



European 'green stadium' certification being r tested, from Vienna to Barcelona

LEED and BREEAM certification have become synonymous with efforts to green sports venues. E standard developed in Central Europe is slowly gaining traction

By [Matthew Campelli](#) - September 4, 2018

THE 2017/18 SEASON WASN'T A VINTAGE ONE for FK Austria Vienna. A seventh plac (out of 10 teams) and a 4-0 home drubbing at the hands of fierce city rival Rapid i kind of return the second most successful club in the country expects.

Red Bull Salzburg may dominate the Austrian Bundesliga – winning eight titles in the la but being 40 points off the pace (and 19 behind Rapid), is unacceptable in the eyes of tl

It would be remiss, however, to discuss the club's poor form without mentioning that fo two seasons it essentially played every match away from home while its Generali Arena rebuilt.

Its temporary home, the 50,000-capacity national stadium named after the legendary c Hoppel, was never a good fit. The biggest crowd last season was just over 15,000 specta meaning that it was always at least two-thirds empty. Indeed, of FK Austria Vienna's 17 season, the majority (nine) came away from home.

So three wins out of three in the newly-built Generali Arena to start the 2018/19 campa the tonic, providing renewed hope that the team can compete at the top end of the tabl With a capacity of 13,000, and located in the familiar Viennese district of Favoriten, the venue appears to have made both players and supporters feel at home again.

Benedikt Pultar, who oversees the club's S.T.A.R Project (stadium, training ground, acad

regional youth centre), talks with pride as he reveals that the stadium will host international matches as well as the Austrian Cup Final in 2019. Overlooking the newly-laid training pitch adjacent to the stadium, Pultar talks through the innovative open-plan hospitality and legends' lounge named after the greatest Austrian footballer of all time (and FK Austria favourite son), Matthias Sindelar.



The new-look Generali Arena was officially opened for a friendly against Borussia Dortmund on 13th July

But perhaps the most notable aspect of the shiny new Generali Arena is that it's the first venue to receive green stadium certification developed by the sustainable building council in Austria and Germany (ÖGNI and DGNB respectively). Similar to the LEED and BREEAM accreditation, the Neubau Sportstätten judges the sustainability credentials of stadiums based on a number of criteria.

The criteria set for stadiums and sports venues are similar to that of other commercial buildings, but have been adapted due to their particular nature. For example, they look at the light and noise pollution generated by that stadium on match days, for example.

Auditors are still reviewing the credentials of the Generali Arena to give it its final accreditation score, but after making sustainability one of the core features of the building, FK Austria Wien is quietly confident of at least achieving the baseline of 50%.

Solar panels installed on the stadium's roof produce 300,000 kilowatt hours of power per year, taking care of 95% of the facility's electricity. The system totally powers cooling plates installed throughout the stadium that ventilates the space more evenly. And a further solar panel

been built on the roof of the club's academy.

It's a significant investment, but one the club expects to recoup through energy savings or six years. Heavy investment was also directed towards a rainwater collection system to irrigate the lawns – a sustainability project “driven by circumstance” with the stadium on a hill in one of the wettest regions of Vienna.

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Markus Kraetschmer, the club's chief executive, is largely responsible for the project's sustainability agenda. He was one of the catalysts for the development of the Neubau Sportstätten guidelines and standards after asking ÖGNI to develop a sustainability measurement system for the stadium during the planning stages.

A working group that included Austrian and German planners, administrators, politicians, schools and universities first got together in 2013 to thrash out the criteria for the standards. Drafting the first edition in 2015, just before the Generali Arena was rebuilt.

In fact, the Generali Arena and the Vodafone Arena in Istanbul (the stadium for Besiktas in 2016) were the first two developments to go through the process, which is being termed 'project' by the councils. Auditors mark each project based on life-cycle assessment, energy of construction and cost of maintenance, as well as the other criteria, before ÖGNI and I complete an independent review.

The supply chain is also impacted. All tenders have to adhere to strict criteria around energy reduction, impact, hazardous substances, energy consumption and sustainably sourced materials.

“We built the hospitality area alongside the company we hire for catering,” explains Pulli. “We wanted the wood for the flooring to come from South America. But the certification process we couldn't source products from more than 400 kilometres outside of Vienna. So the wood

from Styria (southern Austria).”

ÖGNI and DGNB hope that Neubau Sportstätten can become the go-to sustainability standard for construction and redevelopment projects in sport throughout Europe. The standard is currently used as part of a wider certification process DGNB is undertaking for the redevelopment of Camp Nou, the home stadium of FC Barcelona.

Transforming the current stadium into a 105,000-capacity venue is a significant job in itself. The project has the added complexity of developing the large car park outside the stadium in the surrounding area. The new development in Barça – a pedestrian space with a hotel, eateries and the Camp Nou Experience museum – will be part of the certification process. The process will not just look at the sustainability credentials of the stadium – but at the whole development.



Plans for the new-look Camp Nou and Espai Barça, designed by Japanese architect Nikken Sekkei

“At FC Barcelona we’re not in the business of certifying the stadium as a first priority,” says the director of real estate, William T. Mannarelli, tells *SSJ*. “We are far more interested in certifying the entire campus as an urban cluster inside one of the densest cities in Europe. DGNB’s approach to urbanism, to the campus. To open spaces and the public realm. That’s the reason we chose this particular certification system rather than LEED or BREEAM.”

Drees & Sommer, the Stuttgart-based engineering firm, is guiding the project team through

process and helping them achieve key performance indicators related to carbon, material recycling. So far, the project has received Gold status for its pre-certification stage. Final certification will not be achieved until after the whole project is complete – which will take at least five years.

“This is a long approach. It’s a sensitive approach,” says Mannarelli. “The fact that we’ve managed to live with the existing stadium, maintaining 60-70% of the structure, shows a sustainable approach. The Camp Nou is a little bit like Frankenstein. We do things to it a bit at a time. But we want to keep the past alive and make a sustainable future possible.”

With the project’s completion still a long way off, Mannarelli won’t speculate about the timeline of the certification process. He reveals that the project team is looking at various energy options, including solar power and innovative technology that captures the energy from people walking by and converting it into electricity. However, he’s clear that any work related to sustainability must make sense for the project as a whole.

“We don’t want to be one of these clubs desperate to have a medal,” he says. “We want to create a campus environment that is about stadium infrastructure, but also about our roles and responsibilities to the public realm. It’s not about putting a fancy sticker on a building – it’s about going well beyond labelling and categorisation. And DGNB’s approach speaks to that.”

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