

smartcities & sport summit 2026

monday 16 november

19:00 – 22:00

welcome reception

VAUDOISE ARENA

tuesday 17 & wednesday 18 november (IMD CAMPUS)

MOVE TO IMPACT

Sport is many things at once: leisure and work, individual and collective, fun and competition, grassroots and elite, shadow and light, pure play and big business, routine and spectacle, practice and institution. It is both an end and a means.

Today, the question of sport's impact – especially its social impact – lies at the heart of how we rethink its role, its value, and its extraordinary potential in our societies, our communities, our local environments, and even in our daily lives.

It is now widely recognised that sport contributes to inclusion, education, equality, social integration, community cohesion, economic development, youth empowerment, civic engagement, peacebuilding, sustainability, and both physical and mental well-being. From individuals to communities to entire societies, sport is a powerful driver of social transformation.

While cities are the stages on which most sport takes place, they are far more than that. Cities, as designers and promoters of sports policies, stewards of public space, everyday playgrounds for citizens, home to sports facilities, and hosts of sporting events, play a pivotal role in delivering this social impact.

Over two days of conferences, smartcities & sport summit invites you to discuss, measure, and share the social value of sport in cities, for cities, and for the citizens. From everyday action targeting specific communities to sporting events that create momentum, every approach helps to unlock the transformative power of sport to change society.

To explore these questions, this year's summit will be structured around three distinct but deeply connected rhythms of sport in city life.

The journey will begin where sport actually resides, in the everyday. In the local club, the public park, the school programme, the volunteer coach

showing up every Tuesday evening. This is the permanent, often invisible engine of social change: quiet, constant, and foundational. Before impact can be measured or policy designed, this daily fabric must be understood and honoured.

From there, the focus will shift to the contractual, the governance structures, accountability mechanisms and shared responsibilities that give social impact its durability and economic legitimacy. Social impact through sport is by design. It is co-constructed, negotiated and written into the relationships between cities, federations, clubs and communities. This is where aspiration becomes obligation, and where the question "what do we owe each other?" demands a concrete answer.

The summit will close with the exceptional, the sporting event as a laboratory for urban and social transformation. Events compress time and concentrate energy. When designed with intention, they become unique opportunities to test new models, shift behaviours, and leave behind not just infrastructure, but changed cities and stronger communities.

The permanent. The contractual. The exceptional. Three rhythms, one conviction: that sport's social impact is not a bonus or a by-product, it is something we can choose, design, measure and build together.

tuesday 17 november

09:00 – 12:15

everyday sport: the quiet engine of social change – *the power of the ordinary*

Sport's most profound social impact is often invisible because it is constant. Starting with a definition of what social impact is and how to effectively activate it, this chapter explores the daily fabric of sport in cities as the true backbone of social cohesion, health and inclusion, exploring how this quiet, permanent engine of change can be better understood, supported, and strengthened. It will ask who could enjoy the social benefits of sport and how to remove those barriers; and consider how the thoughtful design of everyday spaces, from parks to public squares, can turn ordinary places into powerful drivers of inclusion and community life.

09:00 – 09:15

welcome words

09:15 – 09:45

framing the scope: What does social impact of sport mean? And how do we go beyond the words to effective action?

09:45-10:45

reaching further: The social impact of everyday sport is only as strong as its reach. This session spotlights initiatives driving real social impact through sport, and presents programmes that remove barriers to ensure that sport's social benefits extend to those who need them most: young people, women, people with disabilities, and marginalised communities.

10:45 – 11:15

coffee break

11:15 – 12:15

places that matter: Parks, street corners, public squares and sports facilities are social spaces. When thoughtfully designed and activated, they become powerful drivers of inclusion, health, and community life. How do cities turn everyday places into an everyday impact, and who gets to decide what these places are for?

13:45 – 17:00

sport as a social contract: rights, responsibilities and the social deal – *what do we owe each other?*

Social impact through sport is not decreed, it is co-constructed through governance, accountability and shared commitment. This chapter reframes social impact as a structural obligation, connects it to its economic dimension, and explores the conditions under which cities, federations and civil society can build ecosystems that deliver lasting, measurable change. It will make the economic case for sport's social value; examine how social impact can be written into contracts, governance frameworks and urban planning processes; and examine the central role of clubs and local associations as primary and pivotal agents of social change.

13:45 – 14:15

counting what counts: The social value of sport is real but often unmeasured and underfunded. What does Social Return on Investment mean and how does it work? What tools allow cities and federations to capture the social value of sport, make the economic case for sustained investment, and demonstrate that social inaction has a cost and social action a benefit?

14:15 – 15:30

writing it in: How can social impact be embedded into sporting governance, event contracts, procurement processes and urban planning, moving from aspirational to deliverable? What does a genuine social clause look like in practice, and what are the concrete tools that make it enforceable?

15:30 – 16:00

coffee break

16:00 – 17:00

linking it up: The sport ecosystem is dense – clubs, federations, associations, cities, NGOs, donors, participants, etc. From the volunteer coach to the local association, sports clubs are the primary interface between sport and society. How do cities and federations support, resource and empower them as agents of social change, reaching the most vulnerable, building belonging, and turning participation into transformation?

19:00 – 22:00

Gala dinner

BEAU-RIVAGE PALACE

wednesday 18 november

9:00 – 12:30

the event as a laboratory: accelerating urban and social transformation –
when sport disrupts the city for good

Major and mid-scale sporting events are unique moments of urban intensity. They are not ends in themselves, but concentrated opportunities to test, accelerate and embed new models of social impact. This chapter will consider how the innovations and models tested in one host city can be transferred, adapted and scaled by others, explore – through one city case – how sporting events can act as catalysts for inclusion and socio-economic development; and asks how cities and federations can design events that leave behind a genuine set of positive changes.

09:00 – 09:05

introduction

09:05 – 09:50

from one to many. The best legacies travel. How can the innovations tested in one host city be transferred, adapted and scaled by other cities and federations? How to turn the exceptional moment into a permanent shift?

09:50 – 10:30

from 1984 to 2028: highlight on Los Angeles – the event as a catalyst for inclusion and socio-economic development. From community engagement programmes to local procurement, sporting events can generate immediate and lasting economic and social returns. Lessons learnt and innovations in LA!

10:30-11:30

coffee and networking session

11:30 – 12:30

how IFs embed social impact (*with the collaboration of Lausanne Olympic Capital Foundation*). How do cities and federations co-design events with social impact as a core lasting deliverable?