Global sports: time for a changing climate, in times of climate change
Global reality of a changing climate

- 2°C
- Everyone
- Binding
Vision of the EU‘s 7th Environment Action Programme

‘In 2050, we live well, within the planet's ecological limits. Our prosperity and healthy environment stem from an innovative, circular economy where nothing is wasted and where natural resources are managed sustainably, and biodiversity is protected, valued and restored in ways that enhance our society's resilience. Our low-carbon growth has long been decoupled from resource use, setting the pace for a global safe and sustainable society.’

Source: 7th EU Environment Action Programme
Paradigm shift!

What about the ‘sports system’?
Global imperative

Within environmental limits

‘good life’
In the spirit of the ‘exceptionalism’ of sports?

Complete ignorance

Not our problem: ignore!

Variation: not our responsibility
Exceptionalism at work!

SERIOUS DROUGHT
HELP SAVE WATER

- Water one Palm Springs golf course for a day: 800,000 gallons
- Make one day of snow at a Lake Tahoe ski resort: 400,000 gallons
- Fill an average Los Angeles pool: 18,000 gallons
- Supply a single-family home for a day: 361 gallons
Responses: the ’50 ways to save the planet’ approach

NRDC Greening Advisor

- MLB
- NBA
- NFL
- NHL

- MLS
- NLL
- USTA
More embedded or programmatic approaches

- Selection criterium
- Environmental management systems
- Improvement agenda
- Sport- and event-centric
- Often no serious reflection on fundamental issues
Olympic Agenda 2020

- Rec 4: Include sustainability in all aspects of the Olympic Games
- Rec 5: Include sustainability within the Olympic Movement’s daily operations

- No clear targets, no deadlines, no links with major environmental or climate topics or policies
- The proof of the pudding …
Will a changing climate lead to changing sports?
Impacts of climate change

- Higher temperatures
- Higher humidity
- Droughts
Figuur 50: Evolutie van het sterftecijfer en van de temperatuur in de zomer van 2006 (België)

Impacts of climate change

- Extreme weather events
- Changing wind patterns
- Snow patterns
- …
Creative sollutions?
Moving beyond a sport-centric approach?

Energy system impact on and contribution of sports?
Urban and built environment system: Impact on and contribution of sports?
Food system: Impact on and contribution of sports?
Mobility system

Impact on and contribution of sports?
Sports: an economic sector of significance

- Added value
- Employment
- Innovation
- Social and symbolic significance
- Proportionality?
- But not part of the problem nor the solution?
Clear message: the times of exceptionalism are over!

- Embrace the circumstances of the 21st century
- Expect serious impacts
- Be part of the solution
- Ethical imperative
- Sense of urgency!