



# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY



zrównoważony rozwój      odrzivost  
fenntarthatóság  
durabilité      održivost      одрживост  
sustenabilitate  
nachhaltigkeit      qëndrueshmëria  
תמורות      УСТОЙЧИВОСТЬ В      Sürdürülebilirlik  
vastuullisuus      bærekræft      sostenibilità

## Sustainability

/səsteɪnə'bɪlɪti/

Noun

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

sustentabilidade  
udržitelnost      tvarumas  
jätkusuutlikkus      trajnost      βιωσιμότητα  
СТІЙКІСТЬ      inbhuanaitheacht  
ilgtspēja      sostenibilità      udržatel'nost'  
hållbarhet  
одржливост      sostenibilidad  
duurzaamheid      bæredygtighed

# FOREWORD



Sustainability is the most pressing and urgent topic the equestrian community is facing. How we care for our horses, our humans and the planet is fundamental to who we are. The significant work being undertaken worldwide by the FEI to support horse and human welfare, provides us with the vision and regulations necessary to promote best practice. Our planet is an equal partner in our sport and as the EEF, it is in our hands to act now and respond to the unfolding crisis.

Climate change, water shortages and resource use all impact our sport. We must work quickly and collaboratively across Europe, to ensure that we are minimising our negative impacts and preparing strategically to operate in increasingly difficult circumstances.

Our job at the EEF is to provide leadership and to support our Members in proactively working to make substantial changes, to ensure that we create a safe future for our children and horses. I am proud that alongside our committed Board, we are setting out an ambitious plan to create necessary change and place sustainability at the top of our agenda.

Theo Ploegmakers, EEF President

# INTRODUCTION

The European Equestrian Federation is the representative body for the 40 European based National Equestrian Federations. The EEF is committed to promoting equestrianism and its good practices, developing the sport across Europe, and providing leadership for a collective European voice in the sport.

EEF's strategic plan 2022 - 2026 outlines the clear intention to **lead**, **develop** and **promote** equestrianism on behalf of its Members.

## Our strategic vision:

Secure and sustain the "social licence" for equestrianism - united across Europe - with the horse as our partner in sport and life.

## What is sustainability?

Sustainability is defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as creating a future of peace and prosperity for people and the planet. For equestrianism in Europe, sustainability means the inclusion of equines to create not just two but **three pillars**.

By prioritising *horse welfare*, *human welfare* and *the environment*, we can ensure a more robust future for our sport and the humans and equines who work within it.

## Taking a holistic approach

Many actions that benefit the environment also benefit horse and human welfare and therefore by prioritising all three together, we can ensure every part of our sport benefits from our strategy.





# The EEF's scope of influence

Through the extensive work being undertaken by the FEI and equestrian sport federations, the global strategic approach to horse welfare is evolving substantially. The EEF will continue to participate in this crucial topic and promote the regulations issued by the FEI to our Members.

Equally, ensuring a fair, equitable and enjoyable environment for our humans is fundamental to maintaining a positive and inclusive sport for all. Through FEI and equestrian sport federation regulations and careful consideration of the needs of every person involved in equestrianism, we can ensure that everyone is treated with care and respect. The EEF is committed to promoting this topic and supporting our Members with meeting new standards and expectations being driven globally.

Whilst horse and human welfare regulation is driven centrally from the FEI and equestrian sport federations, environmental sustainability sits directly within the EEF's scope of influence and we are able to lead both within our own operations and support our Members more broadly across Europe.

The EEF recognises that our sport has an impact on the environment, and climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, alongside biodiversity loss and pollution. Sport plays an important role as part of the solution and equestrian sport is no exception. Our planet provides the building blocks on which our sport stands and we must take care to protect those precious foundations.

This sustainability strategy outlines the specific steps that the EEF will take in leading, developing and promoting impactful environmental change, alongside supporting global regulation regarding horse and human welfare.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## - A CRISIS WE CANNOT IGNORE

On a global scale, pressure from scientists, governments, financial institutions and the public to take responsibility for the negative environmental impact of all human activities, is accelerating.

According to the latest report of The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global warming and the loss of biodiversity continues to be on a critical pathway, and every individual and business must act immediately to prevent the worst impacts of climate change.

### Sustainable sport

Over the past decade, there has been a noticeable shift towards more sustainable operations at an international and national level in sports organisations. Strong environmental and human rights commitments have been made public, strategies have been disclosed, and goals have been set. Within the Olympic and Paralympic movement, there is an expectation for sports to demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and frameworks like the UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action have enabled multiple disciplines to unite behind one standard. It is time for equestrianism to take collective action.




# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUESTRIANISM IN EUROPE

Climate change is already impacting Europe, with extreme weather events like the 2022 drought (the worst in 500 years) and 2023 record breaking heatwaves. Water shortages are impacting daily life and are predicted to worsen as long, hot, dry summers prevail. Environmental sustainability is at the top of the political agenda in Europe and with new regulations changing the way we live and work, there is no time to wait in addressing the climate crisis.

The impacts of climate change on equestrianism are beginning to be better understood and offer a stark insight into the future of our sport. Unsuitable ground conditions to compete, unbearable temperatures for transportation and turnout and vector borne diseases like West Nile Virus and African Sickness Virus are among some of the risks identified by researchers.

Horses are part of the ecosystem and depend on a healthy environment to survive and thrive. This includes good quality soil and diverse pasture, predictable weather patterns, and shelter and shade from trees. The health and wellbeing of our equines is intrinsically linked to the health of our environment.

Equally availability of feed and bedding alongside the myriad of products used within our industry, are all impacted by the environment. Resource availability is fundamental to our survival.



Water availability is crucial for equestrianism, whether that be for drinking water and washing for horses, maintenance of our competing surfaces or the growing of crops for feed and bedding.

Water shortages present a dire risk to our sport and the whole equine industry.

"Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine"  
"If you see me, weep" Hunger Stone 2022  
(Photo by Vit Cerny/Anadolu Agency via Getty Images)

# EQUESTRIANISM'S IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Climate change impacts different countries in Europe in different ways, therefore our response to it must be agile. The different aspects of our sport require different terrain and our horses adapt differently in each climate.

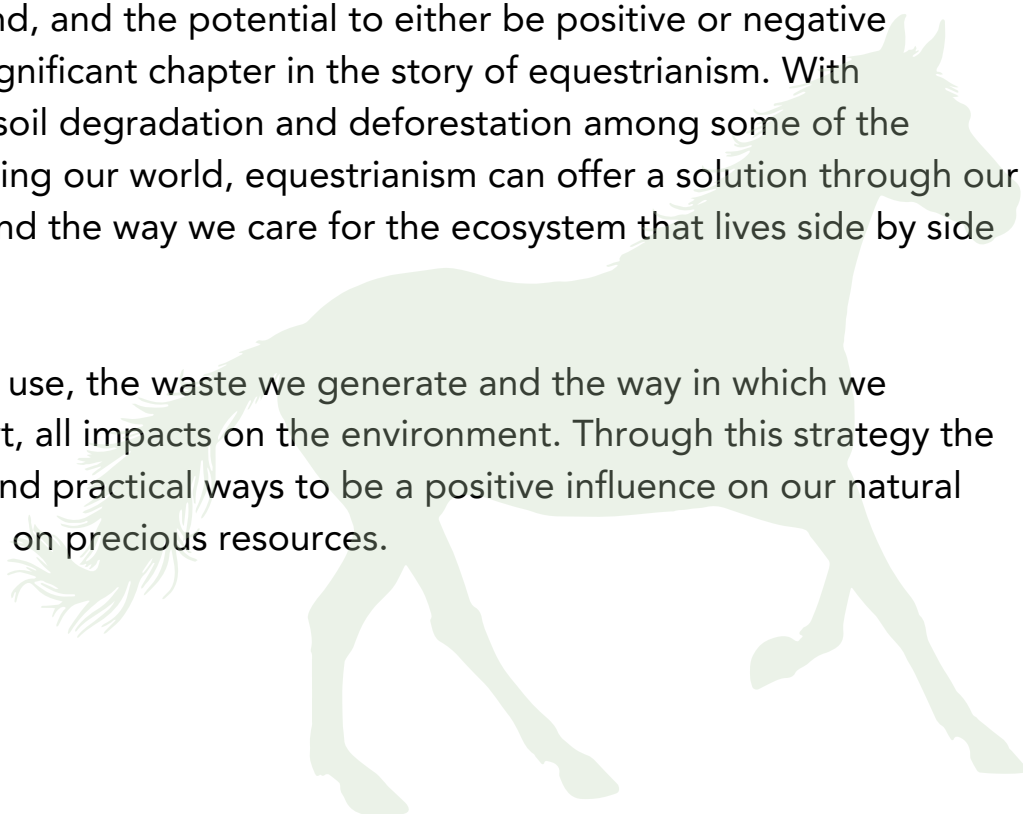
However, our impact on the environment is similar across the continent and therefore we may all strive collaboratively to find solutions to minimise our negative impact.

Our biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions are through our transportation of horses and humans. We must work together to find operational and technological ways to reduce this impact, whilst still maintaining a strong spirit of competition across Europe.

Equally, the use of water for equestrianism bears similarities across the continent in our competition venues, stable yards and beyond. We must seek solutions to avoid waste and conserve water, particularly in the face of shortages.

Our use of the land, and the potential to either be positive or negative custodians, is a significant chapter in the story of equestrianism. With biodiversity loss, soil degradation and deforestation among some of the biggest issues facing our world, equestrianism can offer a solution through our use of the land, and the way we care for the ecosystem that lives side by side with our horses.

The resources we use, the waste we generate and the way in which we function as a sport, all impacts on the environment. Through this strategy the EEF will seek to find practical ways to be a positive influence on our natural world, not a drain on precious resources.







# THE STRATEGY

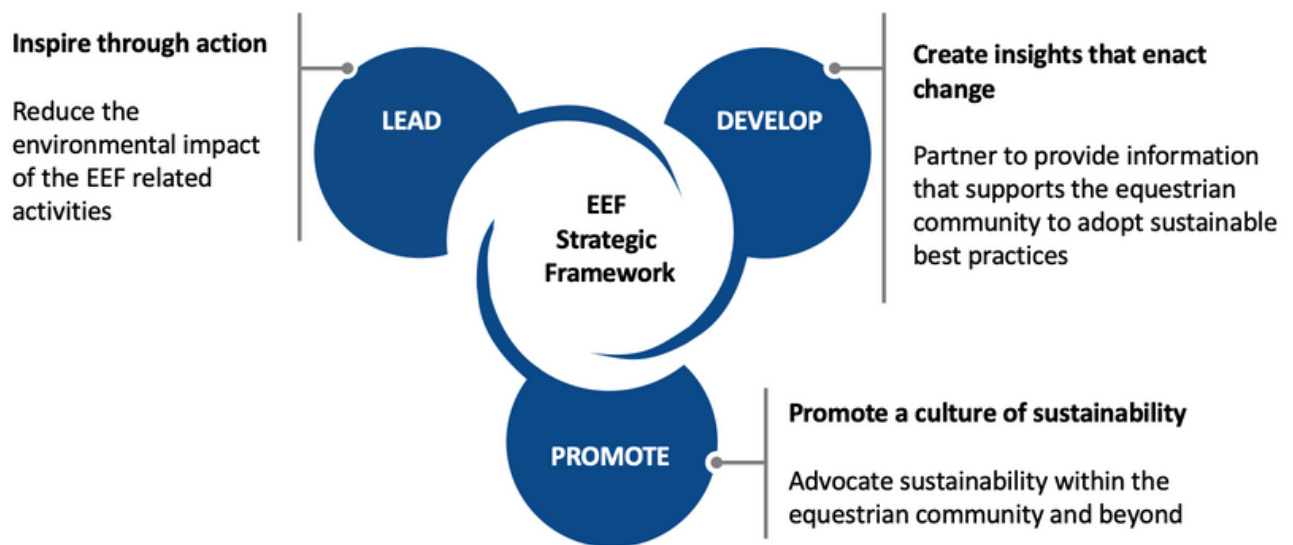




Our vision is to inspire through action and advocate to deliver meaningful positive environmental change within the European equestrian community and beyond.

# WORK DONE TO DATE

In 2022, we began our sustainability journey with a strong commitment to ensuring a future for equestrianism in Europe and maintaining a social license for our sport. Utilising our strategic framework, we outlined the overarching mechanism for change:



## Governance

Responsibility for Environmental Sustainability will be held at Board level, with ownership of all activity driven from the President, reflecting the significant importance we place on this area.

In addition, a Sustainability Lead has been nominated within the Board to drive activities towards our goal with the wider team and across the Membership.

A Sustainability Working Group has been formed in order to generate ideas and drive activities through the organisation. This includes a dedicated lead for all EEF Events.



# Activities

We have delivered three core tools in 2022 and 2023 that will enable the EEF and its Members to commence the process of change:



## The Green Policy

This policy provides a clear summary of the EEF's target areas within environmental sustainability and applies to activities throughout the Federation and out to its Members.



## The Green Code of Conduct

This document shares the environmental vision and priorities with the event organisers of all EEF events, in order to continually improve the environmental and social impact of our events.



## The Carbon Footprint of the Professional Horse (CFH)

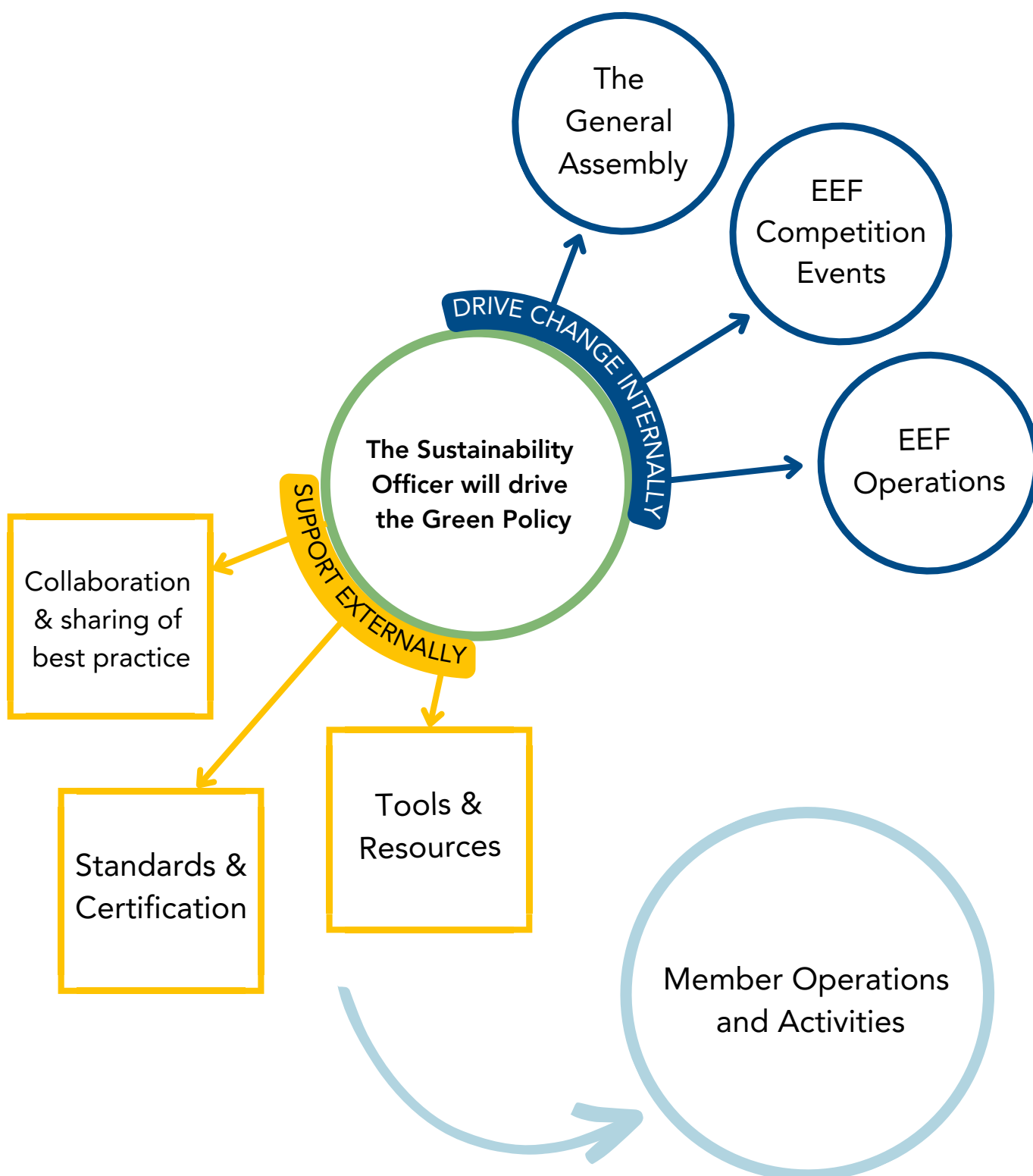
This tool offers for the first time a standardised approach for calculating the carbon footprint for a professional sport horse, through an easy-to-use tool called 'Hoofprint'.



In addition, we have begun the process of supporting wider knowledge and understanding of the topic through our Young Leaders Program and Webinar Series.

# ACTION

In order to achieve our vision, we will focus our efforts in two directions, our own operations and supporting our Members with developing their strategies and operational changes. Using our Green policy to inform our actions, we will work to create a new standard for equestrianism in Europe.

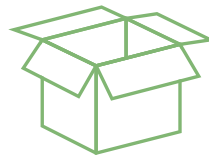


# OUR GREEN POLICY

The EEF aims to realise its vision by addressing the environmental impacts of our products, creating insights that enact change and promoting a culture of sustainability within the equestrian community. Specifically, the EEF aims to:



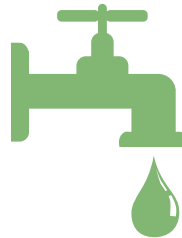
Reduce greenhouse gas emissions



Promote responsible resource use



Encourage waste reduction



Promote responsible water consumption



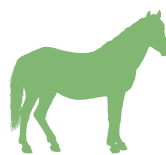
Protect local biodiversity



Promote technological advances & innovations



Create a fair and just ethical standard



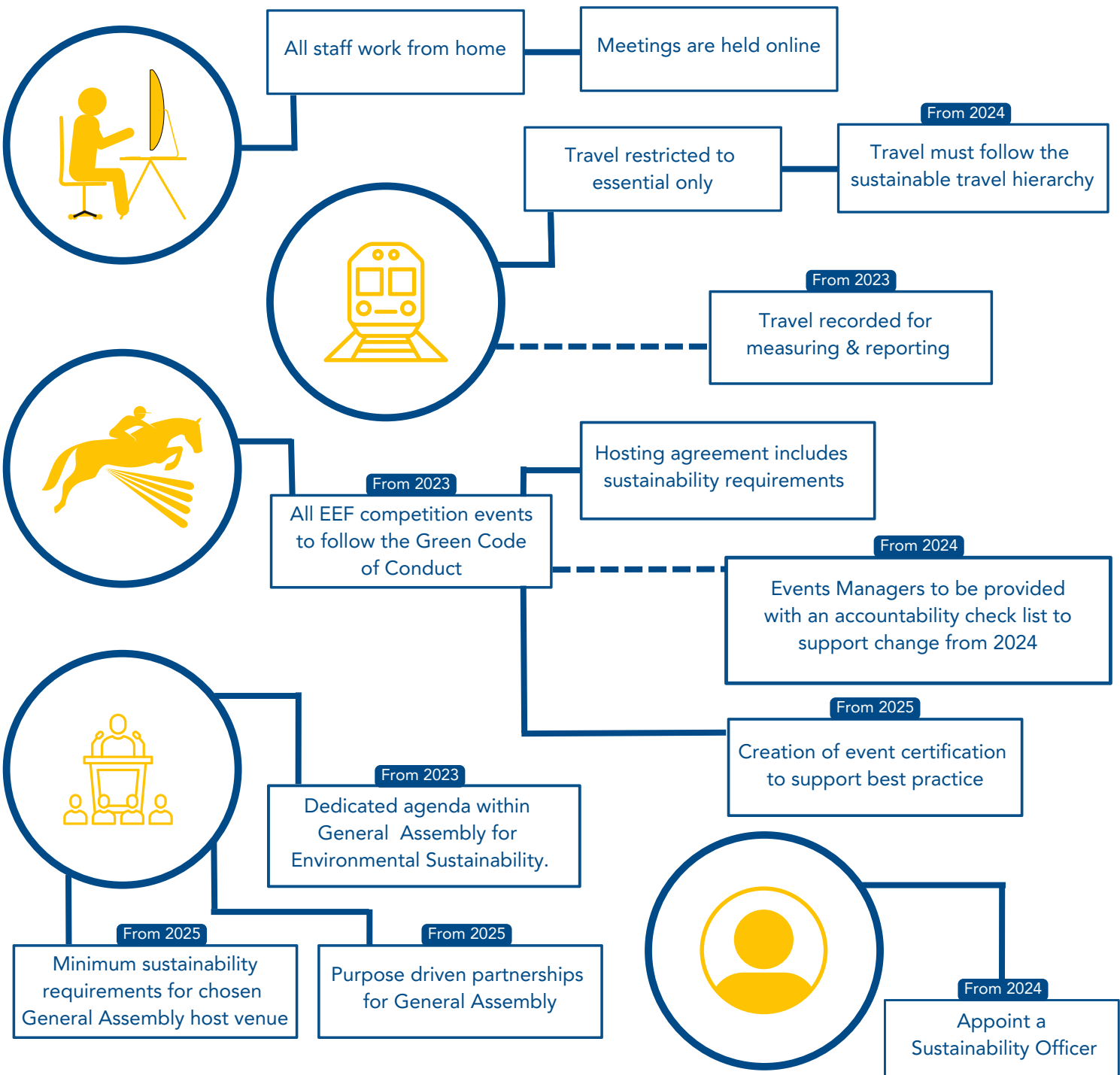
Consider impacts on the horse of all actions

The EEF aims to incorporate the principles of the United Nations Sport for Climate Action initiative and work collaboratively with other sport bodies to identify and spotlight climate solutions.

The first step is to understand what the impacts are and to support the equestrian community in improving its sustainability performance. The EEF will work with the equestrian community, event organisers, sponsors and other stakeholders to comply with the EEF Green Policy Statement.

# OUR OPERATIONS

The EEF is a small team spread across Europe, working to support the needs of our Members. We hold a number of events throughout the year and host the General Assembly annually, all of which contribute to emissions and resource use. We have therefore committed to the following roadmap of actions in order to ensure that our own operations are as sustainable as possible.





# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR EVENTS



Through our Green Code of Conduct, we will ensure that our events represent the highest standard in sustainable events management



We want to go further in supporting all event managers with achieving a truly sustainable event. Therefore in 2024 we will be providing a set of checks to help teams feel accountable for their delivery.

From 2025, we will provide certification to events who are successfully achieving the necessary criteria as set out in the Green Code of Conduct, and rewarding teams who have gone above and beyond to deliver sustainable events.





# SUPPORTING OUR MEMBERS

In order to successfully support our Members, we will utilise our strategic framework to drive change in a number of different areas.

## LEAD

- 1 We will work on our own operations to ensure we are able to demonstrate best practice to our membership, particularly at events.
- 2 We will work with our Members to understand their progress in developing an environmental sustainability strategy and the support they need to progress.

## DEVELOP

- 3 We will produce a framework for Members to create their own strategies and a series of webinars to provide practical support.
- 4 We will develop standards in Environmental Sustainability operations with accompanying accreditation to recognise best practice.

## PROMOTE

- 5 We will create an online platform for Members to learn, share and promote best practice in environmental sustainability.
- 6 We will celebrate best practice through an annual awards ceremony for organisations and individuals leading the way in environmental sustainability

# LONG TERM TARGETS

2024

Review EEF related activities and provide checks and support for improvements

Provide Members with tools to create strategies and the resources to drive change

2025

Measure and monitor EEF related activities, provide awards for best practice

Recommend standards to all Members within equestrian sport, as well as reporting tools and reduction measures

2026 -2030

Measure, monitor and report on the progress of EEF related activities, devise targets and develop partnerships to support significant impact

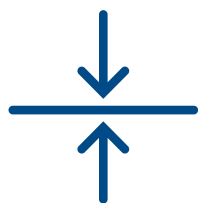
Support Members through best practice sharing, awards and centralised communications to create a new normal in equestrianism

Our long term goal is to support all National Federations with the development of their own robust strategies and to ensure that by 2026, equestrian sport is striving towards a standardised way of working, in which consideration for the environment represents business as usual.



# SHORT TERM ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve this, we will be completing a number of activities in 2023.



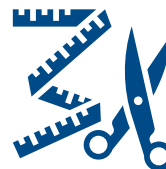
## **Ascertain the baseline**

We will be reaching out to all Members to understand their current activity



## **Create a directory**

We will ascertain who is responsible for Environmental Sustainability in each Member Organisation



## **Offer tailored support**

Utilising the baseline, we will create tailored resources to support Members



## **Provide expertise**

For Members seeking external expertise, we will provide access to specialist support



## **Provide platform to share best practice**

We will create a mechanism to share best practice to help Member progress

# CREATING THE FUTURE

We believe that the European Federations can lead the way in creating a truly sustainable equestrian future, where humans, horses and the environment are all cared for within our sport.

Through developing tools to measure our impact that are specific to equestrianism, creating resources that simplify and expedite the change management process and providing a communications platform and incentives to share best practice and collaborate on initiatives, we believe we can shape a future for European equestrianism that is not only sustainable, but actually elevates the sport, creating a positive, harmonious and prosperous future.







