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Women, Innovation, and ESG: The Olympic Blueprint for a Brighter Future

Client Updates

Paris 2024: Pioneering Gender Parity, Technological Innovation, and Sustainability at the Olympics

Agitos, the symbol of the Paralympic Games, now adorns the Arc de Triomphe, representing a profound commitment to progress — technological, social, and environmental. The 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics are redefining how global events can embody and promote Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

Sustainability at the Heart of Paris 2024

Sustainability was central to Paris 2024, aligning with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as part of the Game's wish to leave a legacy where sport contributes to the SDGs, supported by the French President and the International Olympics Committee. Paris 2024 set a new standard as the greenest Olympics yet, with a carbon footprint less than half that of previous Games. Powered entirely by renewable energy, and with medals made from 100% recycled materials, the Olympics games reflected a commitment to many of the UN's 17 sustainable goals for 2023, such as SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Furthermore, the Games ensured that 90% of their assets would have a guaranteed second life, avoiding the legacy of abandoned facilities—a direct effort towards SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).

The decision to forgo air conditioning in the Olympic Village, use recyclable cardboard beds, and design sustainable uniforms further reflects the broader commitment to environmental stewardship, setting new benchmarks for future events.

Innovation Driving Inclusion and Performance

The 2024 Games showcase how innovation drives inclusivity and performance, particularly through technologies that empower all athletes, supporting SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). Advanced prosthetics, custom-made wheelchairs, and other assistive devices enabled Paralympians to reach unprecedented levels. Protected by intellectual property rights, these innovations underline the importance of patents in advancing ESG-aligned technology that serves a broad and inclusive purpose.

Wearable devices and smart textiles played a critical role in monitoring athletes' health, providing real-

time data to optimize performance while reducing injury risks. AI-driven systems further refined this data, offering deeper insights into technique and form, which contributed to improved outcomes.

The Games also introduced cutting-edge athletic gear, such as "LightSpray" shoes and satellite-inspired swimsuits, enhancing performance while significantly reducing environmental impact.

Gender Parity: A Historic Milestone

Paris 2024 achieved near gender parity, with women comprising 45% of Paralympians and 50% of Olympic competitors, marking significant progress towards SDG 5 (Gender Equality). This milestone reflects the International Paralympic Committee's (IPC) dedication to gender equality, as evidenced by its investments in programs to increase female participation. Gender parity was also reflected among Olympics employees, with women making up 52%.

The Games also highlighted stories of resilience, featuring athletes who overcame various challenges, including pregnancy and severe illness, underscoring the importance of inclusive sports policies.

Balancing Progress with Human Connection

While Paris 2024 exemplifies a remarkable commitment to progress, it's crucial to balance rapid advancements with a deep understanding of human connection. The pursuit of innovation, gender parity, and sustainability must be aligned with the needs of all stakeholders, from athletes to fans and the local community. Maintaining trust and support is essential to ensure that progress does not alienate the very communities it aims to serve.

Conclusion: Shaping the Future with ESG Leadership

The Paris 2024 Games have redefined ESG integration, demonstrating that gender parity, innovation, and sustainability are key to building a more inclusive and responsible future. This is not just a blueprint for global events but a call to action for companies worldwide.

To elevate ESG performance, companies must integrate women inventors, drive sustainable innovation, and aim to align with the UN's SDGs. By focusing on **SDG 5** (Gender Equality), businesses can unlock the potential of diverse talent, while **SDG 9** (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and **SDG 12** (Responsible Consumption and Production) promote the development of cutting-edge, eco-friendly technologies. A commitment to **SDG 13** (Climate Action) further strengthens their environmental stewardship.

Now is the time for companies to lead — by innovating responsibly, supporting women inventors, and embedding sustainability at every level. This approach not only boosts ESG scores but also creates lasting value for all stakeholders.

This update is intended to provide general and concise information only. It does not constitute a complete analysis of the issues discussed, does not constitute a legal opinion or legal advice, and should not be relied upon.

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