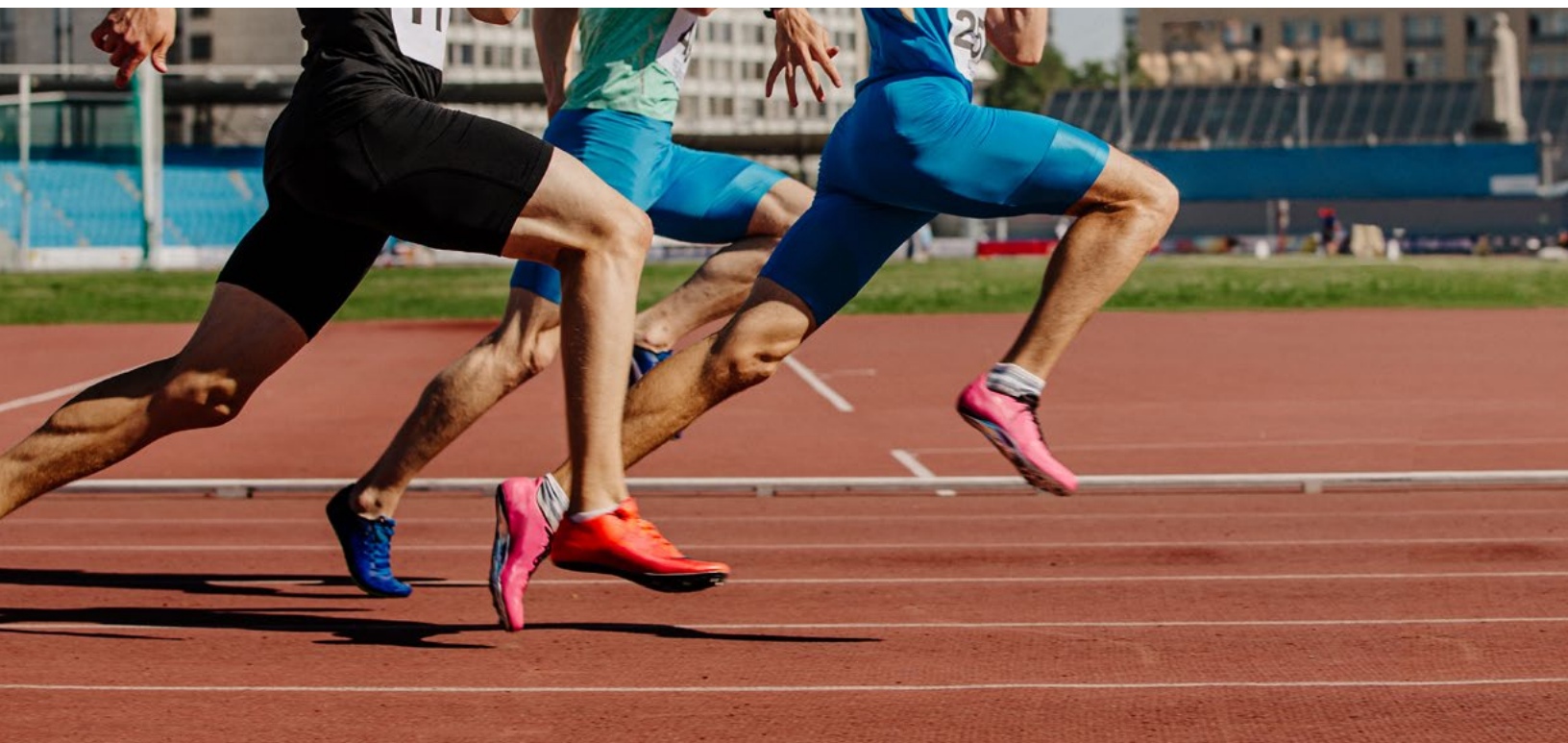
Sustainability frameworks vary in scope, rigor, and purpose. Some are designed to inspire action. Others require public commitments, data reporting, or formal certification. Not all will make sense for your organization—and that's okay.

The key is to choose frameworks and partners that align with your goals, capacity, and audience. For example, a sports arena seeking to implement a comprehensive, long-term sustainability plan may look to certification standards that cover everything from energy use to water conservation. In contrast, a multi-day sports event with temporary facilities might prioritize partnerships that address single-use plastics, food waste and biodiversity conservation.

As you explore the directory, keep these questions in mind:

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Who are you trying to influence?
- What's your organizational capacity?
- Do the values align?

This guide is organized by topic area to help you quickly identify categories that match your priorities, explore credible options, and connect with the right partners. Many are eager to work directly with sports organizations and will meet you where you are.



Frameworks, Standards and Partner Organizations

Aligning with Global Goals

Sports organizations have a unique platform to influence fans, partners, and communities. By aligning with global frameworks like the UN SDGs and the UN Global Compact, teams and venues can demonstrate leadership on issues and create massive ripple effects that transcend the playing field.

UN Global Compact – A voluntary agreement for corporations, where CEOs commit to conducting business responsibly by aligning their strategies and operations with ten principles related to human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption. It also encourages signatories to take strategic actions that support the broader objectives outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)(see below).

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – A set of 17 goals for improving economic, environmental, and social conditions worldwide by 2030. The SDGs offer a widely recognized framework for aligning an organization's sustainability strategy with global priorities across people, planet, and process—while also advancing innovation. Aligning with these goals sends a strong signal to stakeholders that a sports organization understands its role in addressing shared global challenges.

UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport – A rights-based framework developed by UNESCO to guide policy in sport. It supports inclusive access, ethical standards, and alignment with global sustainability and development goals.



Putting It Into Practice

The New York Yankees were the first major sports team in the U.S. to adopt the UN SDGs. In support of SDG 13 "Climate Action", they installed high-efficiency lighting at Yankee Stadium, achieving a 40% increase in energy efficiency. This effort was expanded to their George M. Steinbrenner spring training field in 2023.



Healthy, Decarbonized Buildings

For sports and entertainment organizations, building sustainability is often the first major consideration—and it extends to both permanent structures and temporary facilities constructed for events. Adopting green building standards for these energy and resource-intensive spaces can help sports organizations reduce emissions and enhance fan experiences.

U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) – A widely adopted rating system for new and existing buildings, and even entire neighborhoods. LEED offers a framework for creating spaces that are healthy, energy-efficient, and cost-effective.

National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) – Green Building Initiative (GBI) – Developer of the Green Globes standards for commercial buildings, which support forward-thinking, sustainable practices such as net zero energy, regenerative design, and nature-positive concepts.

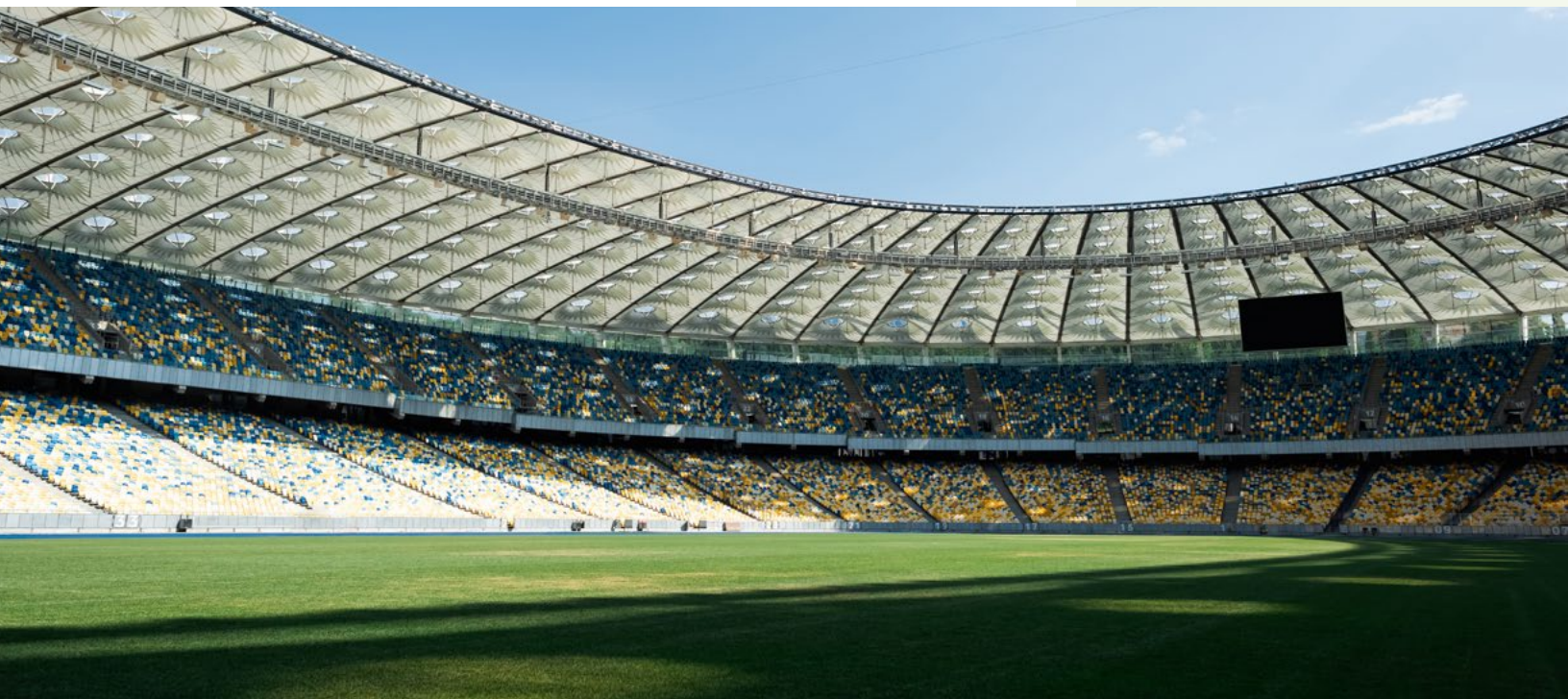
International WELL Building Institute (IWBI) – WELL Building Standard – A practical roadmap for creating and certifying spaces that put people first. The WELL standard focuses on advancing human health and well-being—one building at a time.

ISO 20121 – Event Sustainability Management Systems – An international standard providing a management framework to help organizations improve the sustainability of events. Applicable to sporting events of all types and sizes.



Putting It Into Practice

The Sacramento Kings' Golden 1 Center became the first indoor sports venue to achieve both LEED Platinum certification and 100% solar-powered energy. The arena's heating and cooling system uses real-time crowd feedback to reduce energy use; cutting carbon emissions by 2,000 tons annually. Additionally, 36% of construction materials were made from recycled content, and 99% of demolition materials were diverted from landfills.



Waste Management

Waste is a multifaceted issue that intersects with climate change, resource efficiency, and pollution mitigation. In sports, waste includes both organic (food) and non-organic (plastic, paper, metals) materials—each carrying significant climate impacts through embodied carbon and post-consumption emissions. Implementing waste management frameworks helps teams and venues minimize their environmental footprint, engage fans in sustainable practices, and support broader community goals.

U.S. Food Waste Pact (USFWP) – A voluntary agreement led by nonprofit organizations ReFED and WWF, designed to unite committed businesses in reducing food waste within their operations and across the broader industry. The Pact offers opportunities to collaborate through precompetitive working groups, sector summits, and best practice sharing, and also provides implementation support for piloting promising projects.

Closed Loop Partners – Composting Consortium – A multi-year collaboration aimed at piloting industry-wide composting solutions and building a roadmap for investing in technologies and infrastructure. The initiative focuses on enabling the recovery of compostable food packaging and food scraps at scale.



Putting It Into Practice

The MLB's San Diego Padres earned the 2025 Green Glove Award for their comprehensive waste management program, achieving a waste diversion rate of over 95%. Their state-of-the-art composting program ensures that all vendor products used at Petco Park are fully recyclable or compostable. Other highlights include recycling cooking grease into bio-diesel, composting pre-consumer food waste, donating unsold food, and achieving 100% diversion of electronic and construction waste.



Biodiversity Support & Natural Resources Management

Sports facilities often sit on large land parcels, providing opportunities to protect and restore natural habitats. Programs focused on biodiversity and natural resource management help sports organizations demonstrate stewardship and inspire fans to connect with nature.

Sports for Nature (S4N) Framework – Aims to deliver transformative, nature-positive action across sports by 2030 and beyond, enabling organizations to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. The framework encourages action in four areas: 1) protect nature, 2) restore and regenerate ecosystems, 3) reduce supply chain risks to nature, and 4) educate and inspire others to act.

Sport and Sustainability International (SandSI) – An international organization advancing sustainability in and through sport. It promotes values of inclusion, integrity, accountability, and passion across its global member base.

Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF) – Water Restoration Certificates (WRCs) – A program that allows organizations to offset their water use by purchasing verified credits. One WRC equals 1,000 gallons of freshwater improved or restored to benefit people and ecosystems. Investments support water efficiency in cities and farms and help restore rivers and natural systems.

Friend of the Earth – Sustainable Sports Certification – A certification recognizing sports operators that meet environmental and social sustainability criteria, with emphasis on biodiversity conservation and stakeholder engagement.



Putting It Into Practice

To celebrate Earth Day 2024, the Chicago Cubs, in partnership with local organization Windy City Pollen, installed three native pollinator beehives on their corporate roof, raising awareness of urban biodiversity.

And at the Paris 2024 Olympics, athletes joined forces with the International Olympic Committee, United Nations Environment Programme, and IUCN to advocate for biodiversity conservation as part of the Sports for Nature Framework. The initiative, which promotes nature-positive action through sports, involved Olympic rowers, sailors, and windsurfers raising awareness about the dangers of invasive species—one of the leading drivers of global biodiversity loss, particularly in marine ecosystems. Through educational outreach and hands-on activities, athletes emphasized the critical role sports can play in protecting natural resources and advancing ecological sustainability.



Fan Education & Engagement

Sports organizations have a powerful platform to educate millions of fans on sustainability. Fan engagement programs leverage the excitement of game day to promote sustainable behaviors, connect with community values, elevate marginalized voices, and amplify environmental impact.

National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) – The leading U.S. organization for lifelong environmental learning. NEEF creates opportunities for people of all ages to connect with the environment and improve their well-being. A longtime partner of the Green Sports Alliance, NEEF has led sports-focused public engagement campaigns including NBA Green Energy All Stars and NHL Play It Forward.

Council for Responsible Sport – Offers certification for sporting events and organizations that meet standards for social and environmental responsibility. Focus areas include community engagement, health promotion, and sustainability.

Special Olympics – Sport Sustainability Framework – A comprehensive framework developed to reduce the environmental impact of Special Olympics events. It can also serve as a model for inclusive, environmentally responsible sports programming.



Putting It Into Practice

The NBA Golden State Warriors' Chase Center engages fans in reforestation and habitat restoration efforts during games. Between 2023 and 2024, fans voted on where they want to plant thousands of trees. The Center has planted over 10,000 trees in wildfire-affected areas across California, including Klamath Forest, Coffee Creek, and Rim Wildlife Restoration.



Carbon Measurement, Reduction and Disclosure

From facility operations to team travel to merchandise, sports organizations have significant carbon footprints—much of which happens beyond the venue and game day. Implementing full-scope carbon measurement and disclosure frameworks helps teams measure their true emissions, set science-based reduction targets, and showcase progress to fans, partners, and other key stakeholders.

CDP – A voluntary climate disclosure organization that manages the world’s largest and most comprehensive dataset on environmental action. CDP supports transparent disclosure of environmental impacts from companies, investors, cities, and governments. It is particularly effective in helping organizations and their supply chain partners work toward Paris Accord-aligned decarbonization goals.

Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol) – A standardized framework developed by WBCSD and WRI in 2000 for measuring and managing greenhouse gas emissions. It is widely used across both private and public sector operations, value chains, and mitigation strategies.

The Climate Registry – A nonprofit formed in 2007 serving the U.S. and Canada. It offers Emissions Factors (EFs), maintains a voluntary GHG inventory registry, and supports organizations in reporting emissions in line with GHG Protocol standards.

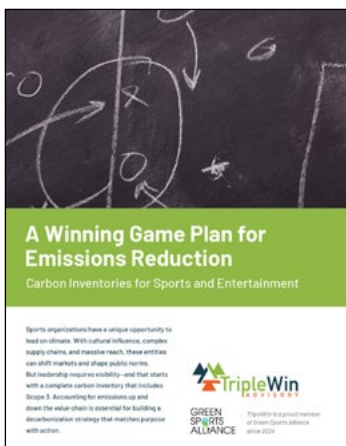
Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) – Defines and promotes best practices in emissions reductions and setting net-zero targets. SBTi provides technical assistance and expert resources to help organizations align with the latest climate science and the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Global Sustainability Benchmark in Sports (GSBS) – A science-based benchmarking tool aligned with EU regulations. GSBS evaluates and compares the environmental and social sustainability performance of professional sports organizations using transparent, sector-specific indicators.



Putting It Into Practice

Athletes Unlimited, a growing force in women’s professional sports, is setting a new standard for climate accountability. The league has adopted a full-scope emissions inventory, measuring and disclosing greenhouse gas emissions across Scopes 1, 2, and 3. While Scope 1 covers fuel use at stadiums and Scope 2 accounts for electricity, AU goes further. Their Scope 3 inventory captures emissions from fan travel, business travel, NFTs, procurement, and waste generated during events.



Learn More

[**A Winning Game Plan for Emissions Reduction: Carbon Inventories for Sports and Entertainment**](#)

Local Government Collaboration

Sports venues are often deeply connected to their cities and communities. Partnering with local governments on sustainability initiatives can amplify impact, reduce costs, and build goodwill with fans and residents.

Your Chamber of Commerce – Local chambers can be key partners in advancing pro-sport and pro-sustainability policies. Collaborating with your chamber can help quantify your organization's economic impact and demonstrate how sports contribute to broader community goals.

Sustainability Is a Team Sport

The most effective sustainability strategies don't happen in isolation—they're built on proven frameworks and supported by networks of people and organizations with shared values. Whether you're just getting started or expanding existing efforts, the organizations in this guide can help you take the next step.

Leadership in sustainability is no different from leadership on the field: it takes a clear game plan, trusted teammates, and the tenacity and commitment to keep showing up.



Putting It Into Practice

The NHL's Seattle Kraken collaborated with the city's public transit authority to offer free public transportation—monorail, bus, and light rail—for fans visiting Climate Pledge Arena. During the initial rollout in 2023, more than 25% of patrons utilized the free transit, demonstrating the impact of local partnerships in advancing urban sustainability initiatives.



Looking for a Teammate You Can Count On?

At TripleWin, we help organizations turn sustainability goals into practical strategies and measurable progress. We're a woman-led firm with deep expertise in carbon accounting, food loss and waste, and stakeholder education and engagement. If you're looking for a partner who brings focus, flexibility, and follow-through, [let's connect.](https://triplewinadvisory.com)