



SUSTAINABILITY AND REGIONALITY AT THE IBU EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022

ARBER, GER

What was the goal?

The district of Regen/Arberland has been a certified "Fair Trade district" since 2017. Since then, ARBERLAND REGio GmbH, under whose umbrella the OC Arber Bayerischer Wald is organised, has been committed to establishing sustainability and regionality in all areas.

As a professional organiser of major international events, OC Arber is keen to set a good example and raise awareness of how sustainability and regionality can be implemented at events with no, or low, additional financial input. Taking the IBU Open European Biathlon Championships (OECH) 2022 at Arber as a showcase event, the goal was to demonstrate that major sporting events can be held in harmony with the economy and environment.

OC Arber's approach was characterised by environmental management, participation and transparency, creation of long-term structures, strengthening of regional value creation, and raising public awareness of the issue of sustainability.

How was the goal achieved?

The OECH 2022 developed a holistic sustainability strategy to address various topics connected to a biathlon event. The main topic was regional food procurement. Products from local producers were used in catering in the Family Club and the VIP area. Additional measures included:

- ▶ 250 local on-site volunteers;
- ▶ exclusive partnerships with regional sponsors;
- ▶ e-cars from a local e-mobility provider for the VIP shuttle service;
- ▶ the procurement of team uniforms made from sustainable materials;
- ▶ rainwater for flushing toilets;
- ▶ procurement of cups made from bamboo;
- ▶ catering and guest gifts from regional producers; and
- ▶ the avoidance of plastic.

Which IBU sustainability issues does it address?

- ▶ Inadequate sustainability communication

All 250 volunteers were informed about the event's overall sustainability goals and strategy. 50 volunteers working in the indoor service areas, providing catering for teams and athletes, were trained specifically on the topic of "healthy preparation of regional food". OC Arber significantly increased its public relations to include progress updates on the implementation of the sustainability goals through various channels, including media outlets, social media platforms, and the event website.

- ▶ Unsustainable food & beverage provision

OC Arber developed a policy to purchase regionally produced food and beverages, exclusively, and Fair Trade and organic products, where possible. In addition to supporting the regional circular economy, the quality of the food and thus the health of the athletes, officials, spectators, etc. was the focus of OC Arber's activities. The use of ready-made products was prohibited, with hot meals cooked by local chefs. By using regional and fresh food, the expensive costs and environmental burdens of transport and storage were avoided. The use of frozen products was also prohibited to avoid using energy and to save costs.

- ▶ Waste production

OC Arber's goal was to produce as little waste as possible. In 2019 (before Covid), it achieved a 50% reduction of food waste compared to previous high-level events, such as IBU Cups. Although the catering was also influenced by Covid-related hygiene regulations, several measures were implemented, such as reusable tableware for VIP catering, no plastic tableware and no plastic bags at the Family Club, the use of environmentally friendly paper bags instead of plastic bags, including for the distribution of start numbers.

In addition, there were regular checks by so-called “Green Angels” during the event to ensure that no waste was left behind in the stadium. Furthermore, a strict policy of waste separation was implemented. As a result, OC Arber staff members observed the “Significantly nicer, cleaner appearance of the stadium/venue compared to previous years, with less litter, and less waste in general (due to the avoidance of plastic, waste separation, and a reusable PET bottle deposit system).”

What were the challenges faced?

- ▶ The biggest challenge was compatibility with the official Covid-related hygiene regulations. The challenge here was to organise the serving of fresh food in a hygienic way while keeping disposable packaging to a minimum.
- ▶ In relation to this, the strict separation of spectators, athletes and officials, volunteers and media also resulted in an additional organisational effort in the preparation and serving of regional products/food.

What are the next steps?

The Hohenzollern Ski Stadium is a national performance centre that is frequently used for major national and international sporting events. OC Arber has noticed an increased use of fully electric and hybrid cars, as well as e-bikes, among visitors to the stadium. Upon acquisition of sufficient funds, OC Arber would therefore like to install an e-charging station for athletes, coaches, spectators, and other visitors.

