

Executive summary

The 'growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace' (UNGA 2015, para. 37, 10) is explicitly identified in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, sets out a 'supremely ambitious and transformational vision' for global development (UNGA 2015, para. 7, 3). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their associated targets are comprehensive and far-reaching in scope and 'balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental' (UNGA 2015, preamble, 1).

The 'growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace' (UNGA 2015, para. 37, 10) is explicitly identified in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The statement represents an important milestone for sport and an opportunity to build on previous commitments and progress made by the Commonwealth, the United Nations and other international, national and local stakeholders. This guide supports this endeavour through providing direction for governmental policy-makers, and other stakeholders, to enable sport to make the fullest possible contribution to sustainable development.

Previous Commonwealth publications have presented analysis (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016) and key principles (Kay and Dudfield 2013) for sport and sustainable development. This guide builds on these publications to recommend evidenced and balanced policy options to support the effective and cost-efficient contribution of sport towards six prioritised SDGs. All identified policy options align with the importance accorded to the 'means of implementation' through SDG 17.

Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages

Universal and holistic conceptions of health and well-being are at the forefront of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Linked to SDG target 3.4, evidence strongly shows that regular physical activity reduces the risks of a number of non-communicable diseases and indicates further benefits for psychological and social health. Reducing globally significant levels of physical inactivity among adults and children of both sexes is therefore a priority which can, in part, be addressed through efforts to increase participation in sport.

Utilisation of sport as an attractive and flexible context for health education and empowerment can also contribute to SDG targets 3.3, 3.5 and 3.7, which address various communicable diseases, substance abuse, and sexual and reproductive health, respectively.

A number of benefits of alignment between policies that span sport, physical activity and public health can be identified. Resources can be levered and targeted from a number of different sources, and their use may balance the prioritisation of infrastructure that can support population-level change with scaling-up of targeted initiatives that have proved effective. Complementary approaches can benefit from the expertise of sport- and health-based practitioners, who can also benefit from mutual capacity-building. Utilising standardised measures of sport participation and physical activity within data collection systems for health and in specific sport-based initiatives can also enhance evidence-based policy-making.

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Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Established by international declarations as a ‘fundamental right for all’ (UNESCO 2013a, b, 2015), physical education, physical activity and sport represent an important component of, and contributor to, holistic education. High-quality physical education and sport can contribute to SDG target 4.1 through enhancing lifelong physical literacy and supporting a range of wider educational benefits.

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Integrating opportunities for experiential learning and youth leadership into sport-based activities can also contribute to SDG targets 4.4 and 4.7 which focus on wider personal, skill and knowledge development. SDG target 4.5 signals the need to address longstanding inequalities in access to physical education and school-based sport. Positively, sport-based approaches can also be attractive in re-engaging some young people with formal and non-formal education.

While physical education has been declared compulsory in 97 per cent of countries (UNESCO 2013a, b), there is a need for impetus and resources to address significant variations in provision. Training for generalist and specialist teachers, and for adults and young people delivering sport-based activities,

can enable the high-quality and inclusive provision that can facilitate diverse educational outcomes. National systems of monitoring and quality assurance can help to prioritise implementation and enable identification of specific areas for improvement.

Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue throughout the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* which has relevance to a number of the SDGs included in this guide. Applying SDG targets 5.1 and 5.5 to sport emphasises the need to address evident gender inequalities at all levels of participation and leadership. Enabling girls' and women's involvement in sport can also serve to challenge broader discriminatory norms and offer specific opportunities for gender empowerment. These contributions of sport to gender equality must further be underpinned by progress towards eliminating all forms of violence and harmful practices against women and girls in sport, in line with SDG targets 5.2 and 5.3.

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Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

In many countries, the contribution of the sport industry to economic growth and employment is increasingly recognised.

While this contribution is relevant to SDG targets 8.1, 8.5 and 8.9, there are significant complexities in precisely measuring the diverse range of economic and employment activities associated with sport. Therefore, careful analysis should inform decisions to pursue economic impact through sport-event hosting and tourism, and leveraging benefits requires long-term, co-ordinated and context-specific strategies.

Sport-based approaches can engage volunteers and offer specific training to enhance employment prospects, and in so doing contribute to SDG targets 8.5 and 8.6. In line with SDG target 8.3, various models of entrepreneurial practice have also been advanced by sport and development organisations. To increase their effectiveness, all such approaches should be linked to identifiable opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship within sport or other industries.

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Finally, in respect of SDG targets 8.7 and 8.8, concerns regarding labour rights, abuses in sports manufacturing and construction, and examples of exploitation of young people who are seeking careers in professional sport need to be addressed. While globalisation often provides the context for such problems, national policy-makers are responsible for evidencing and regulating potential abuses, and can promote good employment and developmental practices.

Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Global trends of urbanisation have significant impacts on various aspects of sustainable development. SDG target 11.7 aligns with UN-Habitat guidance that indicates that a minimum of 15 per cent of urban areas should be allocated for open and green spaces and public facilities (UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development 2015). Integrating opportunities for physical activity throughout such spaces and across urban environments can have widespread and long-term impacts.

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Different approaches to integrated design can provide hubs for family- and community-based engagement in various forms of sport and active recreation, and similarly include provision for sport within facilities for education, health and other services. Inclusion, accessibility and safety for all user groups must

always be a key design consideration. Designs for sport stadiums can also prioritise reducing environmental impacts, enabling sustainable usage and supporting broader urban regeneration.

SDG target 11.3 draws attention to the importance of inclusive, multi-stakeholder involvement in the planning and management of spaces and facilities. National policy-makers can regulate to preserve green spaces, identify priorities for new developments and specify quality design criteria. Funding for spaces and facilities can be drawn from, and build on, public-private and civil society partnerships. Particularly at local levels, engaging all stakeholder groups from the outset can enhance ongoing management and use of spaces and facilities.

Sustainable Development Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

As is more generally the case, enhancing justice and peace within and through sport is essential to underpin sport-based contributions to other SDGs. Both the high profile of sport and more participatory approaches may be utilised to contribute to the pursuit of peace and reduction of all forms of violence, as prioritised in SDG target 16.1. Sport-based approaches can draw on the cross-cultural status of sport and the work of skilled leaders and appropriate role models, but must also be integrated with wider peace building and violence reduction processes given that conflict and violence have complex and deep-rooted causes.

There is increasing recognition of the need to address multiple challenges to the integrity of sport. Associated with SDG target 16.2, it is vital to combat abuse and all forms of violence against children in sport. Problems of corruption, doping and the manipulation of sporting competition serve to emphasise the need for improvements in governance throughout sport and its institutions, in line with SDG targets 16.5, 16.6 and 16.7.

International standards and recommendations for good governance and child safeguarding in sport are available, but require country-led implementation and can be made a prerequisite for sporting organisations seeking public funds.

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Integrated national research and information systems can help to evidence abuse and corruption, monitor organisational compliance and identify examples of best practice for use in capacity-building.

Sustainable Development Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

The means of implementation

Realising the scale and ambition of the SDGs requires the means of implementation to be strengthened within each country, and globally. Together, SDG targets 17.14 and 17.15 establish the importance of country-leadership and policy coherence to enhancing collective approaches towards identified SDGs across sectors and among the wide range of sport and development stakeholders. Associated with SDG targets 17.16 and 17.17, further impetus is required to realise the recognised – if unevenly achieved – potential of different forms of partnership in support of the contribution of sport to sustainable development. National policy leadership can also support all organisations to mobilise and direct financial resources and work towards sustainable and scaled capacity-building, in line with SDG targets 17.3 and 17.9.

Aligned with these considerations, relationships between governments and various private and civil society organisations, including sport federations, can be configured in different ways to contribute collectively to sustainable development. Collective implementation can simultaneously encompass approaches that are:

- **government led** through the direct provision of services or the regulation of non-governmental stakeholders
- based on **structured partnerships** in which governments work formally with private and civil society organisations to achieve agreed objectives
- supportive of **complementary** relationships of mutual support and/or collaborative delivery involving organisations from different sectors
- receptive to **autonomous** contributions of private and civil society organisations where they are aligned with governmental policy objectives.

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Policy options to enhance the contribution of sport to particular SDGs span these different approaches, each of which can work at different scales and require varying governmental capacities and input.

Measuring progress: data, monitoring and accountability

Governments also have responsibility for implementing processes by which progress towards the SDGs are reviewed. This requirement, and the need for capacity-building to meet it, is captured in SDG targets 17.18 and 17.19. In applying these priorities to sport, limitations of the evidence base regarding contributions to development outcomes have been recognised, and emphasis has been placed on improving evaluation of specific sport-based initiatives. Many countries do not, as yet, have national systems of data collection for sport.



Policy-makers can, nevertheless, often draw on and triangulate a range of evidence sources to make reasoned judgements as to the contribution of sport-related policy and interventions towards the SDGs. Different approaches to triangulation are available, and pragmatic methods of identifying the contribution of specific interventions, such as theory-of-change models or social return on investment, have been increasingly used within sport. However, resources and expertise need to be available to enact such methods, and care needs to be taken not to overstate the particular contributions of sport – given the range of other factors beyond sport-based interventions – that can influence progress towards sustainable development.

Concluding implications for policy-makers

In utilising this guide to inform approaches to enhance the contribution of sport to sustainable development, policy-makers are recommended to appraise fully the particular possibilities and constraints for implementation in national and local contexts. Such an appraisal may consider current levels of development, existing physical, human and organisational infrastructure for sport, and the potential scale and depth of potential sport-based contributions to particular SDGs (see Table ES.1). Strengthening national policy based on such considerations enables appropriately differentiated enactment of policy options for implementation and approaches to measuring progress towards sustainable development.



In utilising this guide to inform approaches to enhance the contribution of sport to sustainable development, policy-makers are recommended to fully appraise the particular possibilities and constraints for implementation in national and local contexts.

Table ES.1 The potential contribution of sport-based policy to the global SDG targets

Goal	Target	
3 Good health and well-being	<i>Direct contribution</i>	3.4 By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being
	<i>Linked contribution</i>	<p>3.3 By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases</p> <p>3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol</p> <p>3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes</p>
4 Quality education	<i>Direct Contribution</i>	4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
	<i>Linked contribution</i>	<p>4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development</p> <p>4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all</p> <p>4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international co-operation for teacher training in developing countries</p>



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Table ES.1 The potential contribution of sport-based policy to the Global Sustainable Development Goal targets (cont.)

Goal	Target	
5 Gender equality	<i>Direct contribution</i>	5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life 5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels
		<i>Linked contribution</i>
8 Decent work and economic growth	<i>Direct contribution</i>	8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
		<i>Linked contribution</i>


(Continued)

Table ES.1 The potential contribution of sport-based policy to the Global Sustainable Development Goal targets (cont.)

Goal	Target	
11 Sustainable cities and communities	<i>Direct contribution</i>	11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities
	<i>Linked contribution</i>	11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries
16 Peace, justice and strong institutions	<i>Direct contribution</i>	16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development
	<i>Linked contribution</i>	16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere 16.4 By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels
17 Partnerships for the goals	<i>Means of implementation</i>	17.3 Mobilise additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources 17.14 Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development 17.15 Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development multi-stakeholder partnerships

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Table ES.1 The potential contribution of sport-based policy to the Global Sustainable Development Goal targets (cont.)

Goal	Target	
		<p>17.16 Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries</p> <p>17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships</p>
	<p><i>Measuring progress</i></p>	<p>17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing states, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts</p> <p>17.19 By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries</p>

Source: UNGA (2015)

References

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