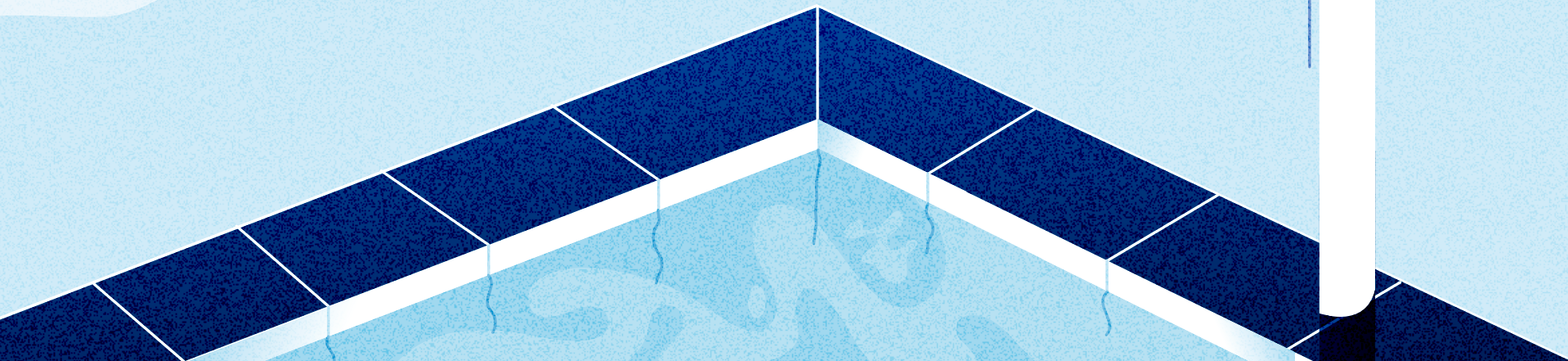


Plastic Game Plan for Sport

Sustainability Essentials: A series of practical guides for the Olympic Movement



In collaboration with





Sport has an unrivalled capacity to motivate and inspire large numbers of people

Sustainability Essentials

SUSTAINABILITY is one of the most pressing challenges of our time across a wide spectrum of social, environmental and economic matters. Major issues such as climate change, economic inequality and social injustice are affecting people throughout the world.

These are also pressing concerns for the sports community, both for managing its day-to-day affairs and for its responsibilities towards young people and future generations. We also recognise that sport has an unrivalled capacity to motivate and inspire large numbers of people. This is why we believe that the Olympic Movement has both a duty and an opportunity to contribute actively to global sustainability in line with our vision: “Building a better world through sport”.

Therefore sustainability forms a key element of Olympic Agenda 2020, the Olympic Movement’s strategic roadmap. In particular, this defined our approach to sustainability across the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) three spheres of responsibility:

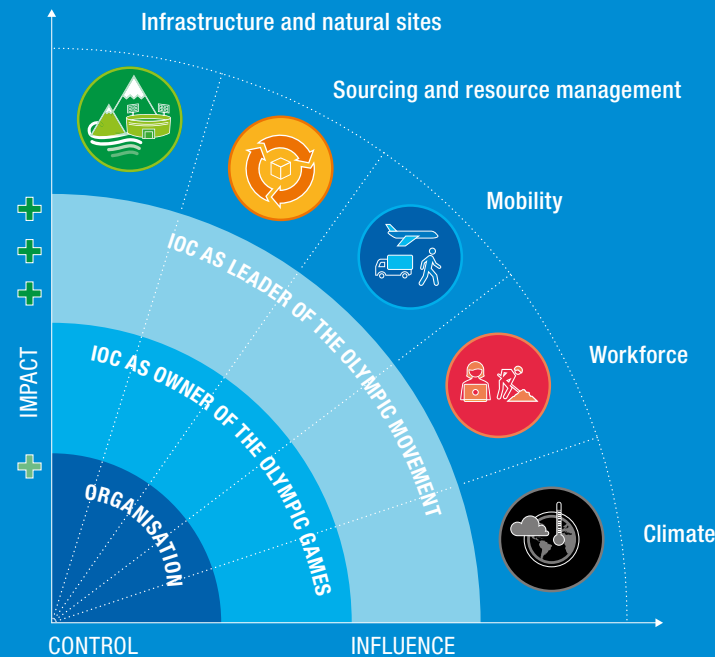
- **The IOC as an organisation**
To embrace sustainability principles and to include sustainability in its day-to-day operations.
- **The IOC as owner of the Olympic Games**
To take a proactive and leadership role on sustainability and ensure that it is included in all aspects of the planning and staging of the Olympic Games.
- **The IOC as leader of the Olympic Movement**
To engage and assist Olympic Movement stakeholders in integrating sustainability within their own organisations and operations.



Following on from Olympic Agenda 2020, we issued the IOC Sustainability Strategy in January 2017. The Strategy is based on our three spheres of responsibility and five focus areas, as illustrated below.

The Strategy sets out a number of actions in our capacity as leader of the Olympic Movement.

Among these is a commitment to develop common guidelines, methodologies and tools for National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs). Further information can be found at www.olympic.org/sustainability



The “Sustainability Essentials” series of guides is the first concrete outcome of this commitment. These guides aim to provide simple, practical and essential information on key aspects of sustainability for NOCs and IFs to be better able to navigate the complexities of this subject and develop effective sustainability programmes. Whether your organisation is just starting out, or is already actively engaged in sustainability, we hope these guides will provide a valuable overview and reference point for this important topic.



Feedback

We hope that our “Sustainability Essentials” guides will provide a valuable basis for understanding sustainability. We also know that sustainability is a constantly evolving discipline, with new issues, challenges and opportunities always needing to be addressed. We therefore welcome feedback, comments and suggestions so that we can continually improve our guidance and ensure our material is as fresh, relevant and accurate as possible. If you have any comments, please contact us in any language at: sustainability@olympic.org

Printing

This document is available only as a downloadable PDF file from the IOC website. If you need to print a copy, please set your printer to double-sided copying on recycled paper. Ideally, please also avoid colour printing and copying.

This document has been prepared in collaboration with UN Environment. We extend special thanks to World Sailing for its additional input.



World Sailing



Sustainability is a constantly evolving discipline, with new issues, challenges and opportunities always needing to be addressed



Introduction

AROUND THE WORLD, WE USE MILLIONS of tonnes of plastic each year because it is such a cheap and versatile material. However, much of this plastic is used just once and then thrown away. Only a small percentage gets recycled. Unfortunately, a lot of plastic waste isn't disposed of responsibly and ends up polluting our seas, towns and countryside – harming people and wildlife. Something needs to change.

So many of us use our seas, lakes, mountains and parks to get involved in sport. Plastic pollution in the environment can have a direct impact on the sports we love, from surfing and sailing, to hiking, cycling, running and football practice. Yet sporting events can be part of the problem – generating huge amounts of plastic waste. The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way.

Across the sporting world we can make a positive difference – eliminating single-use plastic items, reducing the amount of plastic we use and recycling as much as possible. What's more, we have a great opportunity to use the power of sport to encourage millions of fans to take action for the environment. By tackling plastic and other waste, we can also support efforts to create a more circular economy where resources are continually reused and recycled.

This toolkit will show you how.

It provides ideas to get you started and examples of progress from across the sporting community. It will help you to create a plastic plan and to work with suppliers, athletes and fans to reduce, reuse and recycle.



Plastic pollution in the environment can have a direct impact on the sports we love



Key facts: a global plastic pollution problem

WE'VE PRODUCED 9 BILLION TONNES of plastic since the 1950s. Yet, just 9 per cent of this has been recycled. Around 79 per cent is left in our environment, whether in landfill sites and dumps or littering our oceans, towns and countryside.¹

Single-use plastics – used once, then around for ever

Fifty per cent of plastic we use is single-use or disposable.² That means it will probably be used just once, before it is thrown away.

Once discarded, plastic doesn't disappear. A plastic bottle, for example, may take 450–1,000 years to decompose.³ It could still be there in 15 generations' time – when your

great, great, great, great, great grandchild's own great, great, great, great, great grandchild is born.

Plastics, microplastics and the ocean

Around 8 million⁴ tonnes of plastic end up in the ocean each year, from bottles and bags, to cigarette butts and old fishing nets. It washes up on our beaches, pollutes the water and circulates in giant garbage patches. Plastic pollution kills seabirds, fish and marine mammals through entanglement and ingestion.

Our seas are also full of microplastics – small pieces of plastic typically less than 5mm in size. Around one-third of these come from sources such as microfibres from synthetic clothes and fishing nets, tiny fragments of tyres that break off as we drive, and microbeads in cosmetics. The rest comes from larger pieces of plastic that break up into smaller and smaller pieces over time.⁵ Microplastics are consumed by plankton and fish, entering the food chain.



50%
Plastic packaging accounts for half of all plastic waste*



9%
no more than 9% of the 9 billion tonnes of plastic produced is recycled*

* Source: UNEP Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability



Under current rate of plastic consumption



12
billion tonnes of plastic litter will end up in landfills and the environment by 2050*



20%
The plastic industry will account for one fifth of the world's oil consumption by 2050*

*Source: UNEP Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability

All of us have probably contributed to plastic in our oceans – even if we live nowhere near the coast. In fact, the majority of ocean plastic comes from land sources – getting blown, washed or flushed away into our rivers, streams and drains.

Plastics and climate change

With 99 per cent of all plastic made from fossil fuels, plastic production contributes to climate change. Plastic also emits greenhouse gases as it breaks down after use or when it's incinerated.

It's estimated that plastic accounts for around 3.8 per cent⁶ of global greenhouse gas emissions. That's more than the aviation sector. A big portion of this impact comes from single-use plastics. For example, 17 million barrels of oil are used each year just to produce the plastic water bottles used in the US in one year.⁷

Plastics and our health

Plastic is now found everywhere in our environment. We know it affects ecosystems but we don't yet fully understand the impact on human health. What we do know is that the extraction, refining, use and disposal of plastic exposes us to potentially harmful chemicals through ingestion, our skin and the air we breathe.

We are eating plastic in our food too. Microplastics have been found in everything from fish and meat to salt, honey and bottled water. In fact, it's estimated that the average person might be consuming 52,000 microparticles of plastic each year.⁸

Litter and pollution also impact our wellbeing and can affect our ability to enjoy or even take part in sport. For example, who wants to swim, surf or sail in a polluted sea?

How the plastic we use ends up in the sea

Plastic fragments blown off trucks



Litter



Microparticles from tyres



Fishing nets



Beach litter



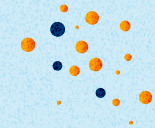
Microfibres from clothes



Wipes



Microbeads from cosmetics



Paint particles



Blown or washed into rivers and drains

Waste dropped on beaches and in the sea

Washed or flushed away from our homes

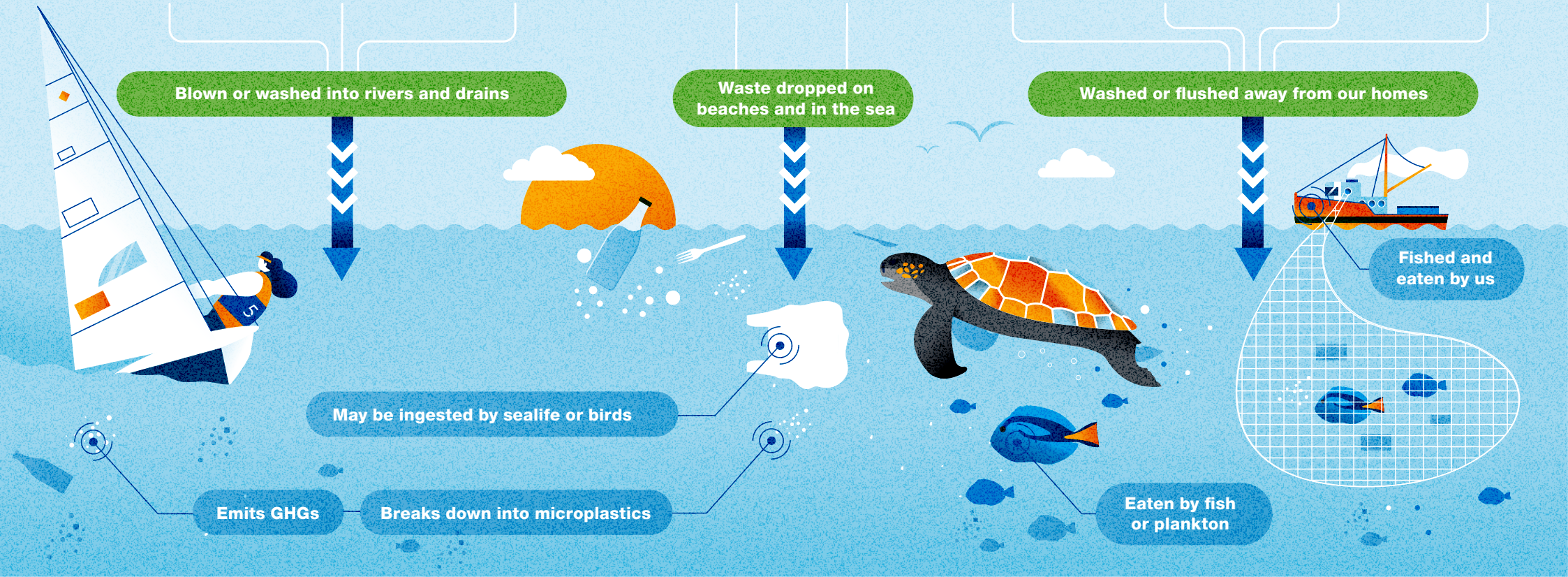
May be ingested by sealife or birds

Emits GHGs

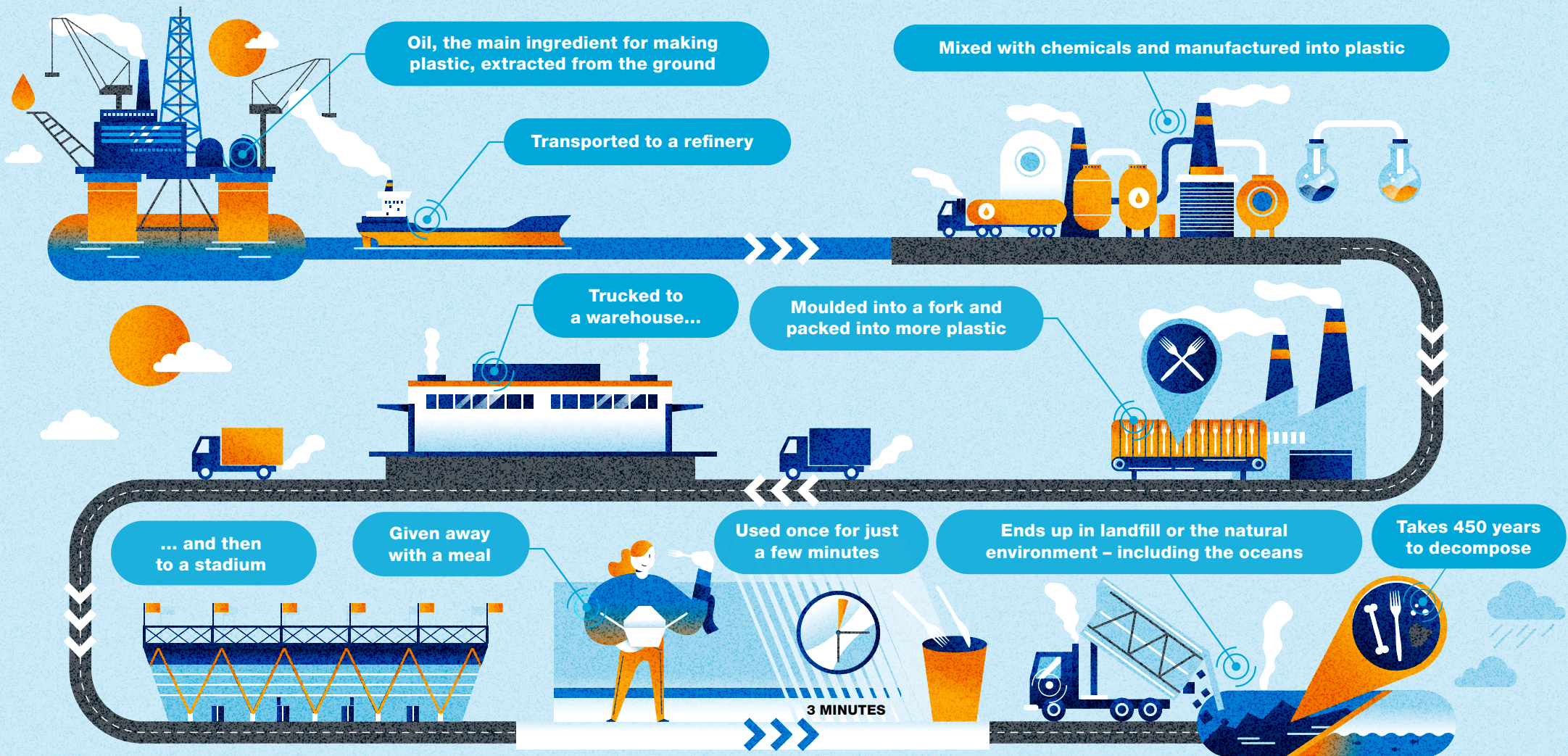
Breaks down into microplastics

Eaten by fish or plankton

Fished and eaten by us



The life of a plastic fork





Plastic and sport

SO WHAT CAN SPORT DO about plastic? If you look around any sporting venue or event today, you're likely to see plastic pretty much everywhere. From the clothes worn by athletes and the artificial turf in stadiums, to the signage and tickets and the products and packaging found in shops and eateries.

Some of this plastic is essential or hard to replace, but much of it isn't really needed – especially when it comes to single-use plastic.

With the right planning, we can design out a lot of plastic from our sporting events and, in the process, encourage our supply chain and millions of sports fans to act too.



If you look around any sporting venue or event today, you're likely to see plastic pretty much everywhere

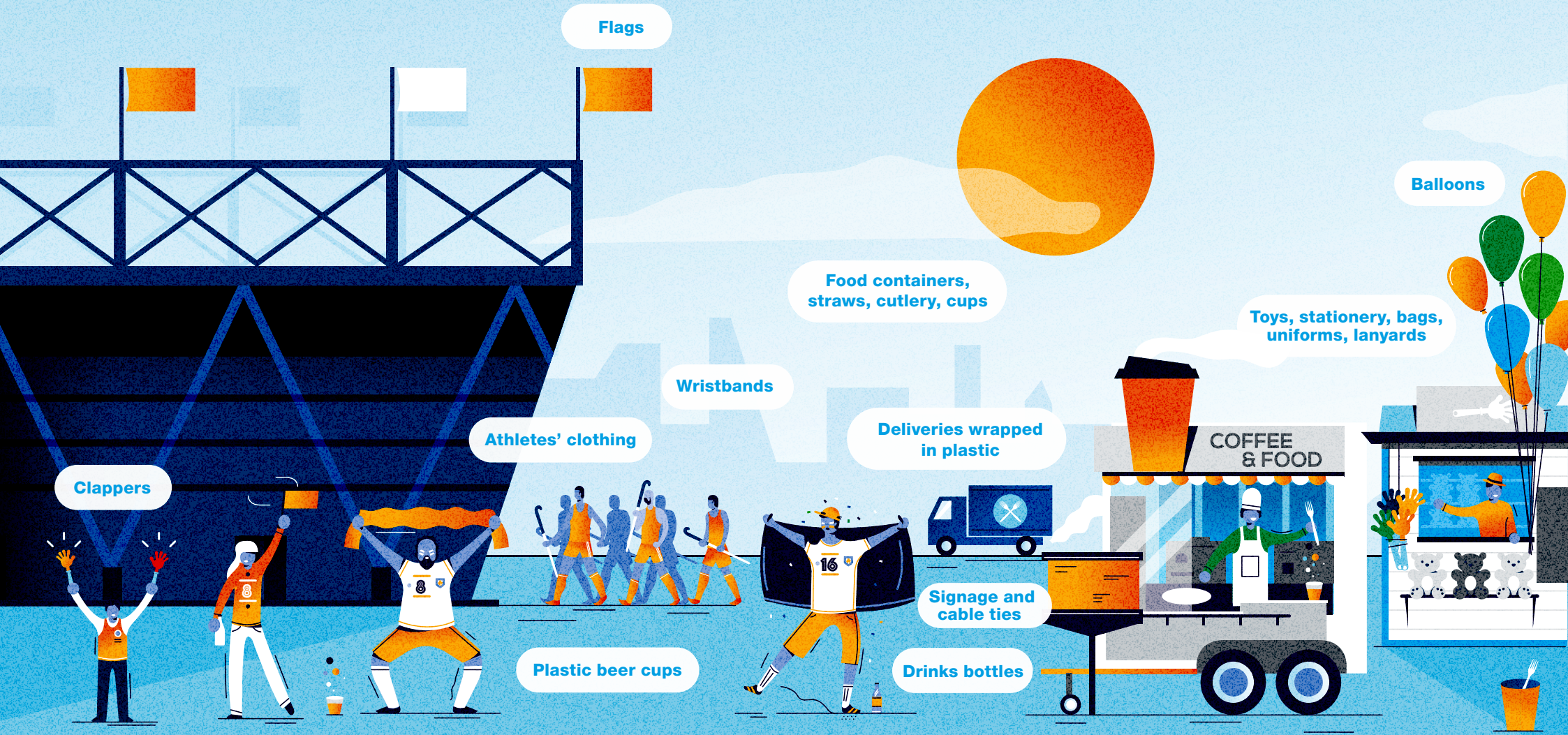
Partnering for Clean Seas

The #CleanSeas Campaign, launched by the United Nations Environment Programme in 2017, aims to engage governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine litter by addressing the root causes of the problem.

The IOC is a member of Clean Seas alongside many sporting bodies and sponsors. As part of the campaign, the IOC has committed to reduce its own waste, provide educational resources to the sports community, and help support coastal clean-ups, campaigns and education programmes.



Finding plastic everywhere



Flags

Clappers

Athletes' clothing

Wristbands

Food containers,
straws, cutlery, cups

Deliveries wrapped
in plastic

Toys, stationery, bags,
uniforms, lanyards

Balloons

Signage and
cable ties

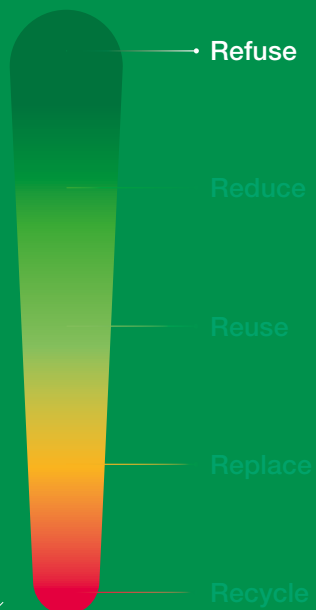
Plastic beer cups

Drinks bottles



Get inspired – sport takes action on plastic

Sports and venues around the world are already taking action to cut down on plastic. Here are just a few examples to get you thinking:



Refuse

STOP USING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC

Don't give out single-use items like plastic straws, bottles and bags. If every sports event adopted this approach, we'd prevent millions of pieces of plastic going to waste each year.

Chicago's White Sox

Chicago's White Sox became the first Major League Baseball team to serve drinks without single-use plastic straws – a move which could prevent the use of 215,000 plastic straws over a season.

World Sailing

World Sailing has changed its contracts with event hosts and organising committees to ban single-use plastic from international World

Sailing events. New contracts now include a mandatory Sustainability Charter and it has also integrated sustainability into its training schemes.

International Surfing Association

The International Surfing Association (ISA) eliminated single-use plastic water bottles at the World Junior Surfing Championship in Huntington beach, USA.

British cricket

London's cricket stadiums are saying no to single-use plastic. The Oval has banned plastic straws, is phasing out plastic bags and has introduced compostable coffee cups. At Lords, cricket fans can get a drink at 25 new bottle refill points and take part in a reusable cup scheme.



Reduce

IF PLASTIC IS NECESSARY, FIND WAYS TO USE LESS

Simple changes can help you to cut down on plastic. Like working with suppliers to redesign or remove packaging. The fewer resources we use to begin with, the less waste we create.

World Sailing

World Sailing asked its clothing suppliers to stop using plastic covers on new kit. Its supplier has now extended this approach to all its customers – resulting in a major reduction in plastic waste

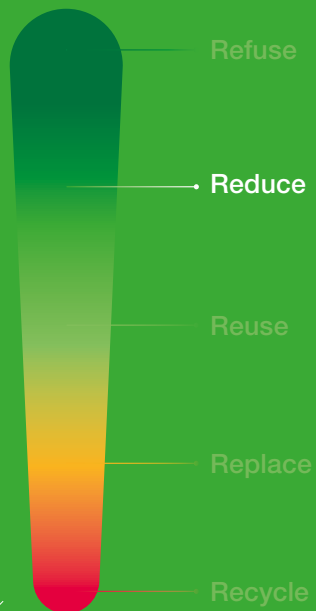
World Archery

World Archery is tackling waste from plastic

water bottles at its annual World Cup. By introducing a plastic bottle deposit scheme, it has increased recycling to almost 100 per cent while cutting costs and reducing the overall number of bottles used. At its Youth Championship in Madrid in 2019, it installed water refill stations and gave out refillable bottles to all the competitors, significantly reducing single-use plastic.

Volvo Ocean Race

Musto, Volvo Ocean Race's official supplier of sailing apparel and footwear, halved the thickness of its plastic packaging. It also found a new way to fold its garments, which means the bag size could be reduced by half. This avoided the use of over 11,000 kg of plastic each year.





Reuse

SWITCH SINGLE-USE ITEMS TO REUSABLE VERSIONS

Reusing is one of the best ways to cut down on waste and reduce our impact on the environment. Make a start by choosing reusable cups, plates and cutlery for your catering outlets, and selling reusable water bottles in your shops.

International Golf Federation

The International Golf Federation, working with the GEO Foundation, provided members and guests at the Golf Le Fronde in Italy with reusable metal bottles and free drinking stations. This has helped avoid the use of more than one million single-use plastic bottles since 2013.

English rugby union

Twickenham, the home of the English rugby union team, may serve as many as 140,000 pints of beer during a match. It has made a big cut in plastic use by introducing reusable 'Fan Cups' to replace disposable versions. Customers pay an additional deposit fee with their first drink to cover the cost of the cup. At the end of the day, they can keep the cup as a souvenir or return it and get their deposit back.





Replace

SWITCH TO PLASTIC-FREE ALTERNATIVES, OR SELECT PLASTICS THAT ARE RECYCLED OR EASILY RECYCLABLE

Find alternative materials that have a lower environmental footprint and make sure that whatever you pick can be easily recycled or composted. Give resources a second life by selecting products made from recycled plastic. This will reduce the volume of waste that reaches dumpsites, rivers and the sea.

European football

Football teams including Bayern Munich, Juventus, Manchester United and Real Madrid have all launched kits made from recycled ocean plastic.

Tokyo 2020

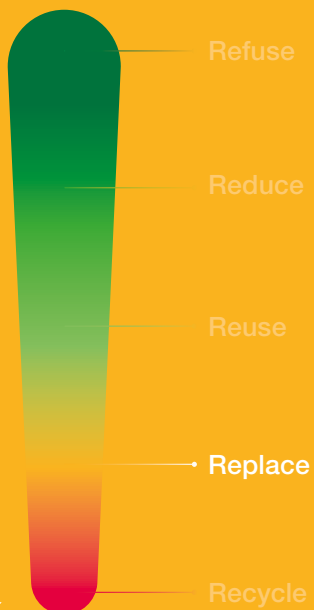
In collaboration with TOP Partner P&G, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 medal podiums will be made from recycled plastic. As many as 1.5 million pieces of waste plastic will be collected in stores around Japan and recovered from the oceans. After the Games, the plastic will be recycled back into product packaging.

Rio 2016

The Maracanã stadium at the Olympic Games Rio 2016 used millions of recycled plastic bottles to manufacture 6,700 stadium seats.

London Marathon

The London Marathon trialed edible and biodegradable drinks capsules to cut down on plastic water bottle waste.





Recycle

DESIGN YOUR EVENT TO ENSURE THAT ANY PLASTIC USED GETS RECYCLED

Having the right waste management approach is all important. Make it as easy as possible for everyone to recycle. Only pick materials that can be recycled in your location.

London Marathon

The London Marathon introduced a unique closed loop recycling project for its 2019 event. This saw plastic bottles collected and returned directly to a reprocessing plant where they were recycled into new bottles.

M. Chinnaswamy cricket stadium

The M. Chinnaswamy cricket stadium in Bengaluru is cutting down on waste. The venue has introduced separate bins for different types of recycling, and volunteers sort waste and educate spectators during Indian Premier League matches. Around 40,000 fans attend each match in the stadium, generating 3-4 tonnes of mixed waste each time – waste that would previously have gone to landfill.





Remind

inspire and influence

SPREAD THE MESSAGE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ACT

Communication is key. Make sure all the right people know about your plastic plan. Use your event to inspire others to act too.

Xiamen Marathon

The Xiamen Marathon has banned single-use plastic bottles and cups. It also got local people involved as 'ploggers' – volunteers who jogged round the course picking up rubbish, while also raising awareness.

Volvo Ocean Race

Sailor Dee Caffari and the crew of the *Turn the Tide on Plastic* yacht used the Volvo Ocean Race

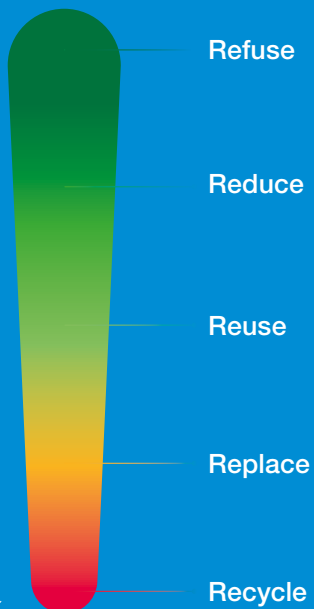
to gather data on microplastics in the ocean and raise awareness.

International Volleyball Federation

The International Volleyball Federation has launched the Good Net project with the Ghost Fishing Foundation. This sees discarded fishing nets recovered from the ocean transformed into volleyball nets for community use.

International Ice Hockey Federation

The International Ice Hockey Federation is turning old plastic banners into new bags – reusing resources and raising awareness on plastic waste. It has also launched a manual on how to run sustainable hockey matches.





Create your event plastic plan

Want to cut down on plastic at your next sporting event? You'll need to create a plan and get all the right people involved. To have the most impact, be sure to start well in advance. These are the key steps you should take:



Identify and prioritise

- Start by understanding where plastic is used and the main sources of plastic waste. You can use the checklist on page 36 to get started.
- You may not be able to tackle everything in one go, so be prepared to prioritise.
 - Include some easy-win steps to boost morale but also some more aspirational and challenging goals. If you think big, you'll get further.



Engage and research

- Identify the stakeholders who will need to be involved. This may be everyone from suppliers and athletes to catering managers and volunteers.
- Discuss your plans and ask for people's ideas. You may find they have helpful suggestions and creative solutions.
- Explore ways to reduce plastics use and alternative options. Beware of unintended consequences: reducing plastic waste from catering outlets, for example, only to find it increases food waste.



Plan

- Write your plan; you can use the template on page 34 as a guide.
- Your plan should set out the goals and policy for your event. Be specific. It should list the actions that must be taken and identify who is responsible.
- You'll probably need to create more detailed plans for different phases and areas of your event.



Contract and support

- Integrate your plastics plan into contracts with all your suppliers, concessions and sponsors. Do this at an early stage so they have time to prepare.
- Work closely with and support suppliers to adopt and implement sustainable purchasing principles and to reuse and recycle plastic products.
- Be clear who's accountable for delivering your plan. Set objectives for colleagues and provide training where needed.



Communicate

- Make sure everyone knows what needs to be done and what their role is. You can use some of the infographics in this toolkit to help you get your message across.
- Keep communicating your plan. You'll need to tell people again and again – changing behaviour takes time.
- Tell visitors, athletes, suppliers and partners what you are doing and why. When you raise awareness, you'll encourage more change at your event and beyond.



Check

- Are your policies being implemented?
Ask to see proof.
- Once the event is underway, you'll need to keep checking and double checking. Get others involved – event staff, cleaners and volunteers can be your eyes on the ground.
- Work with suppliers to obtain accurate data so you can track and report your progress.
- After your event, review what worked and what didn't. Set targets and plan how you can achieve even more next time.

Start your plastic plan

Replace bottles with refill stations



Make it easy to recycle by providing recycling bins



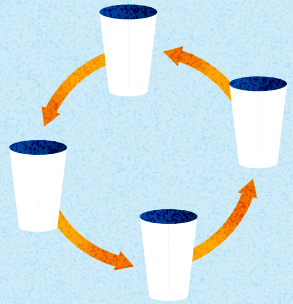
Refuse to use single-use plastic



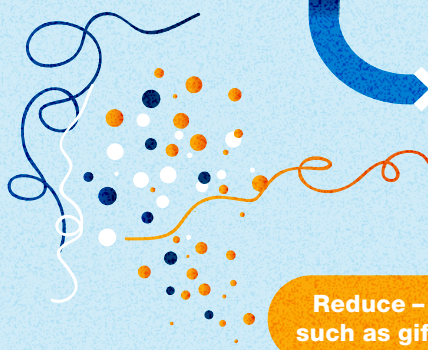
Make it official - add it to your supplier and vendor contracts



Reuse - choose reusable cups and establish a take-back system



Reduce - stop the hidden plastic, such as gifts, banners and balloons



Remind - tell everyone and get them involved





The key components of your plastic plan

EACH EVENT IS DIFFERENT

but these are some of the common challenges you're likely to encounter.

Tackle the bottle problem

Drinks bottles are a major source of plastic waste. Thousands, or even millions, may be used and thrown away at large sporting events.

You can dramatically cut down on this waste by installing refill points. There are lots of ways to do this – ideas include water and soda refill stations or fountains near to

the bar and catering areas, water coolers indoors and even jugs of water on every bar.

Stop sales of plastic drinks bottles. Encourage everyone to bring a refillable bottle. Give away or sell reusable bottles or cups – this could be a great sponsorship opportunity.

Make sure your policy is integrated into all your catering, food and venue contracts.

Say no to single-use plastic for food and drink

Catering, bars and food stands can be a significant source of single-use plastic. But this can change.

Say no to plastic straws. You'll probably find you can go without, but if straws are needed opt for paper or compostable versions.

Use bulk dispensers for condiments such as ketchup. That way you can get rid of single-serve sachets and tubs that are often too difficult to recycle.



Thousands, or even millions, of plastic bottles may be used and thrown away at large sporting events



More and more events are introducing reusable cups. These can eliminate a big source of plastic waste

Switch to reusable or compostable cups, plates, bowls, cutlery and stirrers. Serve drinks on tap or opt for those packaged in cans or glass rather than plastic.

If you must use plastic, make sure it can be recycled and provide recycling bins in the right places. Be sure to check that your waste contractor can recycle that specific type of plastic – different types require different recycling processes. Avoid packaging that uses mixed materials like paper cups that are lined with plastic or juice cartons lined in foil.

Reduce the packaging with each meal. Do you need a plate or box, or would a tray or napkin do?

Ask first – make sure you find out whether a beverage supplier provides plastic-free options before you sign the contract.

If you're picking alternative materials to plastic, do your research. You'll want to be sure that the materials you choose really do have a lower environmental footprint than the plastic you're replacing.

Introduce a reusable cup system

More and more events are introducing reusable cups. These systems can eliminate a big source of plastic waste.

There are several options to choose from. For hospitality zones, a typical restaurant or bar system may work best with glasses collected by waiters and washed before reuse.

In other situations, a deposit or refund system may be better. Or why not invite fans to purchase a special event cup?

Consider a reusable system for other servicewear too, such as plates, bowls, cutlery and chopsticks.



Consider compostable materials

If a reusable system isn't possible, then compostable serviceware may be a good alternative. These are made from natural fibres such as paper and cardboard, bagasse (sugar cane fibre), bamboo or palm leaf. After use, if processed correctly, they will break down into their natural components. But you'll need to do a bit of research, to find a sustainably produced material that can be processed in your location.

Make sure that compostable items get put in the right bin and collected by a waste company who can deal with that particular material. Each may require a different type of processing. Find out what your options are before making the purchase.

What about bio plastic and plant plastic?

These look like plastic but are made from plant fibres such as cellulose or potato starch, rather than fossil fuels. Some types can be composted but only in specialist commercial composting facilities. You'll have to make sure all plant plastic is clearly labelled and collected separately.

If plant plastic ends up in the plastic recycling, it may contaminate the entire batch, which means it can't be recycled. If it ends up in the environment, it poses the same challenges as plastic.



We all need to be conscious of where items come from and what they are made from



It can be hard to find clear information – if in doubt, keep looking. We all need to be conscious of where items come from and what they are made of.



If you're providing food for competitors at the finish line, consider natural alternatives without packaging, such as a banana

Avoid biodegradable and degradable

Do not be tempted to use 'biodegradable' plastic. This is only biodegradable under controlled conditions in an industrial composter at high temperatures and needs to be collected separately. If it ends up in landfill or the ocean, it will pose the same problems as conventional plastic. Biodegradable plastic often isn't recyclable or compostable. Degradable plastic (sometimes called oxodegradable or photodegradable) is just plastic that will break down into smaller pieces faster. Not a good option.

Athlete hydration and energy

Athlete hydration stations can generate a lot of plastic waste. However, there are alternatives. For example, paper cups can work if you pick recyclable or compostable options and have a system for collecting them.



Energy gels, bars and drinks are also a big source of plastic waste. Look for some of the new alternatives that are becoming available, such as energy gels in edible packaging. If that's not possible, provide a collection point for energy gel wrappers which can then be recycled by a specialist company. Some energy product providers will offer their own take-back programme.

If you're providing food for competitors at the finish line, consider natural alternatives without packaging, such as a banana.

Shops, merchandise and sponsors

Don't give out plastic bags. Make sure your vendors don't either.

Don't sell merchandise, souvenirs and fan paraphernalia made from single-use plastic. Encourage teams and clubs to steer clear of plastic too.



If sponsors are providing giveaway items or goodie bags, make sure they're not made from single-use plastic. Encourage more creative alternatives or those made from sustainable materials. A branded reusable water bottle, for example, could make a great giveaway.

Supplier packaging

Engage your suppliers on plastic from the start. Ask them to reduce, replace or remove plastic packaging for everything delivered to your site. Where packaging is necessary, partner with suppliers to set up a collection and return process so materials can be recycled.

Prizes and celebration

Fireworks, glitter and confetti may all contain plastic. Look for better alternatives such as biodegradable glitter or rice paper confetti. Or rethink your celebration altogether – how about a light show rather than fireworks? Don't release balloons into the environment where they cause litter and

can harm or kill wildlife. Even latex balloons will take several years to degrade if they end up in the ocean. Make sure helium balloons are weighted and disposed of safely.

Signage, branding and ticketing

Plastic often finds its way into tickets, accreditation, branding and signage. Find ways to design it out and opt for reusable, or at least recyclable, alternatives.

Make sure your signage can be reused at future events – don't include a date on it. Purchase reusable cable ties to replace single-use plastic ones. You only have to use them a couple of times to make the extra expense worthwhile.

Reduce the amount of signage and branding where possible. Look for creative alternatives – for example, a chalk board can look great and be updated as needed throughout the day.

Avoid PVC because it contains many potentially harmful chemicals.



Plastic often finds its way into tickets, accreditation, branding and signage. Find ways to design it out



Get your recycling system in place

Your efforts to reduce waste will quickly come unstuck if you don't make it easy for people to put their rubbish in the right bin.

Plan your waste management system right at the start. Understand what's possible in your location and which materials can be recycled or composted. Match your materials to the local waste infrastructure. For example, don't pick compostable cups if there is nowhere to compost them. However, do be prepared to do some research. For example, if your main waste contractor doesn't offer composting, you may be able to find a specialist company who can help.

Think carefully about where to place your recycling and composting bins. Make sure you have enough. Good signage is



**Tell everyone about your plastic plan.
Show them how they can get involved**

essential – really make it clear what can and cannot be recycled in each bin.

Recycling isn't a perfect solution to plastic waste because most plastic can only be recycled a few times. What's more, in some locations there may be no recycling or composting infrastructure available. Make sure you always refuse, reduce and reuse as much plastic as possible.

Communication and awareness

Tell everyone about your plastic plan. Show them how they can get involved.

Integrate information on your efforts into every communication, from social media posts, posters and screens, to ticket sales, participant information, and programmes.

This will not only help you achieve your goals but can create a ripple effect – encouraging change across the sporting world and supply chain.



Recap: Rethinking plastic – the six Rs

✓ 1. REFUSE

Do we really need these plastic items?

Example actions: Don't offer plastic straws with drinks.

✓ 2. REDUCE

Can we cut down the amount of plastic we're using?

Example actions: Ask suppliers to reduce plastic packaging. If you have to use plastic, choose items made from recycled plastic.

✓ 3. REUSE

Can we swap single-use items for reusable alternatives?

Example actions: Introduce a reusable cup scheme or install drinking water refill stations.

✓ 4. REPLACE

Can we switch to a plastic-free alternative?

Example actions: Opt for compostable plates and cups instead.

✓ 5. RECYCLE

How do we design our event to ensure that everything gets recycled?

Example actions: Make sure there are enough recycling or composting bins in the right places with very clear signage.

✓ 6. REMIND, INSPIRE AND INFLUENCE

How can we get our colleagues, suppliers, athletes and fans on board?

Example actions: Use tickets, posters, supplier contracts, event programmes, signs and more to encourage everyone to reduce, reuse and recycle.

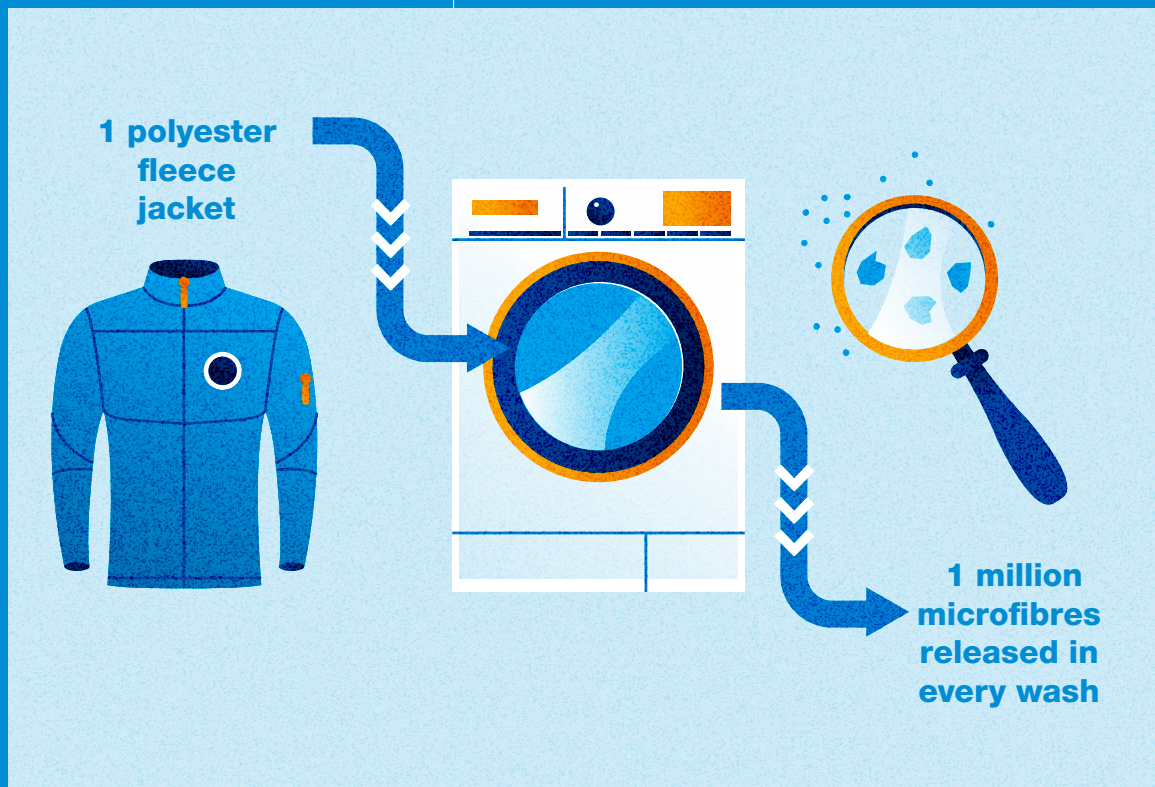


How your sportswear ends up in the ocean

MOST OF TODAY'S SPORTSWEAR is made from synthetic fibres, often derived from plastic. When we wash our clothes and kit they can shed tiny microfibres – a type of microplastic, thinner than a human hair. Washing a single polyester fleece jacket, for example, may result in the release of almost 1 million fibres per wash.⁹

These microfibres get washed down the drains and end up in our rivers, lakes and oceans; see page 8. Clothing isn't the only source of microplastics, but it is a significant one.

Unfortunately, there isn't yet an easy solution for tackling microfibres from sportswear. On page 29 we list a few things you *can* do.





7 steps to reduce microfibres



1. GO NATURAL

Choose sportswear made from natural fibres.



2. CUT DOWN ON FLEECES

Avoid fabrics that shed a lot of fibres, such as fleeces.



3. CHANGE HOW YOU WASH

Wash clothes in a full load at a lower temperature, on a short cycle and with a lower spin speed.



4. CATCH THE FIBRES

Use a wash bag that captures microfibres or fit a microfibre filter to your washing machine.



5. SAY NO TO DRIERS

Air dry synthetic clothes rather than tumble drying.



6. RECYCLE

When you no longer need a piece of clothing, make sure it gets recycled.



7. SPEAK UP

Choose a sportswear brand that is taking action on microfibre pollution or contact your existing clothing provider to urge them to act.



I'm an athlete – what can I do?

AS AN ATHLETE you can make changes in your own life to cut down on plastic waste. But you can have an even bigger impact by becoming an advocate for change – encouraging sports fans, sponsors and organisers to reduce, reuse and recycle.

1. Take action yourself

With a few simple actions you can make a big dent in your plastic footprint. Make a commitment to:

- Refuse single-use plastics
- Opt for reusable alternatives like refillable water bottles and bags
- Recycle whenever you can
- Choose sportswear made from natural fibres or recycled plastic
- Follow our seven steps to reduce microfibres when washing your sportswear; see page 29



2. Ask others to act

Ask your sponsors, suppliers, sports federation and event organisers what they're doing to cut down on plastic waste.

If they don't have a good answer, encourage them to take action. You can start by sharing this toolkit.

3. Spread the word

As an athlete, your face may be recognised by thousands or millions of people around the world. Show your commitment and encourage sports fans and spectators to cut down on plastic. You can start by taking the Big Plastic Pledge, a new campaign involving athletes from across the world. See page 31 for more.



To sign up, visit
www.bigplasticpledge.com



Take the Big Plastic Pledge

THE BIG PLASTIC PLEDGE is a new athlete-led initiative that aims to use the power of sport to achieve zero plastic waste in the oceans.

It's been launched by Olympic champion Hannah Mills MBE and is supported by the IOC. While competing at the Olympic Games Rio 2016, Hannah witnessed the full scale of the ocean plastic crisis and was so shocked she decided to try and make a difference.

Now she is asking other athletes and sports fans to sign up to the Big Plastic Pledge, with the goal of getting the entire Olympic family involved by the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

The Big Plastic Pledge calls on athletes and fans to reduce the use of single-use plastic in their daily lives by pledging to at least three actions, such as using refillable water bottles, refusing plastic packaging and encouraging sports clubs and event organisers to find alternatives to single-use plastic.

By taking the Pledge you join Olympians, elite athletes, sports fans, fun runners and other individuals who have been touched by sport in some way. All on a mission together.



To sign up, visit
www.bigplasticpledge.com

BIG  **PLASTIC
PLEDGE**

I'm a sports fan – what can I do about plastic?

Make the Clean Seas and Big Plastic Pledge: Commit to cut down on plastic



Spread the word: If you have an idea to reduce, reuse or recycle, speak up!



Choose green: From the hotel you book to the souvenirs you buy, look for the more sustainable option



Come prepared: Bring your reusable bottle, bag and cup



Refuse: Don't accept single-use plastic



Recycle: Put your waste in the right bin



As a fan, you can cut down on plastic every time you attend a sporting fixture. These are some ideas to get you thinking.



To sign up, visit
www.bigplasticpledge.com



What next?

EVERY SINGLE PERSON in the sporting community can help to tackle plastic pollution. We hope this toolkit inspires you to take action and to refuse, reduce, reuse, replace and recycle at your next sporting event.

You can find more information about plastics and sport here:

www.cleanseas.org

www.bigplasticpledge.com



Annex 1 template: Event plastic plan

Event plastic policy

Define what you're trying to achieve and set clear goals. Here's an example:

Ambition: To eliminate single-use plastic and to increase reuse and recycling.

Policy requirements:

- Refuse: No single-use plastic to be used in catering, merchandising or shops
- Reuse: Choose items and materials that can be reused
- Reduce: Suppliers must use the minimum amount of plastic needed for packaging and ensure packaging can be reused or recycled
- Replace: Any disposable items must be recyclable or compostable

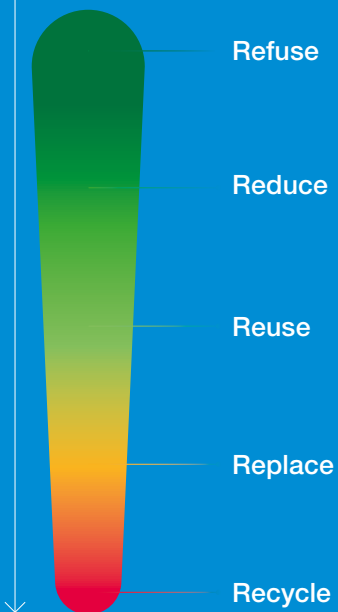
- Recycle: All waste must be recycled or composted
- Remind: All relevant stakeholders should be informed of the policy

Waste management and recycling plan

Meet with waste contractors at an early stage to develop your waste and recycling plan. Integrate this information into your plastic policy and communicate it to all stakeholders. For example, if your policy requires only recyclable plastic, make sure it specifies which plastic can be recycled in your location.

Make sure you know the answer to these four questions:

- Which plastic and other materials can and cannot be recycled or composted at our location?
- How many recycling and composting bins are needed?
- Where should they go?
- What signage and communications will we need to help people put their waste in the right bin?





Stakeholders

To reduce plastic at your event, it is important to work with other stakeholders who may be responsible for the use/purchase of plastic items. Identify everyone who needs to be involved, including both internal and external stakeholders. Some stakeholders may need to take action; others will just need to be kept informed. These are some examples:

Stakeholder/s	What's required from them	Next steps (please fill in)
Waste management contractor/ local authorities	To provide recycling and composting facilities	
Catering manager/concessions	To implement the plastic plan across catering outlets	
Athletes/sports fans	To be aware of and to publicly support the plastic policy	
Suppliers	To reduce plastic use and plastic packaging and source plastic-free alternatives	
Sponsors	To support the plastic plan and apply it to any merchandising and communications for the event	



Checklist

Identify where plastic may be used at your event. These are ideas to get you started but there are likely to be many more.

- Bags
- Balloons
- Banners
- Beer cups
- Bin bags
- Bottle caps
- Bottles
- Bowls
- Boxes
- Branding
- Bubble wrap
- Buckets
- Bunting
- Butter (single-serve)
- Cable/zip ties
- Cartridges (ink/toner)
- Chopsticks
- Cigarette butts
- Cling wrap
- Clothing
- Coffee and tea capsules
- Coffee cups
- Coffee cup lids
- Condiment containers
- Confetti
- Cutlery
- Fan paraphernalia
- Fireworks
- Flags
- Furniture
- Gaffer tape
- Giveaways
- Glitter
- Hazard tape
- Heat-sealed food pouches
- Ice-cream wrappers
- Inflatable pouches (packing)
- Laminated paper
- Lanyards
- Lids
- Merchandise
- Packets
- Pallet 'cling' wrap
- Pallet (blue) banding
- Pens
- Plates
- Ponchos (rain)
- Polystyrene boxes
- Polystyrene balls and packing
- Race bibs
- Rope
- Shopping bags
- Shrink wrap
- Signs
- Stationery
- Stickers (peel-off section)
- Sticky tape
- Stirrers
- Straws
- Streamers
- Sweet wrappers
- Tattoos (peel-off section)
- Tickets
- Toothpicks (plastic wrapped)
- Trays
- Tubs
- Uniforms and textiles
- Wine goblets
- Wrapping/sleeves
- Wristbands



Action list

For each plastic item that may be used at your event, identify whether it can be refused, reduced, reused, replaced, or recycled. Refer to 'Rethinking plastic - the six Rs' on page 27. These are some examples:

Plastic item	Refuse/reduce/reuse/replace/recycle?
Cable ties	Reuse: Purchase reusable cable ties to replace single-use plastic ones.
Disposable plastic cups	Replace: Implement a reusable cup system.
Laminated paper	Replace: Switch to reusable plastic covers.
Packaging	Reduce: Require suppliers to reduce packaging.
Signage	Reuse: Don't include dates on your signage so it can be reused at future events.
Single-use plastic bags	Refuse: No single-use plastic bags to be given out at the event. Replace: Offer bags for life for sale instead. Remind: Encourage spectators to bring their own reusable bags.
Straws and stirrers	Refuse: No straws or stirrers to be given out at the event.
Drinks bottles	Refuse: No plastic drinks bottles to be sold at the event. Replace: Provide refill stations and refillable bottles. Remind: Encourage participants and spectators to bring their own bottles.



Annex 2: Matrix – Plastic item alternatives

This list suggests alternatives to common single-use plastic items. Remember, reducing waste should be the number one priority. Always start by asking “do we really need this item?” Check that alternative products have been sourced and manufactured sustainably.

Catering

Item	Alternative options
Cling film	Use tupperware or glass containers instead. Or switch to waxed paper wraps.
Coffee and tea capsules	Make sure you pick tea bags that don't contain plastic. Avoid coffee pods and capsules. Use urns or espresso machines instead.
Condiments in sachets	Replace single-use sachets with large reusable bottles. If you need to provide individual serving pots, use reusable or FSC paper versions.
Cutlery	Require catering outlets to use metal reusable cutlery. If washing facilities aren't available, then wooden or compostable options may be a good alternative.
Drink cups	Reusable cups are the best option if washing facilities are available. Many FSC paper or compostable versions are also available.
Lunch boxes	Opt for reusable products.
Plastic straws	Instruct caterers not to use straws or to replace with paper, bamboo or metal versions. There are even some edible straw options now available.
Plastic bottles	Replace with reusable bottles or cups. Don't forget to provide refill stations or drinking fountains.
Plates/bowls	Reusable plates should be the first option. If disposable plates are needed, then opt for bamboo or FSC paper versions.
Stirrers	Replace with reusable tea spoons or use wooden stirrers from FSC-certified wood.



Branding

Item	Alternative options
Accreditation	Don't put dates on your lanyards so they can be reused. Switch to FSC paper where possible.
Banners	Choose PET recyclable banners and avoid PVC. Don't include dates on your banners so they can be used again. For indoor events, look at cardboard signs.
Fan paraphernalia	Require event organisers not to give out plastic items.
Laminated paper	Use reusable plastic wallets instead of laminating.
Lanyards	Pick a reusable product. Make sure you collect them at the end of the event. You can also find lanyards made from recycled PET.
Plastic cable ties	Switch to reusable bungee cords and velcro versions.
Stationery	Opt for non-plastic products or those with recycled content.

Athletes

Item	Alternative options
Competition bibs and clothing	Choose natural materials such as organic cotton or products made from recycled plastic. Some suppliers will also collect clothing for recycling after use. Wash synthetic clothing in the right way to reduce microfibres.
Energy gels and bars	Look for non-plastic alternatives, such as those in edible packaging. Pick a supplier that will collect and recycle old wrappers.



Shops, merchandise and sponsors

Item	Alternative options
Balloons and fireworks	Avoid balloons and fireworks. Never release balloons into the environment. Opt for alternatives to fireworks such as a light show.
Bin bags	Choose compostable bags for compostable waste. For other waste, bags made from recycled PET are a good option.
Bunting	Use fabric bunting rather than plastic.
Gifts to athletes	Don't give out plastic items.
Glitter	Choose biodegradable glitter or rice paper confetti.
Merchandise	Encourage/require retailers not to sell single-use plastic items.
Packaging from suppliers	Ask suppliers to reduce plastic packaging on their products or to supply reusable packaging.
Plastic carrier bags	Don't give out plastic bags. Sell paper, cotton or 'bags for life' instead. If using cotton bags, look for products that are organic or Fairtrade.
Polystyrene balls and packaging	Don't allow polystyrene. Use FSC cardboard alternatives.
Ponchos	Choose a compostable alternative to plastic ponchos. Encourage spectators to bring their own rain gear.
Signage/wayfinding	Don't include dates on your signage, so it can be reused. For indoor events, look at cardboard signage systems.



Endnotes

1 UNEP Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability

2 UNEP www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution

3 Estimate by US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Woods Hole Sea Grant

4 UNEP <https://gefmarineplastics.org/publications/addressing-marine-plastics-a-systemic-approach-stocktaking-report>

5 IUCN Primary Microplastics in the Oceans: A Global Evaluation of Sources, Julien Boucher, Damien Friot 2017

6 Strategies to reduce the global carbon footprint of plastics, Jiajia Zheng and Sangwon Suh

7 Integrity of Science: Bottled Water and Energy Factsheet: Getting to 17 Million Barrels, The Pacific Institute 2007

8 Human Consumption of Microplastics, Kieran D. Cox, Garth A. Covernton, Hailey L. Davies, John F. Dower, Francis Juanes, Sarah E. Dudas 2019

9 MERMAIDS EU Life+, Report on localization and estimation of laundry microplastics sources and on micro and nanoplastics present in washing wastewater effluents (A1), 2016

A minute
on the lips



15
lifetimes
in the
ocean

Sport says no to single-use plastic