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**Sports
for Nature**

Sports for Nature Urban Playbook

Toolkit

Institutional partners



International
Olympic
Committee



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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from Karim Ullah



Baseline assessment worksheet

Category	Sub-category	Questions	Suggestions	Comments
Context	Birds-eye-view	What habitats are there on your site? Where does your site sit vis-à-vis natural assets and institutions in the wider landscape?	Use Google Maps , or similar, to contextualise your site in the wider landscape.	
	Ecoregion	In which Ecoregion is your site located?	Use the UN Biodiversity Lab 'Terrestrial Biomes (Ecoregions2017)' dataset.	
		What are the key ecological characteristics of this Ecoregion?	Search Wikipedia for a concise description of your Ecoregion.	
	Protected Areas	What are the names and sizes of the nearest protected areas?	Use the UN Biodiversity Lab 'Protected Areas' dataset.	
		How could your site connect to these protected areas and help advance their conservation objectives?	Consider strengthening ecological corridors, buffer zones and stepping stones.	
	Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)	Are there any KBAs nearby? What species or habitats do they support?	Use the KBA Database to find details on local KBAs.	
		How can your site contribute to KBA conservation priorities?	Consider planting native flora to support local pollinators.	
	Climate and disaster risks	What are the main climate and disaster risks facing your site?	Visit PREPdata or WWF Water Risk Filter to explore the implications of a range of climate scenarios.	
	Citizen science data	What species have been spotted on or near to your site?	Visit iNaturalist for local records of rare and common wildlife.	
		What is the quality of local freshwater bodies?	Visit FreshWater Watch for data on freshwater pollution.	



Category	Sub-category	Questions	Suggestions	Comments
Natural assets	Natural and semi-natural habitats	What existing green spaces, vegetation, or water features are present on your site or nearby?	Look for woodland, meadows, gardens, ponds and rivers.	
	Wildlife observations	What species or wildlife activity have been observed at your site?	Listen for bird calls and buzzing. Look out for burrows and tracks. Use PlantSnap , Google Lens , and Merlin Bird ID .	
Pressures	Degradation	Are there degraded areas, invasive species (e.g. non-native weeds), or pollution sources near your site?	Look for evidence of soil erosion, trampling, litter, and overuse of pesticides.	
	Human pressures	What human activities at and around your site might impact biodiversity negatively?	Look for excessive mowing, lighting disturbances, noise pollution or barriers to movement.	
Opportunities	Habitat enhancement	Are there unused or degraded spaces that could be revitalised for biodiversity?	Look for underused or neglected areas.	
	Species conservation	How can your site support native species or habitats identified in the desk-based research?	For example, creating pollinator pathways or installing bird boxes.	
	Partnerships and collaboration	Are there any institutions or venues nearby that could present opportunities for collaboration?	Look for schools, public institutions, and other sports clubs.	

On-site survey checklist

Instructions		Comments
Map key features		
	Create a site map highlighting habitat types and vegetation zones, location of water sources or wetlands, and areas of degradation or disruption.	
	Use photographs or geotagging to document important observations.	
Identify and document natural assets		
	Catalogue key habitats (e.g., wetlands, rivers, woodlands, grasslands, etc.) at and around the venue.	
	Identify notable features such as large trees, water bodies, or unique geological elements.	
	Record the presence of vegetation types, including native and non-native species. Use plant identification apps such as PlantSnap or Google Lens to quickly identify species.	
Observe wildlife		
	Note visible wildlife activity (e.g., nests, tracks, burrows) and species observed.	
	Listen for auditory cues, such as bird calls or insect activity, to assess biodiversity richness. Use bird call identification apps such as Merlin Bird ID .	
Assess environmental health		
	Evaluate the condition of vegetation, noting signs of stress, disease, or poor growth.	
	Identify ecological degradation, such as soil erosion, invasive species (e.g., non-native weeds), pollution or litter.	
	Note barriers to the movement of wildlife, including busy roads, walls and fences.	

Instructions		Comments
Evaluate restoration potential		
	Identify areas with potential for ecological restoration such as compacted soils for replanting, isolated habitats for wildlife corridors, and paved areas for rain gardens.	
	Consider interventions such as planting native vegetation, enhancing habitat connectivity, and adding features like nesting boxes.	
Prepare a summary		
	Consolidate findings into a concise report including key observations, identified challenges, and restoration opportunities.	



Making the case for nature - cheat sheet

Strategy	What to do	Why it works	What I will do (gameplan)
Know your audience	Tailor your message to each stakeholder group: • Club owners: Cost savings, compliance • Athletes: Performance, air quality, faster recovery • Sponsors: Brand value, ESG impact	Aligns the case with what matters most to them.	
Lead with success stories	Share relatable case studies from similar clubs or venues.	Builds credibility and makes the vision tangible.	
Address concerns proactively	• Cost? Point to grants, tax breaks, and long-term savings. • Space? Suggest vertical greening or modular interventions.	Pre-empts resistance.	
Back it up with numbers	Use credible stats: • Trees can reduce local temps by up to 8°C (source). • Green roofs cut cooling costs by 8% (source). • Green spaces around venues increase property values by up to 20% (source). • Nature-based solutions are ~50% cheaper and 28% more valuable than grey infrastructure (source). • Every \$1 spent on nature restoration can return up to \$6.63 in social value (source).	Quantifies the return on investment.	
Frame it as a competitive edge	Highlight how nature enhances venue appeal, resilience, and reputation. • Sustainability is a key factor in sponsorship decisions for over 60% of sponsors with over 82% believing its importance is growing (source).	Strengthens the business case with competitive advantages e.g., sponsor appeal, ticket sales, and climate adaptation.	

Nature plan - outline

Step	Description	Examples / key points
1. Start with a vision and mission	Define your long-term ambition and immediate purpose.	• Vision: Create a world-class sports venue for people and wildlife. • Mission: Integrate sustainable practices, restore ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and inspire community action.
2. Summarise the baseline	Describe your site's current ecological condition, including natural assets, challenges, and opportunities.	• Species identified during surveys • Existing green infrastructure (e.g. trees, wetlands) • Pressures like pollution or invasive species
3. Engage stakeholders	Involve key groups to co-design and support the plan.	• Local environmental groups • Staff and volunteers • Government agencies • Local schools or universities
4. Set objectives, targets, and milestones	Use SMART objectives to guide your efforts and track progress.	• Objective: Increase native tree cover by 20% in 5 years • Milestone: Plant 1,000 native trees in year one and ensure > 80% survival rate by year three.
5. Define actions	Identify the practical measures that will achieve each objective. Make them site-specific and actionable.	• Remove invasive species • Install nest boxes • Hold biodiversity awareness days
6. Assign roles and responsibilities	Allocate specific tasks to ensure accountability.	• Groundskeepers – implement habitat-friendly practices • Conservation groups – ecological monitoring • Communications team – promote efforts
7. Mobilise resources	Identify and secure financial and in-kind support.	• Government or conservation grants • Eco-conscious sponsorships • Community fundraising or volunteering
8. Monitor, evaluate, and adapt	Track progress using KPIs and adjust plans as needed.	• Number of new species recorded • Pesticide use reduction • Improved green space connectivity
9. Communicate and inspire	Report achievements and lessons learned to inspire others.	• Social media updates • Annual biodiversity reports • Community events or workshops

Urban nature actions playbook

Key

Elements of Urban Nature	
	Habitat patch size – <i>Winning ground</i>
	Connectivity – <i>Connecting playmakers</i>
	Matrix quality – <i>Finding openings</i>
	Habitat diversity – <i>Building a balanced team</i>
	Native vegetation – <i>Seizing home advantage</i>
	Special resources – <i>Landing the big hits</i>
	Wildlife-friendly management – <i>Masterminding the game plan</i>

Co-benefits of Urban Nature for Sport	
	Cooling Athletes, Participants & Fans
	Keeping the Field of Play Playable
	Purifying Air & Water for Peak Performance
	Beautifying Venues for Better Experiences
	Quickening Recovery & Strengthening Mindsets
	Bringing Communities Together
	Future-proofing Venues

Buildings

Category	Actions	Elements of urban nature	Co-benefits
Green Infrastructure	• Install green roofs with native, pollinator-friendly plants.		
	• Add living walls with diverse vegetation.		
	• Incorporate planters for microhabitats on balconies or terraces.		
Lighting	• Use shielded, warm-spectrum LEDs.		
	• Install motion sensors or timers.		
	• Explore dark-sky certifications.		
Sound	• Install sound barriers for noisy events or equipment.		
	• Use sound-absorbing materials where feasible.		
Bird-friendly Design	• Use bird-safe patterned or coated windows.		
	• Incorporate swift boxes or other bird-friendly features.		
	• Avoid reflective landscaping elements that confuse birds.		
Organic Waste Management	• Compost organic waste into fertile soil.		
	• Donate excess compost to local organisations.		
Integrated Water Management	• Install rainwater capture systems for irrigation.		
	• Treat and reuse greywater for landscape irrigation.		
	• Replace impermeable surfaces with permeable surfaces.		
	• Use drip irrigation or smart irrigation.		
Community Engagement	• Organise guided tours highlighting green features.		
	• Partner with local schools on biodiversity education projects.		

Club Grounds

Category	Actions	Elements of urban nature	Co-benefits
Habitat creation	Establish wildflower meadows and wetland habitats.		
	Create woodland edges and hedgerows.		
	Layer vegetation.		
	Conserve large trees.		
	Incorporate living fences.		
	Leave deadwood.		
	Add unique features e.g., floating wetlands, insect hotels, or brush piles.		
Native plants	Select native species adapted to the local environment.		
	Include year-round flowering plants to support pollinators.		
	Partner with local native plant nurseries.		
Water management	Install rain gardens or bioswales to manage stormwater.		
	Use rain barrels or cisterns for water collection.		
	Implement efficient irrigation systems like drip irrigation.		
Turf management	Reduce mowing frequency in non-playing areas.		
	Leave grass clippings in place to improve soil fertility.		
	Use integrated pest management strategies to minimise pesticide use.		
Soil health	Test and amend soil to improve fertility and structure.		
	Avoid over-compaction in non-playing areas.		
Community engagement	Organise biodiversity walks or events to showcase habitat improvements.		
	Partner with local schools for educational activities.		
	Invite community to tend to vegetable gardens.		

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Education, Promotion and Advocacy

Category	Plays	Elements of urban nature	Co-benefits
Educational materials	Create visually engaging materials like infographics and videos.		
	Highlight local biodiversity and the benefits of your efforts.		
	Include interactive elements such as quizzes or augmented reality experiences.		
On-site activities	Install educational signage with QR codes for deeper learning.		
	Organise guided nature walks and biodiversity workshops.		
	Develop an exhibition garden showcasing native plants and their ecological role.		
Fan engagement	Host biodiversity-themed match days with activities for fans.		
	Encourage public participation in restoration projects.		
	Promote citizen science apps to engage fans in recording species observations.		
Advocacy	Use events to advocate for urban greening and biodiversity policies.		
	Collaborate with like-minded organisations to amplify your voice.		
	Publish annual impact reports to inspire broader action.		

Library of use cases

Key

Elements of Urban Nature		Co-benefits of Urban Nature for Sport	
	Habitat patch size – <i>Winning ground</i>		Cooling Athletes, Participants & Fans
	Connectivity – <i>Connecting playmakers</i>		Keeping the Field of Play Playable
	Matrix quality – <i>Finding openings</i>		Purifying Air & Water for Peak Performance
	Habitat diversity – <i>Building a balanced team</i>		Beautifying Venues for Better Experiences
	Native vegetation – <i>Seizing home advantage</i>		Quickening Recovery & Strengthening Mindsets
	Special resources – <i>Landing the big hits</i>		Bringing Communities Together
	Wildlife-friendly management – <i>Masterminding the game plan</i>		Future-proofing Venues
Scale of Intervention			
	Building		
	Club Grounds		
	Neighbourhood		
	Education, Promotion & Advocacy		



Title	Organisation	Sport	Location	Scale	Elements	Co-benefits	Description
Roots and Records: Budapest's Urban Forest Reborn	Budapest 2023	Athletics	Budapest, Hungary		  	   	The 2023 World Athletics Championships in Budapest incorporated biodiversity goals by planting native trees to expand green spaces and cool the city. These actions supported local climate targets and created a legacy of enhanced urban greenery. The event also encouraged sustainable transport and showcased environmentally responsible event planning.
Birds and Baseball: The Oriole Garden at Camden Yards	Baltimore Orioles & NWF	Baseball	Baltimore, USA	  	   	    	The Oriole Garden at Camden Yards, Baltimore, was established by the Baltimore Orioles and the National Wildlife Federation to support pollinators and native birds. Located prominently at the stadium entrance, the garden contains over 30 native plant species. Reduced chemical use and its proximity to other green spaces enhance ecological connectivity and public awareness of biodiversity.
Wild at the Wicket: Whalley Range's Cricketing Conservation	Whalley Range Cricket Club	Cricket	Whalley, UK	 	 	    	Whalley Range Cricket Club in the UK has taken significant steps to enhance biodiversity and promote sustainability. The club has planted over 200 trees, installed swift boxes for nesting birds, eliminated pesticide use, and created vegetable planters for local food production. These actions have improved habitats for urban wildlife while engaging the local community. Their efforts were recognised with the Cricketer magazine's Greenest Ground award.
Greening the Pavilion: Lord's Cricket Ground's Living Walls	Lord's Cricket Ground	Cricket	London, UK		  	    	Lord's Cricket Ground installed green walls as part of a major redevelopment, adding over 12,000 plants and integrated nesting boxes for birds and bats. These walls enhance air quality, provide urban habitat, and serve as a visible commitment to sustainability in one of the world's most iconic cricket venues.
Drenthe's Cycling Corridor for People and Nature	UCI	Cycling	Drenthe, The Netherlands		 	  	Drenthe's Green Corridor connects cities via eco-friendly cycle highways designed with nature in mind. The project includes safer wildlife crossings, reduced fragmentation, and greener travel infrastructure. As a UCI Bike Region, Drenthe exemplifies how mobility and biodiversity can be integrated.
Greening the Game: Spurs' Biodiversity Blueprint	Tottenham Hotspur	Football	London, UK	  	    	     	Tottenham Hotspur has embedded biodiversity into its infrastructure by integrating green design across both its stadium and training centre. Key interventions include planting wildflower meadows, installing ponds, bug hotels, bat boxes, and creating wetland habitats. Biodiversity is monitored through collaboration with external tracking systems, informing data-driven decisions. These actions contribute to ecological value while engaging fans and staff in nature-positive efforts.



Title	Organisation	Sport	Location	Scale	Elements	Co-benefits	Description
Pitch Perfect: Forest Green's Organic Football Revolution	Forest Green Rovers	Football	Nailsworth, UK	 	 	 	Forest Green Rovers has pioneered environmental sustainability in football through organic pitch maintenance, vegan catering, and renewable energy use. The club's new stadium, Eco Park, is designed with climate-conscious architecture, including electric vehicle infrastructure and green spaces. These efforts have significantly reduced the club's environmental footprint and inspired sustainability within the wider sports sector.
Garden Goals: Girvan FC's Sensory Sanctuary	Girvan Football Club	Football	Girvan, UK	 	 	 	Girvan Football Club has created a sensory garden at the entrance to its grounds, planting fruit trees that support pollinators and provide a tranquil space for visitors. This initiative demonstrates how even small clubs can enhance biodiversity and community wellbeing through simple greening interventions. The project strengthens the club's role as a local hub for inclusivity and environmental awareness.
Grass Roots, Green Goals: Brazil's First Eco Stadium	J. Malucelli FC	Football	Curitiba, Brazil	 		 	Estádio Janguito Malucelli in Curitiba, Brazil, was the country's first ecological stadium, featuring a grass-covered grandstand and construction with recycled materials. Although now repurposed, the stadium stood as a pioneering example of integrating sustainability into sports infrastructure and inspired future developments in eco-friendly stadium design.
Kicking for Clean Streets: MYSA's Eco League in Nairobi	Mathare Youth Sports Association	Football	Nairobi, Kenya	 	 	 	MYSA's Eco League in Nairobi rewards youth football teams with league points for litter collection and tree planting. This gamified approach improves urban sanitation, raises environmental awareness, and fosters a culture of community care and conservation among young people in the slums.
Greens of Distinction: Le Golf National's Habitat Mosaic	French Golf Federation	Golf	Paris, France	 	 	 	Le Golf National near Paris demonstrates how golf courses can enhance biodiversity by maintaining habitat mosaics. The 139-hectare site includes ten EUNIS-classified habitats, including three rare ones. Management practices feature reduced chemical use, amphibian hibernacula, and deadwood, with unmown buffer zones helping to preserve wildlife corridors and ecological richness.
Monarchs on the Fairway: Golf Courses for Pollinators	United States Golf Association (USGA)	Golf	Multiple, USA	 	 	 	The USGA's Monarchs in the Rough program helps golf courses across the US convert out-of-play areas into pollinator habitats. Participants plant native milkweed and wildflowers to support monarch butterflies, while reducing mowing and chemical use. This low-cost, high-impact initiative promotes biodiversity and pollinator conservation.
Gallop and Green: Kenilworth Racecourse's Habitat Refuge	Kenilworth Racecourse	Horse Racing	Cape Town, South Africa	 	 	 	Kenilworth Racecourse in Cape Town protects a rare remnant of critically endangered Sand Plain Fynbos, maintaining it as a large, intact habitat patch within the urban matrix. The site's conservation value lies in preserving native flora and associated wildlife in one of the world's most diverse plant kingdoms.



Title	Organisation	Sport	Location	Scale	Elements	Co-benefits	Description
Gameplan for Pollinators: A Guide for Clubs	National Biodiversity Centre of Ireland	Multiple	Ireland	  	        	     	The National Biodiversity Centre of Ireland has developed a practical guide for sports clubs to support pollinators. The guide promotes five simple actions such as reducing mowing, planting native species, and avoiding pesticides. It is part of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and has been adopted by clubs across the country. The programme is supported by mapping tools and a biodiversity toolkit, helping clubs track and scale their efforts.
Green Goals: Zuiderpark's Sustainable Sports Campus	The Hague Municipality	Multiple	The Hague, The Netherlands	  	    	     	Zuiderpark's Sustainable Sports Campus in The Hague is a CO2-neutral facility that incorporates green roofs, permeable paving, and a restored creek system. The site integrates seamlessly with the adjacent park and promotes biodiversity, recreation, and education. Built by the municipality and a local university, the campus offers a model for future-proof, sustainable sports infrastructure.
Flora at the Footy: Cape Town Stadium's Biodiversity Garden	City of Cape Town	Multiple	Cape Town, South Africa	  		     	Cape Town Stadium's Biodiversity Showcase Garden, located in Green Point Park, demonstrates how native plants can be used in public landscaping. It serves as an educational tool for visitors, promoting awareness of local flora and the importance of conserving the region's unique biodiversity.
Greening the Paris Games from the Ground Up	Organising Committee of the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games	Multiple	Paris, France	   	        	     	The Paris 2024 Olympic Games cut its carbon footprint in half by repurposing venues, prioritising renewables, and promoting sustainable transport. But the commitment didn't stop there: over 1,700 trees were safeguarded, six kilometres of habitat protected, and soil equivalent to 20 rugby pitches preserved. The Olympic Village and surrounding developments featured wildlife-friendly lighting, dead wood, nesting structures, and other special resources.
London 2012: Olympic Park as a Biodiversity Benchmark	Olympic Delivery Authority	Multiple	London, UK	   	        	     	The London 2012 Olympic Park was built with biodiversity at its core, guided by a comprehensive Biodiversity Action Plan. The park restored waterways, expanded habitat patches, and constructed wildlife corridors to allow species movement. Additional features included bird and bat boxes, native vegetation, and artificial otter dens, all contributing to post-Olympic ecological resilience.
Vancouver's Olympic Habitat Island	Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC)	Multiple	Vancouver, Canada		  	   	To offset shoreline habitat loss from Olympic Village construction, the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games created a new island planted with native vegetation. The habitat creation project increased overall patch size and connectivity, with additional restoration work in nearby parks. The initiative is a strong example of compensatory habitat creation tied to urban development.



Title	Organisation	Sport	Location	Scale	Elements	Co-benefits	Description
<u>Row for the River: British Rowing Tackles Pollution</u>	British Rowing	Rowing	London, UK	 	 	   	British Rowing partnered with environmental NGOs to empower rowers to monitor water quality and tackle pollution in UK rivers. By detecting phosphates, nitrates, and litter, clubs are helping to improve aquatic health and biodiversity. The initiative promotes citizen science, strengthens advocacy, and fosters stewardship among athletes and river-based communities.
<u>Oars for Restoration: Spring Creek's Revival</u>	Kinross Wolaroi School	Rowing	Bathurst, Australia	  	   	   	A rowing club in Bathurst restored the riparian area around its reservoir by removing invasive trees and planting native vegetation. This improved water availability in a drought-prone region and enhanced habitat quality. The project involved collaboration with a local school and the city, exemplifying community-based restoration.
<u>Reefs Afloat: Saint-Tropez's Marine Makeover</u>	Sail GP	Sailing	St Tropez, France	 		  	SailGP, in partnership with the Pure Ocean Foundation, is restoring marine biodiversity in Saint-Tropez through eco-designed floating reefs made from recycled fishing nets. These structures provide refuge for marine species and protect sensitive seagrass beds using ecological anchors.
<u>Waves of Change: Surf, Sustainability, and Community in Dakar</u>	Copacabana Surf Village	Surfing	Dakar, Senegal			   	At Copacabana Surf Village in Dakar, Babacar Thiaw leads beach clean-ups and surf camps for youth, blending sport with ocean stewardship. His work, in partnership with the Surfrider Foundation, addresses plastic pollution and empowers surfers to become coastal conservation ambassadors.
<u>Taekwondo and Tree-planting</u>	Jadir Taekwondo Association	Taekwondo	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil		  	     	The Jadir Taekwondo Association combines martial arts with ecosystem restoration in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. Young people participate in belt tests that incorporate environmental challenges and tree planting. Activities take place in degraded urban areas, transforming them into green community spaces. This approach fosters both ecological awareness and social empowerment.



Join the Sports for Nature community

By committing to the Sports for Nature Framework, sport organisations join a community dedicated to leveraging sports towards the protection and restoration of nature. Contact the Sports for Nature team to learn more about the Framework and discuss how you can get involved.

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