

# SUSTAINABILITY IN EUROPEAN SPORTS, LEISURE AND FITNESS ORGANISATIONS

THE RARTTORD

DEPAN

EXECUTIVE REPORT - English

UK active

More people More active More often Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



# INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE GREEN SPORTS HUB EUROPE

The Green Sports Hub Europe (GSHE) project was launched in February 2021 with an ambition to make the sport sector more sustainable and more green. The three-year project, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, sets four key pillars and a clear strategy. The project aims to test the potential of the sports sector as a highprofile and news agenda-driving industry and to be a channel for the societal behavioural change needed to make the European Green Deal a reality by focusing on good governance, so that leaders have the knowledge and skills to place environmental sustainability at the heart of their strategy. GSHE will aim to be a support system for organisations to share knowledge and best practices, so that they can learn from each other and develop. By making use of experts, listening to the needs of the sector and equipping sports organisations and their events with the necessary tools, project partners will look to translate existing standards on environmental sustainability into concrete action, while aiming for the GSHE approach and tools to become a central component of sports organisation good governance.

# The project is coordinated by Surfrider Foundation Europe (France), with project partners including:

- Association of Cities and Regions for the Sustainable Management of Resources (Belgium);
- Sports Confederation of Portugal (Portugal);
- ➢ ukactive (United Kingdom);
- Green Cycling Norway (Norway);
- > The Olympic Committee of Slovenia (Slovenia) ;
- European Volleyball Confederation (Luxembourg);
- Rugby Europe (France);
- > European Athletics Association (Switzerland) ;
- EUSA Institute (Slovenia).

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

Create an EU-level hub on sports and environment to help the sport sector identify its needs and potential actions for a greener and more sustainable future



### **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

This report presents the results from the GSHE survey on sustainability carried out by ukactive. This project is one of the initial work streams that GSHE set out to complete over the three year period, with the outcomes and findings from this piece of work being used to inform and shape the direction of future work streams.

# **SURVEY OUTLINE**

An online survey was created for completion by organisations from across Europe that operate in the sport, fitness and leisure sector. The survey was open for three months from August – November 2021, and was distributed through GSHE networks as well as project partner networks within individual sports and countries.

The survey was available in five different languages (English, French, Slovenian, Portuguese and Norwegian) and collected information on the type, size and location of organisations completing it. The survey also offered signposting to useful resources for individuals and organisations that wished to find out more about sustainability in the sector.

The main part of the survey asked questions around what sustainability meant to respondents, and whether they currently had any processes or procedures in place to actively focus on sustainability. It explored why this may or may not be the case and what the barriers towards acting on sustainability are.



#### Survey aims

Understand how important sustainability is for organisations across Europe

- Discover what the barriers and motivators are to being more sustainable
- 3 Understand how organisations can be supported to be more sustainable
- Establish if organisations are measuring sustainability, and which policies or guidelines they follow

## **ABOUT UKACTIVE**



ukactive exists to improve the health of the nation by getting more people, more active, more often. ukactive provides services and facilitates partnerships for a broad range of organisations, all of which support our vision and have a role to play in achieving that goal.

We serve over 4,000 members and partners from across the public, private and third sectors, from multinational giants to local voluntary community groups. We do so by facilitating partnerships, campaigning and providing outstanding membership services.

# **RESPONSE OVERVIEW**

- Over 300 responses to the survey were received from organisations based across Europe that operate in the sport, fitness and leisure sector.
- The country with the most responses was France, which saw 25% of all responses. In total, over 45 different countries were represented within the data set.
- Organisations were mainly small, with over three quarters (78%) having less than 50 staff members.
- Just under half of organisations were professional sports club (16%) or governing bodies (30%), but the most frequently selected option for this question was 'other', which included educational institutes, coaching, media, events companies and organising committees.
- Seventeen different sports were represented, with volleyball, athletics, rugby and judo the most popular.

# Organization location (n=326)



France	25%
Slovenia	17%
United Kingdom	6%
Italy	5%
Norway	4%
Belgium	3%

# (+

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine & Uzbekistan

# CONCLUSION

### Sustainability is an important priority for organisations

The majority of organisations responding to the survey believed that sustainability was important, showing there is a keen appetite across the sector to contribute towards green practices and minimising the impact of sector activities on the environment. Definitions of sustainability tended to feature the themes of preserving natural resources and the environment, as well as planning for the future to ensure that sustainable practices that are embedded now can contribute to a more sustainable sector in the future. Less than 1% of organisations believed that sustainability was not important at all. The commitment to sustainability went further than just the actions of their own organisations, with most believing that buying from suppliers with their own sustainability processes in place was important.

### 2 There is a strong sense that working to be sustainable is a moral duty

The main driver for acting in a sustainable manner was that it was 'the right thing to do', which received more responses than any financial or operational reasons. This shows there is the collective goodwill across the sector to play a part in the overall effort to improve sustainability, and whilst cost was also viewed as an

important factor it was not the predominate motivator. Again, the sense of providing for the future was seen as important, with the sport sector having the potential to be a leader in terms of promoting sustainable practices.

### **3** The barriers to being sustainable are varied and require Further exploration

The barriers to acting more sustainably were varied, with different organisations having different opinions on what it is that is preventing them from adopting more sustainable practices. Whilst cost was the most frequently cited reason, this was only from one quarter of respondents. However, over half of respondents felt that cost savings would be an incentive to promote sustainability. Other key factors included lack of knowledge, with nearly half of respondents saying an increased

knowledge of sustainable practices would be useful. Other key barriers mentioned included getting full organisational buy in from all levels. especially senior management, which in turn could lead to the necessary culture shifts to embed sustainability in all areas. The variety of barriers that were given by respondents suggest that there is further work to be done in this area to pinpoint exactly what is required and what the sector can do to support the drive to improve sustainability.

## 4 An increased knowledge and understanding of how to be sustainable is required

Whilst the primary incentive for increasing an organisations contribution to a sustainable agenda was cost savings, the secondary motivation for encouraging sustainable practice was having increased knowledge on how to do this. Consumer campaigns were not viewed as an effective method of driving sustainability by many respondents, suggesting the drive and pivotal action needs to come at an organisational level, and improving access to knowledge and resources about sustainability could help this.

# 5 Organisations are Following processes and policies but these are varied

The majority of organisations had sustainability processes in place, and were aware of policies and standards surrounding this. There was a huge variety of different types of policy and standard that were being used, with a range of local, national, European and global standards being followed. There seemed to be little consistency in which of these were used most frequently. The policies in place included guidelines for waste management, events, greenhouse gas emissions, and sport specific areas.





# Еигоре

©2021. CSHE. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, without express written permission. Any unauthorized reprint, commercial copying, selling, transmitting, or use of this material is forbidden and will constitute an infringement of copyright. This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

