

# Green Goal

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**The tumult and the shouting have died. The captains and their players have departed. But the drama-filled 2006 FIFA World Cup will have a lasting significance far beyond Italy's victory. For not only was it the world's biggest sports event, but its first-ever climate-neutral international tournament.**

Green Goal, an ambitious initiative spearheaded by Franz Beckenbauer – the only person to have won the Cup both as a player and a manager, and the leader of the organizing team for this year's tournament – set out to minimize the World Cup's environmental impact. It was a formidable task. More than 3 million fans descended on the 12 German cities hosting the 64 matches, generating vast amounts of traffic. And then there were the staggering amounts of electricity the fans consumed, and that were needed to run each stadium and televise up-to-the-second coverage.

'The eyes of the world were on Germany. We wanted to set an example in terms of environmental protection, and show what could be done,' says Beckenbauer – who played in his first World Cup final in 1966 and captained Germany to victory in 1974.

His team started work in 2002. Stadiums were renovated to make them more energy efficient. A new photovoltaic system at Dortmund's Westfalenstadion, for example, produces

550,000 kilowatt hours of solar energy per year, enough to have lit up the six World Cup matches held there, and save at least 430 tonnes of carbon emissions. And at the Berlin Olympic Stadium, the final venue, the flood-lighting system of 500 lights was consolidated into 310, reducing power consumption by 40 per cent.

World Cup sponsors joined in. Deutsche Telekom installed solar-powered phone boxes in stadiums, while Coca-Cola used only CFC-free, energy-efficient refrigerators to chill beverages. Electric company EnBW Energie Baden-Württemberg climate-neutralized the 13 million kilowatt hours needed to power all the stadiums, media centres and hospitality areas by diverting the equivalent electricity from renewable sources into Germany's national grid.

Public transport was heavily promoted. Match tickets also served as travelcards for buses, the metro and trains around the host city on match days. Deutsche Bahn, the German railway network, offered fans heavily discounted rail tickets – and even extended the 25 per cent fare discount offered by its Weltmeister BahnCard 25 railcard to the end of October – a month for every round the German team stayed in the Cup.

Even so, more needed to be done to offset the total 100,000 tonnes of greenhouse gasses the tournament emitted. So FIFA, the German Football Association (DFB) and a number of the

World Cup's sponsors and partners pledged a total of \$1.6 million for climate protection projects elsewhere in the world. The projects help to build biogas plants to produce cooking fuel from cow dung – replacing kerosene and wood – for 700 families in Tamil Nadu, India; to replace the use of coal on a South African citrus farm with sawdust waste from the paper industry; and to collect methane from a sewage plant in Sebokeng Township, southwest of Johannesburg, to generate electricity. Together, over time, these projects will save enough greenhouse gas emissions to make World Cup 2006 completely climate neutral.

Klaus Toepfer, former UNEP Executive Director and German Environment Minister – who is a keen supporter of the Bundesliga club Mainz – signed on as Green Goal Ambassador in 2005. 'Green Goal is football's contribution to climate protection,' he says. 'Athletes need a healthy environment, but the flip side is that sports events and facilities have a negative impact on the environment. FIFA, Franz Beckenbauer and his team, and their partners, deserve the highest praise for their Green Goal initiative.'

Green Goal sets a vital standard. The newly energy-efficient stadiums and the projects in India and South Africa will conserve resources into the future, while organizers of other events will be able to learn from the World Cup's example. Above all, it showed millions round the globe what can – and should – be done.

