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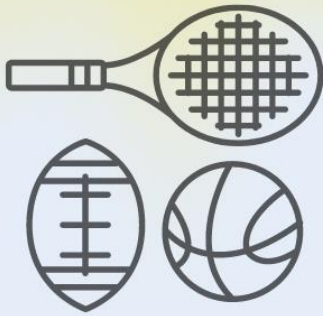
Green Sport and Outdoor Activities for Environmental Awareness and Lifestyle

GREEN SPORTS



Research on the topics of green sport, outdoor activities and environment

January 2023

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THE RESEARCH: AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This research represents the tool and the initial base for the creation of the content of the ***Booklet of good practices on green sport and outdoor.***

It represents one of the preliminary steps of the project and it is run by the Consortium of the partners to get in contact with the meaning of green sport activities in the countries involved in the project. The aim of this research, in fact, is ***to understand how these concepts are interpreted in different countries, to explore and compare.***

The target group involved, and main actors involved in the research *are youth workers, youth organizations, youth leaders, youth centers, youth educators in the field of sport* and in general. Not by chance, the output is dedicated to those working with young people in specific structures (like youth centers, sportive organizations, youth clubs, recreation centers, youth hubs, NGOs, scout organizations etc.).

In line with the objectives of the project, this research aspires to:

- Gather information of the state of art in each country related to the topics of green sport, outdoor activities, and environment.
- Enable organizations to share and exchange good practices on the impact of green sports and outdoor activities to the links between encouraging a healthy and inclusive lifestyle and working for a healthy environment.
- Allow youth workers and organizations to increase their knowledge in taking actions and initiatives associated with green practice sports and outdoor activities.
- Raise awareness on the environmental issues and contributing to the creation of a generation of youngsters that are sensible to the challenges of their communities.

At the end of the project, this tool will have a direct impact on youth workers by empowering them, and on youth organizations by building their capacity. Indirectly, this tool will support and stimulate other education providers to make use of non-formal education methodologies and methods to enrich their teaching techniques and improve the learning results.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM AND THE SPECIFIC ACTION

Erasmus+ is the EU Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period **2021-2027**. Education, training, youth, and sport are key areas that support citizens in their personal and professional development.

High quality, inclusive **education, and training**, as well as informal and non-formal learning, ultimately equip young people and participants of all ages with the qualifications and skills needed for their meaningful participation in democratic society, intercultural understanding, and successful transition in the labour market. Building on the success of the programme in the period 2014-2020, Erasmus+ strengthens its efforts to increase the opportunities offered to more participants and to a wider range of organisations, focusing on its qualitative impact and contributing to more inclusive and cohesive, greener, and digitally fit societies.

The general objective of the Programme is to support, through lifelong learning, the *educational, professional, and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond*, thereby contributing to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to driving innovation, and to strengthening European identity and active citizenship. As such, the Programme shall be a key instrument for building a European Education Area, supporting the implementation of the European strategic cooperation in the field of education and training, with its underlying sectoral agendas. In addition, it is key in advancing youth policy cooperation under the *European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027* and developing the European dimension in sport.

The Programme has the following specific objectives:

- To promote learning mobility of individuals and groups, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity, and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training.
- To promote non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity, and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of youth.
- To promote learning mobility of sport staff, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion, creativity, and innovation at the level of sport organisations and sport policies.

To achieve its objectives, the Erasmus+ Programme foresees the implementation of the following Key Actions in the 2021-2027 period:

1. Key Action 1: Learning Mobility of Individuals

2. Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions
3. Key action 3: Support to policy development and cooperation
4. Jean Monnet Actions

With specific regard to the project ***Green Sport and Outdoor Activities for Environmental Awareness and Lifestyle***, it has been part of the "Key Action 2: Cooperation among organisations and institutions", in particular the sub-action named "Small Scale partnership".

Small-scale Partnerships are designed to widen access to the programme to small-scale actors and individuals who are hard to reach in the fields of school education, adult education, vocational education and training, youth and sport.

The action will support flexible formats – mixing activities with transnational and national character although with a European dimension – allowing organisations to have more means to reach out to people with fewer opportunities. Small-scale Partnerships can also contribute to the creation and development of transnational networks and to fostering synergies with, and between, local, regional, national and international policies.

The objectives of this action are:

- To attract and widen access for newcomers, less experienced organisations and small-scale actors to the programme.
- To support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities.
- To enhance active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level.

Small-scale Partnerships projects are designed by youth organizations in Europe taking in consideration different priorities as follow: inclusion and diversity; digital dimension.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Green Sport and Outdoor Activities for Environmental Awareness and Lifestyle is a long-term project within the Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ programme, in the specific field of the Small-Scale partnerships. The **aim of the project** is to share and exchange good practices on the impact of green sports and outdoor activities to the links between encouraging a healthy and inclusive lifestyle and working for a healthy environment; as well as spread it in the youth work field and other sectors.

The **specific objectives** are:

- To enable youth workers, organizations and young people, to develop a limited set of measures, actions and initiatives associated with green practice sports and outdoor activities;
- To increase the sense of belonging and the sense of community for the youngsters in their local community through their direct and active participation obtained through the practice of green sports and outdoor activities;
- To raise awareness on the environmental issues by bringing the Green Deal close to youngsters and give them the right tools to take action;
- To contribute to building empowered and committed communities to increase the processes of youth participation and empower them for the environmental challenges that in today's EU regions are facing;
- To create a network of organizations in Europe that plan and implement future projects with the E+ program in order to generate further opportunities for young Europeans and their local communities.

The project will reach the planned objectives through a series of activities that will bring to the development of the following **outcomes**:

1. A Research on the state of art of green sports and outdoor activities in each country;
2. A Booklet of good practices on the impact of green sports and outdoor activities.

Both the outputs will be available in five languages and free to use and/or download them. Moreover, the partners are expected to share outcomes and results at local, regional, national, and international level.

About the activities, the project includes a mix of local, international and research activities:

1. INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- *Kick-off meeting in Italy*
- *International seminar in Cyprus*
- *Evaluation Meeting and Final Conference*

2. LOCAL ACTIVITIES
   - *A set of workshops which include practical session in non-motorized sea and water sports; mountainous sports; sports in urban areas*
   - *Three (3) dissemination events (training for young people and youth workers)*

3. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

About the situation of green sport and outdoor activities in each country, identification of good practices and impact on sustainable development

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

The consortium consists of four (4) partners from the following countries: ***Cyprus, Italy, Romania and Portugal***, which cover a wide range of expertise and experience related to the scope and the aims of the project.

ACTIVE ZONE OUTDOOR is the applicant of the project and it is a **Cyprus** based non for profit, non-Governmental organization established in Larnaca in 2019.

Its mission is to connect young people with opportunities ***to develop better mental health through sports and outdoor activities*** and be actively engaged in society achieving personal fulfillment. Good levels of mental health and well-being enable young people to live their life in a positive and meaningful way and cope better with **changes and challenges**.

Active Zone Outdoors's daily objectives are: to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people through non-formal learning, nature and outdoor activities and sports; to engage young people in local and European level contributing to social change, protection of the environment and personal development; to reinforce active citizenship and to promote European values through intercultural education. Moreover, it supports the *European Ecological Network* "Natura 2000" through the protection of natural areas for species of flora, fauna, birds and habitats in the area of Larnaca and generally in Cyprus.

TDM 2000 INTERNATIONAL, partner of the project, is a non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit, independent organization based in **Italy** committed to foster cooperation across Europe through the establishment of a vivid network of youth organizations. Since its creation in 2008, the network has significantly flourished and now ***embraces 30 organizations from 23 different countries***. So far, it has coordinated, directly implemented, supported, and disseminated activities and projects mainly in the fields of *Education and Training for Capacity Building, International Cooperation for Development and Mobility for Intercultural Learning*. TDM 2000 International is committed to establish an **effective network of cooperation** between youth organizations through which

we shall develop concerted strategies to approach common issues that affect youth, thus becoming a main promoter of the empowerment of young people, youth associations and their communities.

CONEXÃO JOVEM ASSOCIAÇÃO partner of the project, is a youth organization based in Braga, **Portugal**. Conexão Jovem Associação it is an organization of young people, for young people. Its mission is to help young people ***to increase their skills and active participation through local and international projects*** focused on their personal, cultural and social development. It is dedicated to bringing young people and their communities together for dialogue, debate, and to enable them to take part and take initiative in solving major challenges on a local and global scale. Conexão Jovem works mainly with the **youth sector** rom 14-35 years old and its main activities consist on local community activities together with municipality and the local parish such as workshops and seminar up to trainings and local gatherings. With these formats the organization has been supporting the youth sector and boosting their skills, and awareness to the most urgent issues of society while at the same time giving them skills to prosper within society and activating them to create a positive contribute.

ASOCIATIA SCOUT SOCIETY, based in **Romania**, it is partner of the project. The organization was founded in 2011 with the primary goal of ***educating members of the local community through non-formal education to become active citizens in their local communities***. The vision of the organization is to create a favorable climate for the development of as many people as possible at the level of the local community, the country and across Europe. The activities organized by the association are mainly aimed at young people. Thus, the organization is constantly working with young people using non-formal methods that promote and cultivate among them the European principles and values of **multiculturalism, democracy, and knowledge of human rights**. At the same time, through our projects, we are working to address the needs and issues that young people confront with in the nowadays society.

CONTEXT AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

Sport is increasingly seen as a valuable ally toward social and environmental sustainability goals. "*With its values of respect, dialogue and understanding, it contributes to the development and fulfillment of individuals. From sport spring actions and reflections to transform and improve our societies.*" Audrey Azoulay, director-general of UNESCO, thus sanctioned the Kazan Plan, a global agreement that incorporates the practice of sports into the sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 Agenda.

In general terms a ***green or sustainable sport or environmentally friendly sport or outdoor activity***, seeks to reduce the sport's ecological footprint on the environment. Unfortunately, to date there is no real body of legislation on sustainability in sports but relies on private initiatives or agreements between private individuals and Public Administration to promote the prevention and proper management of waste in the context of sporting events, the environmental impact of sports facilities, the spread of green procurement and the attention of protected areas.

In accordance with the definition provided by *BASIS - The British Association for Sustainable Sport* [1] , speaking about green sports means, the following parameters should be considered:

- ENERGY AND EMISSIONS

  To minimize greenhouse gas emissions from all sources including buildings, equipment, and other operational sources, including emissions from non-energy sources such as refrigeration.

- WASTE MANAGEMENT

  To minimize the generation of waste. All unavoidable waste to be reused, recycled, or recovered with no waste sent for incineration or landfill.

- WATER AND EFFLUENTS

  To use water efficiently and effectively, to dispose of wastewater appropriately, avoiding watercourse pollution and to design buildings and hard landscaping surfaces to avoid local issues such as flooding.

- MATERIALS AND CHEMICALS

  To use sustainable, healthy, non-toxic products and raw materials with low embodied energy which are sourced locally and made from reusable, recyclable and/or recycled resources.

[1] BASIS (the British Association for Sustainable Sport) - https://basis.org.uk/

- TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

  To minimize the impacts of transport and travel by reducing journeys and using low and zero-carbon transport and travel options.

- FOOD AND DRINK

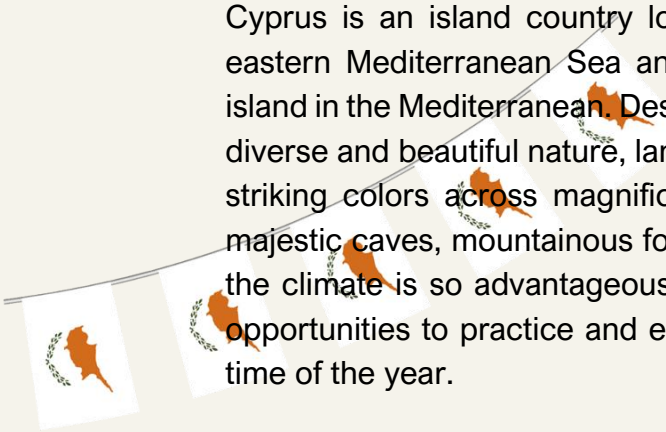
  To reduce the impact of food and drink production, use and disposal by choosing local, seasonal, high welfare and organic produce; minimizing waste and, where waste is unavoidable, segregating and disposing of waste in a positive- or low-impact way; and redistributing unused food and drink where possible.

- BIODIVERSITY AND HABITATS

  To encourage and protect biodiversity and wildlife habitats through appropriate land use, management, and integration into the built environment.

LOCAL REALITIES. PRESENTATION OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED

CYPRUS



Cyprus is an island country located south of the Anatolian Peninsula in the eastern Mediterranean Sea and is the third largest and third-most populous island in the Mediterranean. Despite being a small island, it incorporates so many diverse and beautiful nature, landscapes, and attractions, stunning scenery with striking colors across magnificent rock formations, sandy coasts, sea blues, majestic caves, mountainous forests, waterfalls, lakes and rivers. What is more, the climate is so advantageous for most of the days of the year providing the opportunities to practice and enjoy several sports and outdoor activities every time of the year.

Sports policy on the island is developed, administered, and managed by the Cyprus Sports Organization (CSO), a semi-public Institution that operates under the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth. Within this framework, the CSO has issued a national strategy for sports which is broken down in certain priorities including: infrastructure, support to federations and clubs' competitive programs, development of National Sport Programs, social role of sports, relationship of CSO and the European Union, economic dimension of sports, maximization of the internal capacity, improvement of communication, professionalism in sports and participation in sports and physical activity[2].

To understand the prevalence of sport and physical activity across the population in Cyprus, it is valuable to take a look at the latest Eurobarometer 525 on "Sport and Physical Activity"[3]. Briefly, 46% of Cypriots never exercise as opposed to 29% who exercise with some regularity. The outcomes of the survey are worrying also with regards to the question "how often do you engage in other physical activity such as cycling from one place to another, dancing, gardening, etc.?" in which the predominant answer is "never" (41%) followed by "with some regularity" (26%) and seldom (20%). In addition, the survey aimed at identifying where Cypriots engage in sports or physical activity with 43% of them indicating that they do sports in the park or outdoors while a percentage of 28% prefers exercising in a health or fitness center. Finally, the respondents reflected on the environmental sustainability strategy and practices of their sport organization(s), sport club, health or fitness center by choosing from a predefined set of possible answers. Interestingly, 42% indicated "none, as far as I know", while 30% and

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http://cyprussports.org/general-information/2020.html

[3] Eurobarometer 525 – Sport and Physical Activity

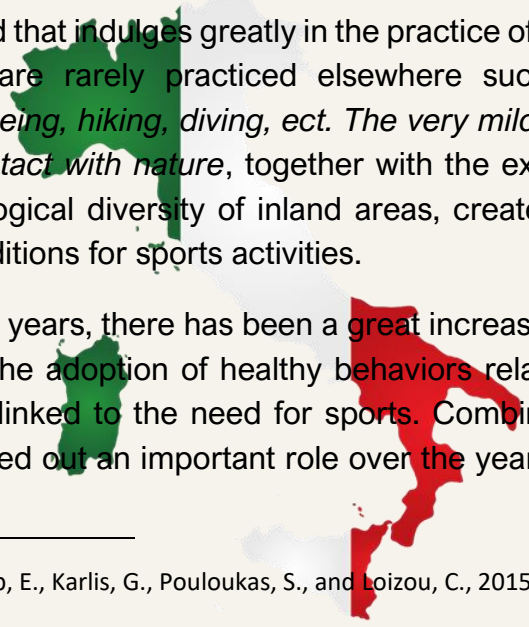
24% chose the answers “working in reducing waste or improving waste management” and “promoting the use of green energy”.

Evidence with regards to trends in sports among Cypriots is scarce with the latest research[4] to have been conducted in 2012. Based on the study “Leisure Sport Participation in Cyprus 2012” conducted by the University of Nicosia on behalf of the Cyprus Sports Organization, a percentage of 39,8% of the population exercised in 2012, while 60,2% did not. Regarding team sports, most people were involved in football (13.2%) with other activities receiving lower attention (e.g. dancing (5.0%), basketball (3.8%), volleyball (2.7%) and futsal (1.7%). In terms of individual sports, most people were engaged in walking (47.6%) with one quarter of the respondents exercising at the gym (26.4%). Swimming, on the other hand, was practiced by 9.2% of the sample and tennis by 3.4%.

The above discussion reveals the lack of recent research with regards to the current trends in sports for Cyprus as well as the absence of any study exploring green sports and their impact on the environment. In general terms, as green sports are considered those sports practiced in the physical environment and are based on environmental standards. Some examples of sports which could potentially be considered as greener sports are running, cycling, yoga, climbing, swimming, as well as sea sports such as sailing, windsurfing, kayak, sup, and surfing.

ITALY

Sardinia is the second largest island in **Italy**, located in the Mediterranean Sea and characterized by about 2,000 km of coastline and hundreds of km of hiking trails located in the most inland and remote areas. More than other Italian regions, it is a land that indulges greatly in the practice of different types of sports some of which are rarely practiced elsewhere such as *surfing, trekking, windsurfing, canoeing, hiking, diving, ect. The very mild climate invites outdoor activities and contact with nature*, together with the extension of the coastline and the morphological diversity of inland areas, create the ideal environment and the best conditions for sports activities.



Over the past few years, there has been a great increase in people's awareness and attention to the adoption of healthy behaviors related to healthy lifestyles and increasingly linked to the need for sports. Combining these two aspects, Sardinia has carved out an important role over the years as an attractor for the

[4] Kartakoullis, N., Webb, E., Karlis, G., Pouloukas, S., and Loizou, C., 2015. “Leisure Sport Participation in Cyprus 2012”

organization of sports events related considered sustainable and low environmental impact.

In 2020, the government of the region of Sardinia drew up a *three-year plan for sports* (2020 - 2022) where, through the guidelines drawn up, it recognizes the social function of sport and promotes its practice and dissemination in the territory as an indispensable tool for the psycho-physical protection of the citizen, the cultural and civil growth of society, and the respect and enhancement of the environment and the territory. Starting from some statistical data highlighting the statistical correlation between sports activity and health, less than 30 percent of citizens practice sports on a regular basis (this is against the European average of 60 percent). The goal of the regional government, in this sense, is ***to promote among citizens an increasingly deeper awareness of the practice of sports activity and the state of health, both from a mental and physical point of view.***

Also very important are the synergies created with the various departments: this implies, among other factors, the promotion in national and international terms of the island's image and its morphological, naturalistic and environmental characteristics and its candidacy as a suitable region for hosting, organizing and managing green sports events.

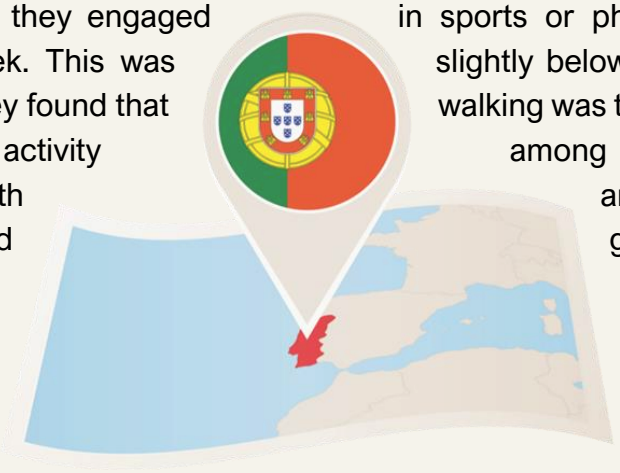
Sport and the environment represent a virtuous alliance that is becoming more and more widespread accomplice to the increased awareness of citizens and the need to adopt more healthy lifestyles. Over the past 10 years Sardinia has emerged on the national and European scene as a green destination where it is possible to practice any kind of sport in contact with nature thanks to favorable conditions. Just think of the choice, for example, of *Luna Ro*ssa to move its base to the city of Cagliari for the preparation of the trials related to the *America's Cup regatta*, the climatic conditions related to the winds made the area among the best where to train.

The protocol signed between *Lega Ambiente* and *Cagliari Calcio* in July 2021 lays the groundwork for a collaboration between the two entities (an association that deals with environmental protection and a football club) to raise awareness among citizens, starting with the youngest, to adopt sustainable lifestyles and protect the environment and territory. This is a collaboration that highlights how the **link between sports and the environment** is becoming increasingly widespread in the region.

PORTUGAL

Portugal is a country located in southwestern Europe, bordered by Spain to the north and east and the *Atlantic Ocean* to the south and west. It has a mild *Mediterranean* climate, with hot summers and mild winters, and its geography includes a mix of coastal plains, rolling hills, and rugged mountain ranges.

In terms of sports, **football** (soccer) is the most popular sport in Portugal, with a high participation rate among both men and women. Other popular sports include **futsal, handball, basketball, and volleyball**. Portugal has a strong tradition in surfing, with some of the best surf spots in Europe located along its coastline.



According to the Eurobarometer 525 survey[5], around 62% of Portuguese respondents said they engaged in sports or physical activity at least once a week. This was slightly below the EU average of 64%. The survey found that walking was the most common form of physical activity among Portuguese respondents, with around 38% saying they had gone for a walk in the past week. Running or jogging was the second most popular activity, with 16% saying they had engaged in it in the past week. The Eurobarometer 525 survey also found that football (soccer) was the most popular team sport in Portugal, with around 22% of respondents saying they had played it in the past year. Other popular team sports included basketball, volleyball, and futsal. Swimming was the most popular individual sport, with around 22% saying they had engaged in it in the past year. Overall, according to this barometer, while sports and physical activity are popular among a significant percentage of the Portuguese population, there is still room for improvement in terms of increasing regular participation.

Green sports, also known as sustainable sports, refer to sports activities that prioritize environmental sustainability and social responsibility. In Portugal, there are several initiatives aimed at promoting green sports and reducing the

[5] "Eurobarometer 525: Sport and Physical Activity." European Commission. September 2021. https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/92786

environmental impact of sports activities. One of the most notable initiatives is the Green Sports Pact, a national agreement between the Portuguese government, sports organizations, and environmental NGOs. The Pact aims to promote sustainable practices in sports activities, such as reducing energy consumption and waste generation, promoting eco-friendly transportation, and promoting social responsibility and environmental education among sports organizations and the public.

Another notable initiative is the ***Green Athletics*** program, launched by the Portuguese Athletics Federation. The program aims to reduce the environmental impact of athletics events by promoting sustainable practices such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and the use of eco-friendly materials. In addition, several sports facilities and events in Portugal have implemented sustainability practices to reduce their environmental impact. For example, the *Estádio do Dragão*[6], home stadium of the FC Porto football club, has installed a solar panel system that provides a significant portion of the stadium's energy needs. The *Portugal Open tennis tournament* has also implemented sustainable practices such as waste reduction and eco-friendly transportation.

Overall, while green sports are still a relatively new concept in Portugal, there is growing awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability and social responsibility in sports activities. The ***Green Sports Pact*** and other initiatives are helping to promote sustainable practices and reduce the environmental impact of sports activities in Portugal.

ROMANIA

Romania is a state located in the south-east of *Central Europe*, on the lower course of the Danube, north of the Balkan peninsula and on the north-western shore of the Black Sea. Almost the entire surface of the *Danube Delta* and the southern and central part of the Carpathian Mountains are located on its territory. The capital of the country is Bucharest, which is also the largest city and the sixth city in the EU by population. Romania borders Ukraine to the North, Bulgaria borders to the South, Hungary to the West, Serbia to the Southwest, and the Republic of Moldova to the East. Romania has a temperate continental climate with shades of transition.

Romania has a rich tradition in sports, and it is difficult to determine what the beginnings were. On the territory of our country, there are mentions of sports games since ancient times. In the 7th century, such events took place in *Histria, Callatis and Tomis*. The first sports associations in Romania were founded in the

[6] Portugal's Estádio do Dragão Installs Solar System." Solar Power World. December 2, 2019. https://www.solarpowerworldonline.com/2019/12/portugals-estadio-do-dragao-installs-solar-system/

middle of the 19th century. One of the first was called the "Sign Society". In the early years of the 20th century, sports such as cycling expanded.

The *Scout Society Association* was founded in 2011 with the aim of encouraging volunteering and contributing to the development of the local community, especially to the process of educating young people through activities based on non-formal education. The association began to develop its field of activity, carrying out projects on more and more diverse topics (such as sports, health) but keeping the same goal since its establishment - helping young people to develop and train as individuals involved in society. Sport is an integrated part of *Erasmus*+, the EU action program in the field of education, training, youth and sport. Promoting mobility "for the purpose of staff learning, as well as cooperation, sports quality, inclusion, creativity and innovation at the level of sports organizations and sports policies" was highlighted as one of the three key objectives of the new Erasmus+ program.

Sport is not only about points, goals, matches, and games, fans or adrenaline. It is also about traditions, about unique interesting customs that accompany and become a symbol over time, as they are passed down from generation to generation. In Romania, ***Oina*** is a purely Romanian sport that was born hundreds of years ago, from a simple game of sheep during the moments of rest on the long transhumance roads. It is said that a shepherd, still clutching in his fists a lump of cow hair that he had woven, came up with a kind of ball. He put his hand on the club and, striking it hard, sent it far away, to the root of a tree. When he sent the boys to bring it back to him, they competed to see who could return with the ball the fastest and thus the game of sheep was born.

METHODS USED FOR THE RESEARCH

CYPRUS

As an initial step for the execution of this research, Active Zone Outdoor identified an indicative number of green and environmental sports and activities **from desk research** and **from its own experience in offering sports events for young people**. The sport activities were categorized into the following four pillars: (a) mountain sports, (b) beach sports, (c) sea sports and (d) urban sports. To limit the exhaustive list of sports which share some principles and characteristics of green and environmental sports (e.g., fuel less) as well as increase the potential generated impact of the project in the society beyond the sports professionals and athletes, emphasis was given on sports and activities which can be practiced at a low budget and are easy to learn leading to the table presented below.

MOUNTAIN SPORTS	BEACH SPORTS	SEA SPORTS	URBAN SPORTS
Rock climbing	Beach tennis	Windsurfing	Orienteering
Skyrunning	Beach volley	Stand Up Paddle	Skateboarding
Cycling	Beach soccer	Kayaking	Running
Skiing	Beach handball	Sailing	Parkour
Hiking	Beach rackets	Surfing	Cycling

The next step was to isolate three sport activities based on the following criteria:

- Easy access to sports professionals and athletes practicing the sport/activity to organize focus groups.
- Popularity and acceptance of sport/activity among young people at a local and national level.
- Access to sport/activity throughout the entire year.

Therefore, from August until November 2022, *Active Zone Outdoor* held **a series of focus groups** with professionals (e.g., coaches), professional athletes and amateur athletes from its extensive network practicing the following sports/activities in Cyprus: beach tennis, Stand Up Paddle (SUP), orienteering. The goal of the focus groups was to engage the participants in a structured discussion to gather information about and identify among others the potential of green sport activities in Cyprus, their advantages, and weaknesses as well as

their impact to the environment and those practicing them. A total of 20 participants willingly shared their views on green sport activities, out of which 12 were men and 8 women. Ten (10) of them represented beach tennis, situating itself as the most popular sport activity in the research sample while SUP and orienteering were represented by 6 and 4 representatives respectively as presented below.

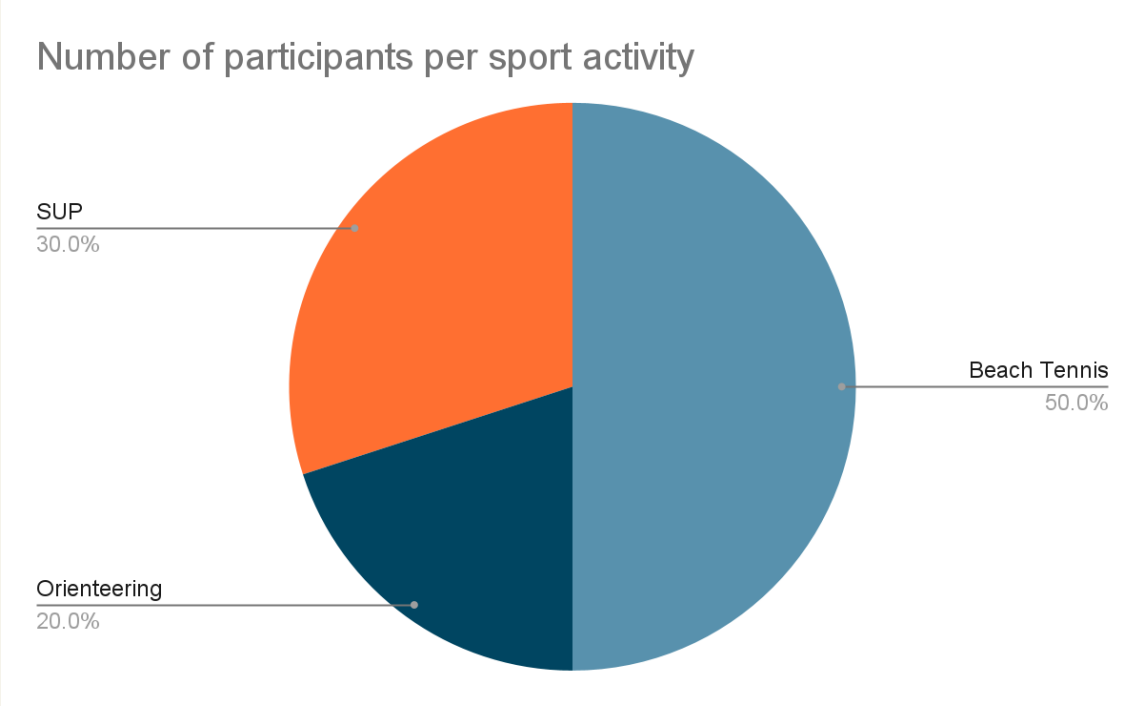


Figure 1 Number of athletes per sport

Finally, given the fact that all three chosen sport activities are currently under development in Cyprus in terms of infrastructure, training, and coaching, two types of respondents were identified, namely, sport professionals (e.g., coaches and professional athletes) and amateur athletes to provide a more comprehensive representation of the reality. As demonstrated in the chart above, each sport activity was represented in the sample by both sport professionals and amateur athletes. To enrich the results of the research on green sport activities and feed the outcomes of the focus groups, *Active Zone Outdoor* also executed desk research focusing on the impact of this type of sport activities to the mental and physical health of practitioners as well as identifying sustainable ways to reduce their impact to the environment.

ITALY

The research related to **Italy** was carried out using a traditional methodology (research) combined with the support and experiences of some local stakeholders involved in sports activities. Five stakeholders active in sports were

involved, specifically: the owner of a gymnasium, a padel coach, two referents of a nautical club involved in water sports, and finally, a soccer coach legally registered with the FIGC (*Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio*).

With these stakeholders it was possible to have a chat and understand the point of view of those involved in sports activities, the methodologies adopted to reduce the impact on the environment, and the long-term prospects.

In addition, TDM 2000 International **created a working group** to look for good practices and do the research by **making use of tools, publications, good practices, and what emerged from the discussion with stakeholders**. All the outputs that emerged were put together within the research. Finally, an attempt was made to respect the regional dimension as much as possible without forgetting to delve into good practices and initiatives at the national level. To carry out the research, the local working group has, in addition, evaluated through special documents the impact of some major sporting events and the implications for the surrounding environment. Documents, guidelines, and recommendations developed at the European level (e.g., the *White Paper on Sport*) were, then, used, which allowed for a better definition of the local versus European dimension.

PORTUGAL

The research presented in this document has been done using the following methods:

- ***Questionnaire***. A total of 78 participants filled a survey based on which we were able to collection of information on the level of knowledge/awareness on green sports from the perspective of Portuguese citizens in Portugal. The survey also allowed us to understand the impact these activities have, their limits and how they can be improved.
- ***Focus group***. We have organized structured talks with professional both in the sports field as well as in the sustainability field. They have shared with us the current situation of Portugal regarding sustainability and how it is contributing to a greener sports practice – National programs being held, enterprises supporting the movement and individuals' action we can all take to make sports greener.
- ***Desk Research***. Research done based on the information provided by the focus group. After the input from the focus group, we were able to proper channel our research and find more information on the programs and initiatives in place that promote green sports.

ROMANIA

To this research, we used qualitative and quantitative measures:

- ***Qualitative***
  - We investigated the existing online resources/ literature about Green Sports in Romania.
  - We built our research on the previous experience of the organization in outdoor activities and environmental awareness where we could observe the attitude of people about Green Sports and how Sport can be mixed with practices that protect the Environment and promote a Healthy Lifestyle.
- ***Quantitative***
  - To understand the attitudes and knowledge of Romanian citizens about Green Sports, we created a questionnaire and administered it to a population of citizens. The aim of the questionnaire was to estimate based on data collection and analysis, what is the overall situation concerning Green Sports in Romania, as the concept is not very well known by its citizens and may take many people by surprise.

We included questions, such as the following:

Are you familiar with the concept of Green Sports?

Have you ever practiced Green Sports?

Do you think Green Sports are well-known in Romania?

If you practiced, what are the benefits of Green Sports?

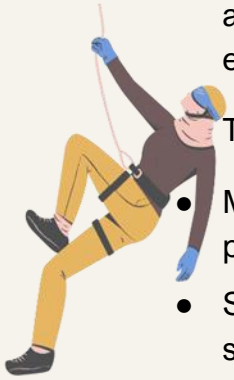
What are the benefits of Green Sports for the environment?

If you do not know about Green Sports, how do you imagine them to be?

STATE OF GREEN SPORTS IN EACH COUNTRY

CYPRUS

Given the extremely pleasant weather conditions evident in Cyprus throughout the year with the average maximum temperature in January and July to be around 16-18°C and 40-42°C respectively, it is no surprise that a variety of sport activities has been developed and is practiced on a regular basis in the natural environment by mountain and sea enthusiasts.



The list of green sport activities can be exhaustive and includes among others:

- Mountain Sports: rock climbing, sky running, cycling, ski, snowboarding, paragliding, mountaineering, hiking, mountain biking, trekking, bouldering;
- Sea Sports: kayaking, Stand Up Paddle, kite surfing, sailing, windsurfing, surfing, swimming, snorkeling;
- Beach Sports: Beach handball, beach soccer, beach tennis, beach volleyball, beach rackets, beach sambo
- Urban Sports: Orienteering, skateboarding, running, rollerblading. cycling, parkour;

Even though no research has been conducted at a national level to explore the popularity of each of the above listed sport activities in terms of the number of professional and amateur athletes practicing them, some of these sports seem to be more attractive to young people for various reasons with SUP and beach tennis, all being nontraditional sports (e.g., football, basketball), to top the respective list.

If you drive to the coastal areas of Cyprus, you can easily spot numerous people practicing two of the most emerging sport activities gaining tremendous popularity across the island, namely, Stand Up Paddle (SUP) and beach tennis. Stand Up Paddle, "the act of propelling oneself on a floating platform with the help of a paddle[7]", has inevitably received extensive popularity across the island over the last couple of years with a number of factors to have combined to achieve this goal. While the purchase of a new paddle can cost as little as 400 euro, all the water sport companies located at various beaches in the coastal cities provide rental services for SUP. Furthermore, practicing SUP does not require any specific fitness level if you can balance your body on the board making it very easy for beginners to learn. In addition, wind, and wave conditions

[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standup_paddleboarding

evident in the island throughout the year are appropriate for practicing this sport activity at morning hours regardless of the temperature.

With 3 registered Beach Tennis Clubs[8] and sand courts mainly built-in various beaches across the island, beach tennis, a sport combining tennis and volleyball and played between two couples (doubles) is one of the most rapidly growing sport activities in Cyprus. Its popularity lies in the fact that it is an easy to learn sport and can be played by players of different abilities and fitness levels, it can be practiced all year around due to adequate weather conditions applicable in Cyprus while it gives the opportunity to players to socialize as each game requires four people. With an average racket costing around 150-euro, beach tennis is considered a low cost and inclusive sport activity as it does not require excessive financial investment in practicing it. Finally, national as well as international (e.g., The Grammar School ITF Beach Tennis Tournament - BT 10 & BT50) beach tennis tournaments are frequently hosted in Cyprus for both men and women giving the opportunity to ambitious local players to compete at a high level.

Orienteering is not a very popular sport in Cyprus. The sport was first introduced in Cyprus in 2008 informally. The first Orienteering Club was established in 2010 and in the same period, became a member of CMCOF Cyprus Mountaineering, Climbing and Orienteering Federation and IOF International Orienteering Federation. Therefore, there is a lack of awareness of the sport, its benefits, and potentials. Fortunately, a group of people who envision the development of the sport have joined forces and are cooperating to spread and expand the sport at the local, national, and international level.

A main reason for the development of the sport is the number of mapped areas. Admittedly, the number of mapped areas has increased in the last three years. More maps have been created and more events have been planned to give the opportunity to people of all ages to experience a variety of courses in different locations in the island. Specifically, there are Orienteering maps for 10 parks, 14 cities and villages, and 4 forest areas all over Cyprus. At least three clubs and organizations, members of Cyprus Mountaineering Climbing and Orienteering Federation CMCOF, organize courses in different areas and for different levels of participation. One Orienteering Club organizes an annual international event, with athletes and Orienteers from different nations. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education organizes, in cooperation with CMCOF a sport educational program in every city, aiming to give opportunity to students in primary education to experience the sport in the physical environment.

[8] http://cyprusbeachtennis.com/

Covid pandemic brought more people into the sport, since is an outdoor activity taking place in open area (park, city center, traditional village, forest, school yard), there is no physical contact between the participants, each participant or group of participants can start the course any time they want in the given timeline, it is a low-cost sport, the only specialized equipment which is needed is an orienteering compass which costs approximately 40-50 euro. The digitized version of the game created more accessibility to the sport, since the only requirement is to download a mobile application and take a course in certain events in each country. In Cyprus, there are 3 digitized mapped areas in the centers of Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca towns.

Importantly, it can be addressed as a green and sustainable sport since the events leave nothing to the environment other than footprints. Sustainability is one of the fundamental values of orienteering. Orienteering provides mental and physical challenge, builds life-skills and self-confidence, and promotes a healthy lifestyle. Orienteering is respectful of the natural environment and promotes environmental good practice. Orienteering events require limited infrastructure and a low threshold for participation. Organizing an Orienteering event all you need is a map, compass, control points (flags) and checkpoint recording device. At each control point, there will be either an electronic device to record that you were there, or a manual punch device to mark your card.

In general terms, aspects of environmental sustainability and protection are slowly being embedded in the mindset of young people practicing green sports and activities to become more conscious about minimizing their human impact on the environment while practicing the sport. Maintaining the natural environment (e.g., hiking route, beach facilities) clean while and after practicing the sport activity, understanding, and following main principles with regards to the disposal of human waste and buying environmentally friendly equipment are considered core ethical practices towards green sports in the country.

ITALY

Climate change is an extremely topical issue that looms over us every day and that all policies worldwide are trying to address by putting **the concept of Sustainability at the center**, which in fact is the only solution. The fight against climate change and the parallel implementation in our society of sustainable living projects are ***involving all sectors***. Indeed, it is crucial that this is the case and that everyone is committed to doing their part if we really want to have a future on our planet. With the pandemic and after the Covid-19-related period, people's attention to environmental and social dynamics has increased.

Sports, too, are fortunately taking their first steps toward a sustainable future, for example, by increasing awareness of green sports such as: hiking in contact with nature; walking or running in contact with the surrounding environment; water sports such as ***sailing, kayaking, windsurfing, kitesurfing, dragon boating; and yoga***, which is a discipline closely related to the concepts of concentration and relaxation. These listed sports are just a few of the sports that have currently found greater popularity in Italy, aided by the growing attention of the population towards these activities.

Environmental sustainability is an important factor in improving the quality of our lives. For this reason, it is essential to make sure that the message reaches as many people as possible; this is when sports assume a central role in bringing the green message even to those who, at other junctures, would not have thought of it.

In Italy, it should be stated that many sports clubs are structuring their environmental sustainability projects with a twofold purpose: as sports clubs with a relevant influence on the territory and their fans, clubs can play a central role in raising awareness of these issues, while as companies they are called upon to do their part in achieving the goals imposed by the industry. This allows people to become more aware of and closer and closer to the topic of sports and playing sports in a healthy outdoor environment. In fact, in addition to combating sedentariness with immediate benefits for the mind and body, sports activities practiced outdoors provide an opportunity to better experience nature and take care of the environment.

Because of its simplicity and more **practical approach**, it presents far fewer **obstacles** than other sports that are practiced indoors (often this type of sport involves economic costs or even finding a suitable space). In this case, nature presents itself as a great outdoor gymnasium and gives everyone, consistent with their abilities and skills, the opportunity to participate by expressing themselves and their attitudes in the best possible way.

PORTUGAL

Among the research and the questionnaire, we have identified the sports which are considered the greenest and the ones most practiced by our survey group. Those being:

- Beach Soccer
- Surf
- Trail Running

The three of them require a specific setting to implement/practice (either on the coastline or at the beach, or in a mountain setting – which can be one of the first reasons why people would turn into less greener options to begin with if they aren't living in that specific setting. Even though we have quite a large coastal area and wide mountain regions, usually the most populated cities still require you to drive outside town to be able to practice these sports, not to mention the weather limitations – winter in Portugal can be severe, reaching -5º in some regions, and fairly raining especially in the North.

The general attitude towards green sports isn't the best in Portugal. From our survey we understood that over 80% of the participants don't know what green sports is. Also, when choosing a sport to practice, the sustainability of the sports itself is not considered or not taken as a criterion, which is also a negative factor in regard to awareness and general attitude towards green sports, hence supporting the necessity of intervention.

ROMANIA

Sustainability in sport is a team effort. Even though there are sometimes diverging points of view and interests, actors, organizations, institutions, and individuals have to join forces to seek ways of developing sport to meet the challenges of the future.

To ensure that future generations can also enjoy an intact environment, sport must respect ecological boundaries. In the field of sport and environment, the precautionary principle has two dimensions. Precautionary resource management means that, as a matter of principle, sport should use natural resources such as water, soil, and air carefully, and should actively combat climate change. Precautionary risk management is based on taking preventive action to avert adverse impacts on flora, fauna, and landscapes, especially where there is incomplete knowledge or uncertainty about the type, scale and causes of environmental damage.

Sport is one of the phenomena that characterizes the modern and contemporary era. This fact is given by the pleasure of moving in the open air, as well as by the continuous desire to improve and challenge one's own psycho-physical limits.

The concept of "green sports activities" is not very common in Romania. Thus, there are little to no resources available to present an accurate situation of green sports in the country. In Romania, only 20% practice a sport or exercise regularly. Also, while 60% never exercise, 13% of the Romanian citizens sit for more than 8 hours a day, thus neglecting the health and benefits of exercising for themselves and others. The Romanian countryside lends itself perfectly to a

multitude of outdoor activities, from hiking on the peaks of the country's many mountain ranges to tracking an amazing array of birds in the Danube Delta or wildlife in the Carpathians.

In recent years, new types of activities have been developed and promoted to deal with the lack of physical movement of people and the increase in the environment's pollution. There are various activities that can be organized by combining sports with environmental actions such as:

- Picking up trash - running (plogging), hiking, water sports (canoeing, kayaking, surfing, diving), yoga or other cardio sessions in parks;
- Educational games in nature that combine physical movement with environmental actions (trash hunting).

Athletics entered Romania at the end of the 19th century thanks to the Romanian students who studied in Germany, France, and Austria.

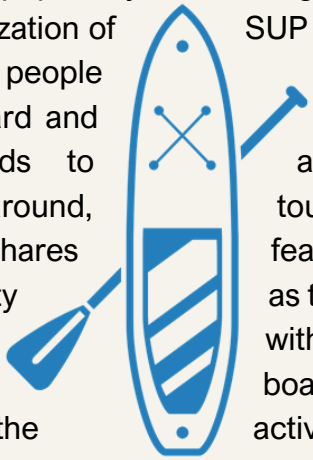
Roxana Lupu founded *Plogging for Romania*, the national movement for greening and green spaces, with the help of amateur sports volunteers and nature lovers, involving the organization of greening sports camps.

BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF GREEN SPORTS

CYPRUS

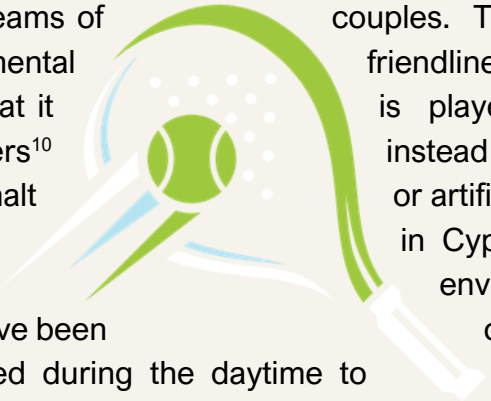
STAND UP PADDLE

Stand Up Paddle (SUP), a fast-growing outdoor activity, is a water sport activity "where a rider stands up on a large board and uses a paddle to move through the water[9]". It can be practiced almost in all water surfaces, from the sea, lakes, rivers, and canals and its popularity among water enthusiasts has given rise to a new conceptualization of SUP which goes beyond surfing; now you can encounter people practicing yoga, pilates as well as fishing on a SUP board and this is why there is a great variety of SUP boards to accommodate different activities and needs (e.g. all around, touring, surfing, fishing). The activity undoubtedly shares features to be considered a green and environmental activity as the SUP board is engineless and thus it does not operate with fuel; the paddle and the waves are the engines of the board! In order to examine the environmental impact of the activity, it is crucial to consider the materials used to construct a SUP board, a discussion which takes place in the next chapter.



BEACH TENNIS

Beach Tennis is a rapidly growing sport activity in Cyprus combining rules and techniques found in other sports, such as tennis and beach volleyball, which is played between two teams of couples. To advocate towards the environmental friendliness of beach tennis, we should consider that it is played on sand courts measuring 16 x 8 meters[10] instead of any other court surface built with asphalt or artificial grass. In addition, all beach tennis courts in Cyprus are built on the natural outdoor environment - no indoor beach tennis courts have been constructed - and most of them are used during the daytime to exploit natural lighting and avoid the consumption of energy for lighting purposes. Even though beach tennis rackets are made from carbon, a difficult to recycle material unlike plastic, the durability of the material exponentially extends the



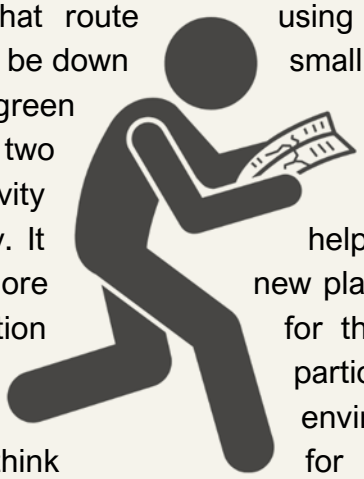
[9] https://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/what-is-stand-up-paddleboarding-sup

[10] https://www.itftennis.com/en/itf-tours/beach-tennis-tour/

lifespan of the racket and as a result, an amateur beach tennis player is expected to replace his/her racket in no less than 2 years.

ORIENTEERING

An ***urban orienteering*** is a course that takes place in cities, villages and parks and does not follow a set route. Instead, you just must pass from a series of checkpoints. Your challenge is first to navigate and make decisions in terms of which is the best (fastest route) to pass from the checkpoints and then to find your own way along that route using a map. The checkpoints are not hidden, but they may be down small alleyways or behind trees. It can be considered as a green sport since the only tools that someone needs are two legs, two arms and one mind. An outdoor activity that creates balance between mind and body. It helps a person to improve navigation skills and explore new places in town. An activity that does not create any pollution for the environment but instead can help the participants to observe and explore the environment, take sharpens decisions and help them think for their next move. Urban orienteering is a sport that can take place in city centers, many villages, and parks near cities. The only requirement is the map of each area where the orienteering event will take place, and the special equipment. Recently, in many mapped areas you can practice courses only with mobile applications. Specifically, MapRunF enables a form of Orienteering that uses a SmartPhone App for punching and timing, avoiding the need to put out flags and SI units on the course. Therefore, you can just download the app, search for local events near your city and practice by yourself. As soon as you complete the course, it will be saved.



A survey by the International Orienteering Federation 'Orienteering and Environment' in 2012 revealed that the environmental impacts of orienteering are small, and that Orienteering's green image should be used more efficiently for marketing the sport and gaining positive PR among the public.

ITALY

The research focuses on identifying good practices at the national and regional levels. For practical issues, it was decided to identify five practices are placed on the regional territory of Sardinia. The good practices identified concern both sports and sports clubs and/or associations that practice green and sustainable sports daily.

CIRCOLO NAUTICO ISILI

This first local good practice was born in 2014 by a group formed by five friends who decided to get involved by betting on the success of the venture, giving birth to an association that over time has become increasingly consolidated until today, achieving amazing goals both in the sports field and in the social and environmental ones. Starting in 2020, the association will focus everything on the environment and the enhancement of surrounding resources. From 2021 among the green sports (in addition to ***hiking, hiking, trekking activities***) From 2021, the use of amateur ***kayaks, courses for the use of mountain bikes with experts in the area, training sessions on the lake, dragonboat*** has been introduced. The tourist-sports activity also introduced in 2021 with pedal boats allowed even the most reluctant to engage in motor and hiking activities safely. Events organized by the lake (social apericena and sport fishing competitions) have been sold-out. In doing so, thanks also to the great social-promotional activity carried out, the association has succeeded in raising awareness of the area, making citizens aware of respect for the territory, and encouraging people to practice sports. https://circolonauticoisili.com/

SOCIETÀ CANOTTIERI ICHNUSA

120 years in the service of sports. The *Società Canottieri Ichnusa* is an amateur, nonprofit sports association. It represents the oldest sports society in Cagliari, established as the Sardinian Rowing Society on August 10, 1891, with headquarters in the Levante Pier. It immediately began its sporting activities in rowing, first in the regional field and then also in the national one. And, apart from an interlude during World War II, Ichnusa's sporting activity and successes never ceased. So much so that CONI has recognized Ichnusa with one of the most prestigious sports awards at the national level. Among the green sports practiced are: 1) C***anoeing***, which is practiced either at sea or in the lake area of the Molentargius Regional Park. It is a healthy, sustainable sport practiced in the open air that can be practiced by young people and adults at both amateur and competitive levels; 2) ***Canoe Polo*** which is a team ball sport that takes place in the water, in which the players (5 on the field and 3 on the bench) move around in canoes. It is a game similar in some aspects to water polo, although the suspended goal is more reminiscent of basketball hoops. The goal of the game is to score more goals than the opposing team, in a real time of 20 minutes. Activities take place in the Port of Cagliari; 3) ***Olympic Sea Canoeing***, which can be practiced from age 6 and up, both at the amateur and competitive level in the specialties of speed, cross-country and marathon; 4) **Sailing**, a sport that takes place at sea on regattas with fixed courses. https://it-it.facebook.com/canottierichnusa1891/

SELVAGGIO BLU: TREKKING AND CLIMBING

It currently represents the most important and challenging ***trekking route in Italy***, unique in its kind because its route winds simultaneously between sea and mountain in one of the most unspoiled territories of the Mediterranean. The most original version consists of five days of ***walking*** along invisible shepherds' paths and log ladders overhanging the sea, cliffs, spectacular rocks, ancient sheepfolds, centuries-old holm oak forests, Mediterranean maquis, white beaches and unspoiled creeks. This is a challenging and fascinating adventure along a 50-kilometer route made up of rough paths with uneven ground, rock traverses, rock climbing and rope abseiling, immersed in the colors of a breathtaking nature, the gray of the limestone, the green of the Mediterranean maquis, the deep blue of the sea, and the white of the beaches. The trek is participated in with experienced guides and in compliance with safety standards, consistent with the experience of the participants. https://climbingsardinia.com/cosa-fare/selvaggio-blu/

CAMMINO DI SANTA BARBARA

It represents the most classic example of ***hiking in Sardinia***; not only because it is possible to follow walking routes that vary from 2 to 5 hours, but especially because it is affordable for everyone. The Walk was created with the establishment of the Geominerary Park for the enhancement of the disused mining areas of Sardinia, for the involvement of young people and the implementation of sustainable sports activities in contact with nature. The uniqueness of this practice lies in the fact that it combines the green and sustainable dimension with the cultural and historical aspect of enhancing local traditions. The Walk is developed along a ring of about 500 km in the Sulcis-Iglesiente-Guspinese region, and almost 75% of the route is walked on paths, mule tracks, cart tracks and unpaved carriage roads, while the remaining 25% is made up of the paved roads of urban centers and short extra-urban stretches with asphalt surfaces. https://www.camminominerariodisantabarbara.org/

NUADVENTURE

It was born in Bosa with the promotion of activities related to the combination of green disciplines: ***yoga and sup*** (***Stand Up Paddle Yoga***). It is a yoga practice on a stand up paddling board, very similar to a surfboard, which combines the mental benefits of physical activity in the water with the millennial benefits of yoga. Yoga sup has caught on worldwide thanks to its ability to establish a contact with nature that envelops and transports you in a practice suitable for all levels, and it is slowly spreading to Sardinia, as well as the rest of Italy. Nuadventure carries out this type of activity in the town of Bosa, on the region's

west coast, which is crossed by the *Temo River*: this allows the benefits of the sporting discipline to be combined with those of contact with nature. https://nuadventure.nu/it/

PORTUGAL

SURF

Surfing is a water sport where a person rides a board on the waves. The origins of surfing can be traced back to ancient Polynesia, but it gained popularity in the early 20th century in Hawaii and California. Today, it is a popular sport and lifestyle enjoyed by people all around the world. Surfing requires the use of a surfboard, usually made of foam or fiberglass, and a wetsuit in colder water. Surfers catch waves by paddling out to the lineup, a spot in the ocean where waves start to break, and then standing up on the board and riding the wave to shore.

Surfing can be challenging and requires skill, strength, and balance. It is often considered a symbol of freedom, adventure, and connection to nature. Surfing can be made more environmentally friendly, or "green," by taking steps to reduce the impact of surfing on the environment.

Surfing can have both positive and negative impacts on the environment, depending on how it is practiced. Here are some ways that surfing can impact the environment:

- *Pollution*: Surfing can contribute to ocean pollution using surfboards made from materials that are not biodegradable, such as foam and fiberglass, and the use of toxic chemicals found in surf wax and cleaning products.
- *Erosion*: Surfing can contribute to coastal erosion, particularly in areas with large waves, as the force of the waves can cause sand and other sediment to shift and erode the beach.
- *Habitat disruption*: Surfing can disrupt the habitats of marine life, particularly in areas with coral reefs or other sensitive ecosystems. Surfing can also disturb the feeding and breeding patterns of marine animals.
- *Carbon emissions*: Surfing requires transportation to and from the beach, which can contribute to carbon emissions and climate change.

- *Water quality*: Surfing can be affected by water quality issues, such as contamination from sewage and other pollutants, which can pose a health risk to surfers.

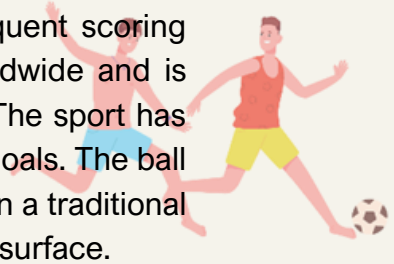
It is important for surfers to be aware of these potential environmental impacts and take steps to reduce their impact on the environment while enjoying their sport. This can include using eco-friendly surf gear, supporting beach cleanup efforts, and being mindful of the impact of their actions on the natural environment. Some ways **to make surf more sustainable and eco-friendlier** include:

- Choosing eco-friendly surfboards made from sustainable materials, such as recycled foam or bamboo.
- Using natural wax or eco-friendly wax made from non-toxic ingredients.
- Reducing plastic waste by using reusable water bottles and avoiding single-use plastic products.
- Supporting sustainable surf travel by choosing eco-friendly accommodations and transportation options.
- Protecting the ocean by participating in beach cleanups and supporting ocean conservation efforts.

By taking steps to reduce the environmental impact of surfing, surfers can help protect the ocean and the environment while enjoying their sport.

BEACH SOCCER

Beach soccer, also known as beach football, is a variant of traditional soccer played on a sandy surface, typically on a beach. The game is like regular soccer, with two teams of five players each attempting to score goals by kicking a ball into the opposing team's net. However, the sand surface and smaller playing area create a faster-paced, more dynamic game with more frequent scoring opportunities. Beach soccer is played in over 70 countries worldwide and is recognized by FIFA, the governing body of international soccer. The sport has its own set of rules, and it is played on a smaller field with smaller goals. The ball used in beach soccer is also different, as it is lighter and softer than a traditional soccer ball, allowing for better control and accuracy on the sandy surface.



Beach soccer is a popular recreational sport, played on beaches and other sandy areas around the world. It is also played at a competitive level, with national and international competitions, including the *FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup*. Beach soccer is known for its high-energy, fast-paced gameplay, and spectacular acrobatic moves, making it an exciting and entertaining sport to watch and play.

Beach soccer can have various impacts on the environment, including:

- *Sand erosion*: The constant movement and play on the sand can cause erosion, especially in areas with high foot traffic or strong winds. This can lead to a loss of sand and affect the coastal landscape.
- *Litter and waste*: Like any other beach activity, beach soccer can contribute to litter and waste accumulation, including plastic bottles, food packaging, and other debris.
- *Damage to natural habitats*: Beach soccer can lead to damage of natural habitats, such as sand dunes and vegetation, which can cause harm to coastal ecosystems.
- *Noise pollution*: Beach soccer games can generate a significant amount of noise that can disturb wildlife and have an impact on the local ecosystem.

To mitigate these impacts, it's important to practice environmentally sustainable beach soccer. This can include picking up litter and properly disposing of waste, using eco-friendly equipment, and avoiding sensitive areas with delicate ecosystems or wildlife. Additionally, it's important to follow local regulations and guidelines for using the beach and to be mindful of the impact that beach soccer activities can have on the environment.

Beach soccer can be made more environmentally friendly, or "green," by taking steps to reduce the impact of the sport on the environment. Some ways to make beach soccer more sustainable and eco-friendlier include:

- Using eco-friendly equipment, such as balls made from sustainable materials.
- Reducing waste by using reusable water bottles and avoiding single-use plastic products.
- Supporting sustainable transportation by choosing eco-friendly modes of travel, such as cycling or public transportation, to and from the beach.
- Participating in beach cleanups and supporting local conservation efforts to protect the beach and its ecosystems.
- Promoting eco-friendly behavior among players and fans, such as reducing litter and avoiding damaging sand dunes and other natural features.

By taking steps to reduce the environmental impact of beach soccer, players and fans can help protect the beach and its natural beauty while enjoying their sport.

TRAIL RUNNING

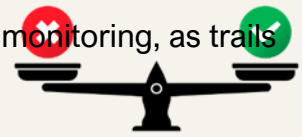
Trail running is a type of running that takes place on unpaved paths and natural terrain, such as mountains, forests, and hills. Unlike road running, trail running involves navigating uneven terrain, challenging inclines, and varying environmental conditions. It is a popular form of exercise and competition that offers a unique and rewarding experience for runners who enjoy being outdoors and challenging themselves in a natural environment. Trail running can vary greatly in difficulty, from relatively flat and well-groomed paths to steep and technical mountain trails. It can be done individually or in groups, and can range from short, recreational runs to ultra-marathons that cover vast distances and elevation changes.

One of the benefits of trail running is the opportunity to connect with nature and enjoy the beauty of the outdoors. Trail runners often report feeling a sense of freedom and adventure as they explore new paths and environments. Trail running can also provide a full-body workout, with the varied terrain and inclines providing a greater challenge than running on flat, paved surfaces. However, trail running also presents unique challenges and safety concerns. Runners must be prepared for changes in weather and environmental conditions and should be familiar with basic outdoor safety skills such as navigation, hydration, and first aid. It is also important to wear appropriate footwear with good traction and support, and to carry essential items such as a map, water, and snacks.

Overall, trail running is a challenging and rewarding form of exercise that provides a unique opportunity to explore the natural world while pushing physical and mental limits. Trail running can have both positive and negative impacts on the environment, depending on how it is practiced. Here are some ways that trail running can impact the environment:

<u>Positive impacts</u>

- Encourages appreciation and stewardship of natural areas.
- May support local economies and conservation efforts, as some trail running events donate a portion of the entry fees to environmental causes.
- May provide opportunities for scientific research and monitoring, as trails can be used to collect data on natural areas.



<u>Negative impacts</u>

- Erosion: Trail running can cause damage to the natural environment by increasing erosion and soil compaction, particularly in sensitive areas such as wetlands and alpine environments.

- Habitat disruption: Trail running can disturb the habitats of wildlife, particularly if runners go off-trail or use trails during sensitive times of the year (such as nesting season).
- Littering: Runners may accidentally or intentionally leave behind trash or other debris, which can harm the environment and wildlife.
- Crowding: Popular trail running areas can become overcrowded, leading to trail widening and other negative impacts on the environment.

It is important for trail runners to be aware of these potential environmental impacts and take steps to reduce their impact on the environment while enjoying their sport. This can include staying on designated trails, avoiding sensitive areas, carrying out all trash and litter, and being mindful of the impact of their actions on the natural environment

Here are some ways to make trail running more sustainable and reduce its negative impacts on the environment:

- Stick to designated trails: Running off-trail can cause soil erosion and damage fragile habitats. Stick to designated trails to minimize your impact on the environment.
- Avoid sensitive areas: Some areas may be off-limits to protect sensitive ecosystems or wildlife. Be aware of any regulations and avoid running in these areas.
- Pack out what you pack in: Carry all your trash and litter out with you, including biodegradable items such as banana peels and orange rinds. Do not leave anything behind on the trails.
- Use sustainable gear: Choose trail running shoes made from eco-friendly materials, such as recycled rubber, and clothing made from sustainable fabrics. Look for gear made by companies committed to reducing their environmental impact.
- Choose races with sustainability in mind: Look for trail running races that prioritize sustainability, such as events that minimize waste, use sustainable transportation, and support environmental causes.
- Join a trail running club: Joining a trail running club can help you connect with others who share your commitment to sustainability and can provide opportunities for group cleanups and other environmental initiatives.
- Support conservation efforts: Consider volunteering or donating to organizations that work to protect and conserve natural areas and trails.

By following these steps, trail runners can help reduce their impact on the environment and ensure that trail running remains a sustainable and enjoyable activity for generations to come.

ROMANIA

There are several examples of good practices that are worthy to be presented.

In Romania, more precisely in Cluj,

WOODEN PEDALS have been installed in the parks, which allow, through movement, to generate enough electricity to charge the mobile phone. Oak wood is protected to resist the external factors of moisture, UV rays, etc. Also, through sports, people can also get their bus ticket. Tickets for public transport will be issued after performing 20 genuflections.

An example of good practice is the activity of the Association

PLOGGING FOR ROMANIA, which is ‘a non-profit eco-sports association whose aim is to promote ecological sports by collecting garbage through running or another type of sports activity (plogging), cleaning green areas in Romania of plastic and other waste, with the help of amateur sports volunteers.' The waste will be picked up by a collector to be sorted and recycled. (https://plogging.ro/despre-ong/). Recycled plastic is a durable and robust material, great at sound retaining. Creating this green circle in using what we already have will significantly reduce the waste in the long run. Plogging is a sports practice that combines running with waste collection. This sports practice can be carried out in any outdoor sports activity: eco swimming, eco running, eco hiking. Even if we are far from a performance march, it is a very effective method of combining sport and sustainable development. Through plogging, people enjoy nature, practice sports, and mobilize as many people as possible to follow their example.

Biodiversity is fundamental for human existence. It offers many natural "free services", such as:

- Food products
- Medicine/cosmetics
- Other raw materials, without which we could not survive

By plogging, we help the surrounding nature, which provides us with these services.

ORIENTEERING is a sports discipline, which consists of going contretemps through a previously established, marked on the map, concreted in reaching the control points, materialized in the field by beacons.

The essence of the competition: orientation in an unknown terrain, with the help of the map and compass, covering a route imposed by the organizers in the shortest possible time. Orienteering is practiced in the form of competitions held in lowland, hilly, mountainous, forested areas, with rough terrain. Perhaps there is no purer and more exciting sport because the competitor relies only on his own strength and skills. First of all, the payer has to overcome his own weaknesses in the middle of nature. Nothing compares to the joy that, after overcoming all the difficulties of the route, the player manages to arrive victorious at the finish line.

Orienteering is more than a competition, it is a battle with oneself, with one's physical and intellectual limits. The ever-current motto "run with your head" is interesting and perfectly justified because in this sport it is not enough to just be a good athlete and have an enviable physical condition. This sport requires logic, attention, intuition, and initiative, the ability to quickly make the most appropriate decisions and finally, courage. It is a sport that combines both physical and intellectual qualities. It is not like chess, for which you only need to have intellectual qualities, or like athletics, which mainly requires physical qualities. Orienteering combines both. As in all sports that take place in the middle of nature, athletes learn one essential thing: nature CANNOT be defeated, people must adapt to it, know it, understand it, respect it, and love it.

CYCLING (TRANSPORTATION)

Cycling plays a major role in any sustainable transport strategy. It helps tackle congestion and local air pollution, as well as the emissions that cause climate change. 23% of car trips are less than 2 miles, a distance that is easily cycled in less than 15 minutes. If people choose to make some of those trips by bike, we could have a considerable impact on local congestion and pollution.

By cycling, people do both themselves and the planet a favor, because it's not always about us. In case you didn't know, one car parking space can be used to park no less than 20 bicycles. In addition, the bicycle is the most eco-friendly means of transport, because it does not pollute. Even noise pollution is significantly reduced, if we think of the horns that are heard simultaneously in big cities at rush hour. Thus, whenever you have short distances to travel, the bicycle is the friendliest means of transport - both with the environment and with your time, because you will reach your destination faster than you think. Cycling can solve a major problem in many cities, such as that of space. As public space becomes increasingly constricted by cars, the transition to bicycles could provide more space for parks and public meeting places. By cycling for a few minutes, a day, you have every chance to start feeling rested again, because you will fall asleep faster, longer, better.

THE IMPACT OF GREEN SPORTS IN EACH COUNTRY

CYPRUS

SUP

If you have never tried a Stand Up Paddle before, a short SUP activity in the sea on a sunny day will be sufficient to reveal some of the benefits of the sport for both your body and mind. At a glance, SUP is considered to be a low impact workout as it is unlikely to cause any serious damages or injuries to the surfer; instead, by using simultaneously multiple muscle groups (e.g. back muscles, core, arms, legs, shoulders), the activity contributes towards a whole body workout[11] outside the traditional gym environment. In addition, recent studies associate SUP with increased levels of aerobic and anaerobic fitness[12] while the exposure to the smells, sights and sounds of the natural environment can be an effective stress reliever to the busy daily life. Furthermore, sun exposure has positive health benefits including boosting the production of Vitamin D, the so-called "sunshine vitamin". Preliminary studies show some correlation between Vitamin D and negative emotions concluding that Vitamin D supplementation may regulate the mood and might also be beneficial for patients with depression[13] [14].

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

In general terms, two types of boards are identified, namely (a) solid boards and (b) inflatable boards and their main materials include: Expanded Polystyrene Foam, plastic, foam, wood, fiberglass, carbon, PVC[15]. Given the popularity of the sport and the subsequent increase in the demand for buying SUP equipment, the quality of SUP boards differ as well as their prices. While some brands began using sustainable and recycled material to reduce their environmental impact, others use cheap and poor-quality materials which decrease the durability and the lifespan of the board. As a result, the consumer will throw away the cheap board and buy a new one adding to the already disconcerting global crisis of plastic pollution and waste as most of the boards cannot be recycled.

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[11] https://www.airhead.com/blogs/news/eight-great-benefits-of-stand-up-paddle-boarding

[12] Ashley G. B. Willmott, Benjamin Sayers, Gary Brickley. (2020) The physiological and perceptual responses of stand-up paddle board exercise in a laboratory- and field-setting. European Journal of Sport Science 20:8, pages 1023-1033.

[13] Anglin RE, Samaan Z, Walter SD, McDonald SD. Vitamin D deficiency and depression in adults: systematic review and meta-analysis. Br J Psychiatry. 2013 Feb;202:100-7.

[14] Cheng YC, Huang YC, Huang WL. The effect of vitamin D supplement on negative emotions: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Depress Anxiety. 2020 Jun;37(6):549-564.

[15] https://standuppaddleboardworld.com/what-are-paddle-boards-made-of/

To counteract the negative impact of SUP boards on the environment, Active Zone Outdoor, as a leading NGO in providing sea and water sport activities, has launched a green SUP campaign inviting volunteers and SUP lovers to clean the sea from plastic and waste while practicing SUP. To this respect, participants are encouraged to use waterproof eco-friendly dry bags as well as reusable water bottles to minimize our footprint to the sea environment as single-use plastic bottles are often thrown into the sea by paddlers. In addition to this, the organization has recently promoted an innovative idea to host working groups (e.g. workshops, discussions, focus groups) on SUP boards in an attempt to pilot non-conventional ways of organizing events for young people and to raise awareness about the benefits of the sea for the mental health of people and the protection of the natural environment.

BEACH TENNIS

Given the relatively recent development of the sport with its official rules to be established only in 1996[16], it is no surprise that research exploring the benefits and impact of beach tennis is still scarce. Practicing, however, beach tennis in Cyprus for the last almost twenty years, its impact can be traced to different aspects of the beach tennis community, from players to families and organizations as well as local municipalities and the environment. In Cyprus there are more than 300 active beach tennis players from a wide range of ages, from children to elderly people who practice beach tennis on a regular basis at public and private beach tennis sand courts. In fact, as beach tennis is considered a low motor complexity and an easy to learn sport, it reinforces comprehensive participation bringing together people of different ages, backgrounds, genders and fitness levels. The benefits of exercising on a sand surface should not be neglected as the lower impact forces experienced on sand contribute towards minimizing muscle damage and soreness[17]. As argued before, exposure to sunlight during the exercise accelerates the production of Vitamin D which is responsible among others for our mood. In addition, unlike other sports which divide competitors into men and women, beach tennis is divided into three categories: (a) men; (b) women; and (c) mixed: the team is composed of a man and a woman, contributing towards the promotion of gender equality in sports. Finally, the low cost for practicing beach tennis estimated at roughly 150 euro per racket and 2 euro for each ball along with the easy and mostly free access to public facilities are determining factors in populating beach tennis in the society.

[16] https://blogs.bmj.com/bjsm/2021/10/25/beach-tennis-a-new-sport-trend-and-a-call-for-research/

[17] Binnie MJ, Dawson B, Pinnington H, Landers G, Peeling P. Sand training: a review of current research and practical applications. J Sports Sci. 2014;32(1):8-15.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A low compression Stage 2 'orange' tennis ball is used to practice beach tennis. The ball is made of pressurized rubber[18], a non-biodegradable material, which takes 400 years to decompose in the natural process. As no evidence is available with regards to the number of beach tennis balls produced and consumed across the globe per year, we could investigate the environmental impact of beach tennis by taking into consideration the impact of tennis to the environment. In the USA, approximately 125 million used tennis balls end up in landfills every year, which is interpreted into 20,000 metric tons of methane-producing, non-decomposable rubber waste[19], making tennis one of the most impactful sport activities to the environment. Even though some innovative steps to recycle and reuse tennis balls for other purposes (e.g. tennis court surface, horse footing) have been taken in the USA by Recycle Balls[20] adding to other innovative projects for greener tennis (e.g. 3D printed recycled tennis balls[21]), the vast majority of both tennis and beach tennis balls are thrown away once their lifespan dies out and cannot be used competitively. In fact, all balls used in Cyprus beach tennis courts are not being recycled adding to the negative environmental impact of the sport.

ORIENTEERING

Based on the conclusions of the survey conducted by the International Orienteering Federation in 2012, “there is a great variation from country to country in the importance of different environmental aspects, requirements of legislation and - required permissions for orienteering. There is some concern about the disturbance of nature due to orienteering among landowners, environmental authorities, and environmentalists. However, this seems to be only a local problem and does not threaten orienteering at large”.

One of the main advantages regarding orienteering is that it is a relatively inexpensive sport. The main things you need is a map, compass and checkpoint recording device. Maps and checkpoint electronic punching devices are usually provided by event organizers. Depending on the event or race that you are participating in, there might be different recording devices starting from simple punch cards to different electronic devices. Control card is used to prove that you have visited all the control points in the right order. At each control point,

[18] https://www.sportsrec.com/6657654/what-are-tennis-balls-made-out-of

[19] https://www.recycleballs.org/solution/

[20] https://www.recycleballs.org/

[21] https://materialdistrict.com/article/a-3d-printed-recyclable-tennis-ball/

there will be either an electronic device to record that you were there, or a manual punch device to mark your card.

In Cyprus urban orienteering is not that popular but many events are taking place in forest areas, parks and villages. Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean sea with a rich history of village traditions and geographical architecture. Those elements are making even more attractive the idea to organize an orienteering event to those places rather than cities. That is the reason why there are only maps in the historical centers of the three large cities Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca, as an effort to make the course more interesting and explorative.

Organizing events in the forests or national parks a disadvantage of orienteering can occur. Because it is an activity with no limit of participants, orienteering in the forests or parks can be a problem of nature. Firstly, and most probably, fuel and gas emissions can happen from the fact that participants will drive to go to the beginning point. Furthermore, garbage's is another element that may be a problem to the nature and the fact that if many participants the more damage to the nature sidewalk and area of the place. Moreover, the passage of feet and the disturbance of the wildlife during a course can be a possible impact to the physical environment.

ITALY

What we are witnessing in recent years is a cultural maturation about ***environmental sustainability and climate change***. People are increasingly aware of what is happening to our planet and have begun to call for a change in the overall strategy (applicable to all sectors) on the environmental issue. Governments and multinational corporations have begun to give themselves ambitious and challenging sustainability goals. The former, for example, by committing to reducing CO2 emissions and initiating more sustainable energy policies. Large companies have begun to see the concept of eco-sustainability as a real business opportunity. Sports is also part of this context, as there is an increasing focus in this sector on environmental sustainability due to an increased awareness of the issue of climate change.

The best practices analyzed show a decisive shift in the approach to sports that relates to fundamental aspects of life such as *healthy lifestyles, environmental sustainability and mental and physical well-being*. Within the scope of the research, these analyzed practices are dropped into the regional context of Sardinia. Although there is no shortage of experiences at the national level, it was decided to contextualize the research at the regional level also to be able to better monitor the impact.

It is clear that the types of activities analyzed fit perfectly into the environmental context that the region of Sardinia has to offer sea, mountains, lakes and large expanses of green.

IMPACT ON PEOPLE

The impact that these types of activities have on people can be of various kinds: first of all, improvement of living conditions with the adoption of healthier and more sustainable styles; improvement of the relationship with the surrounding environment; widespread sense of psycho-physical well-being; contact with the environment allows the development of an environmental consciousness thanks to a constructive interaction with nature; doing sports in the open air allows the body to be kept healthy, for example by producing vitamin D, which is essential for human health; the endorphins released by the body will be greater if the sport is practiced in the open air; improvement of muscles.

IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

From the point of view of impact on the environment, first of all, we are talking about activities that have a strong impact in reducing emissions; they have a remarkably low economic cost compared to activities that would take place in indoor spaces; they involve little travel and by means with a low environmental impact; they are also activities that allow for continuous use and recycling of equipment, avoiding waste and abuse of material. From a qualitative and quantitative point of view, the good practices analyzed have more than positive facets.

The impact of being was measured in agreement with the SPORT CLUBS involved who provided the material required to carry out the analysis.

PORTUGAL

In general, green sports and outdoor activities in Portugal can have a positive impact on attitudes, lifestyle, and mental health. Participating in these activities can foster a sense of environmental responsibility and respect for nature, leading to a more sustainable and mindful lifestyle. Engaging in physical activity and spending time in nature can also improve mental health by reducing stress and anxiety, increasing mood and self-esteem, and promoting overall well-being. Additionally, participating in these activities can create a sense of community and social support, leading to positive social connections and greater feelings of belonging.

In specific, and at the local level, surf is producing an immense economic impact. As the coast of Portugal is very favorable for its practice it brings up the tourism

sector of the coastal areas not only during high season. Compared to trail running and beach soccer, surf is notoriously more impacting in economic factors as it highly depends on the ocean that Portugal is able to make use of, while trail running, and beach soccer can be performed in other setting as accurate as if played in the beach or in the mountain.

Regarding the environmental impact, as these sports rely highly on the nature surrounding, they are also degrading it a lot if not careful enough. On the other hand, being a nature sports, it boosts the sense of caring and responsibility towards the environment, especially these 3 sports than we mentioned before as they rely on the setting.

To sum up, we can see that green sports have bigger impact in the communities if the sports involve nature or rely on it. Also, they create bigger impact at least economically if there is a feature that can only be found on a local and specific area, like the ocean or the beach. Lastly, the social impact taken from these sports can go from the positive impact in the environment, the positive effect in the mental wellbeing boosted in the practitioners as well as the positive effect in the overall wellbeing of individuals and society.

ROMANIA

Negative impact on the environment

1. Sports activities and events related to sports can generate a diverse impact on ecosystems, from insignificant repercussions to some major, devastating ones, depending mainly on the type of sports event and its importance.
2. Physical exercise in many places involves substantial environmental risks, such as air pollution or excess heat. Participating in outdoor activities such as rock climbing or canoeing can threaten local biodiversity and micro-climates.

Positive impact on the environment

- Correct the negative effects that already exist upon the environment, such as pollution.
- Outdoor areas are cleaned.
- The creatures living in the environment get to live in a more harmonious habitat.

For example, in Romania, various forest sports took place. A Romanian association organized a marathon of events through which people adopt saplings to continue the afforestation of southern Romania. Plogging is an

excellent way to take care of the environment. The goal is to collect as much trash as possible during a sports activity in the environment such as jogging. Garbage thrown in nature pollutes the environment because it is very difficult to degrade. A plastic bag decomposes in 10-20 years, aluminum cans in 200 years, while plastic containers reach up to 500 years. All this time, their chemicals contaminate the soil, affecting the quality of fauna and flora and the health of the population.

Plogging is an initiative that encourages a healthy lifestyle and maintains a clean environment, the collected garbage being later recycled. Plogging has a visible impact not only on the environment but also on the mental and psychological health of humans. Sport contributes to a healthy lifestyle, helping the body function properly and relieving stress. During the activity, the body performs varied and more complex movements compared to classic running, by performing genuflexions, squats and stretches. Thus, while in 30 minutes of jogging the body burns approximately 270 calories. During a plogging race of the same duration approximately 330 calories are consumed.

The impact on children

Sport in nature causes children to feel happy and relaxed. In nature, children are much more active, with a permanent good mood. Children are much more sensitive when they are in the middle of nature, thus producing much stronger and more lasting effects regarding the acquisition of the ability to master complex situations, leadership, team spirit and communication. A concrete case is the football tournaments for children that pursue the development of sports skills and instilling in children's values, such as mutual respect, teamwork, and the idea of fair play.

Sport for social impact

It represents the ways in which sport and physical education can be used consciously and intentionally to address major problems, such as pollution, discrimination, poor health, access to education or lack of civic involvement. *Ashoka Romania* mapped the local dimension of sport for social impact using the snowball method, and after the research it discovered 313 sports changemakers, people nominated by others as using sport to solve social problems.

The impact of sport on the elderly

Out of convenience, the elderly live life without a regular exercise program. With advancing age, practicing sports is more difficult, some believe, but no one is "too old" for. sports. On the contrary, sport helps to build muscle tone, cognitive functions, helps the bone system and the heart. Regarding gender differences,

it seems that for both men and women, sport had an impact on self-respect. And in terms of mood, outdoor sports had a greater impact on men.

LIMITS AND BENEFITIS OF GREEN SPORT ACTIVITIES

CYPRUS

SUP

Despite being an island with an endless summer season, a lot of young people and adults do not have swimming skills which turns out to be, on the one hand, a deterrent factor for them to enjoy the benefits of the sea, and on the other hand, one of the main reasons for accidents and deaths at the sea. This necessitates the need for the introduction of swimming lessons at the primary school education as being suggested in the Policy Paper developed in the context of the European funded project "*Youth 4 the sea and vice versa*" coordinated in Cyprus by Active Zone Outdoor and aiming to bring together youth and policy/decision makers in discussing issues related to sea awareness. In addition, even though SUP can be practiced as a solo activity, it is highly recommended, for safety reasons, to be in the water with a group of other SUP paddlers; especially, if you are planning to cover a long distance further away from the shore. This recommendation acts as an obstacle for those wishing to practice SUP during the cold winter months as the number of occasional SUP paddlers drops dramatically.

BEACH TENNIS

As already presented, beach tennis receives significant popularity in Cyprus now because it is an easy to learn sport activity and it does not require any tremendous investment to buy the equipment among others. In addition, public sand courts are in Larnaca and Limassol, two of the main coastal cities of the country, which can be used for free by anyone wishing to practice the game. As the sport has recently been developed across Cyprus, the need, and the market for training sessions on beach tennis is still limited and as a result, the number of qualified beach tennis coaches is low.

ORIENTEERING

Orienteering it is called the thinking sport since it is not only improving the physical condition of the person and increases the fitness levels, but also it sharpens decision making skills, improves people's mental health and wellbeing, builds balance between the physical and the mind, teaches self-reliance and terrain discovery to the point where it could save lives, increases self-esteem and create skills for a lifetime.

However, as mentioned before, orienteering is not a popular sport in Cyprus. There is a limited number of clubs and organizations based in Nicosia and Larnaca that are active, organize events and promote the sport. Though

orienteering provides a wide array of benefits, there are still some disadvantages considered, yet in a limited number. Some of the limitations of the sport are: Firstly, it is believed that practicing the sport requires special navigation skills, strength, and endurance. For many people it is not just an outdoor sport but a competitive sport where participants find themselves thinking, running, and moving at a fast pace. Some people might have in mind the probability of getting lost during the course. Besides, the possibility of getting injured during courses taking place in parks or forests might create insecurities. The disadvantages of orienteering are much less compared to the benefits that it can offer to the participants. However, despite the small number of disadvantages, it is still important to take them into consideration, to prevent it from occurring as much as possible.

ITALY

Analyzing the five practices, the percentages in terms of participation are comforting while data and numbers show a positive balance. The change in mindset and approach to more sustainable lifestyles is part of the turnaround that has characterized different sectors, sports included, in recent years.

One consideration to be made is related to the fact that these activities mainly concern a very young target audience, although there is no shortage of comforting numbers from the perspective of adult participation. From an age point of view, it is difficult to define the average age since it varies depending on the type of sport and the sport club taken into consideration. For example, speaking of canoe polo, it is a sport that starts being played from the youngest age, and therefore there is continuity from the youngest age. This continuity coincides with the young person's career advancement.

In the case of water sports, whether yoga sup or canoe and/or dragon boat activities at the lake, there are some considerations to be made. The first of these is that we often approach this type of sport in adulthood in search of a moment of recreation on a physical and mental level; the athletes who are regularly registered and who compete competitively mainly concern canoeing; these are two sectors that are strongly growing in the regional territory and that reach very high numbers during the summer. In fact, it is no coincidence that so many tourists decide to indulge in healthy lifestyles, in contact with nature and in search of psycho-physical well-being.

Speaking of participation makes very high numbers the trekking in the *Selvaggio Blu* of the Sardinian east coast; however, it is an activity that can be practiced mainly by those with more experience in the field since it is a complicated path. Since the trail has been active there have been hundreds of thousands of hikers

who have chosen to spend time in contact with nature discovering one of the wildest and most remote areas of Sardinia. This aspect is fundamental in that it contributes to the creation of an induced income related to the de-personalization of the tourist flow and helps in the promotion of the region's image outside.

A separate discussion deserves the sense of participation linked to the *Cammino di Santa Barbara*. This walk, which represents the purest and most traditional model of hiking in Sardinia, was created following the model of the Camino de Santiago. The walk proves to be in continuous growth, and this is shown by the data related to the stay of visitors in the accommodation facilities located in the various stages of the path. The walk annually attracts hundreds of visitors from all over Italy and different areas of Europe, while the numbers related to the participation of locals are lower. This data lends itself to be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, locals tend to hike for short distances (*short-medium duration*); this type of activity is more attractive to those planning a green, sustainable vacation and seeking a healthy lifestyle (*medium-long duration*).

PORTUGAL

The main **benefits** of the sports stated before, relates to physical, social, environmental, and economic benefits it can bring. They:

1. Encourage spending time outdoors and connecting with nature.
2. Can be a fun and exhilarating experience that promotes relaxation and reduces stress.
3. Offers opportunities for socialization and community building.

LIMITATIONS

1. Requires access to the ocean, beach or mountain and appropriate equipment, which may be expensive or difficult to obtain in some areas.
2. Can be physically demanding and potentially dangerous, especially for those who are inexperienced or not in good physical condition.
3. Exposure to sun, wind, and water can cause skin damage, dehydration, and other health risks.
4. The popularity of these sports in some areas may lead to crowded conditions, making it difficult to find space to practice or posing a risk of collisions with other people, especially surfing.

ROMANIA

BENEFITS

Motto: "***Sport is part of the heritage of every man and every woman, and its absence can never be compensated***" - **Pierre de Coubertin**.

Sports practiced outdoors offer more advantages than those practiced indoors. Contact with nature brings many benefits both physically, mentally, intellectually, and socially. The brain is better oxygenated by breathing the clean air from nature, thus developing cardiac resistance. Outdoor sports bring benefits such as improving self-esteem through changes in body mass, improving sleep - the energy inside the body is consumed actively and healthily through sports.

Outdoor sports also involve exposure to the sun, so the body will produce more vitamin D, which is an essential element for improving the health of the bone system, as well as the immune system. Athletics brings many benefits in our life, sport being the first source of health in our life, bringing us closer to nature and making our lives easier by releasing stress and generating endorphins, as a real natural "drug", which does not cause any harm to anyone regardless of the "dose".

Cycling improves blood circulation and lowers the pressure in the legs, actively contributing to increasing muscle tone. It's a sport that keeps you constantly active and you get to enjoy wonderful landscapes in nature. Sport increases the feeling of belonging to a community and to social inclusion. Sport in nature does not offer the advantages of practicing sport in the gym, where there is a controlled environment, access to equipment, and the availability of group classes. Finally, through sports we can get rid of certain vices such as alcohol, tobacco, or drug abuse.

LIMITATIONS

Beyond the feeling of liberation people feel, the brightness people get in doing more and more physical activities, outdoor sports also involve some limitations. The pleasure of exercising will never be complete without the appropriate equipment and accessories. Practicing green sports in nature will not always require simple and comfortable clothes.

In the practice of green sports, there may not always be sufficient personnel available to mobilize participants and supervise these activities in nature. Also, outdoors, there are no marked areas for practicing green sports. When practicing plogging, age is not considered, any person can do plogging

regardless of age. You only must come with energy and the desire to do good to the Planet.

In Romania, orienteering as a sport is little known, while there are countries with hundreds of thousands of orienteers. These competitions cannot take place in halls or stadiums, but in nature, the competitor disappears after the start in the forest and can only be seen after finishing the route, at the finish line. Only the one who really participates in the contest can appreciate the true beauty and value of this sport. The "forest sport" orientation is among the cleanest and most exciting sports because the competitor relies only on his own strength and skill, first he has to overcome his own weaknesses in the middle of nature.

This sport in nature also has certain limits. These limits can be found in a map showing the route, represented by conventional signs specific to this sport. The map is the horizontal projection of the area, together with the objects in the field.

PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **RAISE AWARENESS**

It's important to raise awareness in schools and sport associations and spread the knowledge about green sports and good practice through young and youth workers and associations. During the actual implementation of the activities, focus should also be placed on the educational aspect and not only on the physical one, achieved by communicating with the participants how and why the sport is green.

- **GUIDELINES AND CHECKLIST**

The development of general guidelines for the transition to a more sustainable way of practicing sports to be considered during the design and the implementation of existing sport activities by: professional, stakeholders, youth NGOs, etc. considering their capacity limitations and any limitation related to the sport itself

- **COMMITTEE AND/OR NETWORK OF PROFESSIONALS**

Establishment of a committee and/or network of professionals bringing together experts, end users, stakeholders, etc… from the fields of sports, environment, and sustainability to adapt existing sports into a more sustainable and green approach and ultimately develop a repository of green sport activities and practice.

- **POLICY REFORM**

Incentives and benefits from government and local municipalities for entities opting for or adapting their activities to more sustainable ways. Regulating the sport practice so that, when possible, the greener option has to be chosen. For example, to save electricity, an activity can be held in daylight.

CONCLUSION

Outdoor sport is an activity that readily connects us with our natural environment. This very connection helps us become aware of our relationship, as human beings, with nature. This connection also influences how much we care for nature, and our desire to protect it. Nature is the foundation of many sports, to help athletes stay healthy until the places and spaces that make competition and training possible.

Nature is the foundation of many sports, to help athletes stay healthy until the places and spaces that make competition and training possible. Outdoor sports promote respect for moral values in the Olympic spirit, as well as the essential values of collective life, favoring integration in the group and society, respect for others, the law, nature. Sport in nature emphasizes the use of more ecological resources. As a matter of fact, nature is the foundation of many sports, as it helps athletes stay healthy, offering places and spaces that make competition and training possible. The awareness that we must save energy, water and materials is the first step for a sport to become green.

While Green Sports come with their benefits and limitations, the benefits outweigh the limitations. Participants who desire to practice plogging but complain of not being in shape or having not sufficient preparation to run, could adjust this sport to walking in nature and collecting garbage that harms the environment. Green sports combine physical activities and nature greening activities. Sport is one of the most accessible tools for change, if not the most accessible. It doesn't cost us anything to pick up the trash we encounter while practicing sports in nature, while we gain a cleaner environment. Sport leads to a reduction in the use of means of transport that generate carbon dioxide and to other beneficial effects for the environment. Green sports help those that participate feel like they belong to the place, stimulate them to deepen their connection with the environment and increase their appreciation for the surrounding beauty.

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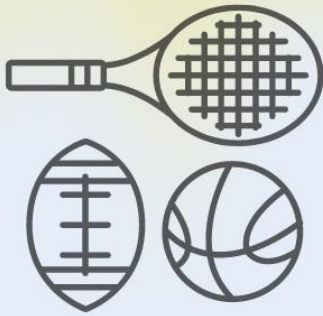
Green Sport and Outdoor Activities for Environmental Awareness and Lifestyle

GREEN SPORTS



Research on the topics of green sport, outdoor activities and environment

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