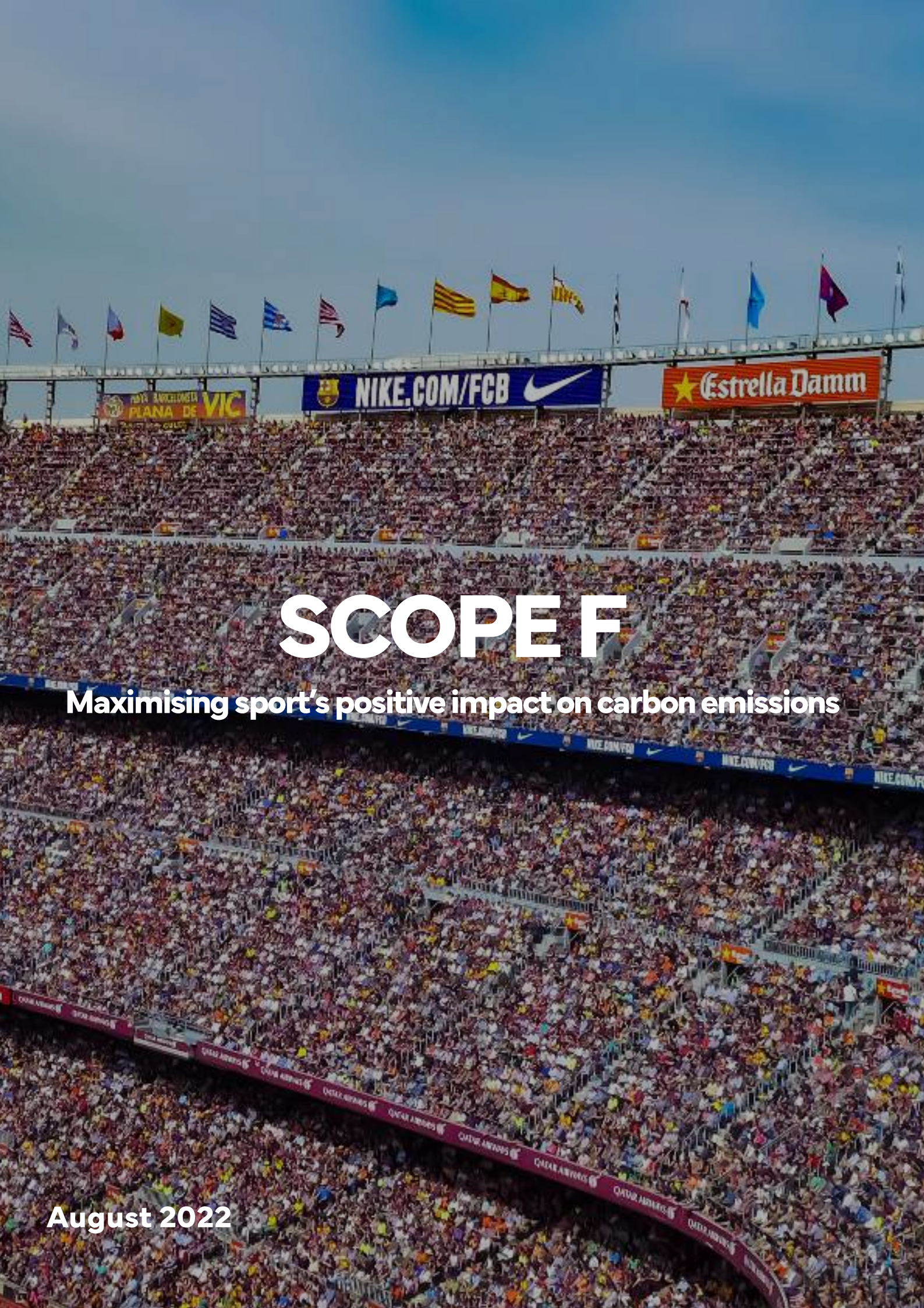


SCOPE F

Maximising sport's positive impact on carbon emissions

August 2022

Scope F - in 30 seconds

Sports organisations usually limit their work on climate to their own in-house operations and fan travel.

But sports organisations can reach far more fans than just those that go to matches; and can reach them every day not just on matchday.

There's evidence that sports can help fans cut emissions in their daily lives.

By engaging fans on climate change, sports organisations can create up to 100x more impact than what they can achieve in-house.

Everything depends on them tackling in-house emissions to be authentic

Scope F

Maximising sport's positive impact on carbon emissions.

Introduction

This paper is about Scope F, a new category of carbon emissions.[1] It covers the emissions and the reductions in emissions which result from the influence that sporting organisations have on their fans' everyday lives. For some sports this reach and influence can extend to millions of fans, so Scope F is significant.

When an organisation looks at its emissions, it usually considers them in three categories: Scopes 1, 2 and 3.[2] Together, these cover the emissions caused directly and indirectly by the organisation's operations, and up and down its supply chain (see box "The story of scopes"). The chains of responsibility for these are relatively easy to identify.

However, brands can influence emissions in other ways. Big brands can reach hundreds of millions or billions of people through their marketing. And their marketing influences how people live. That influence can make a big difference to our carbon emissions, depending on what the brands encourage us to do.

There is a special case where a brand does not have consumers, but has passionate fans. The influential brand could be a football club or a football player. It could be an athlete or club from many other sports, an actor or a musician.

It's been proven that football clubs can get fans to take action to cut emissions in their daily lives.[3] Fans respond because they are loyal to their clubs and passionate about them. If a club has large numbers of fans, the impact of getting those fans to cut their personal carbon footprints has the potential to be much bigger than the impact of the club cutting its own Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. We call this impact Scope F: F for Fans.

Nelson Mandela said: "Sport has the power to change the world."[4] In terms of cutting CO_2 emissions, this is absolutely true, and Scope F shows the way.

The power of Scope F

Carl and his family - Claire and Sam - live in West Bromwich and are passionate fans of West Bromwich Albion. In summer 2020 they were asked by their club to join in a pilot programme where you compete for your club by doing green actions. It was the Planet League's first four-week pilot. For the first time in his life, Carl found himself consciously undertaking tasks and making decisions that didn't usually come naturally, these included monitoring gas and electricity usage which subsequently ended in having a smart meter installed. Not being a family that enjoyed gardening , there were tasks that Sam wanted to try, like "bug hotel". This activity was fun for all the family. Long after finishing the tournament they are now more conscious of careful usage not just of energy but water too. And whilst being far from vegetarian or vegan, they now like to cook and eat meat-free meals.

1 In this paper we use the term "carbon emissions" to refer to emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. While carbon is not the same as carbon dioxide, this is a common usage. We have also used "CO_2" to refer to carbon dioxide. This topic is as much about environmental impact generally, not just carbon emissions, and the reader might want to extrapolate the ideas of Scope F across other areas of environmental impact. For consistency with Scopes 1, 2 and 3 we have stuck to carbon emissions in this paper.

2 See the Annex at the end of this paper for definitions and explanations of Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

3 The Planet League has run five competitions where fans represent their clubs and score "goals" by completing green actions. Over 77,000 green actions have been recorded and verified.

4. https://www.globalgoals.org/news/sport-for-development-and-peace/

The story of scopes

The Greenhouse Gas Protocol defines the three categories of emissions as follows. Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions (not included in Scope 2) that occur in the value chain of the reporting company, including both upstream and downstream emissions.[5]

Influence at the heart of human society

Most human beings are social animals. In that, we're like sheep, ants and crows. In our society we're always influencing and being influenced by each other. The influences around us affect our behaviour, what we wear, what opinions we have, our holiday choices and what shows we watch. We respond to those influences by imitation, and that's how we learn, conform, socialise, communicate and empathise. Influence is a force that shapes society and holds it together.

Influences come from our parents, brothers and sisters, friends, relatives, books, shows, politicians and heroes - and, not least, sportspeople. And from organisations trying to sell us stuff.

The technologies of influence

Brands use advertising and marketing to influence us. Since the 1950s, as society has shifted to full-blown consumerism, advertising and marketing have become omnipresent. They have been refined to the point that we often aren't even aware that we're being targeted and influenced. People are under pressure to keep on shopping, and economists tell us that the whole house of cards would collapse if we ever stopped buying things.[6] So we are persuaded to buy more and more, well beyond the levels of what we need to be content. This makes the economy grow.

Sport has been a channel for commercial influence since at least the 1870s when tobacco cards with pictures of famous athletes were included in packs of cigarettes.[7] These days, influence mediated through sport is a multi-billion pound industry.

Recently, through the convergence of online social media and the world of celebrities, the reach and power of influence has surged so much that people are paid millions just to be online influencers.[8]

Influence and emissions

As people spend more, emissions grow.[9] Therefore, as different social influences change how people spend their money, they affect emissions as well. In short, different social influences can cause emissions to rise or to fall.

5 https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards_supporting/FAQ.pdf

6 https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-psychological-pundit/201906/want-stuff-why-we-are-driven-buy-more

7 https://openmedia.uk.com/the-history-of-sports-and-advertising-sports-marketing-then-and-now/

8 https://www.businessinsider.com/how-much-money-instagram-influencers-earn-examples-2021-6?r=US&IR=T

9 There is debate about how economic growth affects emissions, and some economic growth could lead to a decrease in emissions, but generally when GDP goes up, so do emissions; and when GDP falls (e.g. during COVID), emissions follow.

We think of influence as just another cause of emissions in the same way as switching on the lights or manufacturing a brick causes emissions. Influence is less direct, but its impact can be significant. If a famous sportsman tweets that he's just got a new car or is at a cool beach party, who knows how many fans will order a new car themselves or book a flight to Ibiza?

Scopes of emissions

When experts in carbon footprinting talk about greenhouse gas emissions, they put them into different categories called "Scopes".

Scope 1 emissions are those you cause directly - in the case of a sports club, things like running the team bus or firing up the gas boiler for the shower room.

Scope 2 emissions arise from generating the electricity you purchase, to power the floodlights, for example.

Scope 3 emissions are those caused up and down the supply chain, by your supplier in making inputs to your product or service, or by your customer in using it. Examples include fans' travel to games, emissions from making the matchday food they eat or from manufacturing the merchandise sold in club shops. Scope 3 might also include the emissions from streaming a game, for the majority of fans who can't watch their team live.

Scope for debate

In the case of sports clubs, there is much discussion around the correct application of Scope 3. This is partly because the GHG Protocol, from where the scopes originate, was not written with sports in mind. For example, the guidance in the Protocol refers to business travel and employee commuting, but does not mention travel by fans to and from games. Some practitioners, therefore, exclude emissions from fan travel from their Scope 3 calculations, while others include them.

Scope F is something that stretches beyond this and into the daily lives of fans. Through initiatives on engaging fans on climate action, over 70 British clubs have now demonstrated that they can engage fans in activities not directly related to their enjoyment of the sport. These activities involve fans reducing their day-to-day emissions at home and at work, including their energy use, their travel and the food they eat.[10]

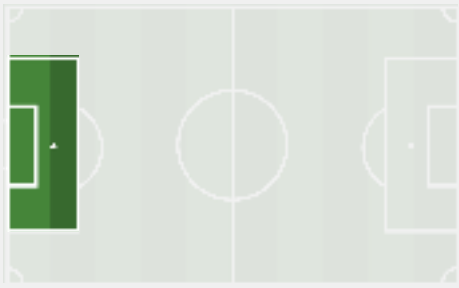
Scope F covers a wider range of emissions than Scope 3. Fan emissions falling under Scope 3 are the ones which relate to them "consuming" the product - attending games or watching them remotely. Scope F can cover all aspects of a fan's day-to-day life (or the life of the fans' family and friends!) as long as they are influenced by the club.

It's worth noting that Scope 3 only includes emissions from the fans lucky enough to get to watch the match - at the ground or on a screen. Scope F, however, covers those fans and all the other fans who aren't watching.[11]

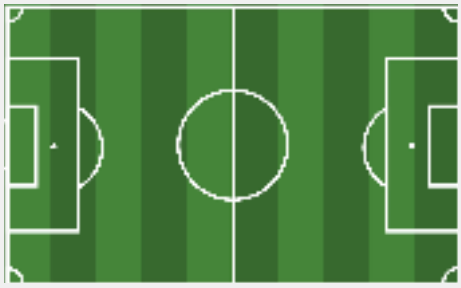
10 Through the Planet League's tournaments such as CUP26, clubs have engaged thousands of fans on climate action. www.planetleague.co.uk

11 An interesting case is Extreme-E, the sport with no fans attending their events. Here the Scope 3 emissions from fans would be limited to the emissions from watching at home. As the sport's influence grows its potential for influencing Scope F reductions could be substantial.

Scope F. Why are we only playing in the penalty area?



Today fan engagement on sustainability is limited to the match day. This engagement reaches a small part of a club's fan base and only covers a few behaviours.



Sport has permission to engage fans in their everyday lives. And has proven it can change a wide range of behaviours. Let's play on the full pitch, not just in the penalty area.

Scopes and responsibilities

It's been said that the idea of the carbon footprint was made popular by the oil company, BP.[12] It was a way of pointing out that they were not the only people responsible for emissions. Whatever BP's motives, the idea of a carbon footprint allows people to take responsibility for their own carbon emissions, by making them something we can calculate and even control.

Scopes 1, 2 and 3 were developed as ways of categorising emissions, based on how directly they fall under your control. But the scopes don't always bear a relationship to how big the emissions are or how responsible you are for them.

The idea of Scope F was inspired by a concept called Scope X, developed by communication firm, Futerra.[13] Scope X is used to address the question of how organisations can be responsible for emissions by way of their influence. Scope X covers emissions that result from the influence of professional service. A law firm might have small Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions - just a few hundred tonnes of CO_2 a year from the workings of the office and travel to clients. But the same law firm might be the lobbyist for a project to drill for oil in the North Sea, an activity which could cause tens of millions of tonnes of emissions. These would be the law firm's Scope X emissions. On the other hand, an ammonia factory might have a couple of million tonnes of Scope 1 emissions, but have little influence beyond that, given that the factory sells a commodity into a global market - so it would have low Scope X emissions.

Some big company examples

Some of the biggest companies in the world have Scope X influences which are much bigger than their scopes 1, 2 and 3. Netflix's emissions, for example, are 1.5 million tonnes according to its environmental report. This figure does not include the influence on emissions of its films and documentaries. Some of these keep the consumer economy going. By glorifying high consumption lifestyles, they might unintentionally cause millions of tonnes of emissions. On the other hand, films or documentaries about individuals and groups taking action to protect a planet in peril might inspire people and lead to millions of tonnes of reductions in emissions.

12 https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/aug/23/big-oil-coined-carbon-footprints-to-blame-us-for-their-greed-keep-them-on-the-hook

13 https://www.forbes.com/sites/solitairetownsend/2020/06/29/we-urgently-need-scope-x-business-leadership-for-climate/?sh=f0ed88e4dd39

A more complex example might include any number of global consumer goods brands. Their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are typically measured in tens of millions of tonnes.[15] But arguably their influence in sustaining aspirations to a high-carbon lifestyle goes beyond the emissions of their own products. Such aspirational brands power (and are powered by) an economy causing billions of tonnes of carbon emissions a year.

The case of football and Scope F

Drawing on these ideas, we have coined Scope F to encourage sports clubs to consider how their influence on fans can affect the fans' day-to-day carbon footprint.

Football clubs are small businesses when it comes to their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. We estimate broadly that the emissions of the 20 clubs in the Premier League are around 700,000 tonnes a year (see box). That's 35,000 tonnes per club. Smaller clubs outside the Premier League have annual emissions in the low thousands or even hundreds. These are from Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

Getting to the average emissions for a Premier League club

There is not a lot of data available on the carbon emissions of football clubs. In the 2020 report "Playing Against the Clock: Global Sport, the Climate Emergency and the Case For Rapid Change", by David Goldblatt and Rapid Transition Alliance, there is an estimate of 10,000 tonnes CO_2 per Premier League club. This is based on data from a few years ago, when even less information was available. Manchester City reports Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions of 46,000 tonnes, before Covid. As Manchester City is one of the larger clubs, we have multiplied this by only 15 to get an aggregate figure for the 20 clubs. This gives 690,000 tonnes, which we rounded to 700,000 and divided by 20 to get an average figure per club of 35,000 tonnes. We acknowledge these numbers lack rigour, but they give a reasonable starting point for the analysis.

The emissions *mediated* by the game through advertising and sponsorship are arguably higher. According to pre-covid data the £700m sponsorship spend on the Premier League clubs was from companies in ten different sectors.[16] Some of those sectors have a high carbon footprint (aviation, automotive), some medium (financial services, sportswear) and some relatively low (gambling and gaming). We calculated that this sponsorship and the exposure that the brands got from it plausibly resulted in an extra 500,000 to 1 million tonnes CO_2 emissions.[17]

Advertisements shown during games can also have an impact - usually trying to persuade viewers that carbon-intensive consumerism is a good thing - although increasingly we also see advertisements for low-carbon products.[18]

From this it appears that emissions in part caused by a sport's influence on its fans lifestyles - its Scope F emissions - are on a similar scale, at least, to its Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

14 Source: Netflix environmental progress report 2020, page 12, where 1 metric ton = 1.102 tonne

15 For example, Apple's emissions are 23 million tonnes. https://www.statista.com/statistics/528604/carbon-emissions-from-apple-by-segment/

16 SportsPro Media, 2019

17 TPL calculations

18 During half-time of one televised game just before Covid, Manchester United v Newcastle, shown on Amazon Prime in December 2019, there were eleven advertisements. Two were for high-carbon-footprint products (meat-based take-aways, and travel), six for medium-footprint consumer goods and three for relatively low-carbon services.

But there is an exciting and positive twist to this: the influence of sports brands can be harnessed to bring emissions down as well as to increase them. Sports brands have the power to wield their influence in a positive way and inspire fans to cut emissions and live greener lifestyles. This is not just a dream. We've seen it happen. We've seen Scope F emission reductions in action.

A case-study in Scope F emission reductions

Fans of Northampton Town Football Club, who play in the fourth tier of the English football league system, have been regular participants in the Planet League's tournaments.

In these tournaments fans sign up to represent the club they love. They compete against fans of other clubs - so far 70 clubs have signed up in England, Scotland and Wales - in weekly fixtures. They score "goals" by completing green activities. There are around a hundred of these activities which fall into environmental categories such as: home energy, transport, food, water and waste, as well as activities to do with getting out into nature and a handful about spreading the word and influencing others.

Some of the activities are everyday activities, but lower carbon versions of the things people do in an average British lifestyle. For example, in our activity "Over the line", fans line-dry their clothes instead of using a tumble drier, or in "Meat-free meal" they have a vegetarian or vegan meal instead of one containing meat. We calculate a "reduction" in emissions compared to the UK average. We don't claim that these are actual reductions in emissions because we don't have information about the individual fans' lifestyles before they signed up for the Planet League. We can't confidently say what they would have done otherwise if they hadn't got involved in the Planet League tournament.

In order for the activity to count as being completed, the fan has to upload a "goal celebration" - that is a photograph of them doing the activity or some visual evidence of the activity having been done. This is evidence that they went beyond a good intention and actually carried out the activity.[19] We check photographs for their validity using our "VAR" system.

We have good evidence that the activity was performed but we don't have independently verified proof.

In our five Planet League tournaments an estimated 14,000 fans have completed over 77,000 activities with evidence that these activities result in CO_2 emissions 360 tonnes lower than the average UK lifestyle.[20]

Northampton Town fans have been among the most enthusiastic. 483 fans have completed 12,300 activities representing a reduction of 66 tonnes CO_2.

Although we don't have the Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions figures for Northampton Town, we do have those for Forest Green Rovers, a similarly sized club. Forest Green's published emissions are 47 tonnes CO_2 per season.[21] These are likely to be much lower than the average smaller professional club, since Forest Green have put in a lot of good work to cut their emissions. For example, they get their renewable energy from Ecotricity.

Drawing from this and other, sparse data on football club carbon footprints, we estimate that Northampton Town's footprint is around 1,000 tonnes CO_2.

19 It doesn't stack up as court-of-law quality proof, but it's evidence nonetheless.

20 All TPL data from our user platform

21 FGR Climate study: A Truly Sustainable Football Club, 2021, page 4.

Football clubs' footprints

The best data we found on a football club's carbon footprint is from Manchester City. Their 2021 sustainability game plan gives an exceptional amount of information on where emissions come from and how much they are.[22] Their 2018/19 season footprint was 46,179 tonnes CO_2, but by switching to renewable energy they cut out around 18,000 tonnes CO_2. The impact of Covid was to cut emissions from fan travel from approximately 25,000 tonnes CO_2 to just over 1,000 tonnes CO_2. By 2020/2021 their footprint was down to 4,775 tonnes CO_2. Other data we found included Juventus - 4,886 tonnes CO_2 (Scopes 1 and 2 only), VfL Wolfsburg - 9,461 tonnes CO_2 and Tottenham - 5,056 tonnes CO_2).[23]

Based on this figure, Northampton Town, through taking part in the Planet League's tournaments, had Scope F savings amounting to around 5% of its Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Northampton Town has an average home attendance of 5,000, and approximately 85,000 Twitter followers.[24,25] So if the club could increase participation in climate action from roughly 500 to 5,000 supporters, the impact could be equivalent to 50% of the club's annual carbon footprint.

Scope F at scale - the 100x factor

With bigger clubs, the impact scales up. A typical Premier League club's carbon footprint might be 35,000 tonnes per year, so perhaps 35 times bigger than Northampton's. Their fan base may be several million people or even tens of millions of people. If the club can influence its fans to take action on climate change, then it could create a very substantial Scope F saving. We calculated as a rule-of-thumb factor that Scope F impact can be 100 times bigger than Scopes 1, 2 and 3 impact (see box).

100x impact

We made a calculation to compare Scope F reductions with reductions in Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. This is an illustrative and aspirational example, deliberately simplified. While it's not conservative, it's also not unreasonable.

Suppose a Premier League club has 3.5 million fans worldwide each with a carbon footprint of 10 tonnes CO_2 per year, so 35 million tonnes in total. If it can engage 10% of fans and help them reduce emissions by 10%, that would be a Scope F reduction of 350,000 tonnes. Meanwhile, if its Scope 1,2 and 3 emissions are, say, 35,000 tonnes and it reduces those by 10%, that's a reduction of 3,500 tonnes. In this case the Scope F reduction would be 100x the reduction in Scopes 1,2 and 3.

22 https://www.mancity.com/meta/media/2axiocfh/sustainability-game-plan-august-2021.pdf

23 Sustainability Report of VfL Wolfsburg 2020, page 55.Showing the 2017-2018 season footprint.Fans mobility represent 60% of the total footprint. Juventus Climate Report 2020/2021, page 4 - Scopes 1 and 2 only. Tottenham Hotspur Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements - 30 June 2021, page 7. Scope 3 represents a marginal volume of emission.uventus Climate Report 2020/2021, page 4 - Scope 1&2 only.

24 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_Northampton_Town_F.C._season

25 https://twitter.com/ntfc

The same goes for players. Although we don't have quantified examples of players influencing fans to take action on climate, the potential is obvious. When Cristiano Ronaldo famously rejected a Coca Cola bottle at a press conference in 2019, telling people to drink water instead, Coke's market value fell by $4bn.[26] Some economists have refuted the claimed connection between Ronaldo's action and the fall in share price. Still, it's clear that he could have more effect on carbon emissions through influencing his 400 million Instagram followers than through making changes in his own portfolio of properties and cars, or in his travel and dietary habits!

"As well as", not "Instead of"

Scope F is powerful. Influencing fans' lifestyle emissions can be more impactful than working on Scopes 1, 2 and 3. But with that power comes a danger. It would be tempting for fan-based organisations to focus only on Scope F and use it as an excuse to neglect the important work on Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

We haven't seen evidence of this happening, but you can see that it could happen. In practice we have seen two forces which counter this risk.

First, most clubs and players don't feel comfortable encouraging fans to take action on environmental issues until they've done more themselves - they want to be authentic and maintain their reputations. It doesn't mean they need to be perfect, but they feel they need to have started on the process.

There's great work being done by many sports organisations. Internationally, the Sports for Climate Action Framework set up by the UN's climate change body, the UNFCCC, now has over 270 signatories from sporting organisations around the world.[27] Most Premier League football clubs, for example, are making progress in the annual Sports Positive sustainability league.[28] The broadcaster Sky arranged Game Zero, the world's first net zero carbon football match at an elite level, between Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea, in September 2021, as part of its plans to be net zero carbon by 2030 and its commitment to the UNFCCC.[29] Every time a sports organisation publicly achieves a higher level of sustainability, some of their supporters will follow the example themselves.

There is a second dynamic we are seeing. Clubs that aren't doing so much on climate action get inspired by seeing their community organisations getting engaged in green fan action. When Cambridge United's fans won the Planet League's 2021 tournament, Cup26, it led to the club putting sustainability higher on its own agenda, including conversations at board level.

It is vital that clubs continue to work hard on their own emission reductions - to save money, to comply with commitments, to set a good example to their fans and peers, and, last but not least for reasons of ethics and good governance and citizenship. Individuals and families will only be more inspired to contribute to Scope F reductions if they know their teams are doing their part to reduce Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

26 https://www.espn.com/soccer/portugal-por/story/4410619/cristiano-ronaldo-snub-sees-coca-cola-share-price-fall-by-$4bn

27 https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action/participants-in-the-sports-for-climate-action-framework#eq-2

28 https://www.sportpositiveleagues.com/pl-2021/

29 https://www.skyzero.sky/gamezero

Case Study: Extreme E- Sport for Purpose

Extreme E is a brand new breed of sport, crafted with purpose as its core. The series, which features electric-off road racing in some of the world's most remote and challenging environments, aims to; Pave the way to a lower carbon future through the promotion of electric vehicles; Use sport to draw attention to the impacts of climate change, and; Inspire fans, companies and locations in the solutions we can, and must, all be part of.

How Scope F applies

In relation to its Scope F strategy, having a positive influence on fan behaviour in their own lives is key for Extreme E. As fans are not on site, the live broadcast, docu-series and series' team and driver social channels are key to the fan engagement.

During its inaugural Season in 2021, Extreme E joined forces with Count Us In, a group of global companies united in taking action on climate change. This comes at a critical moment of opportunity as the car industry, investors and policymakers commit to cleaning up the transportation system that fuels our cities, businesses, schools, homes and lives.

The Extreme E challenge harnesses the power and excitement of sport to calls on its fans to take real life steps which reduce their carbon footprint and to urge governments, cities and businesses to do more to address climate change. Fans were asked to pledge up to 16 different steps, including to avoid single-use plastic, to walk or cycle more, to eat more plant-based foods, to drive electric vehicles, among other actions. Keeping sporting competition at the heart of its ethos, every time a fan took a step, they attributed it to their favourite team, creating a sustainable championship alongside the racing.

Extreme E team owners include Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and Jenson Button – influential motorsport names with huge fan followings, who all asked their fans to get involved and take steps in their names. Following a tightly contested effort, Lewis Hamilton's team were crowned the winners.

In total, Count Us In's global campaign has seen over 500,000 people globally pledge to take over 15 million steps, which equates to 170,725,353 kg CO_2e Carbon Saving, proving that seemingly small steps are multiplied on a global level, they can have huge accumulative effect.

Accountability on Carbon

Minimising emissions and environmental impact has been considered at every level of the Championship and at a calculated and verified 8,870 tCO_2-e across its Scope 1, 2 and 3 inventory, Extreme E has the lowest carbon footprint in motorsport.

Extreme E's reduction methods include;

Using electric vehicles for racing

Using green hydrogen as the power source for the race vehicles

Not having fans on site. Fan travel is estimated to be approximately 20% of event carbon emission totals so this decision has great impact.

Refurbishing a former Royal Mail ship to carry the cars and all paddock set up and logistics – providing an estimated 75 percent reduction compared to air travel alternative.

Minimising on-site attendee numbers – this includes remote broadcast operations, and capping each race team to just 7 people – 2 drivers, 1 engineer and 4 mechanics.

The economics of Scope F

The cost of reducing emissions in Scopes 1 and 2 is around €80 per tonne. The best proxy for this is the market price of carbon allowances in the European Union Emission Trading System. This €80 is what it costs an industrial facility in the EU to cut its emissions by one tonne of CO_2. This is in the range of where academics say it needs to be for industry to be motivated to cut its emissions.[30]

For an organisation to reduce its Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions is going to cost on average around €80 per tonne of CO_2. What about Scope F emission reductions?

So far clubs and players have not paid to take part in the Planet League or any of the other initiatives where sports fans are engaged in sustainability. Far from being €80 per tonne to cut emissions, it hasn't cost clubs much at all - except in the form of prizes such as merchandise and tickets, and promotion through their own media channels. The cost to clubs of Scope F emission reductions so far has been practically zero.[31]

Scope F as a force for greening society - with commercial upside

We have speculated about the economics of Scope F when fan engagement on sustainable living becomes mainstream. We envisage that large clubs will work with specialists in fan engagement, community building and the shift to low-carbon living. Clubs will engage both with local fans who live near the ground, and with fans who support from afar.

As the strongest brands in many cities, with unparalleled reach in their communities, clubs will use their influence to bring together local leaders, businesses and organisations, and local fans, to focus on building resilience and practical ways of cutting environmental impacts. This might include arranging insulation programmes, setting up community renewable energy companies, making improvements to local transport, creating more green spaces, helping set up community market gardens, or making better provisions for biking and walking. They'll bring glamour and excitement to these initiatives by arranging matchday events at the ground, getting the stars involved, or offering prizes for participation.

By making sustainable living more appealing for youngsters, clubs will be contributing to cutting emissions and also be recruiting new, loyal fans for the long term. Southampton FC, through its Halo Effect initiative, has discovered exactly this: engaging fans on sustainability brings in new fans and boosts the sense of pride in the club.

Bearing in mind that Scope F is about emissions from fans' lifestyles, not their attendance at games, most of the potential for Scope F emission reductions will come from the 90% or more of fans who don't have the chance to go regularly to games. As the former global brand director of Barcelona Football Club said, "We know that only three per cent of Barcelona's fanbase will ever in their life come to the Nou Camp."[32] Remote fans might be living thousands of miles away. But their love of the club is also strong, and if shifting to green behaviours - appropriate for their geography and culture - is done for the club they love, they will do it.

The bigger the club, the lower the cost per tonne to reduce emissions through Scope F. The largest clubs, reaching several millions of fans, could, in our estimation, achieve reductions of hundreds of thousands or millions of tonnes across their fan base, for costs to the club of a few hundred thousand pounds. This implies a cost of reducing carbon emissions in the range of €1-10 per tonne CO_2, dramatically lower than the cost of making reductions in Scopes 1, 2 and 3.

30 https://carbonpricingdashboard.worldbank.org/what-carbon-pricing The carbon price does move up and down, however. Just over three years ago the EU carbon price was around €20.

31 Tell that to climate change economists and they should bite your hand off.

32 https://theathletic.com/3305597/2022/05/17/barcelona-cadiz-global-fanbase-connection/

The “greenest football club in the world”, Forest Green Rovers, shows that engaging fans on sustainability isn’t only for the good of the planet.[33] It’s also good business. Because of the club’s famous dedication to sustainability, its fan base has mushroomed to a hundred fan clubs in 20 different countries.[34] Meanwhile commercial revenues quadrupled in the three years to 2021.[35] Applied at scale, Scope F helps build a new generation of passionate fans, living more sustainable lives.

Scope F works because the emotions and passion of sport have more motivational power than pounds and pence. When governments try to work out what can be done about climate change, money is the only tool at their disposal. Unlike sports clubs and athletes, governments rarely inspire love.

33 https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change/climate-neutral-now/creating-the-greenest-football-club-in-the-world-forest-green-rovers

34 https://thesefootballtimes.co/2021/08/10/owner-dale-vince-talks-forest-green-rovers-unique-model-of-sustainability-and-its-legion-of-global-fans/

35 https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/forest-green-rovers-sowing-the-seeds-for-next-phase-of-growth-8dbpnhtgr

Conclusions

Scopes have been formulated in order to make it easier to manage calculating and reporting emissions. The conventional Scopes 1, 2 and 3 are mainly based on how much physical control an organisation has over its emissions. It's also just a question of convention.[36]

But there are other ways to slice up the world. The taxonomy should be meaningful, not just convenient. As well as calculating and reporting emissions based on whether you as a company made them or a supplier or customer did, it also makes sense to calculate and report emissions based on your influence over them and how significant the emissions are. Scope F has an important role here.

The biggest impact that a sports organisation can have on the planet is to get its passionate fans to take action on climate change: Scope F. For anyone who runs a sport, a governing body or a club (whatever size), with fans and an influential brand, Scope F is an opportunity.

Without playing down the importance of Scope 1, 2, and 3 (it's "and" not "or"), a richer understanding and appreciation of Scope F could have a dramatic effect. It could change how we think about tackling emissions; it would force us to consider our responsibilities regarding how we use our influence. And it would lead us to see climate action as a community effort rather than a lonely initiative.

Our world needs to change radically, and that's only going to happen if lots of people and organisations work together, supporting each other - not least because there will be some tough times ahead as climate change takes hold. That's why it's really important to see emissions not just as "my responsibility" or "your responsibility", but also as the consequence of lots of influences across society - baked into the system, hardwired in our minds, built into the design of things, woven into our culture. To unravel this requires a new level of cooperation - Scope F brings to life the potential of that cooperation.

This is right at the beginning of Scope F. A few organisations are working on how football and other sports can use their influence to help fans live more sustainably. The technology and methods of Scope F are in their infancy - it will need experts to turn it into a more rigorous science.

But as sports organisations large and small feel a growing responsibility to play their part in saving us from ecological catastrophe, understanding their influence and the huge potential to use it for good will become a vital part of any strategy. Reaching four billion fans around the world and inspiring them to live greener lives - through Scope F: that can become a gamechanger in the battle to cut emissions, and yet an achievable aspiration for the world of sport.

Adding Scope F to your ambition

Have you included your fans in your sustainability strategy?

Have you asked your fans for their views?

Are your comms team ready to talk about climate?

Have you got any athletes on your books who'd like to step up?

Are you making some progress in house, to stay authentic?

36 Emissions embedded in electricity you buy are Scope 2 and the emissions embedded in steel that you buy are Scope 3. But it's kind of the same thing - you're buying a product or service from a supplier who creates emissions when they make the product.

Definitions

Scope 1 emissions
Scope 1 emissions are the emissions that happen directly under your control. It could be the emissions from a gas-boiler you operate or the emissions from burning fuel in your car.

Scope 2 emissions
Scope 2 emissions are emissions that happen elsewhere but on your behalf. The most common example is the emissions from generating electricity which you purchase - effectively you've "outsourced" the emissions from the electrical energy you use to the power station where it was produced.

Scope 3 emissions
Scope 3 emissions are the hardest to define. They are seen as the emissions which you indirectly cause - the emissions which happen in the manufacture and transport of products and services you buy, or the emissions which happen when a customer uses your product. In football and sports, it's not easy to apply. Emissions from fan transport to matches is considered Scope 3 by some, but not others. Should it also be the emissions from fans watching the game on television or streaming site? Should it include the emissions from all those half-time cups of tea? As yet there isn't a standard way for the sports industry to determine exactly what should be considered Scope 3 emissions.

Scope X
Scope X emissions result from the influence that you have over another person or organisation. For example, if you persuade someone to fly across the Atlantic, then your Scope X calculation would include (a portion of) the emissions from that flight. This scope is mainly applied to professions like law and advertising which don't have big emissions themselves, but have a lot of influence on other people's emissions.

Scope F
Scope F emissions are those attributable to the influence that a football club or another sporting organisation or athlete has on a fan. For example, if an advertisement for an SUV is shown at half time of a football match, and the advertisement causes a fan to go ahead and upgrade to the SUV, then an attribution of the emissions from manufacturing and using the SUV would fall within Scope F emissions of the club which is mediating the advertisement. This isn't saying that the club is solely responsible; it's saying that the club has a role in the emissions.

Scope F emission reductions are, similarly, emission reductions of a fan, attributable to the influence of the club or athlete on the fan. If a fan signs up for a green fan engagement programme, and as a result of the club's encouragement switches from conventional power to green power, the several hundred kilograms of CO_2 saved would fall within the club's Scope F - this time as a reduction in emissions not as an increase.

Note about comparability

You can't compare emissions from different scopes like for like. If you add up everyone's Scope 1, 2, 3 and X emissions up, for example, you would get to more than the total emissions, because there is overlap or double-counting. Take the case of cooking some pasta. Burning gas on the cooker to boil the water is Scope 1 emissions for the household. It's Scope 3 emissions for the gas supplier and also the pasta maker. And if the pasta cooker is responding to a great advertisement, then the emissions fall within the Scope X emissions of the advertiser. To add a twist, if the person is cooking a protein-rich pasta instead of a chunk of steak, because they are taking part in a green fan-engagement contest, the reductions in emissions compared to what they would have been if the cook had been having steak, would fall within the Scope F reductions of the sports club the cook-fan is following.

Scope X and Scope F are not about strict mathematical rigour, but about understanding, recognising and taking responsibility for how influences spread through society and generate environmental impact.

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Many thanks to Claire Poole of Sport Positive, Brian McCullough of Texas A&M University, Solitaire Townsend and her colleagues at Futerra, Extreme E, Leicester City FC, Rugby League, SailGP and Southampton FC for their support in preparing the paper.

The Planet League is a behaviour-tech platform using the power of sport to drive action on climate change. We are bridging the gap between climate change and people taking personal action.

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