

Building a greener sport from procurement to pitch with World Rugby

World Rugby partnered with Capgemini to embed sustainability into procurement – co-creating a framework that drives responsible sourcing and supports climate goals across global rugby operations

Enhancing sustainability throughout the sporting supply chain

In a [landmark study](#), World Rugby detailed the impact of climate change on the sport, which is played in more than 130 countries. It predicted that a surge in extreme heat days, heavier rainfall, flash floods, and rising sea levels would increasingly restrict the ability of players and fans to enjoy the game – posing an existential threat to clubs around the world.

Determined to lead the way in sustainable sporting excellence, World Rugby launched its [Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030](#) in January 2022. Its associated roadmap aligned with the objectives of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

Client: World Rugby

Region: Global

Industry: Sports

Client Challenges:

World Rugby sought a solution to embed sustainable sourcing, assess supply chain risks, and enhance its reputation as a sustainability leader through a responsible, end-to-end procurement strategy.

Solution:

Capgemini helped World Rugby establish a heatmap of ESG vs. supply chain risks and a Sustainable Sourcing Framework to guide purchasing decisions with a focus on environmental impact and responsible supply chain management.

Benefits:

- Drives environmentally conscious procurement
- Improves supply chain transparency and accountability
- Supports ethical and socially responsible practices
- Scalable and sharable to extend impact across the rugby ecosystem



In line with its wider business transformation and strategic decision to directly manage the preparation and delivery of its major events – including the Men's and Women's Rugby World Cups – World Rugby has centralized its procurement function.

As the logistics of international events rely heavily on suppliers and partners, this structure allows a dedicated procurement team to help the business identify and work effectively with those third parties to support World Rugby's programs and objectives, deliver its tournaments and events, and grow the game.

Sourcing sustainably is a key part of this approach, and the procurement team is tasked with ensuring fairness, transparency, and adherence to sustainability criteria.

With these goals in place, World Rugby needed a solution that could help the team deliver against their objectives. World Rugby's global partner Capgemini, with its longstanding links with rugby and extensive experience with sustainability best practices, was an obvious choice of innovation to tackle this challenge.

Establishing World Rugby's Sustainable Sourcing Framework

In January 2024, Capgemini helped World Rugby establish a Sustainable Sourcing Framework to promote carbon-conscious procurement.

The framework targeted four main objectives:

- Identify and prioritize sustainable sourcing
- Reduce environmental impact through the supply chain
- Support ethical labor practices and social responsibility
- Enhance World Rugby's reputation as a sustainability leader

The framework consisted of two main components: a heatmap and factsheets.

The heatmap helps identify and prioritize sustainable sourcing issues based on the goods and services being procured. It analyzes different spending categories, such as facilities, travel, food, and logistics, to indicate which sustainability topics require specific priority and attention. Topics are categorized according to the key themes in World Rugby's Environmental Sustainability Plan 2030 as specific topics related to supply chain transparency and due diligence.

Meanwhile, the factsheets raise awareness about these topics, highlight best practices, and provide questions to ask both buyers and potential suppliers as part of the procurement process. They provide departments and colleagues with information on risks, relevant legislation, and key sustainable sourcing topics. In addition, the factsheets prompt teams to evaluate the necessity of each purchase and consider alternatives. If a purchase is deemed essential, departments are guided to assess the impact and ask suppliers specific questions regarding product details, supply chain, and environmental impact as part of the procurement process.

A scalable framework with far-reaching impact

The Sustainable Sourcing Framework is a cornerstone of World Rugby's broader environmental strategy and is crucial for reducing the carbon footprint of its operations and events while integrating sustainability into its procurement processes. It has already been used in the upcoming Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 to apply rigorous standards to the uniform procurement process.

Initially designed as an internal document, the Sustainable Sourcing Framework has since been shared with member unions to support their sustainable procurement efforts. This has actively encouraged event planners and managers to factor in sustainability in all their procurement decisions.

The next step is to evolve the framework into a formal Sustainable Sourcing Code that suppliers must adhere to – further embedding responsible practices across World Rugby's supply chain.

As climate challenges intensify, World Rugby and Capgemini have proven that bold leadership and strategic partnerships can drive meaningful change. By embedding sustainability into every procurement decision, World Rugby protects the future of the game while setting a powerful precedent for the entire sporting world.

Now the journey continues, with World Rugby committed to evolving its practices and inspiring others to play their part in building a more sustainable future for sport as Capgemini continues to develop innovative solutions to help them along the way.

About Capgemini

Capgemini is a global business and technology transformation partner, helping organizations to accelerate their dual transition to a digital and sustainable world, while creating tangible impact for enterprises and society. It is a responsible and diverse group of 340,000 team members in more than 50 countries. With its strong over 55-year heritage, Capgemini is trusted by its clients to unlock the value of technology to address the entire breadth of their business needs. It delivers end-to-end services and solutions leveraging strengths from strategy and design to engineering, all fueled by its market leading capabilities in AI, generative AI, cloud and data, combined with its deep industry expertise and partner ecosystem. The Group reported 2024 global revenues of €22.1 billion.

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