



Paris is setting a new standard for large-scale events with significant carbon footprint reductions, highlighting the growing importance of sustainability in corporate and governmental practices. Paris, France. (UBS)

Paris Olympics 2024: Pioneering sustainable innovations

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We are watching the Paris Olympics not just for the athletic feats but as a real-world test of innovative sustainability practices, focusing on the circular economy, energy transition, and food revolution.

Paris is gearing up to host an expected 8-10 million ticket holders and over 11,000 athletes for the Summer Olympic Games, beginning 26 July. Beyond the excitement of the athletic feats, we are watching these Olympics to see how an event of this scale can bring to life the innovation—and challenges—tied to some of our longer-term investment ideas around the circular economy, the energy transition, and the food revolution. The Games also highlight the expectations, opportunities, and challenges of committing to carbon accounting, transparency, and supply chain management for both companies and governments.

While the Olympics are globally celebrated, they have historically been environmentally taxing, with past events emitting between three and four million tons of CO₂. For context, the emissions from a two-week Olympic event can equal the annual emissions of a country like Iceland. The 2024 Paris Olympics organizing committee committed to halve the Games' carbon footprint compared to historical emissions. Organizers have employed a circular economy strategy and the "Avoid, Reduce, Offset" (ARO) approach to reduce emissions before, during, and after the event. This should have an economic impact, in addition to the environmental one.

Investor takeaways

Paris is setting the tone for sustainable investments becoming mainstream by hosting sustainable and profitable Olympic Games. The Games are estimated to earn between EUR 6.7bn and EUR 11.1bn, and the focus on sustainability is both important and not new. Delivering on these commitments is complex, and the jury is out on the Paris Olympics' ability

to implement fully. Yet, we note that there is now an expectation for large-scale sporting events to pay attention to sustainability, adding another data point to the mosaic of shifting cultural norms and expectation on what is business as usual. These longer-term shifting expectations, combined with rapidly decreasing costs across many of the areas discussed, create investment opportunities for our Long-Term Investment themes like “The circular economy,” “Clean air and carbon reduction,” “The food revolution,” and for the broader transition to a low-carbon economy.

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For more on the circular economy, energy transition, and food revolution, see [Watch the starting line: Paris Olympics compete on sustainability](#) 24 July 2024.

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