



# SDG Striker

Scoring Goals for Sustainability



**Strikers** for sustainability -  
SDGs in football

**How To Be**  
a **Striker**

*Interview:*  
**Forever Green**  
and **Real Betis**  
**Balompie**

**The future** of  
artificial pitches?

**Insights on how to**  
**engage volunteers**  
with a **gender**  
**perspective** in  
sports organizations

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**SUSTAINABLE**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  **GOALS**





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### Links to Website and social media channels



@sdgstriker



@SdgStriker

Web:





SDG Striker is a European co-funded project under the Erasmus+ programme that aims to **implement and communicate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)** for improving good governance in grassroots sports clubs and organizations resulting in positive impacts over the communities around them.



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# Strikers for sustainability SDGs in football



Written by: Lisa Eisner

## What are the SDGs?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>1</sup> was adopted by the United Nations in 2015. It is a shared concept for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and it includes the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. The SDGs are a call for action by all countries. They follow the approach that the targets to end poverty and other deprivations, to improve health and educa-

tion, to reduce inequality, to boost economic growth, to fight against climate change, and to ensure the preservation of forests and ocean must be addressed together.<sup>2</sup>

The 17 SDGs are shown in **Figure 1**. In total, they include 169 targets, that are assigned to the different goals.

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



**Figure 1:** The 17 Sustainable Development Goals. **Source:** United Nations 2021.

**THE 17 GOALS**

**169**  
Targets

**3176**  
Events

**1322**  
Publications

**6094**  
Actions

**1** • United Nations General Assembly 2015.

**2** • United Nations n.d.

## How does SPORT address the SDGs?

According to the United Nations sports in general are an **“important enabler for sustainable development”**.<sup>3</sup> With the overall objective to leave no one behind, the 2030 Agenda represents an opportunity for global change and development all around the world, also including the field of sport, as with sport it is possible to promote peace and development targets very cost-effectively.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, sports promote **tolerance and respect** and it contributes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities. In addition, sports can address targets regarding **health, education, and social inclusion**.<sup>5</sup> The SDG that represents the clearest relation to sports is **Goal 3 (Good health and well-being)**.<sup>6</sup> Concerning the health benefits of sports, sport does not only benefit the physical fitness, but it can also communicate a healthy lifestyle to children. Moreover, physical exercises also have a **positive effect on mental health, self-esteem, and self-confidence**.<sup>7</sup>

**3** • United Nations General Assembly 2015.

**4** • Lemke n.d.

**5** • United Nations General Assembly 2015.

**6** • SDG Fund 2018.

**7** • Lemke n.d.



Therefore, in order to support the SDGs, sports need to be fully integrated into development programs and policies, on the local, national and global level.<sup>8</sup> In a certain way, sports can be related to all of the 17 SDGs, whereby for some of the goals a greater contribution is identified, and some are only limited or indirectly addressed, but not less important to deal with. The SDGs where a direct impact of sports is identified by the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace are SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, SDG 8, SDG 11, SDG 16, and SDG 17.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Fund released a compelling Toolkit for Action for “The incorporation of sports to the achievement of the SDG”, which includes several examples explaining how to integrate different SDGs in sports, addressing Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11 and 16.<sup>10</sup> Hence, sports and therefore also football can contribute to the SDGs in different ways and the SDG STRIKER project shows some possibilities for this contribution.

**8** • SDG Fund 2018.

**9** • UNOSDP n.d.

**10** • SDG Fund 2018.



## The role of SDG STRIKER

SDG STRIKER seeks to increase the organizational capacity for **Good Governance in grassroots football**. Therefore, the clubs should be assisted in the implementation and communication of the SDGs through ad hoc action at local level so they can align themselves with European, national, and local public policy on SDGs. In the project there are **three pilots** addressing different topics on sustainability and therefore also different SDGs:



### Scotland: Energy efficiency and energy poverty

The pilot in Scotland includes **6 of the 17 SDGs**. The topic of energy poverty addresses Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities) and the topic of energy efficiency deals with Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and Goal 13 (Climate Action). Furthermore, Goal 17 (Partnership for the goals) is addressed by the Scottish pilot through interlinkage and a variety of activities.



### Portugal: Photovoltaics potential and feasibility on sports facilities

With the topic of PV panel installations at the pilot in Portugal, **4 SDGs are tackled**, including Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and Goal 13 (Climate Action).



### Norway: Microplastic regarding its use as infill material for artificial football pitches

With the aim to find a greener alternative to microplastic as artificial turf filler the Norwegian pilot deals with **4 SDGs**, namely, Goal 9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), and Goal 13 (Climate Action).



*Therefore, SDG STRIKER aims to contribute to the SDGs by covering **8 out of 17 SDGs** throughout the project.*

Interested in what's next and how the embedding of the SDGs in pilot activities is evolving? Then stay on the ball and follow us on social media.

 @sdgstriker  
 @SdgStriker



# How To Be a Striker



Written by:  
Cameron Watt  
and Marc Vallverdú



## What does it mean to be a **Striker**? Striking GOALS for sustainability

With the growing climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the multiple environmental and social challenges the current societies are facing, there is a need to implement measures to **ensure sustainability**. In Europe, numerous individual and collective actions are taking place in favour of greener and fairer socioeconomic models that will have a positive impact on life quality of future generations. Throughout different socioeconomic sectors, new initiatives are developing for a more environmental and socially responsible production processes. Now is the time of **sport businesses and clubs** to join into the shared effort by implementing changes on their structure and functioning and providing greener and fairer alternatives. Now is the time for the clubs to strike goals for sustainability at the same time they strike goals in the football field.

Striking goals for sustainability means using sport for promoting healthy lifestyles, equality

environments, social inclusion, personal growth... but also revise the impacts of the club's activities such as waste generation, water and electricity consumption, urban planning, social roles, accessibility, and diversity. In this sense, the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals** are the guidelines and main points of action that the clubs can set as objectives to attain for an **active role** in the transformation for a better world, for current and future generations.

Always at the heart of their local communities, there is a huge opportunity for **football clubs to lead the way** in reducing the impact they have on the environment. Not only at home in the community but also abroad, setting an example internationally for other clubs to follow. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are the goals to be struck by the clubs to **win the match for social wellbeing and against climate change**.

- Avoid single-use products
- Change your diet to a more plant-based one
- Use sustainable mobility systems (bike, public or shared transport)
- Learn how to be more energy efficient at home
- Get more actively involved with your club to help in its transition to sustainability
- Commit to local causes
- Get informed
- Change to LED lighting
- Reduce & recycle
- Have PV installations
- Make a proper waste selection and recycling
- Foster sustainable mobility (providing bike parking spaces, EV charging points, group transporting options...)
- Use sustainable packaging and avoid single-use products
- Promote a plant-based diet
- Promote E-ticketing to replace printing

## The role of the clubs



Clubs and federations have a broad impact on the day-to-day people's lives, from the smaller ones that work at a local level, to the biggest that welcome hundreds of thousands of spectators each year and deliver world class events. With such a **social and economic influence** and such a **power to impact** the environment through their activities, a great responsibility lies on them.

The SDG Striker project aims to **help clubs and federations to consider their impact**, showcase the journey others have undertaken and ultimately strive to create sustainable organisations that work with their communities to achieve the best possible results. In this framework, the clubs and federations are committed to playing its part in **creating more sustainable sport activities and events**, starting by reducing the impact on the environment of the sport infrastructures (stadiums, football pitches, sport schools, offices...) and continuing with the implementation of the best environmental practices in sport events together with education and role modelling

for younger generations of sportsmen and sportswomen.

Federations and clubs' involvement in the SDG Striker project has afforded the opportunity to **highlight the undertaken work in this area**, focusing more specifically on energy efficiency initiatives across clubs at all levels of the game, from the smallest grassroots football club right up to the national teams and stadiums. No matter the scale of stadium or football club involved, there are measures which are scalable and therefore can be implemented at all levels and result in positive impacts whether in core financial or commercial terms or returning improved operational efficiencies.

In the SDG Striker's framework, **three football federations** have taken huge action into implementing UN's Sustainable Development Goals: Scottish FA, Norwegian FA, and Portuguese FA are implementing three pilots **aimed to strike sustainable goals and contribute to the transformation of the sport's sector**.



## Be a Striker



No matter how small or big you are, you can also be a striker by undertaking daily actions that end up having a high and wide positive impact.

*It's your turn to be take action, every change made, no matter how big or small can help make a difference!*



# Interview about Forever Green and Real Betis Balompie



EFDN has conducted an interview to the **General Manager at Real Betis Balompie Foundation**, with experience in policy design, institutional coordination and field interventions in Asia, Central America, Europe, and United Nations global events. Also specialised in environmental and sustainability issues, sports, youth employment, social inclusion of vulnerable groups of people, within the framework of Corporate Social Responsibility.



## **Please could you introduce the Real Betis Balompie and its Forever Green initiative?**

**Real Betis Balompie** was founded on September 12th 1907. The Club was granted the honorary title 'Real' in 1914 by King Alfonso XIII. The team's biggest honours are a League championship, won in 1934/35 and two Copa del Rey victories, in 1977 and 2005. Real Betis was the first Andalusian team to play in the Spanish first division. Betis' home stadium is the Benito Villamarín Stadium, which is owned by the club and can seat up to 60,271 fans.

**Forever Green** is an open platform for partners who want to show the world what they are doing today for the future of our planet. It uses the power of the most popular sport on the planet to help saving it and it is to make the millions of fans of today our allies to fight against climate change tomorrow.

## **The platform Forever Green is an innovative way to create collaboration between people. How many people are in this platform and what type of people are they?**

More than 50 organizations have joined the platform, including companies, NGOs, foundations, sports and cultural events and institutions, like Kipin energy, Arrebola, Bureau Veritas, Ecoterrae, Play Station as companies; National Paddle tournament, Futsal National League and La Liga as sports entities; OK Planet, Ecovidrio or Ecolec Foundation as non-lucrative organizations or green initiatives as The Climate Pledge by Amazon or Climate Neutral Now by United Nations. Also, large organizations such as LG, who are doing reforestation with high technology items.

The Platform Forever Green platform can be used together with its member to develop projects or call to actions.

### **Could you present the Forever Green model and some of its current actions?**

As a professional football club belonging to one of most followed leagues in the world, we have the power to be a referent and speaker to society. That is why we decided to have Forever Green open to any company that would like to be part of this ambition, so we can create a global awareness. This is also thanks to the club being a multidisciplinary entity together with passionate fans, committed, and involved with the club and all the actions we are developing.

The Project is divided in five big Areas:

- Mobility*
- Climate Change*
- Nature protection*
- Recycling*
- Sustainable club*

### **What is your policy to strive for carbon neutrality? Each year you register your carbon results, what is the status of your policy and its improvements?**

Since the launch of Forever Green, eco criteria for the selection of suppliers have been implemented within the Club and sustainable mobility has been promoted among employees, through the availability of a fleet of electric scooters and the creation of incentives for bicycle transport. This action will be extended to Real Betis Balompié fans when the fans can return to the Benito Villamarín Stadium. In addition, in all the Club facilities, containers have been installed for the recycling of electrical and electronic equipment, glass and plastics.

The measurement, reduction and compensation of the carbon footprint is also among the key premises of Forever Green. The Club has partnered with the Andalusian consultancy Ecoterrae, which provides the appropriate technical advice for this mission.

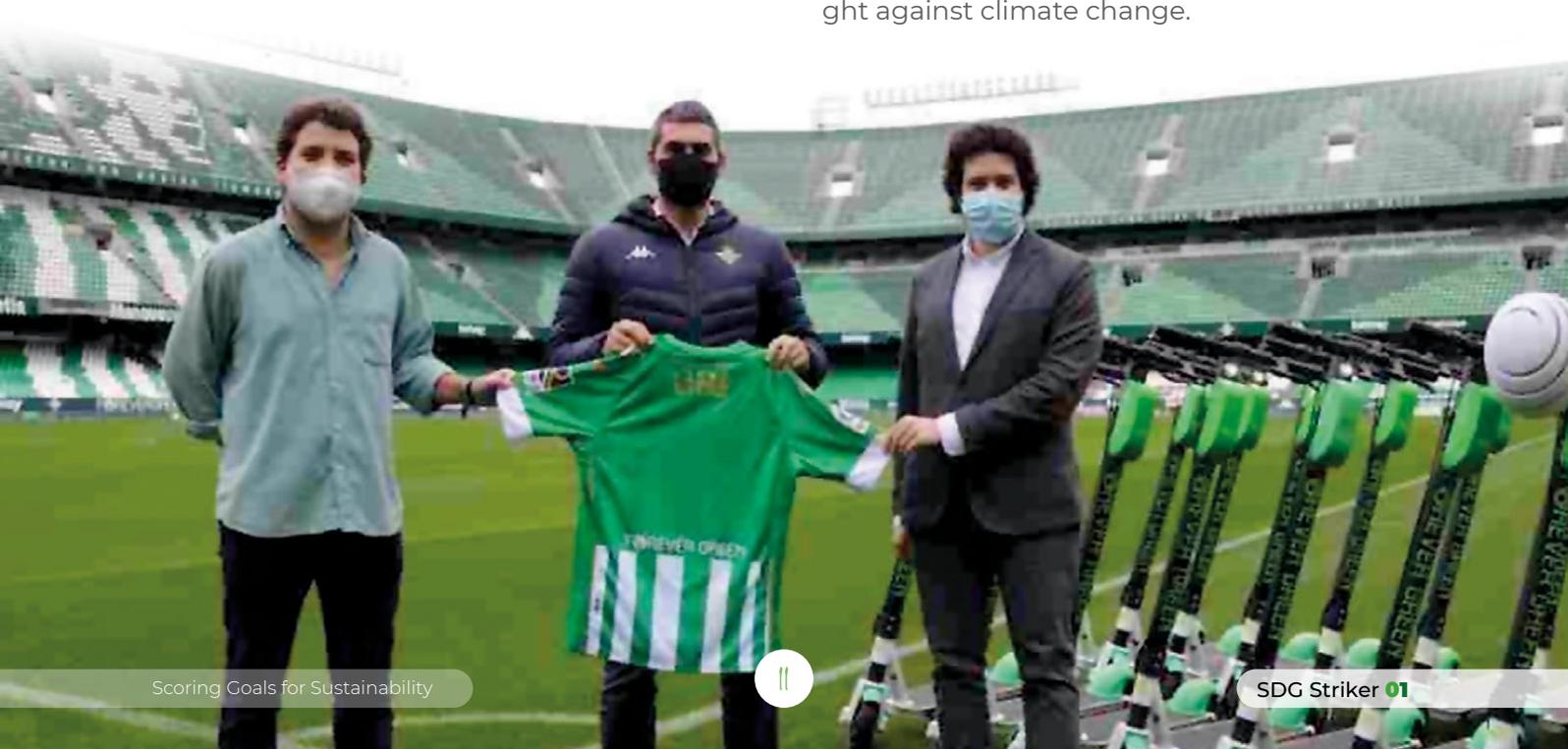
Additionally, every year we compensate our carbon footprint, because we think that there is no planet B. And with no planet, there is no football and there is no Betis. That is a good reason to work for.

### **Do you have ambassadors inside your club who support Forever Green?**

A 'Forever Green' commission has also been established, made up of representatives of all the Club's departments and created to establish a transversal green philosophy in all areas of Real Betis Balompié. Within this philosophy we find the "Eco-employee" campaign, an internal action with small and big eco-gestures from the workforce. The objective is to raise awareness and modify day-to-day habits to reduce energy consumption and carbon footprint. This campaign is generating very positive effects and creating "green" habits among employees.

### **What is your advice for a club who would like to start a sustainable revolution? What would the starting point be?**

It is crucial to start raising awareness inside the Club, especially with the board of directors. In financial terms, sustainability will be a key indicator for investors and sponsorships, and beyond, for the most important client for every Club, their fans! According to several studies, Generation Z is highly committed to the planet emergency and will make decisions accordingly, taking as a reference those organizations who are doing something to fight against climate change.



# The future of artificial pitches?



A brand-new infill made from Norwegian birch can possibly solve the environmental challenge caused by artificial pitches. Now it remains to be seen if this will be the future of artificial football pitches across Europe.



Written by: Henrik Gill



Photo by: Henrik Gill

Today Europeans are experiencing a great focus on getting more environmentally friendly artificial turf pitches. Especially the preforming infill in the artificial turf is highlighted. Granules of rubber and plastic are sought to be replaced by more environmentally friendly products, that at the same time fulfil the necessary sport functional characteristics.

Due to this challenge, The Norwegian Football Association (NFF), in partnership with the company **GEO-production**, Kristiansand municipality, and the football club Randesund IL, are testing out a brand-new infill on their new training pitch as part of the “SDG Striker” project, co-founded by the Erasmus+ program of the European Union.

The company “GEO-production” has spent the last couple of years developing an infill made from the trunk of Norwegian birch. In August, the world’s first artificial pitch with birch as infill material was installed at Sukkevann Stadium in Kristiansand, the home of the biggest football club in southern Norway, Randesund IL.

*“We are very proud to be a part of this project. We have tried many different new infill materials in Norway, without it yet being a success neither for the environment nor for the playing characteristics. We are, however, very positive with these birch pitches, and we want to be a part of the solution”*

**Øystein Konradsen**, who works as CEO at **Randesund IL**.

*“It is an organic product that doesn’t stick to hair, clothes, or shoes, so it will not follow you home. That is something for all parents in Norway to applaud”*

**Konradsen** says with a big smile.



The birch-pitch (Pitch A) is one of four new training pitches at Sukkevann Stadium. Pitch B has pure sand infill. The last two (C & D) have crumb rubber infill, the most common infill in Norway. This way we will see the comparisons between the different materials during the season.

*“The ball is acting just as fine on the birch-pitch as it does on the others. The bounce is good, and the ball follows the pitch better than the ones with crumb rubber. The feedback from the players has been very positive so far. And this is just the first edition. The second version of the infill will be installed in pitch B before Christmas 2021.”*

Soon we will have an app where players will give feedback on the new birch-pitch. The results will be used to further improve the product.

According to Konradsen, there is constant training and match activity on the new pitch with players from 13 years old up to senior from early afternoon to 10 pm every day. 16-year-old **William Topstad Henriksen** and his teammate **Ole Andreas Bjørnsgaard-Andersen** are among those who regularly train on the new pitch.

*“We have trained on this pitch since the late summer, and we are very pleased. I think it is a good replacement for the old artificial pitch with crumb rubber. This works nicely”*

Henriksen, right after he flicks the ball over to his teammate **Bjørnsgaard-Andersen**.

*“Even though the small wooden blocks are hard in themselves, the pitch feels nice and soft. So, it works very nicely. I can’t feel any different to the old pitch with crumb rubber”*

Says **Bjørnsgaard-Andersen**.

The duo, who both are regulars for the clubs under 16-team, does not hesitate when asked which infill they want when the club’s main stadium pitch next year will get a new artificial turf.

*“I would rather play on this new pitch. I think this can be the future of artificial pitches”*

Says **Henriksen**, while his teammate nods along with him.



# Insights on how to engage volunteers with a gender perspective in sports organizations



Written by:  
Maria Jabbour



The **Playgreen project** revolved around this topic, particularly focusing on ensuring that the results obtained were transferable to other sports than football: Playgreen's perspective was sufficiently flexible as to guarantee that clubs' particularities can be taken into account being effective. The main foundation behind Playgreen was the idea that climate change can be a driver to engage people in sports, and vice versa:

*we can protect the environment through green sports events*

A **first line of action** proposed by the Playgreen project consisted of addressing the gender inequalities in sports engagement. Women are more likely to feel called to action regarding sustainability, but their sports'

participation is usually much lower than men's. In the case of football, this is mainly due to the fact that it is usually seen as a "males' sport", and women are less moved to play it because it was not constructed, from the outset, as a safe space to play. The solutions included **creating safe spaces for women to play sports** while simultaneously changing the societal image of the sports so that women feel called to participate.

The **second line of action** was the so-called "nature sports", which are sports that are tightly linked to nature – such as rowing. These sports tend to become much less enjoyable in polluted environments. Here, the proposal was to **galvanise the process by implementing a feedback loop**: the cleaner the sea, the more enjoyable the sports.

In order to achieve the first line of action, the main challenge to address was considering barriers that hinder women participation in sports and removing them. Other major challenges include engaging volunteers from a wide range of profiles (ethnicity, age...) and keeping in mind the fact that volunteers most surely will have very different expectations. It is important to understand, the particular expectations and driving values of each of the volunteers.

It is worth noting that it is also relevant to consider the fact that some citizens who initially might appear not to be interested in environmental volunteering can be tapped after learning more about climate change and related issues: **removing the knowledge barriers can provide access to a larger pool of potential participants.**

But how exactly do we engage people? The first consideration is target groups: for instance, university students or youngsters who have already tried volunteering are more likely to be called into participation. A very powerful strategy is **mentoring volunteers**



In general, it is key to put efforts into **(1)** ensuring that your needs and the volunteers' are aligned; **(2)** making clear your expectations, responsibilities as well as time commitment, and tailor your vacancy to the profile of the volunteers you are looking for; **(3)** providing something back from the activity to volunteers, whether it is a letter of recommendation, or job training, or reimbursed expenses or something similar.

Additionally, during first meetings it is good to include icebreakers and get-to-know activities in your schedule and allowing for flexibility in order to guarantee attendance. Finally, do not forget to include family-friendly options.

and providing them with the tools and knowledge so that they feel empowered to recruit others. If possible, invite local athletes who are advocates for sustainability in sports: **role models and ambassadors are often more effective than theory**, also due to trust issues.

**In order to foster women participation, it is crucial to:**

*Guarantee a welcoming environment, and their participation in responsibility roles.*

*Avoid gender stereotypes in your communication.*

*Remember that women are more likely to participate when being asked, whereas men are more likely to step forward.*



Playgreen led to a **successful volunteering campaign**, in Estonia's football association, in which a powerful communication strategy was key. On the other hand, Malta's pilot project revolved around cleaning natural spaces such as beaches. The Flemish football association recommends setting clear and concrete goals for volunteers in order to keep engagement high through time. Finally, Lithuania's football association highlighted that quality is better than quantity, and that flexibility in events is key.



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01



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