

Greening sports for achieving participative and contributory circular communities: skills and know-how for getting there

How sustainable are sports today and why aren't they more sustainable? Motivations and barriers



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



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#EUGreenWeek
PARTNER EVENT

Skills for sustainable, resilient, and socially fair communities

Forewords

- ▶ The results presented are based on a research document produced by *ukactive* in 2022: ‘Sustainability in European sports, leisure and fitness organisations’
- ▶ The research has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union
- ▶ All the results are accessible online FOR FREE (and in several languages)



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What is it about?

- ▶ The main part of the research 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.
- ▶ The research had 4 main objectives:
 - Understand how important sustainability is for organisations across Europe;
 - Discover what the barriers and motivators are to being more sustainable;
 - Understand how organisations can be supported to be more sustainable;
 - Establish if organisations are measuring sustainability, and which policies or guidelines they follow.



Response Overview

- ▶ 326 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.



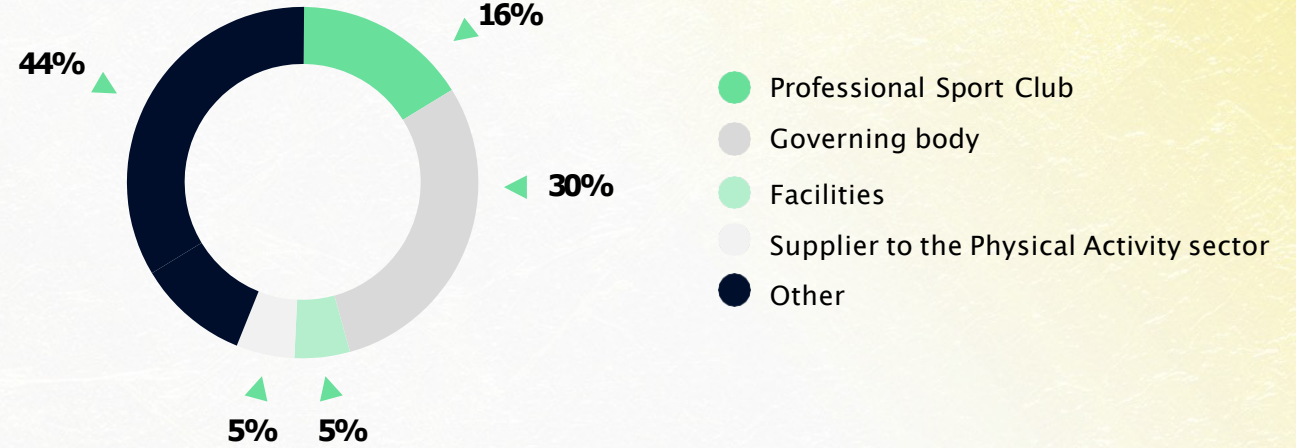
Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal,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

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

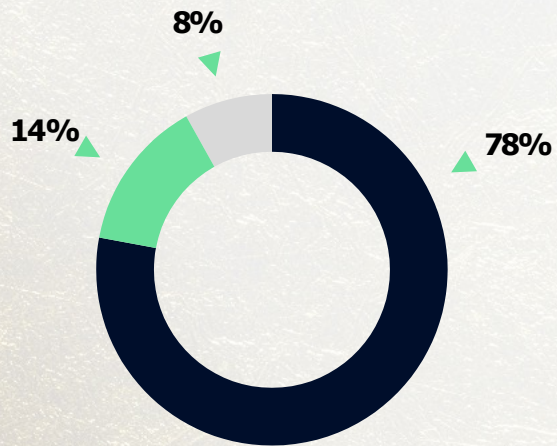


► Just under half of organisations were professional sports club (16%) or governing bodies (30%), but the most frequently selected option for this question was 'other', which included educational institutes, coaching, media, events companies and organising committees.

Organisation type



Organisation size



















► Organisations were mainly small, with over three quarters (78%) having less than 50 staff members

- 0 - 49 staff members
- 50 - 249 staff members
- 250+ staff members



► 17 different sports were represented, with volleyball, athletics, rugby and judo the most popular.

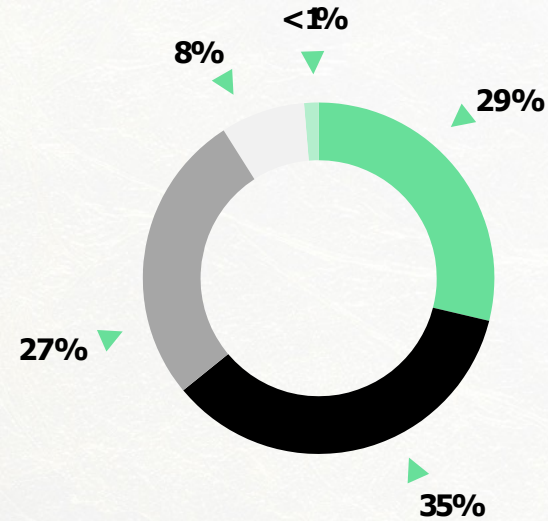
Sport type

	Artistic swimming		Cycling		Skating
	Athletics		Football		Skiing
	Basketball		Judo		Swimming
	Beach volleyball		Rowing		Table tennis
	Boxing		Rugby		Volleyball
	Canoeing		Sailing		



IMPORTANCE AND MEANING OF SUSTAINABILITY

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Quite important
- A little important
- Not at all important



► Sustainability has high importance for organisations across Europe, with over 60% agreeing that it was "extremely" or "very" important for them. Less than 1% of organisations felt it was not at all important.

► The sustainability credentials of suppliers were also viewed with importance, again with over 60% saying it was "extremely" or "very" important that their suppliers had a commitment to sustainability.



► When asked what they understood about the term "sustainability", there was a wide and varied collection of responses. They were compiled in 4 different categories:

1 Preserving resources

- › Reducing waste
- › Saving energy
- › Reducing carbon footprint
- › Using recyclable materials

2 Preserving the environment

- › Reducing the use of chemicals
- › Protecting the environment where sporting activities take place

3 Improving natural and man-made surroundings

- › Increasing biodiversity
- › Creating better transport links
- › Modernisation of sports areas

4 Planning for the future

- › Setting realistic and achievable targets
- › Dynamic planning, situation analysis and demand forecasting for the sector
- › Networking between different clubs, groups and organisations
- › Creation and promotion of best practice for the sector



BARRIERS AND MOTIVATIONS

▶ The main driver for organisations to work on their sustainability was the sense that it was the right thing to do, with nearly half of respondents selecting this as an option.

What motivates you to work on your sustainability ?



49%

It's the right thing to do



28%

Efficiency



19%

Image



20%

Financial savings



8%

Contracted by authority/governing body

OTHER MOTIVATIONS

- ▶ For health, especially of young people. => Revision of EU BWQD
- ▶ Personal responsibility.
- ▶ Social responsibility.
- ▶ There is no alternative.
- ▶ Company values.
- ▶ Organisation reputation.
- ▶ To inspire others.
- ▶ To help create global awareness.
- ▶ To improve the living conditions of coaches and athletes. => Link to WWF Report
- ▶ Sport should be used as a 'vector of change' to raise awareness of these issues.
- ▶ To educate children about the need for sustainable development.
- ▶ To protect the environment, the planet, and living species for future generations.
- ▶ To have respect for natural resources and use them appropriately.



► Cost was seen as a big hurdle, with one quarter (26%) selecting this as the biggest barrier to adopting more sustainable practices.

What is currently preventing you from adopting more sustainable practices ?



15%

Not sure how



26%

Cost



20%

Time



7%

Ease

OTHERS

► **Organisations rely on volunteers ;**

- Air travel is still a necessity ;
- Not enough organisational buy-in ;
- Not enough government regulation ;
- Changing process not cost effective ;
- Technology ;

► **Organisational culture ;**

► **Difficulties in delivering across different countries ;**

- Difficulty in calculating current carbon footprint ;
- Not a priority within organisation.



▶ Subsequently, cost reductions were the most frequently selected option as an incentive to adopt more sustainable practices, with over half (59%) saying reductions would be encouraging.

What could incentivise or encourage you to adopt more sustainable practices ?

59%

Cost reductions

19%

Consumer campaigns

48%

Increased knowledge

36%

Tax benefits

OTHER FACTORS

▶ Meaningful cash benefits and incentives.

▶ Knowing that it would enhance reputation and external perception of the organisation.

▶ Better mitigation of any risks.

▶ Resources specifically for voluntary and not-for-profit organisations.

▶ Mandatory standards set by national federations for specific organisations.

▶ Governmental standards for sector wide organisations which encourage sustainability.



MEASURES AND PROCESSES

Areas of Focus

For those who did have sustainability processes in place.



58%

Operations - usage



33%

Travel



56%

Events



56%

Output - waste



25%

**Becoming
carbon neutral**



17%

Building - design

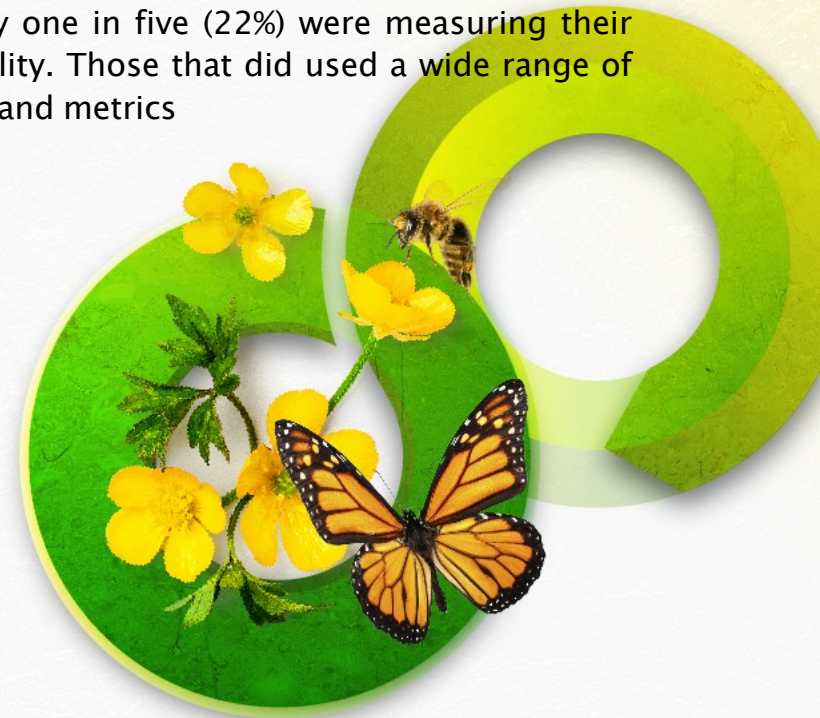


37%

Purchasing products

► Nearly two thirds of organisations (63%) had sustainability processes in place, with over half following published standards or policies. The policies being used were wide ranging, including country specific, pan European and global.

► Despite most organisations having processes in place, only one in five (22%) were measuring their sustainability. Those that did used a wide range of measures and metrics



POLICIES

- ▶ Governing Body guides (e.g. 8 Step Sustainability Guide of the European Athletics)
- ▶ B Corp standards
- ▶ Country specific policies (e.g. Environmental lighthouse (Norway), Esos compliance (UK), Green Club Programme (Ireland), Slovenia Green).
- ▶ IOC policies
- ▶ CSR policies
- ▶ Waste management policies
- ▶ Event specific policies
- ▶ FISU Healthy Campus Project
- ▶ Greenhouse Gas protocol
- ▶ GRI Standards
- ▶ PAS 2060
- ▶ REACH regulations
- ▶ Students 4 Climate Action
- ▶ Sustainable development goals (UN)
- ▶ ISO standards (14000, 20121, 26090, 26000, 14000, 14001, 50001, 20211)
- ▶ WHO's sustainability goals
- ▶ WWF sustainability guides
- ▶ UN Climate Pact for Sports
- ▶ UNFCCC Sport for Climate Action

MEASUREMENT

- ▶ Flight tracking
- ▶ Measurement of paper consumption
- ▶ Measurement of sick leave
- ▶ Measurement of carbon footprint
- ▶ Measurement of progress against energy reduction targets
- ▶ Measurement of waste and recycling
- ▶ Measurement by financial savings
- ▶ Measurement of purchases
- ▶ ISO certification audits
- ▶ Conducting surveys of clubs
- ▶ CSR committee
- ▶ ESS statutes
- ▶ Measuring energy usage
- ▶ Specialist data analysis service for sustainability



INITIATIVES

- ▶ A report on sustainability initiatives was drafted (available to collect today) and focus primarily on qualitative projects implemented across Europe by the GSHE's network and affiliates.
- ▶ The report compiled a wide range of initiatives from sponsor and athletes engagement, public transportation, event management, energy, etc.
- ▶ The initiatives were ranked according to the IOC's sustainability strategy and the % focus areas (see below)



Conclusion

① Sustainability is an important priority for organisations

- ▶ The majority of organisations responding to the survey believed that sustainability was important;
- ▶ 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;

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

- ▶ ‘The right thing to do’ received more responses than any financial or operational reasons;
- ▶ Acknowledgment that the sport sector has the potential to be a leader in terms of promoting sustainable practices;

③ The barriers to being sustainable are varied and require further exploration

- ▶ Barriers to acting more sustainably are varied (cost, knowledge, organizational buy in etc.);
- ▶ Necessity to conduct further work to pinpoint exactly what is required.



Conclusion

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

- ▶ Primary incentive for increasing an organisations contribution to a sustainable agenda was cost savings;
- ▶ Secondary motivation for encouraging sustainable practice was having increased knowledge on how to proceed;
- ▶ The drive and pivotal action needs to come at an organisational level;
- ▶ Improved access to knowledge and resources about sustainability could help achieving this objective;

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 (including guidelines for waste management, events, greenhouse gas emissions, and sport specific areas);
- ▶ There is a huge variety of different policies and standard being used;
- ▶ There is a wide range of local, national European and global standards being followed;
- ▶ There seemed to be little consistency in which of these were used most frequently.



Food for thought

- ▶ The sport sector is not yet ready and you can feel it at every level: heterogeneity
- ▶ Budget does not mean success (cf. Paris2024 Olympic Games)
- ▶ The approach is not global enough (yet): sponsors, media, etc.
- ▶ The risk of 'Sport washing' is undoubtedly on top of the list

HOWEVER

- ▶ Crucial to take a break and measure with pride the road that we have travelled (notion of Green Sports at EU level, consciousness, engagement, etc.)

