

# Guide for Sports Organizations with Recommendations on Identification, Integration and Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility



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KMOP – Social Action and Innovation Centre (Greece)

BSDA – Bulgarian sports development association (Bulgaria)

CESIE (Italy)

CARDET – Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (Cyprus)

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# Abstract

A group of athletes, including women in athletic wear with bib numbers like 4226 and 2H 229, are performing a high-five gesture on a beach at sunset. The scene is captured in a warm, orange-toned photograph.

GoSport consortium is proud to present you with the Guide on recognizing social responsibility and understanding the relationships between a sports organization, its stakeholders and the society, and on how social responsibility can be effectively integrated throughout the sport organizations.

The Guide has been envisaged as the second step in the two-year long process of the GoSport project.

The readers of the Guide will be able to **improve knowledge** on how sports organizations can identify, integrate and how social responsibility is communicated within the organizations. Furthermore, this Guide will aim at **providing tools** to for-profit and non-profit sports organizations for understanding

the relationships among the organizations, its stakeholders and society, and integrating socially responsible organizational governance practices.

The GoSport consortium would like to sincerely thank all of the organizations that have made this Guide possible and we continue to be inspired by how people are working together to promote values of sports in their daily work.

# 1. About GoSport project

**GoSport** is a European initiative aiming to encourage **social inclusion and equal opportunities in sports** by improving **good governance within sports organizations**. In order to contribute to the improvement of good governance in sports organizations in Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Italy, GoSport aims at:

## Enhancing the capacities and awareness

of sports clubs/organizations, professional and semi-professional sports teams and clubs on implementing good governance principles through social responsibility, focusing on participation and inclusivity irrespective of gender, race, disability or age, and the promotion of human rights.

## Providing tools

to sports organizations and professionals for understanding the relationships among the organizations, its stakeholders and society, and integrating socially responsible organizational governance practices.



## Promoting the participation and inclusivity principles

in sports through responsibility.

## Improving knowledge

on how sports organizations interpret, manage and prioritize social responsibility issues – especially in terms of combating violence, tackling racism, discrimination and intolerance, and encouraging social inclusion and equal opportunities – how organizational governance influences social responsibility and how social responsibility is communicated within the organizations.

**Sports can play an important role in combating discrimination and promoting human rights, tolerance and social inclusion. In this context, it is crucial to enhance sports organizations' abilities to implement socially responsible behavior.**

## 1.1 About project partners

**Project Consortium consists of five project partners from five different countries: KMOP as a project coordinator (Greece), BSDA (Bulgaria), CARDET (Cyprus), CESIE (Italy) and IDOP (Croatia).**

**KMOP - Social Action and Innovation Centre** is a leading NGO with more than 43 years of experience in supporting vulnerable people through the provision of social services, implementation of social initiatives, education, research and development of know-how on social policy issues. We design and implement impactful initiatives, aiming to make a difference in tackling the ongoing challenges in a globalized world.

Education is the foundation of our democracy and key to building resilient and inclusive societies. Aiming at empowering people and tackling the roots of vulnerability in a constantly changing world, we work on crucial topics such as migration, gender, bullying, discrimination, hate speech and violence. Within this context, we have developed an online platform, providing free, online educational courses.

**BSDA - Bulgarian sports development association** was established in 2010 and is a non-governmental organization in public benefit, committed to the development of sport and working to improve and raise sport culture in Bulgaria.

The main priorities of BSDA are revival of the sport culture, volunteering in sport, education through and in sport, good governance in sport, integration through sport and skills of the future and entrepreneurship. BSDA believes that sport should be part of a modern life of children and young people and should transmit in them all those values and support their use in all aspects of life. Sport is also an excellent way to prevent many of the problems with young people such as social exclusion, violence, crime and addictions.

**CESIE** - is a European centre of studies and initiatives established in 2001. Its mission is to promote educational innovation, participation and growth. Inspired by the work of Danilo Dolci, we focus our work on the research of social needs and challenges and the use of innovative learning approaches. In this way, CESIE actively connects research with action using formal and non-formal learning methodologies.

Over time, CESIE has developed a wide experience in projects and initiatives addressing sports, healthy lifestyles and physical activity. These projects not only worked towards the uptake of these highly beneficial activities and habits but were also used as tools to foster positive and democratic values and to enhance social inclusion of vulnerable target groups. Here some of our most recent.

**IDOP - The Croatian Institute for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** was established in 2015, as a non-profit, research and advisory organization focused on development and education of CSR and sustainability practices among different organizations. IDOP uses a global approach and certified methodology for the needs of current and future society development. IDOP is the only organization in Croatia that systematically follows relevant news, research and information on a global level when it comes to sustainability

and CSR. Moreover, IDOP is a member of strong international organizations like Global Reporting Initiative and of CSR International. Through this membership and network, IDOP with the help of European stakeholders, works in forming new social responsibility strategies and policies important for both adult education and research.

Furthermore, IDOP actively participates and implements various EU projects in the field of CSR.

**CARDET - Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology** is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental, research and development organization based in Cyprus, with partners around the world. CARDET is one of the leading institutions in the Euro-Mediterranean region for research and development and its team strives to offer the highest quality services to benefit society. To fulfill and further this goal, the Centre collaborates with local and international organizations, public and private bodies, and across diverse disciplines in designing solutions for local and global challenges.

CARDET's mission is to inspire next generation education, and to promote research, innovation, and development through evidence-based practices, cutting-edge research, and empowered people.

## 2. Definition of the Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A term that sounds familiar. Still, it is useful to try to define it, at least for single use. Therefore, in the sea of definitions, we highlight the **following** one:

**“Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (“Triple-Bottom-Line-Approach”), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.”<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> What is CSR? (<https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade-capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr>)

**C**orporate

**S**ocial

**R**esponsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an area of great importance for many companies and, therefore, earned considerable attention. Despite the possibility that CSR might be a management fashion, the CSR concept is of value, because it has real consequences in the business world.<sup>2</sup> While the study of CSR has become increasingly prevalent in the management and organizational behavior literature, the concept has only recently entered the sport management area.<sup>3</sup>

Sports organizations start to apply CSR concepts more often in their work. As sport becomes an increasingly prominent economic and social institution across the globe, the question of what social responsibilities athletes, coaches, team owners, league officials, and glob-

al sport organizations' personnel have, should constantly be asked.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the existence of sport has led to the elevation of sport organizations as influential members of the global community, especially as they have become big businesses themselves.<sup>5</sup> In addition, sport organizations are facing a consuming public that is increasingly aware of the social aspects of corporate policy, as a result of the infamy given to recent corporate misdeeds.<sup>6</sup>

CSR activities in sports include, but are not limited to: athlete volunteerism, educational initiatives, philanthropic/charitable donations, community development, community initiatives, fan appreciation, health-related initiatives, and community-based environmental programs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Guthey et al., (2006)

<sup>3</sup> cf. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Bradish, 2006; Brietbarth & Harriss, 2008; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Walker, Kent, and Rudd, 2007

<sup>4</sup> Godfrey, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Athanaspoulou et al., 2011

<sup>6</sup> Athanaspoulou et al., 2011

<sup>7</sup> Athanaspoulou et al., 2011

## 2.1 Social Responsibility, Governance and Corporate Philanthropy

Organizational governance and (corporate) social responsibility in sport have become a center of attention for researchers, managers and policy-makers. The fact that sport organizations have mass media distribution and communication power and (youth) appeal, places increasing focus on sport organizations to implement social responsibility initiatives in the belief that sports SR has a greater impact than

the CSR activities of commercial organizations. As Smith and Westerbeek (2007) claim, the nature of sport lends itself to being uniquely positioned to influence society in general and communities in particular.<sup>8</sup>

Before we continue, there is a need to distinguish several concepts – CSR and SR & CSR and Philanthropy.

**The main difference between corporate social responsibility and social responsibility is that corporate social responsibility concerns obligation of business companies to ensure their business benefit the society as well as the environment while social responsibility is the general way of a person(s) being responsible for the societal and environmental benefit. Hence, social responsibility, when applied to business, becomes corporate social responsibility.<sup>9</sup>**

<sup>8</sup> Corporate social responsibility in sport: Stakeholder management in the UK football industry [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271150910\\_Corporate\\_social\\_responsibility\\_in\\_sport\\_Stakeholder\\_management\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_football\\_industry](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271150910_Corporate_social_responsibility_in_sport_Stakeholder_management_in_the_UK_football_industry)

<sup>9</sup> What is the Difference Between Social Responsibility and Corporate Social Responsibility ([https://pediiaa.com/what-is-the-difference-between-social-responsibility-and-corporate-social-responsibility/#:~:text=The%20main%20difference%20between%20social,a%20person\(s\)%20being%20responsible](https://pediiaa.com/what-is-the-difference-between-social-responsibility-and-corporate-social-responsibility/#:~:text=The%20main%20difference%20between%20social,a%20person(s)%20being%20responsible)) Athanaspoulou et al., 2011

<sup>7</sup> Athanaspoulou et al., 2011

## Social responsibility

is the responsibility of an organization for the impact of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior that contributes to sustainable development, health and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and is integrated throughout the organization and practiced in its relationships.

The most important and effective means of integrating social responsibility throughout an organization is through the organization's governance, the system by which its decisions are made and implemented. Effective governance is based on incorporating the principles and practices of accountability, transparency, ethical behavior, respect for stakeholder interests and respect for the rule of law into decision-making and imple-

## Governance

is a central organizational function that can positively or negatively influence the relationship between organizations and society; while Social responsibility refers to how an organization impacts society. Because social responsibility concerns the potential and actual impacts of an organization's decisions and activities, the on-going, regular activities of the organization constitute the most important behavior to be addressed.

Furthermore, there are also two similar concepts that often overlap in the practice – corporate philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Often, philanthropy is integrated into a bigger picture of the corporate social responsibility plan. Both are positive concepts designed to deliver corporate resources to the community the corporation serves, and the giving may also be aimed toward specific causes.<sup>10</sup>

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**10** The Difference Between Corporate Philanthropy & Corporate Social Responsibility (<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/difference-between-corporate-philanthropy-corporate-social-responsibility-65129.html>)



## 2.2 Flexibility during COVID-19

Over the past few months, the GoSport consortium has learned a lot about the flexibility, resilience and cooperation. We have switched the implementation of the project online and worked in the ways we have never imagined before. At the same time, COVID-19 has put many questions about the sports industry as well. The pandemic has caused significant barriers to the sports organizations and had to engage in new ways of operation and performing their activities by being as flexible as possible. This particular period of health and social crisis has raised the need of flexibility, as a competence for the sports organizations.

Going forward, it is our aim to support communities in which we operate in a flexible manner and support individuals while balancing project needs in our countries and cultures. Flexibility can have different definitions for each of our partners and we admit that there is no universal solution given the diversity of the roles we have within the project. However, with the joint work and constant cooperation we create together a schedule that works for all while respecting the different needs of each of the partners within the consortium.





## 3. Key terms and findings of the GoSport field Research

### Stakeholders

We can define stakeholders as the participants of the sport organizations. According to Small Business, there are five categories of stakeholders in sports:

#### Participants

Players, coaches, administrative, management, technical and financial workers in organization, managers and promoters of players, young players, youth sport school and academy, referees, employees, volunteers and other sports clubs.

#### Governing Bodies

Players, coaches, administrative, management, technical and financial workers in organization, managers and promoters of players, young players, youth sport school and academy, referees, employees, volunteers and other sports clubs.

#### Spectators

Fans, season ticket holders.

#### Financial Stakeholders

Shareholders, capital providers, sponsors, trade partners, investors, suppliers, and their employees.

#### Community

The community in which the sports organization operates, society remains higher term than community considering that community includes fewer people than society. Community consists of families of athletes, educational institutions and universities, media, public.

Source: What Is a Stakeholder in Sports?<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> What Is a Stakeholder in Sports? (<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/stakeholder-sports-54584.html>)

Many studies have shown the benefits and importance of good communication in sports. Therefore, to prepare for the guide's content, we want to communicate properly and define the crucial terms that will be used in this Guide.

These terms are stakeholders, society, for-profit sports organizations and non-profit sports organizations.

## Society

"A society, or a human society, is a group of people involved with each other through persistent relations, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations."<sup>12</sup>

### For-profit sport organizations

Sports body that actively participates in sport competitions on national or local level and have as main aim - economic benefit.

### Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>13</sup>

### Non-profit sport organizations

Sports body that actively participates in sport competitions on national or local level and have as main aim - public benefit.

### Financial Stakeholders

Shareholders, capital providers, sponsors, trade partners, investors, suppliers, and their employees.

### Good Governance

Process whereby public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a manner that promotes the rule of law and the realization of human rights (civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights).<sup>14</sup>

\* Target groups are broad and have many differences since the for-profit and the non-professional sports organizations have different capacities and needs.

<sup>12</sup> Science Daily (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/society.htm>)

<sup>13</sup> Sustainable Development (<https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd>)

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Anti-Corruption>Module 2: Corruption and Good Governance>Key Issues>What is Good Governance? (<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/anti-corruption/module-2/key-issues/what-is-good-governance.html>)



To enable the greatest possible social awareness, it is necessary to coordinate the coherence among every actor. Therefore, we have focused on the three key aspects to define in which way implementation of CSR policies in sport organizations can be: **social, economic and/or environmental**.

## Social aspects of implementing CSR policies can be:

Fighting against discrimination, violence and racism

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Promoting participation of women in sports

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Social inclusion of marginalized countries

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Health and physical promotion

Safety of participants

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Youth education

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Providing opportunities for young athletes

---

Sustainable development and leadership

### **Economic aspects of implementing CSR policies can be:**

Good governance and anticorruption

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Financial stability in the long-term period

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Sustainable innovation

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Sports organization brand development

### **Environmental aspects of implementing CSR policies can be:**

Sustainable energy

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Waste management

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## **Key findings of the GoSport field research:**

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### **Main positive findings of the GoSport field research in five partner countries regarding implementation of the CSR policies are:**

- ▶ Cooperation of institutions regarding implementation of CSR policies
- ▶ Raising social awareness
- ▶ Working on implementation of CSR policies
- ▶ Positive will in conducting CSR policies
- ▶ Use of EU funds

### **At the same time, main negative findings in implementation of CSR policies are:**

- ▶ Lack of knowledge on CSR within the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations
- ▶ Insufficient environmental awareness
- ▶ Low representation of women in sports in media
- ▶ Lack of financial resources for better implementation of CSR policies

## 4. Integration of the Corporate Social Responsibility within the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations

It has been widely accepted that sport clubs are powerful and influential socio-political institutions because of their traditional dual economic and social bonds with local communities. They have been conceived as both homes for social interaction and powerful vehicles for social “exchange”, mainly due to their enormous communicational power, youth appeal/ identification and “role-modelling” ability. At the same time, human rights and

sport have become increasingly intertwined, as sport has significant potential to impact human rights. The UN General Assembly has recognized the valuable contribution of sport in promoting education, development, peace, cooperation, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion and health at the local, regional and international levels, and has noted that sports can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations.

Being a socially responsible organization can bolster a club's image, build its brand and increase the success of the organization. The strategy for the integration of the CSR into the sport organization can be conducted throughout following stages:

**1. Analysis of formal requirements (legal framework), issues, and initial assessment of risks** for-profit and non-profit sport organizations to integrate CSR into its work:

- ▶ Analyzing regulatory mechanisms and decrees of sport organizations related to sustainable development
- ▶ Analyzing laws related to sustainable development
- ▶ An initial review of issues raised by stakeholders related to sport organizations; both on local and national level
- ▶ Analysis and assessment of business risk of for-profit and non-profit and national sport organizations
- ▶ Discussion and identification of main issues of sustainability process in main areas (economy, environment and society) on the ground
- ▶ Identification of the issues and causes that are relevant and important for the organization and its community

**2. Analysis of sustainable context** as an in-depth research of norms, standards or thresholds for what an organization's impacts on vital resources would have to be or not be, in order to be sustainable:

- ▶ Extensive review of existing economic, environmental and social programs and initiatives conducted by sport organization on local and national level
- ▶ Mapping stakeholders and understanding their needs
- ▶ Analyzing laws related to sustainable development

**3. Analysis of impact** as a process of identification of the potential results that can accomplish a change in the field:

- ▶ Analysis of impact that is provided by sport organization on local and national level
- ▶ Deep consideration of level of influence which is granted by sport organizations

## 4.1 Integration and implementation of CSR between the organization and society

The goal of every organization is to increase its positive effects on society as much as possible. First, we need to foster long-term initiatives that aim to develop sustainability through its social, economic and environmental factors. Second, sports organizations have power to produce a great impact on society. Therefore, sports organizations can launch numerous initiatives for “awareness raising” in society. Sports organizations can conduct numerous initiatives for “awareness raising”, especially in the creation and management of adapted and inclusive social sports schools, as well as its support of charity initiatives, dedicated in particular to children, active and veteran athletes, and disadvantaged groups. Another major commitment of the club with its employees and with society is to focus on the prevention of occupational risks and continually promote health, safety and hygiene at work. Because of all these aspects, it is necessary to respond to

what society expects from sports organizations regarding CSR. Playing sport at a professional or amateur level demonstrates time and that player’s background is irrelevant for successful teamwork, and that more can be achieved when a range of people work together. Sport organizations need to promote social inclusion and integration and do everything within its power to prevent any kind of exclusion. Therefore, sports organizations, especially on the national level, have foreign players. Society can play a very important role in accepting foreign players and enable them to feel welcome in a sports organization.

It is important that the sports organization equally promote social responsibility among the genders, all ages and all types of educated people. In this way, social equality is promoted, which is one of the products of social responsibility.



## 4.2 Integration and implementation of CSR between the organization and its stakeholders

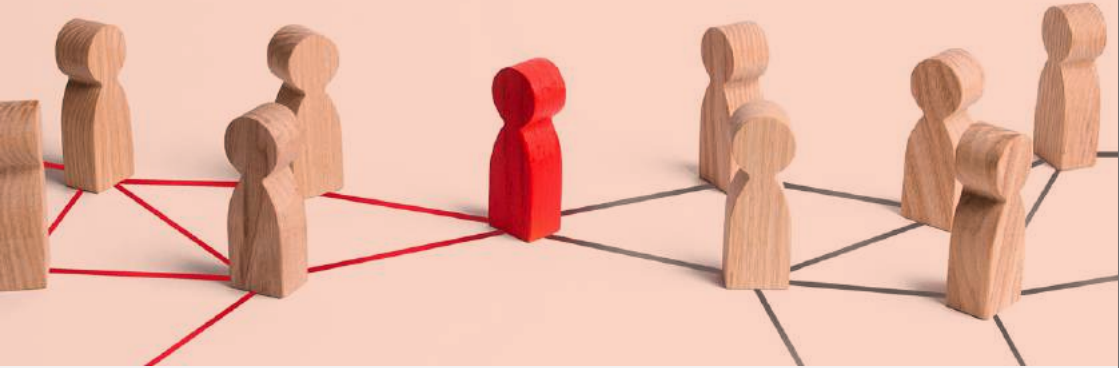
In the previous chapters, we have defined key terms, such as CSR, sports organizations and their stakeholders. First group of organization's stakeholders makes **participants** – players, coaches, administrative, management, technical and financial workers in organization, managers and promoters of players, young players, youth sport school and academy, referees, employees, volunteers and other sports clubs. It is necessary to do an initial review and define if there are problems that exist or could exist in the relationship between stakeholders and the sports organizations. Furthermore, every organization needs to have regulatory mechanisms, which will help to conduct relationships between stakeholders and sport organizations. More-

over, a national legal framework is important for sustainable development to build a connection between sports organizations and stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagement enables an organization to better understand the context in which an event is organized in terms of risks, opportunities and aspirations to guide the planning and decision-making of the event, but also facilitates the implementation of concrete activities to ensure products and services are delivered according to expectations<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, sports organizations need to be aware of the impact that their stakeholders can present, as well as deep consideration of the level of influence, which is granted by sport organizations.

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<sup>15</sup> FIFA Sustainability Report, 2018 (<https://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/sustainability-report-of-the-2018-fifa-world-cup-russia>)



We have identified five groups of participants which impact sport organizations, each with different interests which sport organizations need to address. Five stakeholder groups and their impacts are:

### **1. First group of participants, coaches and players**

can play a major role in promoting values that sports organizations stand for. Therefore, the idea of CSR can be better conveyed to a wider audience. Stakeholders play an important role in influencing an activity positively - for example, by providing expert knowledge or through alignment with existing sustainability policies and commitment, especially, as we mentioned, coaches and players.

## **2. Second stakeholder group is spectators,**

made up from fans and season ticket holders – the group that the sports organization has the greatest influence on. An important factor in this relationship is the process of mapping their needs. Additionally, this is the biggest stakeholder group, thus the organization must generate great efforts in relation to the spectators, e.g. identifying their needs and their integration within its sustainable development plans.

## **3. Third stakeholder group is the governing bodies.**

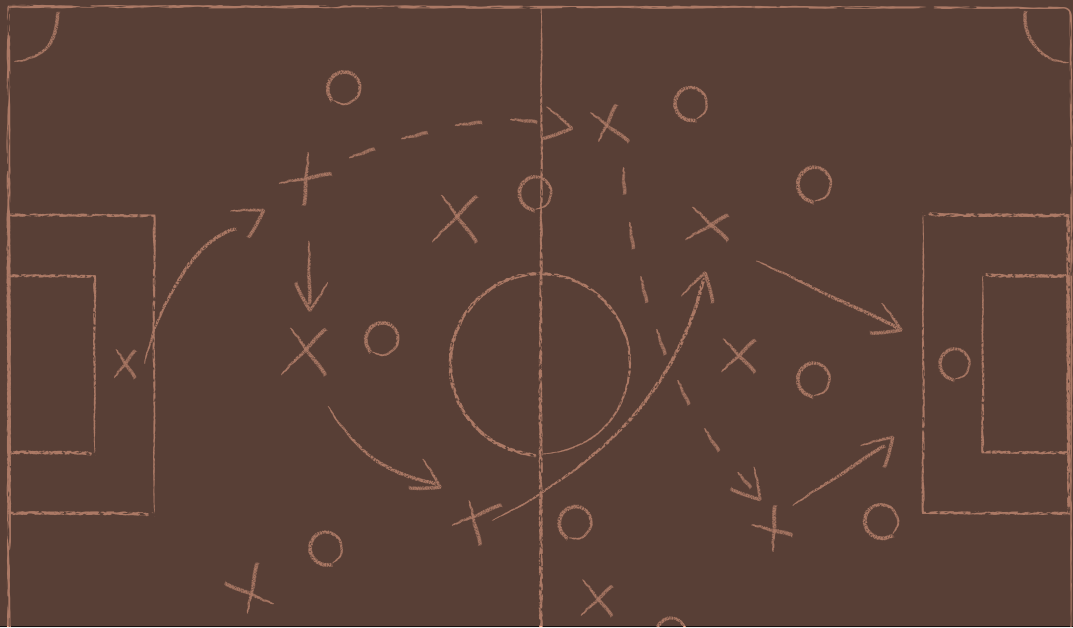
As we already defined, governing bodies consist of participants who organize and regulate sports competitions, public administration and law enforcement, local and international organizations, and other sport organizations. Since they are actively participating in the organization of big sports events, organizations are obligated to define all regulatory mechanisms, laws and statutes of the sport organization. Therefore, it is crucial to map all relevant issues between sports organizations and governing bodies, to be more sustainable and efficient.

## **4. The biggest step needs to be made between the sports organization and the group of stakeholders that make up financial or capital providers.**

Since the resources are in their hands, through this line is possible to make a huge overall impact on the organization and society. This endeavor requires overall consistency in the annual financial statements, which means that all legal and regulatory mechanisms need to be determined in the relationship between the sports organization and financial stakeholders.

## **5. Finally, relationships between sports organizations and communities**

are also of great importance. We can talk here about the strength of the impact, but also about learning practices that universities and educational institutions can provide. The sports organizations at the national level have built a brand that the media can help promote. More importantly, in collaboration with the media, sports organizations can promote social responsibility and the importance of CSR.



## 4.3 Integration between stakeholders and society

The definition of society has been given in the chapter “Key terms and findings of the GoSport field Research”. Therefore, in the context of this Guide - society is represented by all stakeholders. Thus, it is important that CSR is properly integrated between stakeholders and society. Stakeholders (participants, spectators, governing bodies, financial capital providers and community) make up a large part of society. Therefore, sometimes it can be difficult to provide a connection between stakeholders and society. Stake-

holders are in direct contact with the sports organization, through participation in one of the roles that we mentioned earlier.

To form a wider usage of this Guide, GoSport project developed a comprehensive strategy for sustainability, identifying essential issues and solving them. The main aim of sports organizations is to ensure a positive impact for society, economy and environment. One of the goals for social development is improving human capital, throughout sport.

## 4.4 Steps for developing a CSR plan in sport organizations

The United Nations have long recognized, advocated for and supported the important contributions of sport to development and peace, with a significant record of General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, UN treaties, Secretary-General's reports and other guiding documents highlighting the **unique potential of sport**.

The processes and milestones which led to the historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 were followed by the Sport for Development and Peace community with strong interest and a commitment to continue using **sport as**

**a unique tool to support this new global plan of action.**<sup>16</sup>

SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.<sup>17</sup>

As a result of joint efforts, particularly including UN Member States' support to recognize the contribution of sport to the SDGs, Heads of State and Government and High Representatives declared in the Political Declaration for the new Agenda:

***Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.***<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals; An overview outlining the contribution of sport to the SDGs; [https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org/sport/files/ckfiles/files/Sport\\_for\\_SDGs\\_finalversion9.pdf](https://www.un.org/sport/sites/www.un.org/sport/files/ckfiles/files/Sport_for_SDGs_finalversion9.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Sustainable Development Goals, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

<sup>18</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1, paragraph 37

The most important and effective means of integrating these efforts throughout an organization is through the organization's governance, the system by which its decisions are made and implemented. Effective governance is based on incorporating the principles and practices of accountability, transparency, ethical behavior, respect for stakeholder interests and respect for the rule of law into decision-making and implementation of activities. There were several rec-

ommendations as the result of the field research within the GoSport project.

One of them is particularly important in the context of this section: Sports organizations should be granted support and guidance to be in a position to conceptualize and compile structured plans for their CSR activities in a manner that will allow them to elevate both the extent to which they are working in the field as well as their effectiveness.

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Therefore, we have made a list of simple steps sport organizations need to consider when strategizing or developing a CSR plan/initiative into the organization's governance:

### **1. Define your mission and why do you want to achieve it.**

E.g. Develop football in the region of Sofia (Bulgaria) and the mission is to ensure the growth and recognition of football on the national level.

### **2. Who are your stakeholders and what values you want to bring them?**

E.g. Stakeholders could be participants (players, coaches, administrative management, managers, young players...), spectators (fans, season ticket holders), governing bodies, financial stakeholders, community... Values that you want bring them are fairness, teambuilding, equality, discipline, inclusion, perseverance, etc.

### 3. Define what CSR means for your stakeholders and how it relates to the mission and vision of your organization.

E.g. CSR for your sport organization means helping your community through various project that tackle discrimination and racism. It relates to your overall mission – growth and recognition of football on the national level.

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### 4. Evaluate what your organization already does in this field and who are the people/brands/initiatives you support.

E.g. Put on the paper every initiative, and project that you have been implementing. Discuss this item in details with you team. Make a list of the people/brands/initiatives you support in order to have an overall picture of what kind of engagement you back up.

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### 5. Recognize which CSR issues are most important to your stakeholders.

E.g. Define which CSR issues are important to your stakeholders – combatting racism and discrimination, charitable giving, volunteering in the community, etc.

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**Important tip:** Do not forget to have fun along the way!

### 6. Think about minimizing your environmental impact.

E.g. Donate unused materials (goals, benches...), organize recycling system for plastic bottles, encourage your spectators to use eco-friendly transport.

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### 7. Arrange priorities and focus on them first.

E.g. Define your priorities: bring football closer to people, popularize football in Bulgaria, and focus on them.

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**8. Incorporate your priorities into your overall business strategy and approach.** E.g. Integrate your CSR plan into your official documents such as Club Strategy, Sustainability Report, Club Statute...

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### 9. Assess the potential risks by implementing a specific action.

E.g. Propose a project and implement it on the field. Define the potential risks. How will be the reaction of the stakeholders and the community/fans?

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### 10. Connect with your network and communicate your CSR priorities.

E.g. Engage, support and share your story on social media and among your community.

By creating and developing CSR initiatives, sport organizations can bring closer their mission and values to the stakeholders. We have compiled a short list of benefits of the CSR in sports:





CSR initiatives contribute to the social impact and the generation of new ideas. Moreover, these initiatives empower, inspire and motivate, especially young people, to give their contribution in society.

1

CSR practices in sports address issues such as discrimination, racism and crime.

2

CSR practices provide various tools to drive a change in the community, especially through sports by bringing together people of different backgrounds.

3

Through its initiatives, CSR projects create opportunities for inclusion & volunteering, community building and promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

4

CSR projects help to support the environment through protecting open space and encouraging outdoor activities.

5

CSR projects support economic growth through business investment, employment, networking, major events and tourism.

6

## 5. Good practices and examples of CSR actions that sports organizations can emulate

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**“Reach out and help others. If you have the power to make someone happy, do it. Be a vessel, be the change, be the difference, or be the inspiration. Shine your light as an example. The world needs more of that.”**

*- Germany Kent*

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It has been widely accepted that sport clubs are powerful and influential socio-political institutions because of their traditional dual economic and social bonds with local communities. They have been conceived as both homes for social interaction and powerful vehicles for social “exchange”, mainly due to their enormous communicational power, youth appeal/ identification and “role-modelling” ability. Organizational governance and (corporate) social responsibility CSR in sports have become a center of attention for researchers, managers and policymakers. The fact that sport orga-

nizations have mass media distribution and communication power and (youth) appeal, places increasing focus on sport organizations to implement social responsibility initiatives in the belief that sports SR has a greater impact than the CSR activities of commercial organizations. As Smith and Westerbeek (2007) claim, “the nature of sport lends itself to being uniquely positioned to influence society in general and communities in particular.”<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, we want to provide you with some of the great examples of the sustainability practices in sports.

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<sup>19</sup> Corporate social responsibility in sport: Stakeholder management in the UK football industry [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271150910\\_Corporate\\_social\\_responsibility\\_in\\_sport\\_Stakeholder\\_management\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_football\\_industry](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271150910_Corporate_social_responsibility_in_sport_Stakeholder_management_in_the_UK_football_industry)



## Forest Green Rovers

*Creating the greenest club in world soccer*

Named by FIFA as the world's most sustainable soccer club, Rovers' ultimate quest for carbon neutrality is embodied by their proposed 5,000-seater, Zaha Hadid Architects-designed venue called Eco Park. To be made entirely of wood, it has already been dubbed the greenest stadium ever built for soccer.

*"We do think environmental sustainability and on-pitch success is symbiotic. The media attention we get, for example, helps us grow the crowd, helps us get sponsors, and I think it helps us attract players as well. As for the football side of things, when we're successful on the pitch that brings credibility to our eco message." said Forest Green chairman Dale Vince.*



## Juventus FC

*Taking a business-like approach to sustainability*

In 2017, FC Juventus created a dedicated sustainability department, after having incorporated the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals into their overarching business strategy.

For the past six years, Juventus has published its own yearly sustainability report, which provides a comprehensive overview of the club's efforts in the field of sustainability - financial, social, and environmental. Verified by PricewaterhouseCoopers, each report provides a detailed breakdown of the club's various activities, including social inclusion projects, gender equality, energy consumption and waste management. The result is that the club, who have taken to calling themselves 'a football company' rather than merely a soccer team, are able to quantify and monitor their impact, and to offer a degree of welcome transparency in their corporate practices.

## World Athletics

### *Employing a scientific approach to tackling air pollution*

In 2018, World Athletics - then known as the IAAF - teamed up with the UN Environment and the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) to better understand the effects of air pollution on human health, establishing a five-year partnership to monitor air quality at approximately 1,000 athletics tracks around the world.

Data collected at competition venues is now being used to develop a real-time air quality database, help runners choose the best times to run in their cities, assist event organizers' to design safer timetables, and to study the correlation between air quality and athletic performance. A monitor installed for last year's World Relays in Yokohama even led to a peer-reviewed scientific publication.





## The Ocean Race

*Taking action to improve the marine environment*

As well as taking steps to reduce the impact of its own events, The Ocean Race is working to contribute towards scientific understanding of ocean health and the effects of climate change. Its race boats double as research vessels, collecting data on sea surface temperature, microplastic concentrations and ocean acidification as they travel through some of the remotest parts of the planet. That data is then made available on an open-source basis, contributing valuable knowledge and unique insights to the international scientific community.

## Pac-12 Conference

*Educating college students about the greening movement*

Supported by the Green Sports Alliance (GSA), the annual Pac-12 Sustainability Conference brings together experts and advocates from the worlds of sport, academia and business to discuss best practices and design new collective initiatives. Working with partner Copia, Pac-12 schools now actively recover and donate leftover food to those in need, while universities are also being inspired to take action through the Zero Waste Challenge, an initiative which encourages athletic venues on campuses to divert refuse from landfill and eliminate waste during major events.

## Johan Cruifj Arena

*Showcasing the smart city technologies of the future*

More than 4,200 solar panels, a rainfall collection system, energy-efficient LED lighting, bidirectional electric vehicle charging points, even a windmill to churn out additional power: Amsterdam's Johan Cruifj Arena boasts a veritable smorgasbord of green technology that ensures it is rightly held up as a leader in sustainable innovation.

Having earned a slew of environmental accolades, in 2018 the home of Dutch soccer giants AFC Ajax became the biggest commercial energy storage system in Europe thanks to the addition of a three-megawatt storage structure capable of powering 7,000 households for an hour. Now, the stadium - which is owned by the government of Amsterdam - supplies energy to the Dutch capital's power grid when not in use, affirming its status as a living, breathing case study for the smart city technologies of the future.

## Borussia Dortmund

*Club's fight against the far right*

Borussia Dortmund support and strengthen the democratic, anti-racist groups and initiatives within their fan base. One example of such an initiative is ballspiel.vereint! - a play on words combining the club's full name, Ballspielverein Borussia, and the German word for "connects." The initiative was established in 2014 and is independent from the club. According to its website, the initiative aims to "raise awareness of daily discrimination in connection with Borussia Dortmund." Borussia Dortmund's work in combatting discrimination would not be possible without the work of the local Fanprojekt, or "fan project" - a youth social program developed in Germany in connection with football in the 1980s, when chants about "sending opposition fans to Auschwitz" were often heard in German stadiums. For several years now, Borussia Dortmund have been working with the Fanprojekt to organize educational trips to former concentration camps for young fans. The trips cost just €50 euros (\$56) including flights, accommodation and other expenses, with the club covering the rest.<sup>20</sup>

## Panathinaikos FC

*Supporting vulnerable citizens and enhancing social balance*

Club views as a historical responsibility to be active on supporting vulnerable citizens and enhancing social balance. The company is involved in international social responsibility networks such as FARE, the European Football for Development Network and the ECA and its actions apply on organizing events against racism and discriminations, supporting humanitarian organizations through philanthropic games and the reception of vulnerable social groups at the PAE Sports Centre.

## Goal in Life

*Supporting the community*

Goal in life is a charity organization founded by current and ex-footballers. The organization commenced its work in 2017 and as it wishes to utilize footballers' capacity to have a positive influence in the society, empower people in need and send positive messages to all directions.

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<sup>20</sup> Borussia Dortmund: The structures behind the club's fight against the far right (<https://www.dw.com/en/borussia-dortmund-the-structures-behind-the-clubs-fight-against-the-far-right/a-50281070>)





## World Sailing

*Putting the wind in the sails of the quest for clean seas*

World Sailing's Sustainability Agenda 2030 sets out the global governing body's ambitious sustainability strategy, detailing an expansive list of targets, standards and requirements running the breadth of its operations, events and venues. Last August, the federation introduced the special event sustainability charter, a move which mandates some of sailing's top event organisers, including SailGP and the World Match Racing Tour, to take measurable steps to reduce their environmental impact. In addition to sourcing reusable products, providing organic clothing to race officials and volunteers, and offering largely plant-based, locally sourced menus, organisers must create strategies that reduce their carbon footprint and safeguard marine biodiversity.<sup>21</sup>

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**21** The sports industry and sustainability part one: Rights holders playing their part (<https://www.sportspromedia.com/from-the-magazine/forest-green-juventus-formula-e-ocean-race-climate-change-sustainability>)

## 6. Communication of Social Responsibility of the sports organizations based on its society and key stakeholders

Almost all professional organizations and sports teams began to engage in various forms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in recent years.<sup>22</sup> This is because CSR can provide financial benefits<sup>23</sup>, increase the public opinion of an organization<sup>24</sup>, increase brand loyalty<sup>25</sup> and attract potential talent for a firm.<sup>26</sup> Communicating CSR is a long-standing practice of many companies and multinational corporations. Since 2017, the EU Non-Financial Reporting

Directive requires companies with more than 500 employees to disclose certain information on the way they operate and manage social and environmental challenges. However, sport organizations are not obliged to communicate their CSR activities/programs, but many sport organizations (mainly for-profit ones) have decided to start doing it. The central tool for communicating CSR is the non-financial report, which presents a very good practice and forward.

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**22** Corporate Social Responsibility in Sports: Efforts and Communication; Daniel Erickson from Marquette University (2009), [https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1428&context=theses\\_open](https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1428&context=theses_open)

**23** Brammer & Millington, 2008; Oliver, 1991

**24** Godfrey, 2009; Walker & Kent, 2009

**25** Moon, Lee, & Oh, 2015

**26** Shamir, 2005

## 6.1 Between the organization and society

Each sport organization has its own mediums of engagement with the society and its reach and effectiveness on that matter depends on its 'size' and 'capacity'. The vast majority of the sports organizations contacted through the field research of the GoSport project – conducted in partner countries have a website and social media accounts (most often Facebook page) that they use to present their work, news and actions to their 'supporters-fans' and the public as well as to issue calls to actions.

The extent and the way these mediums are being used depends on the capacity of each sport organization. For-profit sport organizations often develop and run high-level communication outreach and engagement campaigns. From the research, it was evident that only for-profit sport organizations and federations have a specific area on their website where CSR policies and related information are available, thus also ensuring transparen-

cy. Furthermore, for-profit sport organizations and federations regularly plan large-scale communication actions/campaigns through social media to reach and engage with the wider public and their "fans". Internally or externally through outsourced staff and agencies, such organizations plan how the engagement of the public will be carried out and strategies are implemented with the aim for maximum impact. Additionally, high-ranking professional teams attract considerable coverage by media that are utilized to raise awareness about their CSR initiatives and actions. Non-profit sports organizations are confined to ad-hoc actions of limited reach. These sport organizations with less economic resources do not invest so much in large high-profile campaigns, although they use social media as their main source of information sharing with the public. They also get behind with the local/national campaigns that link with the communicating CSR initiatives.

## 6.2 Between the organization and its stakeholder

The engagement between sport organizations and its stakeholders is mainly undertaken via direct contacts through which stakeholders are informed about the organization's challenges, as well as the changes and the plans for future. Apart from that, organizations also send memos and letters to stakeholders and institutions to put forward specific issues and information in an official manner.

The communication between the organizations and stakeholders happens via specific internal communication actions and departments led by staff who take on the CSR development under different departments, such as Corporate communications or Public Relations. For-profit sport organizations communicate with

their stakeholders and sponsors with an emphasis on performance and value generated from the activities implemented. Non-profit sport organizations not only have limited staff available that can lead on such CSR development strategies but also face difficulties securing sponsorship deals that can provide adequate economic resources and thus support rolling out CSR procedures and related projects/initiatives.

All the organizations (for profit and non-profit sports organizations) have direct contacts and collaboration with their stakeholders during key sports events, i.e. game, stadium renovation, kit launches, welcome for new players, etc.



## 6.3 Between the stakeholder and society

The stakeholders communicate their actions, collaborations and involvement in CSR programs to have greater engagement with society and public. Sports are a great vehicle for disseminating initiatives and show that they are active members of the community. Stakeholders use a combination of approaches to engage the society and promote information. Given their capacity and status, stakeholders tend to use more 'traditional' mediums for their engagement of the society such as announcements, press releases and interviews to bring forward information as to their work as well as to promote mes-

sages and call to action. However, in recent years, there have been cases where more innovative tools of engagement were used, e.g. social media campaigns and videos. Most stakeholders such as donors, ambassadors and collaborators ensure that any social impact generated thanks to their support is promoted effectively and beneficial. Donors work closely with the organizations to ensure that their involvement and support in the development of the CSR of the organization is promoted widely to the public to raise visibility, whether through social media channels, influencers, events or media coverage.

## 7. Recommendations for the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations

Taking into consideration the main conclusions that derived through the conducted desk and field, the following recommendations are put forward for the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations:

# 1

Efforts should be invested within the management structures of the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations in promoting a better understanding of the concept of CSR, themes and type of activities it entails. Given its position in the society, these sport organizations have a meaningful positive impact as well as the benefits they can reap by becoming invested in such actions.

# 2

There should be an investment in the promotion of enhanced knowledge and conception of key topics relevant to the CSR priorities of sports organizations, e.g. racism and violence in sport, discrimination and corruption as well as the concepts of civic participation and engagement. By attaining a better grasp of such issues, representatives and officers of sports organizations will be empowered to expand the scope of their CSR activities as well as pursue targeted and effective actions to address the themes.



# 3

Staff and management structures have to be more diverse. Furthermore, recruitment processes promoting diversity represent key principles of CSR policies and strategies should be more transparent. Moreover, it should be reinforced the representation of women in the management boards of sports clubs.



# 5

There should be greater investment among both for-profit and non-profit sports organizations in the promotion of knowledge of key areas within CSR priorities, e.g. gender equality and anti-racism in sport.



# 4

There should be greater investment among both for-profit and non-profit sports organizations in the promotion of knowledge of key areas within CSR priorities, e.g. gender equality and anti-racism in sport.

# 6

There should be better communication strategies developed by the for-profit and non-profit sport organizations that can raise the awareness and the overall visibility of CSR concepts in sports by involving the public, influencers, ambassadors and high-profile donors.

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