



# ZERO

single-use

# PLASTIC

# SPORT



Soutenu  
par



MINISTÈRE  
DES SPORTS,  
DE LA JEUNESSE  
ET DE LA VIE ASSOCIATIVE

Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité

NO PLASTIC



IN MY SEA

# CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                                                                            |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction</b> .....                                                                                                                                                  | <b>3</b>  |
|  <b>Hydration without single-use plastic</b> .....                                        | <b>4</b>  |
|  <b>Catering without single-use plastic</b> .....                                         | <b>8</b>  |
|  <b>Signage and promotional merchandise</b> .....                                       | <b>10</b> |
|  <b>Regulations /Changing the rules of the game</b> .....                               | <b>12</b> |
|  <b>Sponsors and service providers on board</b> .....                                   | <b>13</b> |
|  <b>Another challenge: reducing exposure to microplastics and toxic additives</b> ..... | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b> .....                                                                                                                                              | <b>15</b> |

# Preserving the legacy of the Games

The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games marked a turning point for sustainability in sport.

In terms of plastic reduction, the overall assessment is positive<sup>(1)</sup>. Compared with the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the 2024 Olympic Games show:

**52%**

less single-use plastics

**70%**

fewer plastic bottles, notably by installing water points, promoting the use of reusable water bottles and reducing the quantity of drinks sold.

These overall results offset the errors that had been criticised (filling reusable cups using plastic bottles).

## SPORT, A DRIVER OF CHANGE

Sporting participation and events generate a significant amount of waste, a large proportion of which consists of single-use plastics.

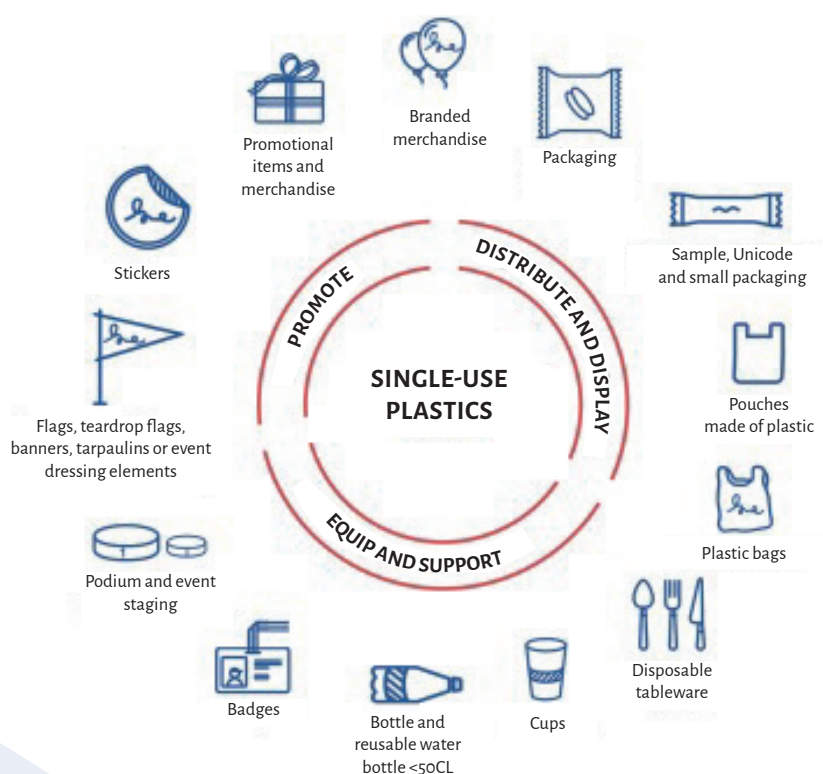
According to ADEME estimates, a gathering of 5,000 participants produces 2.5 tonnes of waste on its own.

Proper management of this waste, starting with its reduction, is now seen as a criterion of credibility and attractiveness.

Sport has the power to lead by example and experiment with new practices. Organisers, athletes, volunteers and spectators may change their habits and even change the social norm.

## A SINGLE-USE PLASTIC PRODUCT:

“a product made wholly or partly from plastic and which is not designed, created or placed on the market to make several trips or rotations during its lifetime by being returned to a producer to be refilled, or which is not designed, created or placed on the market to be reused for an identical use to that for which it was designed” (Environmental Code).



This guide is intended for organisers of sporting activities, whether one-off events, national or international, competitions, regular training sessions or camps. It also supports sports halls, clubs, associations, professional organisations and local authorities that oversee or host sporting activities. It supplements the Ministry of Sport's Charter of 15 eco-responsible commitments<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) Paris 2024 Heritage and Sustainability Report, page 192.

(2) Charter of 15 eco-responsible commitments for organisers of sporting events from the Ministry of Sport.



# Hydration without plastic for single use

To reduce the volume of plastic waste, eliminating disposable bottles, cans and single-use cups, including multilayer cardboard models, is a priority action.

To achieve this, two essential elements are needed: **accessible water points and reusable containers**, whether brought by participants or made available by the organisation.

## 1. WATER POINTS AND WATER FOUNTAINS

**IN STADIUMS AND SPORTS HALLS**, clean, visible and easily accessible water points must be installed to facilitate hydration for everyone.

**THE AGECACT REQUIRES IT:** since 2022, all premises open to the public (ERP) accommodating more than 300 people must have at least one free, signposted and accessible drinking water fountain.

**AT SPORTING EVENTS,** several solutions can be mobilised to avoid plastic bottles:



Connection to the existing water network (particularly in urban areas),

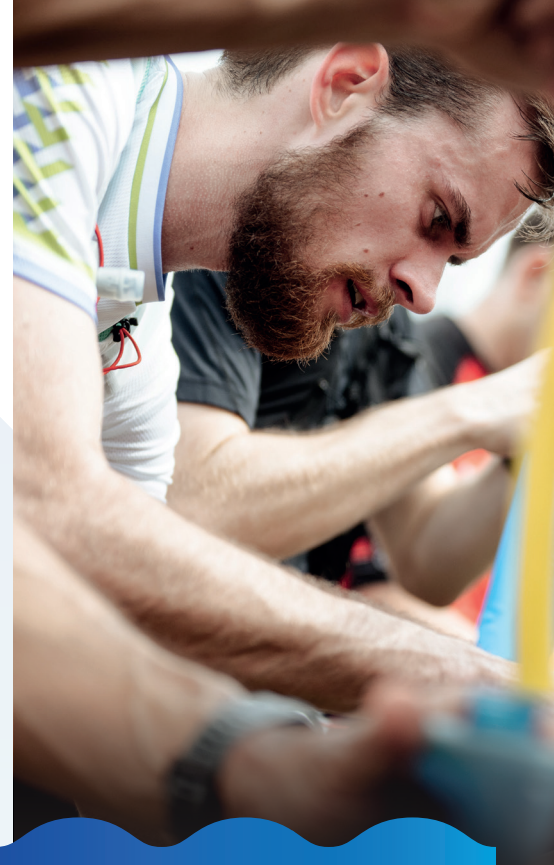


Installation of mobile water stations, fountains or taps at strategic points,



Hire of tanks, water towers or water cisterns along natural routes.

**Clear signage is essential to effectively direct athletes and spectators.**



## THEY DID IT!



# 70%

**fewer bottles at the Olympic and Paralympic Games**, thanks to the deployment of 450 water fountains, in addition to existing water points. These installations, highlighted and supported by communication, drastically reduced the number of plastic bottles compared with the London Games<sup>(3)</sup>.



# 33,000

**participants hydrated without plastic at the Marathon Run In Lyon**, which completely eliminated bottles and disposable cups from its refreshment stations by installing water stations every 5 km.

(3) Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee. Sustainability & post-Games legacy report: Strategic focus: delivering more responsible Games. (2024). Olympic World Library p. 192



Credit: OSE – Outdoor Sports Experiences / Anouk FLESCHE

## 2. HYDRATION CONTAINERS: REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES, REUSABLE CUPS, SOFT FLASKS, HYDRATION PACKS...

To eliminate disposable containers, it is essential to have reusable water bottles and/or reusable cups suited to sporting activities in different types of setting (indoor/outdoor).

### FOR REGULAR SPORTING ACTIVITIES:

Clubs and federations can include reusable water bottles (or even hydration packs for running) in the recommended equipment and make them available. Note that athletes, and everyone else, should be advised to clean reusable containers regularly to prevent the growth of bacteria.

### DURING SPORTING EVENTS (races, circuits...):

Organisers can provide athletes with reusable cups, which are distributed at the start of the event or at the refreshment station, and then collected.

They can also encourage athletes to use their own reusable bottle, cup, soft flask or hydration pack (see page 6 on self-sufficiency).

For refreshment stands, reusable cups with a deposit-return system (token or €2) are also recommended.

**WARNING:** ban cardboard cups that are single-use, which in fact contain a thin plastic layer that distorts the user's perception and makes them more difficult to recycle.



### REMINDER FOR A HIGH REUSE RATE OF THE CUPS PROVIDED<sup>(2)</sup>:

- **Unbranded cups:** avoid any marking (logo, year...) on the cups so that they can be reused across several editions.
- **High return rate:** set up a deposit-return system with a significant deposit and well-positioned collection points (separate from service points) with smooth collection logistics.
- **Renting unbranded cups rather than buying them.** Renting guarantees a stock of unbranded cups that are genuinely reused at multiple events.
- **From an environmental perspective, the ideal return rate is 90%.**

(4) Inter-association opinion on the eco-responsibility of cups at events

### THEY DID IT!



#### An increased return rate for reusable cups at the French Tennis Federation

(fewer partner logos, no mention of the event, to avoid the promotional merchandise effect).

Result: More than 70% return rate



#### Deposit-return cups in stadiums (Stade de France, Marseille, Nantes...):

These venues offer deposit-return cups for €1 to €2. The Zénith de Nantes took the idea to its logical conclusion: an "ugly cup", to discourage people from keeping it.



Credit: OSE—Outdoor Sports Experiences / Manuella FEUILLET

### 3. PARTICIPANT AND SPECTATOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY: THE BEST SOLUTION!

Encouraging athletes and spectators to be equipped with their own reusable water bottles or containers is the most effective way to reduce waste and pollution.

#### FOR ATHLETES

Participants in an event (race, trail race, etc.) may be invited, or required by the regulations, to bring their own reusable water bottle, soft flask or hydration pack. The best option is for these containers to be pre-filled. This instruction is announced during registration and reiterated in communications before the event.

#### THEY DID IT!

# 20,000

**self-sufficient runners on the SaintÉlyon**  
(a night running raid): cups at the refreshment stations were removed and the runners had to bring their own container.



#### Paris Marathon 2026:

The event was the first of its kind to ban disposable hydration waste. 50 000 runners brought their own containers, which they could refill every 2/2.5 km in two seconds, preventing the use of 600.000 plastics bottles.

#### FOR THE PUBLIC

They should be encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottle or cup through advance awareness-raising (email, tickets, practical information, campaign, etc.), and directed towards accessible water points with highly visible signage.

#### THEY DID IT!



© Paris2024

# 80%

**of spectators equipped with reusable water bottles at the Olympic and Paralympic Games,** reusable water bottles up to 75cl were permitted and encouraged through advance communication “Have a gourde day” (“gourde” means “water bottle” in French) and a reminder in ticket mailings<sup>(5)</sup>.

(5) Paris 2024 Heritage and Sustainability Report, page 192

# REMOVING BARRIERS IN ADVANCE AND COMMUNICATING



## SAFETY

At some stadiums or major events, bringing personal reusable water bottles may be restricted to prevent any risk associated with them being used as projectiles. → The Olympic Games experience shows that reusable water bottles can be authorised without incident. Thus, changes to the safety rules can be negotiated with the stadium and/or the prefecture.



## WATER QUALITY

Concerns persist at some international events. It is therefore useful to emphasise that tap water in France is subject to strict controls and has a high level of public health safety.  
→ **Filtration solutions can also provide reassurance.**



## DOPING-RELATED CONSTRAINTS

Some federations (Judo, Underwater Sports...) require sealed containers. This point merits reassessment, as the filling of reusable water bottles can be made secure. Furthermore, these restrictions only apply to athletes; organisation members should be encouraged to use reusable water bottles and tap water.



## LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The lack of connected water points can make free access to water for everyone more difficult.  
→ Temporary solutions exist: tanks, water cisterns, mobile water stations...



## COMMUNICATION

For spectators and participants, significant communication is needed in advance, and water points must be indicated by signage.

## SETTING AN EXAMPLE ON SCREEN

At Roland Garros, no plastic bottles are distributed to players, teams, the media or the public. Setting an example is key: the use of reusable water bottles and tap water must be visible on screen, during press conferences...

## THE CASE OF SPARKLING WATER AND DRINKS

### FOR ATHLETES

Drinks sometimes needed to support exertion (energy drinks, fizzy drinks...) can be offered without bottles, using concentrates.

### FOR THE PUBLIC

Drinks can be served from soda/soft drink fountains connected to the mains water supply. Bottle-free drinks dispensers are also being introduced. They turn mains water into still or sparkling, filtered and flavoured drinks.

## THEY DID IT!



### The Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc:

For the sugary soft drinks sometimes needed by runners, water carbonation systems were deployed, supplemented with soda syrup, to serve 10,000 runners across 8 races.



# Catering without single-use plastic

Limiting the impact of individual packaging, trays and sachets requires rethinking how food is offered and served. It is also important to carefully select the materials used for this packaging<sup>(6)</sup>.

## 1. AVOID OVER-PACKAGED SNACKING

### FOR PERMANENT SPORTING VENUES

(stadiums, clubs, gyms, sports halls...):

It is possible to rethink the snacking offer without eliminating it, by prioritising formats that generate less waste: fresh fruit rather than fruit purée in soft pouches, sandwiches in unprinted kraft paper, and sourcing in large-format packaging rather than individual portions.

### FOR ATHLETES' REFRESHMENT STATIONS AT EVENTS:

During a race (trail, cycling, running, triathlon, etc.), athletes often pass several refreshment stations offering gels, bars or individually packaged portions.

These products can be replaced by involving suppliers: freshly cut fruit, dried fruit, bread, chocolate and other loose food arranged in reusable containers.

**PLEASE NOTE:** food quality should also be prioritised: avoid overly processed, fatty or sugary products.



### THEY DID IT!

## Zero packaging

for the 4,000 participants  
at the Lyon EuroGames: loose food  
replaces individual portions

## 2. ZERO-WASTE MENUS

Where the public and participants remain on site for several hours, they can enjoy a proper meal.

### TO IMPLEMENT THESE MENUS:

- **Prepare cold and hot dishes in advance** and keep them in reusable food containers suited to the temperature and storage duration.
- **Offer loose food or food on a shared platter**, such as fruit, biscuits and cheese, to avoid individual packaging.
- **Serve in reusable containers.**



<sup>(6)</sup> Find out more: Paris 2024 Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Catering packaging guide: Paris 2024. (2023). Olympic World Library.



Credit: OSE – Outdoor Sports Experiences / Anouk FLESCHE



Credit: OSE – Outdoor Sports Experiences / Manuella FEUILLET

### 3. OPT FOR REUSABLE TABLEWARE

#### FOR THE PUBLIC

For catering areas, prioritise a deposit-return system to avoid disposable containers. A deposit or token is enough to ensure the return of the tableware, which must remain unbranded (with no date, logo or sponsor) to be reused from one edition to the next.

To encourage the return of the tableware, a dedicated area (separate from the purchasing area) should be provided.

#### FOR SPORTS VENUES

(stadiums, clubs, sports halls..)

As they are used throughout the year, it is in their interest to invest in a stock of durable tableware. With the option of purchasing directly or sharing use between clubs or local authorities. For washing, there are two options: a commercial dishwasher or a professional external washing service.

#### FOR TEMPORARY EVENTS

(tournaments, trail races, local cups...)

Hiring reusable tableware is often the best solution. Many providers offer complete packages including delivery, collection and washing; a simple, secure option that avoids storage and internal logistics.

Hiring (or borrowing) can also be arranged through the town hall for local events. It is sometimes also possible to use nearby schools and their dishwasher, which is generally available at weekends.

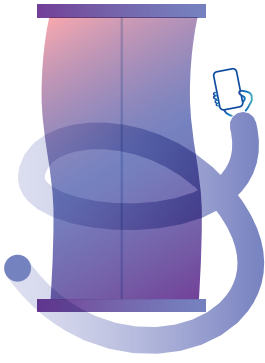
#### FOR TEAMS AND VOLUNTEERS

Either reusable tableware is provided, or they can be asked to bring their own reusable tableware kit.

### THEY DID IT!



**Reusable lunch box** provided  
by the French Mountaineering and Climbing  
Federation to each of its employees



# Signage and promotional merchandise

## 1. SIGNAGE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNICATION

To make communication and signage less polluting, reusable materials should be prioritised, superfluous elements limited and materials carefully selected.

### REUSABLE SIGNAGE:

**The best solution is to produce materials that can be reused several times.** For this purpose, unbranded, undated signboards, teardrop flags and vertical banners without logos or partner mentions should be used, so that they remain valid for several editions.

Generic signage can also be shared between different clubs and events in the same area. A system of labels or interchangeable elements makes it possible to update the information without reprinting the entire material.

The same principle applies to badges, using a rigid case and a reusable lanyard. Only the inner label is changed.



### RESPONSIBLY SOURCED MATERIALS<sup>(7)</sup>:

Some materials significantly complicate the end of life of the materials and should therefore be avoided. Blockout tarpaulins, laminated, varnished, multilayer or surface-treated elements impair recycling. The simpler the material is, and the more it consists of a single, untreated material, the more recyclable it is.

### PREFERABLY OPT FOR RENEWABLE OR RECYCLED MATERIALS.



**Wood** is strong, easily repaired, and can be sanded for a new use.

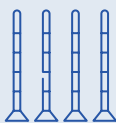


**Biodegradable paint** on the ground can also be used for temporary outdoor markings.



**Cardboard or paper**, 100% recycled, constitutes an interesting alternative when temporary materials are needed.

### THEY DID IT!



#### The shared reusable course-marking kit from The Trail Runner Foundation:

around one thousand wooden stakes made freely available to the 85 member races.

### LIMIT PRINTING:

Rather than distributing leaflets and paper programmes, prioritise visible communication. A clear welcome sign, well-placed posters, a QR code linking to the programme or trained volunteers to provide information to the public can convey information without creating waste.

(7) Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games Organising Committee. Visual communication : towards more sustainable materials : how to design, produce and promote communication materials, event dressing and signage. (2022). Olympic World Library. p 25



Credit: Outdoor Sports Experiences / Rémi PORTIER

## 2. RETHOUGHT PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE AND PRIZES

### SUSTAINABLE PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE

Prioritise reusable, recyclable or locally made items using responsibly sourced materials (paper, fabric, cotton, rope...), or local food merchandise.

### INTANGIBLE PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE

Offer digital or dematerialised alternatives, such as photos, discount vouchers, downloadable content or personalised experiences.

### OPTIONAL PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE

Offering promotional merchandise only as an optional, made-to-order item makes it possible to target genuinely interested spectators and limit waste. As a more radical approach, you can, like some others, forgo promotional merchandise.

## THEY DID IT!



Credit: @agatherunsbdx on Instagram

**A sustainable medal at the Run for Planet:** runners receive a wooden medal made from sustainably managed forests and produced in a vocational rehabilitation establishment (ESAT) by people with disabilities



### Removal of finisher T-shirts

by the French Athletics Federation during the MAIF Ekkiden de Paris in 2024, which avoided the production of nearly 9 000 polyester T-shirts.



**Ban on promotional merchandise and flyers on stands** during the 2025 Paris Grand Slam (French Judo Federation).



# Regulations / Changing the rules of the game

The rules governing the operation of a federation or a sporting event (regulations, charters, requirements relating to mandatory equipment, etc.) can be a major lever for limiting single-use plastics. By moving from a simple recommendation to an explicit rule, the organisation sends a strong signal: waste reduction becomes an **operating norm, rather than an individual effort**.

## 1. MANDATORY MEASURES AS A TRANSITION ACCELERATOR

The requirement for participants to arrive with their own reusable water bottle, hydration pack or reusable cup is a very widespread practice, particularly in trail running.

With regard to waste management, incorporating it into the regulations is a necessary condition for overcoming the limitations often encountered:

- strong reliance on volunteers, already heavily involved in the organisation
- difficulty enforcing practices that remain "optional"

## 2. SANCTIONS TO COMBAT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The issue of littering at the venues remains more complex, particularly because it is difficult to identify those responsible and mobilise the human resources needed for monitoring. However, even without systematic sanctions, simply setting the rule down in writing can already significantly change behaviour. The regulations therefore constitute an essential structuring link by:

- **explicitly reminding people that littering is prohibited**
- **legitimising intervention by on-site teams** to remind people of good practice
- **providing for sanctions or warnings** in cases of clear littering

credit = MaxiCross



### THEY DID IT!



### A water reserve of more than 1L and a cup are compulsory

under penalty of sanctions for the UTMB and many other races.



A €32 fine imposed by the French Cycling Federation in its regulations and disqualification for littering outside the designated areas.



# Sponsors and service providers on board

## 1. SPECIFICATIONS: THE CENTRAL TOOL FOR ALIGNING ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The specifications are the main instrument for formalising your environmental requirements for sponsors, partners (official suppliers and associated brands) and service providers (catering, logistics, signage, etc.).

### FOR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS:

It sets the framework for the terms of collaboration and reduces the distribution of promotional merchandise by prohibiting disposable items and gadgets, which are often made of plastic.

It also specifies the authorised communication materials: using responsibly sourced, recycled or reusable materials (undated and reusable visuals).

### FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS:

It sets the practices to be adopted: optimised logistics, minimised packaging, reusable and re-employable equipment, etc. For food suppliers, this notably means prohibiting individual portions and unnecessary packaging.

## 2. SPONSORS AND PARTNERS: RESPONSIBLE ALLIES

**ALIGNMENT WITH VALUES:** partnerships must be carefully considered and aligned with CSR objectives, especially the plastic reduction objective. Some brands or industries are not compatible. If a partnership is nevertheless considered, it must be accompanied by limits. Thus, some federations collaborate with water brands while refusing to show plastic bottles at events and during televised broadcasts.

**MONITORING AND SUPPORT:** it is essential to check compliance with environmental clauses, monitor compliance of practices and encourage innovative solutions to reduce waste.

Beyond sponsors, organisers can also collaborate with environmental stakeholders (associations, zero-waste actors, water agencies...).

Credit: @eurocom



## THEY DID IT!



**Refusal of partnerships with water industry companies for the EcoTrail Paris:** all their partners share their positions and commitments regarding eco-responsibility. They also refuse partnerships with car manufacturers.



**Partnership with a stainless-steel container brand for the French Mountaineering and Climbing Federation,** as an official supplier



# Another challenge: reducing exposure to microplastics and toxic additives

## 1. PROTECTING EVERYONE'S HEALTH

Chemical additives and micro- and nanoplastics (from packaging, synthetic clothing or synthetic turf) disperse through the air, soil and water, raising environmental and health concerns.

## 2. LIMITING CONTAMINATION: THE CASE OF SYNTHETIC SPORTS PITCHES

Synthetic sports pitches and play areas pose risks to the environment and human health. It is therefore recommended to anticipate the regulations banning the use of plastic granules in synthetic sports pitches from 2031<sup>(8)</sup>.

Accordingly, ANSES (French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety) recommends that manufacturers eliminate all intentionally added substances (thiazoles, phthalates, etc.) and urges vigilance regarding indoor pitches (increased risk to indoor air quality).

**Alternative solutions are developing:** organic materials (cork, crushed olive stones, coconut fibres, maize cobs...), sand or infill-free pitches.

## 3. REDUCING THE IMPACT OF SYNTHETIC CLOTHING

Synthetic clothing accounts for nearly 70 % of global textile production and most textiles used for sport. When washed, these textiles release microplastics (up to 700 000 fibres per cycle), which pass through water treatment systems.

Furthermore, these textiles often contain chemical treatments (anti-odour, anti-perspiration) that may cause irritation and act as endocrine disruptors. Although studies remain limited, a precautionary approach favouring more natural and safer materials, where possible, is recommended.

### THEY DID IT!

Faced with health and environmental risks, some local authorities have adopted an anticipatory strategy to replace synthetic sports pitches.



**Coconut and cork plant fibres in Isère:** since 2020, local authorities have opted for these alternative solutions.



**Crushed olive stones** at a stadium in La Ciotat as early as 2020.

(8) European Commission. Regulation (EU) 2023/2055 concerning synthetic polymer microparticles. (2023). Official Journal of the European Union.

# Acknowledgements:

No Plastic In My Sea thanks the Tara Ocean Foundation, France Nature Environnement, Surfrider Foundation and Zero Waste France for their support of the survey that preceded this guide.

We would also like to express our sincere thanks to the 32 federations and organisers of sporting events who responded to the survey. Their contributions helped identify and highlight the good practices presented in this guide.

We would also like to thank the Ministry of Sport, Ecotrail, Eurocom and the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc for their careful review and the quality of their feedback.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to Culligan, 1% for the Planet, Lexcase and the Fondation de France for their support.

Translation funded by



