

# Promoting polluters – the FIFA World Cup’s bigger climate cost

## The sponsorship emissions of high carbon companies advertising at the World Cup

The FIFA men’s World Cup is more than just a window on a warming world, with extreme weather and dangerous heat hitting players, fans and officials alike. Unfortunately it is a giant billboard promoting the very pollution that is heating the planet. More than the nations playing or their star players, it is the World Cup’s high-carbon sponsors who are most visible, oil

companies, airlines and car makers pitch side and hovering over every single match. This briefing looks at the likely climate impact of the four, big high carbon companies whose names and logos are unmissable at the competition – an oil company, two airlines and a car maker: Aramco, Qatar Airways, American Airlines, Hyundai-Kia.



Sponsorship is merely another form of advertising, and when companies spend on advertising they expect normal business returns through increased sales. This briefing calculates the likely additional climate-polluting carbon emissions that would result in these companies achieving a standard business return on their sponsorship spending. Notes, references and links for the calculations can be found below. What these figures show, however, is that the impact of FIFA using the World Cup as a billboard to promote major, fossil fuel climate polluters, is bigger even than the emissions resulting from the staging of the games and all the travel involved in attending them.

### Key points

- Sponsorship deals with the four leading high-carbon sponsors of the 2026 FIFA men's World Cup – Aramco, Qatar Airways, Hyundai-Kia and American Airlines – are estimated to induce **42 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e)** in additional greenhouse gas emissions.
- Aramco alone accounts for **34.7 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e (83% of the total)** making the world's largest oil producer by far the tournament's most polluting sponsor.
- Aramco's sponsored emissions are nearly four times the estimated footprint of the entire tournament, which are around **9 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e** from all travel, stadiums and operations combined.

The 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup, currently underway across North America, is a tournament like no other. The most polluting in its history, opening under the twin patronage of the world's biggest oil company, Aramco, and a US president who has sought to expand fossil fuel dependence around the globe. It has already been mired in multiple controversies.

This is also the first World Cup in which the impacts of climate breakdown – from extreme heat and humidity, to more frequent storms and smoke from wildfires – will be impossible to ignore. Medical scientists and players have both raised the alarm over the expected playing conditions that await teams throughout the tournament, with several cities expected to breach conditions that are deemed safe for players and fans alike.

Given all this, the question arises about why this World Cup is actively promoting the very companies that are accelerating global heating and hence football's downfall? In April 2024, FIFA announced Aramco – 98.5% owned by the Saudi state – as a Major Worldwide Partner with exclusive rights in the energy category, covering the 2026 Men's World Cup and the 2027 Women's World Cup. The deal is reportedly worth around \$100m a year. It has met sustained opposition: more than 130 professional women players publicly opposed the partnership in 2024, joined by male players in 2025 and by a coalition of supporters' groups in 2026, calling on FIFA to end the deal. Alongside Aramco, are Qatar Airways, American Airlines, and Hyundai-Kia – all major global polluters that are able to push high carbon products and lifestyles to billions via the platform provided by FIFA and the World Cup.

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These sponsorship deals have a real cost to both people and the planet. Sponsorship is a form of advertising: companies pay because it grows sales of their products. ‘Sponsored emissions’ estimate the greenhouse gas emissions induced by the additional sales a sponsorship deal generates, based on the value

of the deal, the expected sales return per sponsorship dollar, and the sponsor’s emissions intensity (total scope 1–3 emissions per unit of revenue). The approach follows the [methodology developed by the New Weather Institute](#) and applied in the 2025 report [FIFA’s Climate Blind Spot](#).

## Sponsorship GHG emissions of FIFA men’s World Cup 2026

Table. Estimated GHG emissions induced by sponsorship deals with leading high carbon sponsors for the FIFA men’s World Cup in 2026

Sponsor	Sector	Value of sponsorship (\$m)	Company GHG emissions (MtCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Company revenue (\$bn)	GHG emissions per unit sponsorship (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e/\$)	GHG emissions of sponsorship (MtCO <sub>2</sub> e)
Aramco	Fossil fuels	131	1,940	105	265	34.7
Qatar Airways	Airline	131	43	22	28	3.7
Hyundai-Kia	Automotive	131	149	123	17	2.3
American Airlines	Airline	66	79	54	21	1.4
<b>Total</b>						<b>42.0</b>

**Aramco: 83% of total sponsorship impact**

### WHY IT MATTERS:

1. FIFA’s biggest climate impact is not flights or new stadiums, but its choice of commercial partners: high-carbon sponsorship induces over four times the emissions of staging the tournament itself.
2. FIFA has pledged to halve its emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by 2040. Handing the world’s biggest sporting platform to the world’s biggest oil company is incompatible with those commitments and overshadows any sustainability initiative offered at this tournament.



3. As with tobacco before it, ending polluting sponsorship of sport is the necessary first step: FIFA should terminate the Aramco partnership and exclude major polluters from future deals. Athletes and fans can join the [campaign here](#).



## Notes and references for calculations

The figures in the table are updated from the early estimates given in the report, FIFA's Climate Blind Spot. The values of the sponsorship deals were estimated using the budgeted figure for total marketing income in 2026, taken from [FIFA's 2024 annual report](#). The fraction of the total figure for each sponsorship category ('FIFA partner' for Aramco, Qatar Airways and Hyundai-Kia; 'World Cup sponsor' from American Airlines) was calculated based on figures for the 2019-2022 World Cup cycle, and then divided by the number of sponsors in each category. Company figures for GHG emissions and revenues were derived from the most recent official documents as follows.

**Aramco:** 2025 figures derived from Annual Report 2025. <https://www.aramco.com/-/media/publications/corporate-reports/reports-and-presentations/2025/fy/saudi-aramco-ara-2025-english.pdf> Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions from p.73. Scope 3 emissions from use of downstream products calculated from oil and gas production figures from p.50 (converted to GHG emissions using standard conversion factors). Other Scope 3 emissions not included. Revenue ('adjusted net income') from p.45.

**Qatar Airways:** 2023-24 figures for GHGs and revenue. Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions from p.47 of Sustainability Report 2023-24. <https://www.qatarairways.com/content/dam/documents/environmental/sustainability-report-2023-2024.pdf> Emissions for aviation fuel use have been multiplied by an uplift factor of 1.7,

to account for their higher warming effect. (see Appendix 2 of FIFA's Climate Blind Sport) Scope 3 is incomplete (e.g. aircraft manufacture GHGs not included). Revenue from p.11 of Annual Report 2023-24. [https://d21buns5ku92am.cloudfront.net/69647/documents/54686-1719916085-3345\\_Annual%20Report%202023%2024\\_V24%201-7cb0c9.pdf](https://d21buns5ku92am.cloudfront.net/69647/documents/54686-1719916085-3345_Annual%20Report%202023%2024_V24%201-7cb0c9.pdf) Figures in Qatari rial converted into US dollars using an exchange rate of 0.27.

**Hyundai-Kia:** 2024 figures from Sustainability Report 2024 of Hyundai Motor Corporation. <https://www.hyundai.com/content/hyundai/ww/data/csr/data/000000053/attach/english/hmc-2025-sustainability-report-en-v13.pdf> Scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions from p.39. Revenue from p.5. Figures in Korean won converted into US dollars using an exchange rate of 0.7.

**American Airlines:** 2024 figures for GHGs and revenue. Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions from p.90 of Sustainability Report 2024. <https://s202.g4cdn.com/986123435/files/images/esq/American-Airlines-Sustainability-Report-2024.pdf> Emissions for aviation fuel use have been multiplied by uplift factor of 1.7 (see Appendix 2 of FIFA's Climate Blind Sport). Scope 3 is incomplete (e.g. aircraft manufacture GHGs not included). Revenue from p.57 of Form 10-K (annual report). <https://americanairlines.gcs-web.com/sec-filings/sec-filing/10-k/0000006201-25-000010>

## Briefing credits

This briefing is published by the [New Weather Institute \(UK\)](#) in association with the Cool Down – Sport for Climate action Network, Fossil Free Football, and Scientists for Global Responsibility.



**The New Weather Institute** is a think tank cooperative, focused on finding pathways for rapid transition to a fair economy that thrives within planetary ecological boundaries. It established the Cool

Down – Sport for Climate Action Network, a global movement mobilising athletes, fans, and sports institutions to demand climate action within and beyond sport.



**The Cool Down Network** believes that sport and the climate emergency are inseparable, and work with partners to: raise awareness of how climate change is impacting sport and threatening its future, challenge high-carbon sponsorships and

advertising deals, draw attention to the environmental impact of elite competitions and their lack of necessary action and ambition, champion figures speaking out on climate change and the threat it poses to sport, and provide a platform for sportspeople from the grassroots to the elite.

[cooldownclimate.org](http://cooldownclimate.org)



**Fossil Free Football** is a growing grass-roots organisation of football fans working to kick fossil fuel sponsors out of football. We believe the game cannot thrive in a world of extreme heat, floods and climate

breakdown - yet football's leaders continue to partner with the industries driving the crisis.

[fossilfreefootball.org](http://fossilfreefootball.org)



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