

Report on Sustainability Goals: Wanda Diamond League Xiamen - "For a Better Tomorrow"

Introduction

This report presents the achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement in the sustainability efforts of the Wanda Diamond League Xiamen, now in its second edition. As one of China's premier athletic events, this year marks a significant milestone as we implement the World Athletics sustainability standard, *Athletics for a Better World*, for the first time. Our commitment to these standards reinforces our vision to not only be a leader in athletics but also in sustainability. This report evaluates our progress across key sustainability goals, highlighting our journey toward making a lasting, positive impact on the environment and local community.

Achievements

1. Sustainable Production and Consumption:

- The event has successfully implemented a procurement plan focusing on locally produced products and services. The target of using at least 35% local services for 2024 ensures a direct positive impact on the local economy and reduced transportation emissions.
- Commitment to reducing unnecessary purchases and prioritizing reusable products demonstrates a focus on reducing waste and promoting sustainable consumption.

2. Waste Management:

- A comprehensive waste management plan, including waste stream reporting and the goal of diverting 50% of waste from landfills in 2024, sets a clear roadmap for minimizing environmental impact.
- Collaboration with local government and waste management providers signifies a strong effort to align with best practices and improve waste diversion outcomes.

3. Food and Catering:

- The introduction of locally sourced food, a well-thought-out menu planning process, and measures to minimize single-use packaging, such as replacing plastic bottles with paper cups in 2024, highlight significant steps towards reducing food and packaging waste.

4. Climate Change & Carbon:

- The establishment of a carbon management plan, including renewable energy use and replacing VIP/staff vehicles with 28 electric cars in 2024, shows a commitment to carbon reduction.

- The partnership with Ant Forest to measure and offset carbon footprints engages the broader community in sustainability efforts, allowing for greater participation in emission reductions.

5. Local Environment & Air Quality:

- The initiative to invite host city representatives and athletes to plant trees around Egret Stadium is a proactive measure to improve air quality and promote environmental consciousness.

- Monitoring air quality during the event creates transparency and accountability for local environmental impacts.

6. Community Impact:

- Strong engagement with the local community, including recruiting volunteers from Xiamen University and showcasing local culture at the event, fosters community involvement and enhances the event's cultural relevance.

- Involvement of local athletics clubs in event rehearsals and as referees integrates local sports communities, strengthening the event's ties with Xiamen's athletics scene.

7. Global Equality and Diversity:

- Fair competition through drug screening procedures and inclusive sporting formats (including mixed relays) ensures equity in participation.

- Clear anti-discrimination policies, equal access to training facilities, and accessibility measures ensure that the event is inclusive for all participants and staff.

Challenges

1. Sustainable Production and Consumption:

- Achieving a balance between locally sourced products and the overall environmental and social impact of suppliers may present challenges, especially in sourcing certain items locally without compromising quality or availability.

- The challenge of avoiding unnecessary purchases while maintaining operational flexibility for unforeseen event needs may require ongoing evaluation. For many of the purchases Wanda Sport has a system for selecting vendors, the focus needs to be on influencing those vendors to following our sustainability measures. For this year we did not have much time to do this.

2. Waste Management:

- Diverting 50% of waste from landfills is an ambitious goal that requires robust infrastructure, coordination, and stakeholder participation, which could be a challenge, particularly with varied waste streams. There was no system on reporting the different waste streams in Xiamen, so we had to manually weigh the waste at both the Hotel and the Stadium.

- Effective communication and education of stakeholders (e.g., spectators, staff) about proper waste disposal practices will be essential but challenging to implement.

3. Climate Change & Carbon:

- Reducing the carbon footprint through sustainable travel options for attendees and athletes presents logistical and behavioral challenges, especially in promoting public transport over private vehicles. We did have campaigns promoting public transport to the arena, but Xiamen is a large city, and most of the CO₂ emissions are from spectator and athlete travel. Secondly the calendar is the biggest factor in the events emissions. Transporting large groups of people over long distances is inevitable – but further reductions can be made with optimizing the global athletics calendar.

- Implementing renewable energy solutions at scale might be challenging due to infrastructure constraints or initial investment costs. The Egret stadium is relatively new (construction completed in 2023), but there is still a lot of the infrastructure that is not complete, and there are still some challenges when it comes to optimizing energy consumption at the arena.

4. Local Environment & Air Quality:

- While the initiative to plant trees and monitor air quality is valuable, ensuring tangible improvements in air quality through a one-time event contribution may face limitations, particularly given Xiamen's urbanization.

- The long-term sustainability of environmental protection actions may be contingent on consistent collaboration with local authorities beyond the event itself. Continued collaboration with Xiamen city and Xiamen Sports Bureau will be a key factor in improving the local air quality.

5. Community Impact:

- Sustaining long-term local engagement, particularly with volunteers, could be a challenge once the event concludes, and retaining volunteers for future events may require ongoing efforts in training and motivation.

- Balancing global event demands while integrating and highlighting local culture effectively might require constant recalibration.

6. Global Equality and Diversity:

- Ensuring that diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity initiatives are fully implemented across all staff, contractors, and participants may be challenging, particularly in integrating these values consistently in practice. Providing training for all staff in these areas are nearly impossible, at least for contractors. For volunteers and staff we had training, that we will look to improve on next year.

- Adequately addressing reports of inequality or discrimination through the online reporting platform will require prompt and transparent actions to ensure trust in the process.

Areas of Improvement

1. Enhanced Stakeholder Engagement:

- The event can work to deepen stakeholder engagement by involving local communities, government entities, and global partners earlier in the planning stages. This could help with refining waste management systems, carbon reduction efforts, and air quality improvements.
- Providing more opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration with local and international sustainability experts can drive innovation in achieving sustainability goals.

2. Education and Awareness Campaigns:

- Conducting more robust public campaigns on waste management, carbon offsetting, and the use of sustainable transportation could help in achieving sustainability targets more efficiently.
- Spectator engagement in sustainability practices such as public transport use or carbon offset donations can be improved through incentives and visible outreach efforts.
- There is a lack of knowledge and understanding of what sustainability is in China. We had difficulties explaining why certain measures was necessary and the importance of implementing them. This can be further strengthened to awareness campaigns throughout the organization and further to stakeholders.

3. Monitoring and Reporting Systems:

- There is potential to strengthen the data collection and monitoring of the carbon footprint, waste streams, and air quality, ensuring detailed transparency in progress reporting. Some of the data collection showed to be challenging to obtain, or it was just not an existing system for it in Xiamen.
- Improved reporting on the outcomes of sustainability initiatives, such as how much waste is being reduced or how air quality is being improved post-event, will provide a clearer picture of the long-term impact.

4. Partnership Development:

- Expanding partnerships with sustainability-focused organizations (e.g., renewable energy providers, local environmental NGOs) can help address gaps in achieving long-term sustainability goals, such as air quality improvement and carbon reductions.

5. Post-Event Legacy Planning:

- Focus on the long-term impact of the event's sustainability initiatives through legacy programs that continue to benefit the local community and environment after the event ends. These could include tree planting programs, local business partnerships, and volunteer retention strategies.

Conclusion

The Wanda Diamond League Xiamen demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, with tangible progress in areas like waste management, local community engagement, and carbon reduction. Continued effort in addressing challenges and improving stakeholder involvement, monitoring, and education will be key to enhancing the event's sustainability performance and legacy.

With this being the second edition of WDL Xiamen, and the first time we started with sustainability measures – there are a lot of areas for improvement, but all in all the first year was a success in many areas, and the organization learned a lot from this experience.