



**Sports  
for Nature**



# Summary of 2023 Signatory Reports

Institutional partners



International  
Olympic  
Committee



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## About Sports for Nature

Sports for Nature (S4N) is a joint initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Olympic Committee (IOC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy. S4N aims to deliver transformative action for nature across sports, by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. It provides a game plan for sports – at all levels – to accelerate and inspire others to take action for nature.



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# Acknowledgements

We are thrilled to present a summary of the Sports for Nature (S4N) Initiative 2023 signatory reports, a collaborative effort aimed at championing nature within the sports community. This report marks a significant milestone in our collective journey towards environmental stewardship.

Firstly, we extend our deepest appreciation to all the signatories who have committed to the S4N Framework and submitted their reports. The high rate of response and the depth of content provided are truly commendable. Your efforts are not just contributions; they are powerful catalysts driving the sports sector towards meaningful action for nature.

The S4N Advisory Group deserves a special mention for their thorough review and evaluation of the signatory reports. Their insights and recommendations have been invaluable. The learnings from this first cycle will be instrumental as we move into the next phase, enhancing our processes, and supporting signatories even more effectively.

The urgency to address the nature crisis is greater than ever, and the sports community is uniquely positioned to lead by example. Through your commitment and actions, you are proving that sports can be a formidable force in protecting and restoring our natural world.

Thank you for your dedication and for being a part of this transformative journey. Let us continue to build on this foundation and inspire others in the sporting world to join us in making a profound impact on nature.

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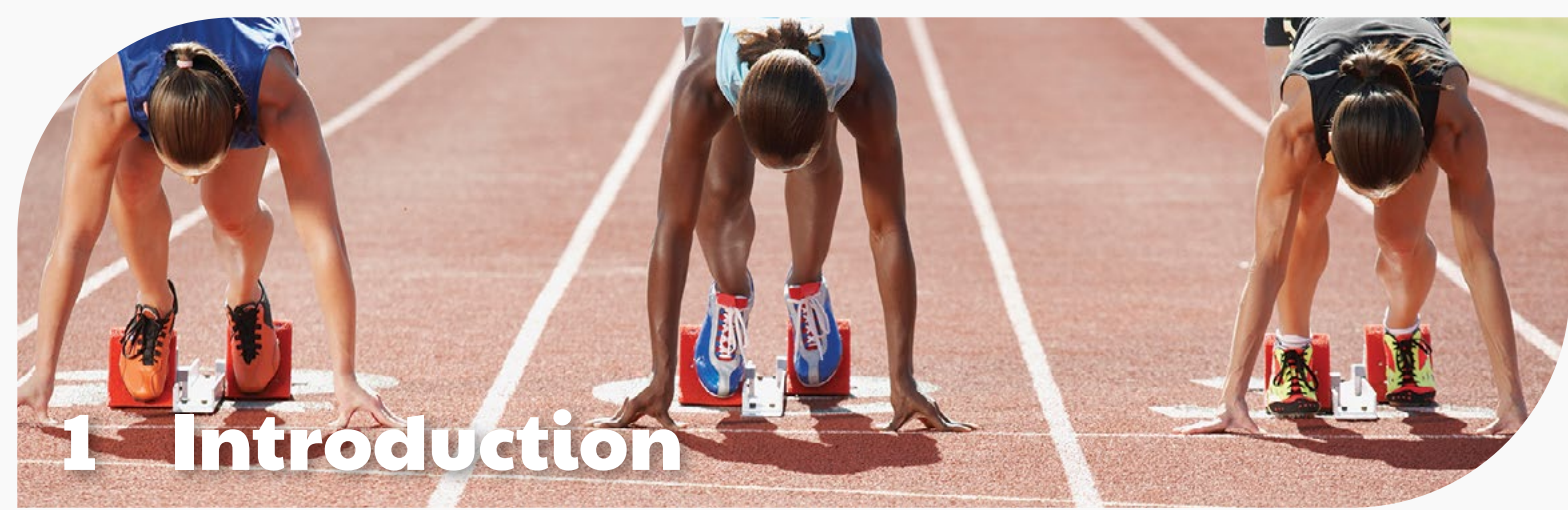
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Today, our planet is experiencing a nature crisis. Habitat destruction, invasive species, climate change and pollution are having an unprecedented impact on nature worldwide. The urgency to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the natural world has never been greater. In this crucial period, the sports community finds itself at a unique turning point.

Sports organisations, renowned for their influence and reach, have the power to be champions for nature. By taking positive actions, they can help protect the environment that sustains our health and well-being, and provides us with clean air, fresh water, and food.

## The Sports for Nature Initiative

Sports for Nature (S4N) is a joint initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Olympic Committee (IOC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy. S4N aims to deliver transformative action for nature across sports, by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. It provides a game plan for sports – at all levels – to accelerate and inspire others to take action for nature.

The initiative consists of three primary components:

**Sports for Nature Framework** – a signed commitment from sports to take action for nature **Capacity building, resources, and training** to help sports advance their nature initiatives; and, **Action campaigns** to mobilise the broader sports sector to join us in taking action on nature.

## The Sports for Nature Framework

Any sport organisation – club, federation, National Olympic Committee, league, series, event – of any size, level, sport capacity, and location can join the Sports for Nature initiative. There are only two requirements: i) the organisation needs to be ready to make contributions for nature under the four key principles that shape the Sports for Nature Framework; and ii) to report on their progress annually.

The four key principles of S4N are:

1. **Nature protection**
2. **Nature restoration**
3. **Green procurement**
4. **Education and communications**

Organisations who became signatories before 31 December 2022 were required to report on their 2023 progress, and annually thereafter. Signatories who engage beginning 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024 will be required to report for 2024.



## About the report

The purpose of this first S4N signatory report is to highlight the methodology and outcomes of the first reporting cycle held under the S4N Framework. Join us in exploring the actions of S4N signatories implemented in 2023 and how the S4N reporting system will evolve in 2024.



Sport awakens emotions and serves as a powerful platform to share core values with fans, athletes, and future generations. Imagine the immense potential sport holds to lead efforts in nature conservation. With its unique capacity to inspire and drive change, the sports community bears a significant responsibility to protect the health of the nature it so deeply relies on.

**Dona Bertarelli, an accomplished sailor, IUCN Patron of Nature, and Executive Chair of Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy**





## 2 Methodology of 2023 signatory reporting

The 2023 reporting system was developed in collaboration with signatories to ensure it was user-friendly and comprehensive. In this inaugural year of reporting, signatories provided a narrative outlining their actions aligning to the S4N principles. The main guiding principles that shaped the reporting process include:

### Direct link to S4N Principles

Ensuring all reported activities align with the overarching principles of the S4N Framework.

### User-friendly, feedback, and support mechanisms

Developing an accessible reporting format that includes mechanisms for continuous improvement based on feedback.

### Long-term vision and adaptation

Encouraging a forward-looking approach that is adaptable over time.

The reporting template development began in May 2023, was finalised and delivered to signatories in November 2023, and were due to the S4N team by the end of January 2024.

## Sports for Nature Advisory Group evaluations

Each signatory report was reviewed by two members of an IUCN-commissioned S4N Advisory Group (Table 1) comprised of various IUCN Commission Members and IUCN Secretariat staff. The evaluations provided technical feedback, recommendations, and encouraging remarks to help signatories accelerate their nature journey.

**Table 1 – Sports for Nature Advisory Group**

<b>Katalin Czippan</b>	Co-Chair, IUCN Commission on Education and Communication
<b>PJ Stephenson</b>	Chair, IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group
<b>Cecilia Wey de Brito</b>	Chair, Brazilian National Committee of IUCN Members
<b>Sean Southey</b>	Chair, IUCN Commission on Education and Communication
<b>Rachel Asante</b>	IUCN Senior Programme Coordinator, Just Transition
<b>Munees Mariappan</b>	IUCN Geospatial Analyst

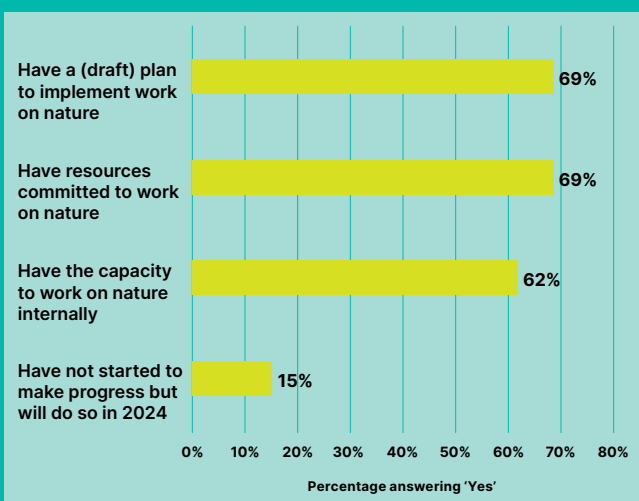
# 3 Highlights of 2023 Signatory Reports

In the first year of reporting, 24 signatories were required to submit their reports. Of those, 22 signatories submitted reports. Additionally, four signatories who joined S4N after 1 July 2023 voluntarily submitted reports.

**92% of signatories required to report in 2023 submitted reports**

Signatories are at different stages in terms of implementing work on nature. While 15% of signatories reported that they had not begun to implement work in 2023, they had plans in place for 2024. It is important to note that 62% of reporting signatories felt that they have internal capacity to work on practices to support nature.

**Figure 1 – Signatory practices**



The following participating signatories submitted reports (voluntary report submissions are marked with an \*):

- International Olympic Committee
- AIUIa Sports Club
- E1 Series
- England Squash
- Extreme E
- Forest Green Rovers
- International Canoe Federation (ICF)
- International Floorball Federation\*
- International Orienteering Federation (IOF)
- International Powerboating Union (UIM)
- International SAMBO Federation (FIAS)
- International Skating Union (ISU)\*
- International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)
- International University Sports Association (FISU)
- International Waterski & Wakeboard Federation
- Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee
- Paris 2024
- Spanish Olympic Committee
- The Ocean Race
- Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc (UTMB)
- Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)
- We Play Green
- World Rowing (FISA)
- World Rugby\*
- World Sailing
- World Skate
- World Squash Federation (WSF)
- World Surf League\*

The activities reported by the signatories were aligned with the four S4N principles. The next sections illustrate the diverse efforts undertaken by the signatories.



# Principle 1

## Nature protection



### Examples of actions taken

- Conducted environmental/ biodiversity impact assessments and audits
- Established partnerships with local conservation groups
- Avoided permanent and temporary infrastructure in protected or ecologically sensitive areas
- Developed sustainability guidelines, checklists, and frameworks; focused on biodiversity in event planning and venue selection

## Case study 1

### 'Keep it Clean' Initiative at the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Scotland

To minimise the spread of invasive species, the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) launched the 'Keep it Clean' programme during the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Scotland. This initiative was developed in collaboration with the IUCN, NatureScot, and Scottish Forestry to combat the introduction of invasive non-native species (INNS), which pose significant risks to ecosystems, the economy, and human health. INNS can be inadvertently introduced via contaminated sports equipment, clothing, and vehicles, potentially harming native species and their habitats.



The UCI's 'Keep it Clean' routine aimed to encourage competitors and their support teams to minimise the risk of spreading INNS. The routine included three basic steps:

- Check** Inspect bikes, equipment, clothing, and vehicles for soil, dirt, mud, or plant material, especially in hard-to-inspect areas.
- Clean** Wash all equipment thoroughly, ensuring contaminants are contained and disposed of properly.
- Repeat** Perform checks and cleaning before moving to other event locations or areas in Scotland and Great Britain.

By adhering to these steps, participants helped protect Scotland's natural environment from the threat of invasive species.

For more information about the 'Keep it Clean' programme and its impact, click [here](#). More details can also be found in the [Sustainability Report of the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships](#).

# Principle 2

## Nature restoration



### Examples of actions taken

- Reforestation activities
- Coastal restoration projects and coral reef restoration
- Selected event locations impacted by climate change; worked with local communities on projects like mangrove restoration and creating positive legacies
- Maintained wildflower areas, provide habitats for wildlife, and run educational programs on environmental matters; celebrated successes with award
- Collaborated with organisations on reforestation and carbon offset projects; supported initiatives like mangrove restoration and water quality testing.

## Case study 2

### World Surf League partners with Coral Gardeners in Tahiti

The World Surf League partnered with WSL PURE grantee, [Coral Gardeners](#), a not-for-profit organisation with the mission to revolutionise ocean conservation and create a global movement to save the world's coral reefs through active reef restoration, awareness activities, and innovative solutions. The aim of this long-term collaboration is to raise awareness about coral reef conservation through the WSL One Ocean initiative and engage surfers and fans in protecting marine biodiversity.

The partnership led to the induction of a new Coral Gardeners branch in Teahupo'o. With the new branch, the Coral Gardeners team has undertaken a series of initiatives, from workshops to awareness events and reef assessments to develop an adapted restoration strategy and engage the local community in the preservation of Teahupo'o's reef, an important ecosystem that not only creates world-class waves but also protects the islanders and contributes to their livelihoods.

WSL supported Coral Gardeners and its impact in 2023. Some of the key outcomes are:

- 100,870 corals planted by the end of 2023 (French Polynesia and Fiji)
- 69,890 corals out planted in French Polynesia
- 122 corals have been out planted in Teahupo'o
- 26,159 corals growing in nurseries (French Polynesia and Fiji)
- 590 corals growing in Teahupo'o nursery
- 12,494 m<sup>2</sup> restored across French Polynesia
- 2,309 people educated locally in 2023 (French Polynesia and Fiji)
- 82 coral workshops

For more information about the partnership between World Surf League and Coral Gardeners, click [here](#).



WSL One Ocean and WSL PURE are deeply committed to protecting marine biodiversity and fostering a sustainable future. Partnering with Coral Gardeners allows us to make a tangible impact on coral reef conservation, engaging both the local community and our global network of surfers, partners, and fans in this crucial mission.

**John Suhar, WSL Vice-President of Environmental and Social Impact**

I'm thrilled to see World Surf League leading the way with environmental and social impact through the WSL One Ocean initiative. It has been amazing to partner with WSL alongside Championship Tour surfers since 2019 to help raise awareness and restore the reef here in French Polynesia for generations to come. As islanders, coral reefs are providing us with everything in our life, from the waves we surf to our livelihood.

**Titouan Bernicot, CEO, Coral Gardeners**





# Principle 3

## Green procurement



### Examples of actions taken

- Assessed supply chains for environmental risks, used eco-friendly materials, and implemented measures to reduce carbon footprint and promoted circular economy
- Implemented sustainable sourcing policies and ISO standards, prioritised renewable and recycled materials, and ensured suppliers present detailed sustainability plans
- Adopted event sustainability guidelines focusing on waste management, energy use, and sourcing local and sustainable products and services
- Engaged and educated stakeholders, provided training on sustainability, and developed collaborative initiatives to improve procurement practices

## Case study 3

### Sustainable restauration services at Olympic House and Olympic Museum in Lausanne

The restaurants at Olympic House and Olympic Museum strive to minimise environmental impact and implement sustainable food procurement practices.

At Olympic House, food purchases are annually evaluated using the ECO-SCORE® by Beelong. This is an environmental rating system based on data from Ecoinvent, the World Food Database and Agribalyse that encompasses climate change, freshwater and marine pollution, and water and land use. Additional elements, such as biodiversity, animal welfare, and packaging are also taken into account.

At Olympic House, the ECO-SCORE® by Beelong is currently 88 points out of 100. Some key indicators and their ratings are provided below:

- Seasonal products: 84%
- Sustainability labels: 58%
- Local sourcing: 50% from Switzerland and 32% from the EU
- Meat products: 9% of total purchases
- Sustainable fish: 78% of fish have sustainability labels and are non-endangered species

Results are displayed permanently in the restaurant and communicated to staff, promoting transparency and enticing continuous improvement. Each year, results are reviewed and new targets agreed upon in collaboration with the IOC's catering partner.

The Olympic Museum restaurant is certified EcoCook® Sustainable Restaurant level 4 since 2018. EcoCook® is the only Swiss certification for the catering sector that recognises the sustainable practices at all operational and management levels.

Every three years a comprehensive evaluation is conducted and results are published on the restaurant's website and the website of EcoCook®. Some of the key areas evaluated are: food and drink; products and materials; social responsibility; and waste and communications.

# Principle 4

## Education and communications



### Examples of actions taken

- Organised workshops, webinars, awareness-raising campaigns, and training sessions to educate internal and external stakeholders on environmental sustainability and best practices
- Collaborated with local schools, NGOs, and community groups to engage in nature-related projects and education
- Used online platforms and social media campaigns to educate and inspire global communities on (ocean) conservation and sustainability
- Encouraged volunteerism and employee participation in environmental projects and sustainability initiatives

## Case study 4

### The Ocean Race Learning Programme

The Ocean Race Learning Programme aims to increase ocean literacy and motivate positive action among younger generations to help protect ocean health. The programme includes:

- **Champions for the Sea** Suitable for 6–12 year olds, these free, engaging resources can be used in schools, at home, or within the community. The course takes children on a journey through the history of the Race, exploring the boats, teams, and route, before explaining our connection with the ocean, the issue of plastic pollution, and how to tackle it. There is also a module about the wonders of ocean science and the challenges of studying the ocean's vast, unexplored depths.
- **Generation Ocean** Join the race to protect our incredible blue planet is an engaging secondary school programme for 12–16 year olds. The resources introduce young people to the vital role of the ocean in sustaining life on Earth, the threats jeopardising it, and the solutions needed to protect it. The Educator's Guide supports place based project work in ocean advocacy that has seen real positive action take place from students in their communities around the world.
- **Our Ocean Our Hero** is a short module on the ocean and climate connection. Helping learners understand the links between the worlds largest carbon sink and its many amazing ecosystems and animals that help provide oxygen and a healthy planet.

The programmes and supporting materials for teachers, parents, or community members can be downloaded for free in nine languages. Since 2017, around 224,640 children in 80 countries have engaged with the learning programme, including 25,000 students using the online programme in 43 countries during the six months of the race in 2023 and over 30,000 students visiting the Ocean Live Park for an educational experience. For more information about the The Ocean Race's Learning Programme, click [here](#).



## Challenges in taking action for nature

The key challenges in integrating biodiversity and nature into sustainability strategies and actions are diverse, reflecting the varied contexts and operations of the different organisations. Different event locations, varying regulations, inconsistent waste management practices, and the complexity of monitoring of legacy projects like tree planting were common issues. The lack of innovation in supply chains and infrastructure, such as insufficient availability of charging services for electric coaches, were identified as further obstacles.

Integrating biodiversity and nature objectives into existing work was a major hurdle. Many activities were targeted at climate action and many signatories voiced challenges in understanding how nature actions can contribute to climate objectives. Coordinating efforts among multiple member federations, focusing primarily on reducing carbon emissions from travel, and ensuring effective communication and stakeholder involvement were additional challenges.

Concerns about improper allocation of time and resources, potential additional costs, and the nascent stage of initiatives due to a lack of financial and human resources were prevalent.

Staff resources, competing priorities, and expertise in nature-specific topics were common constraints.

Identifying and prioritising concrete actions, holding organising authorities accountable for sustainability commitments, and establishing effective reporting metrics were also noted difficulties. Finally, the cost implications for local organising committees were a persistent concern.

**Without nature, sport has nowhere to play. Whether it is the landscapes to compete in, the equipment that you play with, the ocean you sail in or the water you swim in — all is provided with the support of nature.**

**Elizabeth Mrema, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and UNEP Deputy Executive Director**





## 4 Looking ahead

The first year of the S4N initiative has provided valuable insights, paving the way for improvements in the reporting process for 2024.

The reporting system for S4N signatories will be revised both in terms of content and format in preparation for the 2024 reporting period that will open in November 2024. The updates will incorporate feedback from S4N partners, signatories, and the Advisory Group to address any challenges and enhance the overall reporting experience. As in 2023, signatories will be actively involved in this process to ensure the format remains user-friendly and effective.

Several key developments are anticipated for the 2024 reporting cycle:

- **Increased number of signatory reports**  
Reporting will be mandatory for a larger number of organisations. As of 31 July 2024, 59 organisations have joined Sports for Nature, significantly increasing the scope and impact of the initiative.
- **Expansion of the Advisory Group**  
To accommodate the growing number of signatories and ensure comprehensive reviews, the S4N Advisory Group will need to expand. This will help distribute the reviewing workload and bring in a wider range of expertise.
- **Accounting for signatory diversity**  
A key challenge is to make the reporting format work for organisations with varying levels of resources. The S4N signatories range from

grassroots organisations run by volunteers to large entities governing global sports. The reporting process must be flexible enough to accommodate these differences while maintaining consistency and credibility.

**The commitments and energy in Sports for Nature are exactly what the world needs to live sustainably and protect nature.**

**David Ainsworth, Head of Communications,  
Secretariat of the Convention on  
Biological Diversity**

As we reflect on the outcomes of the first Sports for Nature signatory reporting cycle, it is clear that the sports community has a significant role to play in addressing the urgent nature crisis facing our planet.

The enthusiastic participation and innovative actions of our signatories have demonstrated that sports can be a powerful force for environmental stewardship and biodiversity conservation. The S4N reporting format is to become a key resource to showcase how sports organisations are contributing to the Biodiversity Plan, the UN-driven landmark agreement adopted by 196 countries to guide global action on nature through to 2030.

The lessons learned and the progress made in 2023 set a strong foundation for the future. By continually refining our approach and expanding our community, we are committed to driving transformative change in the sports world.

New S4N resources and tools are under development to assist sports organisations in their actions for nature as well as in their reporting efforts. The regular S4N Working Group meetings will engage signatories to continue sharing best practices and success stories amongst one another. Signatories also have access to a S4N helpdesk to receive tailored support.

The high level of engagement and the diverse range of activities reported by the signatories are a testament to the commitment of the sports community to this important cause.

We encourage other sports organisations to join the Sports for Nature Framework and contribute to the global effort to protect and restore nature. By working together, we can make a significant impact and create a healthier planet for future generations.

Learn more about the Sports for Nature Initiative and Framework – visit: [www.sportsfornature.org](http://www.sportsfornature.org)

**Sport relies on nature as much as it relies on a stable climate, and we want to be part of the solution to protect both. While making our own efforts to help protect and conserve nature, we want to use our influence to help the Olympic Movement and sport overall become more sustainable.**

**Marie Sallois, IOC Director for Sustainability**

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