



# PlayGreen



## GUIDE ON ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING IN SPORTS

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**PlayGreen**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION • WHAT IS PLAYGREEN 5

### 1 CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING AND SPORTS 6

- 1.1 The Ecological Basis for Greening Grassroots Sports Events 7
- 1.2 Values of environmental volunteering and altruism 8
- 1.3 Environment as a way to engage young people to play sports 9

### 2 THE PLAYGREEN METHOD: HOW TO DO IT 11

- 2.1 PlayGreen goals and values 12
- 2.2 Roadmap 12
- 2.3 Engage the Green Team of volunteers 13
- 2.4 Mentoring the Green Team: a toolkit 18
- 2.5 Implement 22
- 2.6 Evaluate and report to the network 23

### 3 DISSEMINATION STRATEGY 25

- 3.1 Communication Strategy 26
- 3.2 Visual Identity 27
- 3.3 Communication Channels 28
- 3.4 UEFA FAs Communication Strategies 28

### 4 PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY 30

- 4.1 Economical 31
- 4.2 Human resources 31

### 5 PLAYGREEN IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE • Key studies 32

- 5.1 Estonia FA 33
- 5.2 Malta FA 35
- 5.3 Flemish FA 36
- 5.4 Lithuania FA 38

### 6 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED 40

### 7 ANNEX 43

- ANNEX 1 • PlayGreen volunteering position 44
- ANNEX 2 •• PlayGreen Event Report Template 46





Goal  
TO SUCCEED (THREAT REDUCED)  
How (channels)  
WHAT CONSUMES MONEY  
DATE & MESSAGE  
WHEN

Programs  
WELL-BEING  
Nutrition/Protein  
Password School

Build  
Packout  
1 Server  
ACTIVATE  
youth young

USNY  
+0

Positive?

Challenges  
→ (L) WHEN  
→ SPORT BREAKS  
→ AMPATHY

## INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS PLAYGREEN

PlayGreen is an Erasmus+ Sport funded project that aimed to develop a method to greening sports events with volunteers. The main goal is to be able to engage people of all ages that are interested in climate change and environmental sustainability through volunteering in sports to effect broader social change and at the same time get familiar with the benefits of sport participation.

Generally, research has shown that females are more likely to get involved in causes that tackle climate change. On the other hand, males are more likely to take part in sports or to get involved in sport-related causes <sup>1, 2</sup>. PlayGreen aimed to use climate action and environmental sustainability in sports as an incentive for young people to get involved, organise green sport events, and play sports in a more sustainable way, while at the same time promoting useful/simple ideas for protecting the environment in daily life among local inhabitants. In this regard, it is important to note that while the PlayGreen method has been tested in the field of football through 4 UEFA Federations, it is a thought through method, designed to be useful to various sports. As such, the current document is a practical guide to replicate the PlayGreen volunteering format by any local, regional and national sport organisation and their stakeholders.

This guideline is one of the three Intellectual Outputs (IOs) that the project has developed. All the Intellectual Outputs and pedagogical resources can be accessed in PlayGreen's website ([www.playgreenproject.eu](http://www.playgreenproject.eu)) in Spanish, Estonian, Flemish, Lithuanian and English. This guideline includes six sections and provides both knowledge and key steps to discuss the significance of greening sports events and how to engage volunteers in sports through the incentive of greening sports events. Specifically, the first section of this document titled 'Context' provides insight on the Ecological Basis for Greening Grassroots Sports Events. It then proceeds with explaining the values of environmental and sport volunteering respectively. It finally explains whether, how and why environmental protection can be used as a way to engage young people to play sports. The second part, explains how to carry out an event using the PlayGreen method, the third one touches into the importance of communication, to which follows an approach to economical and human resources sustainability. Finally, the reader will find examples from the four organizations that put PlayGreen in practice and conclusions with key tips and lessons learned.

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<sup>1</sup> Skirstad, B., & Hanstad, D. V. (2013). Gender matters in sport event volunteering. *Managing Leisure*, 18(4), 316-330.

<sup>2</sup> McDougale, L. M., Greenspan, I., & Handy, F. (2011). Generation green: understanding the motivations and mechanisms influencing young adults' environmental volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 16(4), 325-341.

Green Team and partners  
after finishing the match  
in a sport event in  
Estonia



## CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING AND SPORTS

### 1.1

The Ecological Basis  
for Greening Grassroots  
Sports Events

### 1.2

Values of environmental  
volunteering and altruism

### 1.3

Environment as a  
way to engage young  
people to play sports



## **CONTEXT: ENVIRONMENTAL VOLUNTEERING AND SPORTS**

### 1.1 The Ecological Basis for Greening Grassroots Sports Events

Events by their very nature have several impacts on their host environment. While, events vary in terms of their size, type, focus and stakeholder engagement, in recent years, there has been a growing interest in creating more sustainable events with minimal environmental impact. Events create an environmental impact during the planning, development and post-event phases. In particular, mega-sport events that involve a lot of energy use, transportation or waste generation should be more socially aware of their environmental impacts and develop ways to minimise the burden to the environment. As such, it is important for event practitioners to be aware of the most appropriate tools to make their events more sustainable throughout each stage of an event's lifecycle, from planning to evaluation<sup>3</sup>.

There are different methods to calculate the impact that sports events have on the environment, namely, to measure their carbon footprint, environmental input-output modelling, life-cycle analysis or calculating the ecological footprint<sup>4</sup>. Previous research studies suggest that the areas where the impact of sports events are higher are: transport, catering (food and beverages), and infrastructure (understood as the venue lifespan).

According to the Life Tackle EU project<sup>5</sup>, the consumption of electricity yearly of a first division club/stadium can achieve 8,000,000 of kWh. As this EU project states, that consumption is equivalent to the yearly consumption of 2.600 families of 4 persons. Similarly, according to the researchers, the consumption of water can achieve 100.000 m<sup>3</sup> yearly. With that consumption, they state, one can fill 40 Olympic sized swimming pools. With regards to waste, on average, one supporter generates up to 0,6 kg of waste per match, which would allow the production of 20,000 football t-shirts. While the impacts of grassroots sports events on the environment seem minimal, as they do not make use of such extensive

<sup>3</sup> Dickson, C., & Arcodia, C. (2010). Promoting sustainable event practice: The role of professional associations. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(2), 236-244.

<sup>4</sup> Dolf, M. and Teehan, P., 2015. Reducing the carbon footprint of spectator and team travel at the University of British Columbia's varsity sports events. *Sport Management Review*, 18(2), pp.244-255.

Collins, A., Jones, C. and Munday, M., 2009. Assessing the environmental impacts of mega sporting events: Two options?. *Tourism management*, 30(6), pp.828-837.

Walker, A.W., 2007. Going Green: The Application of Life Cycle Assessment tools to the indoor sports flooring industry. In *The Impact of Technology on Sport II* (pp. 83-88). CRC Press.

Collins, A. and Flynn, A., 2008. Measuring the environmental sustainability of a major sporting event: A case study of the FA Cup Final. *Tourism Economics*, 14(4), pp.751-768.

<sup>5</sup> Project website <https://lifetackle.eu>

resources, there are no studies yet that identify how large their ecological footprint is. The numbers can be scaled down, but similar types of impact do exist despite the size and nature of an event.

In addition, one should note that grassroots events can be a platform to influence the event stakeholders and organisers such as the sports club, human resources, paid employees as well as volunteers. As such, greening sports events is not only desirable in terms of reducing the environmental impact but also as it can be a platform to raise environmental awareness.

## 1.2 Values of environmental volunteering and altruism

Environmental volunteers may present some attitudinal and behavioural differences than someone who is involved in other causes<sup>6</sup>. In particular, the social aspects of volunteering are suggested to be a predictor of the intensity of volunteerism in environmental groups<sup>7</sup>. But what do we mean by that? There are, at least, four types of environmental behaviour<sup>8</sup>: (1) Environmental activism: those who are actively committed; (2) Non-activist behaviours in the public sphere: individual level of engagement towards environmental issues, (3) Private-sphere environmentalism: take into account the environment in their daily life and (4) Other environmentally significant behaviours: actions intended to influence the environmental behaviour of others, for instance, in the workplace. Why is this important?

While positive environmental behaviour has increased over time<sup>9</sup>, the level in which citizens engage in environmental activities is different and as such, before identifying volunteers who are interested in environmental issues to apply this interest into sports, it is important to understand what types of volunteers would be appealed to green sports events. In that sense, the values of environmental volunteers would be important to be established. Our hypothesis is that PlayGreen volunteer will be either an environmental activist or a non-activist with behaviour in the public sphere. Moreover, the PlayGreen activities might act as a catalyst for lapsed sport participants to re-engage with sports by supporting a significant cause such as the environmental action through sport. In addition, the values that drive them determine the causes they will be engaged with. As such, understanding these driving individual values are key in identifying relevant strategies to recruit them as volunteers in PlayGreen. Below, some key individual values are discussed:

Individuals who engage in environmental volunteering demonstrate at least three types of behaviour. They can be either egoistic (who will engage because of self-interest concerns), altruistic (who will engage as a result of societal concerns) or biospheric (who engage after weighing the costs and benefits of pro-environmental actions against potential ecological impacts). Both altruistic and biospheric values positively predict pro-environmental behaviours, nonetheless, egoistic behaviour also correlates with pro-environmental behaviour when the persons' wants, and desires take a priority<sup>10</sup>.

It is important to note that the values of environmental volunteers can be found in not-yet-environmental volunteers. Active citizens are also more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviour once they learn about climate change and environmental problems. Furthermore, people who already volunteer have

<sup>6</sup> Randle, M. J., & Dolnicar, S. (2006). Environmental volunteers: are they driven by altruism and a strong feeling of regional identity?

<sup>7</sup> Randle, M. J., & Dolnicar, S. (2006). Environmental volunteers: are they driven by altruism and a strong feeling of regional identity?

<sup>8</sup> Stern PC. 2000. Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of Social Issues* 56(3): 407–424.

<sup>9</sup> Eurobarometer, S. (2008). Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment. European Commission, 295.

<sup>10</sup> Stern PC. 2000. Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior. *Journal of Social Issues* 56(3): 407–424.

developed a sense of volunteering identity and act in ways that reinforce that identity<sup>11</sup>. To sum up, environmental volunteers can be moved by different reasons and different values and to appeal to them it is important to understand what their expectations are and what they are driven by. An altruistic environmental volunteer will be motivated by the intrinsic value of the activity and will not expect anything in return. A volunteer with a more egoistic orientation will either be moved by a reward or due to self-interest in what the activity will mean, for instance, to her/his career. That does not mean that a specific volunteer never carries a mix of behaviours. Indeed, that is usually the case we have seen at PlayGreen (for example, volunteers highlighted that they got involved to both learn new skills on environmental sustainability but also to help their sport organisation and do something good for the environment). Thus, understanding the underpinnings of volunteer motivation is key to get people to undertake pro-environmental actions<sup>12</sup> and volunteer for the environment<sup>13</sup>.

### 1.3 Environment as a way to engage young people to play sports

Having established the significance of greening sports events, and the values that drive environmental volunteers, this section combines both concepts to argue that environmental protection and activism can be used as a way to engage young people to play sports. In fact, for every sport, the incentive for individuals to participate may be different. Thus, it is important to ensure that either (a) the volunteers are getting something good out of it (b) they feel they are contributing to doing something better or (c) feel they have a safe space to develop, will help green volunteers to be more active in the sport. We will discuss this further with two examples from different sports: football and rowing based on interviews, PlayGreen partners conducted with two professionals in the field of sport, environment and volunteering: Giorgio Bagordo from WWF Italy and Paul Hunt from the International Platform on Sports and Development<sup>14</sup>.

The case of football: Football is a gendered sport where more males play than females<sup>15</sup>. While, there is evidence that there is a shift in interest to participate in the sport, people who are active through football are largely males<sup>16</sup>. According to Paul's experience, girls and boys start playing football at school and for girls, it does not represent a safe environment. When they grow older, football has largely been connected to a sport that males play and they are less moved to play it because it was not constructed, from the outset, as a safe space to play. On the other side of the story, environmental volunteers tend to be females<sup>17</sup>. Well-oriented, volunteering opportunities offer a safe space for anyone to get involved. In the case of environmental protection of sports events, it can be a way for females to reshape the relationship with football and see it from another perspective. This new sense of approach and feeling can be an opportunity to re-define the preconceived idea of football as a non-safe or non-gender equal

<sup>11</sup> Finkelstein, M. A., Penner, L. A., & Brannick, M. T. (2005). Motive, role identity, and prosocial personality as predictors of volunteer activity. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 33(4), 403-418.

<sup>12</sup> Scott, D., & Willits, F. K. (1994). Environmental attitudes and behavior: A Pennsylvania survey. *Environment and behavior*, 26(2), 239-260.

<sup>13</sup> Stern, P. C., Dietz, T., & Kalof, L. (1993). Value orientations, gender, and environmental concern. *Environment and behavior*, 25(5), 322-348.

<sup>14</sup> Note that there is a specific output (Study on Environmental Volunteering in Sports as a tool to Green Sport Events with volunteers) where we describe the questions and answers from these two professionals. It can be found at the PlayGreen website (<https://www.playgreenproject.eu>).

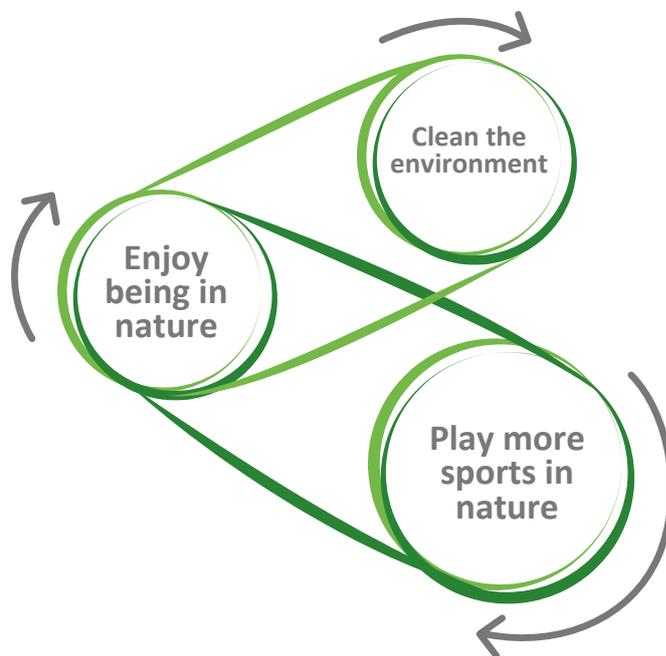
<sup>15</sup> Deaner, R., Geary, D., Puts, D., Ham, S., Kruger, J., Fles, E., Winegard, B. and Grandis, T., 2012. A Sex Difference in the Predisposition for Physical Competition: Males Play Sports Much More than Females Even in the Contemporary U.S. *PLoS ONE*, 7(11), p.e49168.

<sup>16</sup> Bradbury, S., 2011. Representation and structural discrimination in football in Europe: the case of minorities and women [full report]. Loughborough: Loughborough University

<sup>17</sup> McDougale, L.M., Greenspan, I. and Handy, F., 2011. Generation green: understanding the motivations and mechanisms influencing young adults' environmental volunteering. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 16(4), pp.325-341.

place to play, be active and enjoy. Moved by the idea of protecting the environment of a sports event, new people can start seeing football in a different way and be prompted to play it.

The case of rowing: rowing is a good example for all the sports which are played more in contact with nature. The idea that Giorgio Bagordo, from WWF Italy brought into the table is that fewer people are inclined to play sports in a natural environment that is polluted. This will inevitably cause a feedback loop, if people clean the environment so that they can engage in sports there (i.e. they clean the sea to do canoeing). Thus, this potentially enables individuals to see a context as a safer place to play sports and will be more inclined to do so. When they do, they will also help keeping it safe.



**Image 1:** representation of feedback loop on cleaner environment and being more active by playing sports in nature.

Generally, as supported by the interviews, protecting the environment can be used as an incentive to practice more sports. The two examples provided show two possible ways: (1) through creating a safe space that helps create a new image and connotation of what playing a sport is and (2) through cleaning the natural environment where the sporting event takes place, you make the place to be more appealing to play sports later on. So, to sum up, both interviewees discussed the importance of creating safer physical and psychological spaces for participants to enjoy sports in a more inclusive way.



Green Team and partners deciding teams in a match

# THE PLAYGREEN METHOD: HOW TO DO IT

## 2.1

PlayGreen goals and values

## 2.3

Engage the Green Team of volunteers

## 2.5

Implement

## 2.2

Roadmap

## 2.4

Mentoring the Green Team: a toolkit

## 2.6

Evaluate and report to the network



## THE PLAYGREEN METHOD: HOW TO DO IT

### 2.1 PlayGreen goals and values

PlayGreen is a project that developed into a method of greening sports events with volunteers. PlayGreen can be used by any organisation interested in engaging young people into sports by volunteering to develop greener sport events. In addition, since sustainability is becoming more relevant in the field of sports<sup>18</sup>, PlayGreen has created a network of organisations to continually improve and disseminate the method. PlayGreen is a method that continuously adapts and improves thanks to the feedback of the organisation's network and as such, it is also a community to enhance and learn about volunteering and sustainability in sports. This is key as taking care of the planet presupposes, people are involved in community action and activism to take care of themselves and their communities. Sport as is evident in previous studies<sup>19</sup>, can act as a catalyst for the development of human and social capital, thus, in the case of PlayGreen can enable those involved to be more active in their personal life, community and generally towards taking action for protecting the environment. As such, the PlayGreen method has two main goals:

- 1) Create volunteering opportunities focused on sport and environment for people to engage in sport through a new volunteering program.
- 2) Create a European network of organisations enhancing sustainability in grassroots sports through volunteering programs and sharing of good practices.

Any organisation that would like to adapt and apply the PlayGreen method in their sport could follow the below roadmap:

### 2.2 Roadmap

Setting a volunteering program or project presents several challenges. Therefore, we have created a step-by-step roadmap to the volunteering program.

- 1) Prepare and Plan: read about sustainability and sports and PlayGreen. Check the resources from Pedagogical materials to Green Sport Events with Volunteers and get familiar with the PlayGreen project stages.
- 2) Engage volunteers: through a communication campaign or directly contacting with local Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) who have volunteers interested in greening sport events. Our experience has also shown that involving University students through getting in contact with relevant student societies is useful in identifying individuals who are interested to volunteer (Malta FA).

<sup>18</sup> Trendafilova, S., & McCullough, B. P. (2018). Environmental sustainability scholarship and the efforts of the sport sector: A rapid review of literature. *Cogent social sciences*, 4(1), 1467256.

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, T., & Morgan, A. (2017). Managing volunteers in grassroots sport. *Understanding Sport Management: International perspectives*, 130.

- 3) Mentor the volunteers and implement the project: this is the key part of the project and it is based on four stages: analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. In each stage, the volunteers are mentored through online and face to face activities by the consortium as a whole, and their respective mentoring federation. This is important in empowering volunteers to develop skills and knowledge but also to enable them to get something out of the experience.
- 4) Implement the PlayGreen event ensuring that the Green Team has a safe environment to play sports. Remember that the volunteers may not be active sport participants, so this experience is key.
- 5) Evaluate and report to the network: in order to enhance knowledge, it is important to be able to reflect and capitalize on the lessons learned and report to your network organizations.

## 2.3 Engage the Green Team of volunteers

### Green Team Recruitment

One of the broader goals of PlayGreen was to recruit more female volunteers. It is argued that females are less likely to volunteer in sports than males<sup>20</sup>. This is prevalent in more traditionally male-orientated sports such as football<sup>21</sup>. To ensure female volunteers are attracted in such an environment, the barriers to involvement need to be removed. Recruitment and promotion materials, in that sense need to be designed in such a way that create a welcoming environment for underrepresented groups in volunteering such as females<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, it is essential gender-stereotypes are avoided in organisational communication platforms and to ensure more inclusive language in the recruitment and promotion materials PlayGreen has followed some key steps to achieve the recruitment of a more inclusive volunteer workforce. These could be adapted by other sport organisations in their efforts to recruit new volunteers who do not form part of the organisation's membership base. These include the following:

- Your recruitment messages should consider the following principles: avoid assumptions, be specific, sounding like you are desperate, creating feelings of filling positions that no one else wants.
- The recruitment invitation must, minimally, include 3 elements:
  - 1) The statement of need (need of the cause/client NOT club)
  - 2) How the volunteer can help. It is important to note that you have more impact saying e.g 'You can help by' rather than using impersonal tense or 3rd person, as it is not as appealing.
  - 3) Benefits of the position (for volunteers). Answer how volunteers will be helping themselves by doing the job (either general benefits of working at the organisation or specific benefits of doing a particular job)

<sup>20</sup> European Union. (2017). Special Eurobarometer 472: Sport and physical activity.

<sup>21</sup> Clark, S., & Paechter, C. (2007). 'Why can't girls play football?' Gender dynamics and the playground. *Sport, education and society*, 12(3), 261-276.

<sup>22</sup> Example communication targeted for females all ages: <https://www.womeninsport.org>

- It is important to have effective, trained people recruiting new volunteers. One of the most effective recruiters in that sense, are your existing volunteers. Thus, by providing them with training and involving them in recruitment of other volunteers can also assist in your recognition and motivational (engagement of volunteers) efforts.
- Tailor your vacancy to appeal to the type of person who would best fill the position
- Informal processes (the value of being personally asked to volunteer). It offers a sense of value to the person being asked, so do not be afraid of asking your immediate community to get involved as volunteers for the project. In particular, for leadership positions, females are more likely to prefer being asked to contribute compared to males who are more likely to step forward. Therefore, this is something to be considered if an organisation's goal is to recruit more female volunteers<sup>23</sup>.
- Avoid gender stereotypes. Showcase both males and females across all volunteer roles in your communication materials

Based on the above principles, we have developed our general 'Green Team' 2-page volunteering job descriptions. Please see Annex 1 for the word version.



Image 2: PlayGreen volunteering role description. See word version on Annex 1.

<sup>23</sup> Impact Report 2018 and 2019 - Women In Sport. (2018)

It is interesting to note, that the ideal volunteering position contains the following elements: Position Title Supervisor (reporting requirements and supervisory assignment), Goal or purpose of the position (Why was position created and how does it relate to the purpose of organisation?), Major responsibilities (What are the key expectations of the volunteer?), Time commitment (Hours, dates, days, length of time commitment needed by volunteer, amount of flexibility), Qualifications (required and desired), Volunteering location (Where will the volunteer report to work or can all or some of it be done off-site?), Benefits to Volunteer (e.g., job training for marketable skills, free meals, tickets, free parking, admission, reimbursed expenses, opportunity to make a difference, etc.), Date of position design or re-design (Review should occur yearly).

Thus, we recommend, other sport organizations follow the above guidelines when designing their recruitment materials and job descriptions for volunteers. Some other key messages that are useful for your initial and subsequent engagements with your volunteers are also:

- It is important that volunteers take something back out of the experience. Therefore, link the activity to something the volunteers' value (i.e. for young volunteers, the activity could offer a pathway to employment or being fun and an opportunity for socialising). The needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteer must be met simultaneously
- Tailor the volunteering positions offered to appeal to the type of persons you would like as volunteers. Match volunteer profiles with the available roles and opportunities;
- Pay attention to subtle messages that are off putting. For example, in your recruitment materials if you only show members of the dominant group (e.g. males), this may detract others from participating, as it might seem as the activity is not for them. At PlayGreen, we ensured our website, and social media platforms were showing both males and females across all volunteering roles. Our initial website page, during volunteer recruitment featured two girls playing sports to ensure the project appealed to female volunteers and could also send a subtle message that the activity is transferable to other sports beyond football.
- Ensure and allow flexibility in the scheduling of shifts and duties to allow individuals with different commitments to participate
- Recognise volunteers for their efforts through tangible and intangible means. For example, a young volunteer will appreciate a reference letter for their contribution by your organisation, while volunteers with an established career will appreciate some communication of their successes through your newsletters, social media, dedicated events or other communication platforms
- Communicate the successes of your volunteers through your internal and external communication channels
- Develop partnerships for social and human sustainability. To maintain this network of volunteers after the project, it is essential you actively maintain contact with them and share with them relevant opportunities to re-engage through your partners.
- Provide placements

- Audit your volunteer roles to see how much they reflect traditional gender stereotypes and make changes where necessary.
- Find out the motivations and needs of the female volunteers and how these differ from men; then provide training for staff and volunteers to meet these needs.
- Ensure procedures for challenging gender discrimination and stereotyping are clear within your organisation and that volunteers have access to these procedures.
- Make volunteering a social experience, which matters most to women.
- Look at new ways of working, including; changing meeting times to suit people with families, sharing roles and consider shorter term volunteer roles to support parents.
- Encourage progression. Trust your volunteers and offer them more responsibility gradually
- Encourage women to apply for roles with more responsibility. Women are more likely to take the next move if asked to do so, while men tend to be more proactive in putting themselves forward.
- Introduce changes to make volunteering roles 'family friendly' such as; opportunities for parents to volunteer and spend time with their children simultaneously. When promoting opportunities use positive images of women with their families.
- Consult your volunteers, value and acknowledge their opinion and efforts.
- Offer clear guidance, train and mentor your volunteers, so that they feel more empowered to serve for longer (Stallings, 2007; Women in sport, 2018).

In order to engage a Green Team of environmental volunteers, it is foremost important to know what you can offer and what you need. Make sure that you ask the same questions to them when you interview them. At PlayGreen, we have created a questionnaire that can be useful as a roadmap to ask volunteers at the beginning to state their expectations from volunteering. It is recommended to hold one-to-one interviews to get to know the candidates but if time does not allow it, an online campaign asking for their ideas and incentives to be part of PlayGreen is also a viable option. The main ideas to ask are divided into four categories: (1) general, (2) expectations, (3) environment, (4) sport activity. We have gathered them below so you can have an overlook:

General	Expectations	Environmental motivations and awareness	Sports activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you involved in any environmental organization? If yes, which one?</li> <li>• Why did you join PlayGreen?</li> <li>• What do you see yourself doing as part of PlayGreen?</li> <li>• Do you currently volunteer elsewhere?</li> <li>• If you answered yes, where do you volunteer?</li> <li>• If you answered no, did you ever volunteer? Where?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you expect from being a green volunteer in sports?</li> <li>• What skills are you hoping to acquire through PlayGreen?</li> <li>• What knowledge are you hoping to acquire through PlayGreen?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you know about environmental protection and climate change?</li> <li>• Are you aware of whether sports have an influence on climate change and environmental protection? Why/Why not?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you practice sport/ Physical activity?</li> <li>• If yes, what sport/ physical activity do you practice?</li> <li>• What motivates you in practicing sport/physical activity?</li> <li>• How often do you practice sport/physical activity?</li> </ul>

As mentors, the sports organization should then evaluate the surveys and respective answers and determine the best way to proceed. A meeting is suggested to be held after the individual interviews with each Green Team candidate. The meeting will be the first time that all PlayGreen Green Team candidates will meet. As a first approach, it is important to do a get to know exercise and team building activities, explain the main ideas behind the PlayGreen event/tournament and get ideas and feedback from them.

A second meeting is suggested to be held in order to create project commissions, which from focused groups of responsibility, that will help prepare the tournament. Each commission should have between 1-3 members who are responsible for the tasks related to the commission's role. The teams can be mixed between mentors and volunteers or be composed of only volunteers. The suggested commissions are as follows:

Coordination and care	Green Communication	Logistics	Green Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group is for highly motivated people who want to increase their project management skills and learn about human resources.</li> <li>• The coordination part of the commission is to ensure that all the tasks by the other commissions are done on time and provide support to other groups.</li> <li>• The care part of the commission is to ensure that everyone feels safe and confident and that they have a place or someone to talk to.</li> <li>• Participate in the evaluation of PlayGreen and report about it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This group is for creative and artistic people also passionate to communicate sustainability through social media and through offline media. It is suitable for people who want to increase their knowledge on social media and communicating sustainability</li> <li>• The main tasks are the creation of a communication campaign to gather a team of young people (60) who will participate in the green sport event. As part of this, the team will communicate on social media and during the match/tournament.</li> <li>• Participate in the evaluation of PlayGreen and report about it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When one organizes a match, and even more the first time that an innovative match is created there are many things to take into account. If you are a problem solver, proactive and enjoy things working correctly, this is the place for you!</li> <li>• This team will need to be in contact with the Green Activities and the Coordination team quite a lot to ensure that things are ready for the match. Also, if the communication team needs to get a banner or need special things to communicate sustainable messages during the match, they may need your help!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you chose this commission, you want to analyse and decide what activities will be done! You are curious about the real impact of sustainable sport events. You are an analytical person and want to put your talent and ideas to work to solve the issues that your club has.</li> <li>• You will be in touch with the communications team because they will communicate the green activities that you will</li> </ul>

The commissions will communicate either online or off-line in regular meetings where mentoring is going to be provided to the young volunteers (Green Team). The mentoring will be part of the method to keep the green team engaged. Each sports organization should find its own way to keep the volunteers engaged but through the PlayGreen project we provide a basic, flexible structure that may be adapted to your needs.

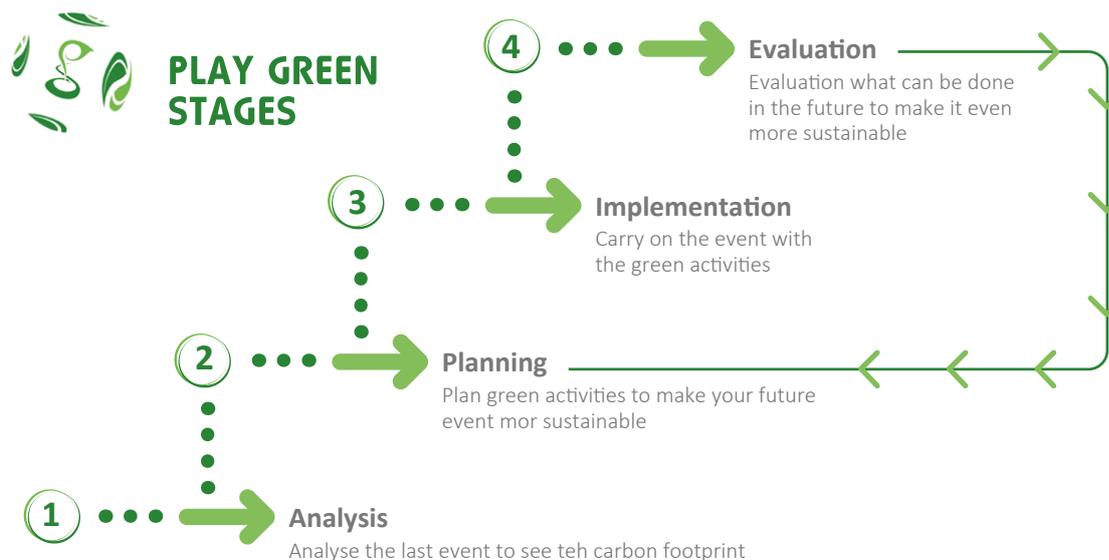
## 2.4 Mentoring the Green Team: a toolkit

After having defined the way the Green Team is going to work, it comes the mentoring phase. This phase is the hardest one because young people's lives are busy. Some volunteers may come and go so the mentoring should be adaptable and flexible but also have a structure in place. The structure we chose at PlayGreen is straightforward and has a practical and knowledge part that will help the Green Team to define the green sport event.

The mentoring phase also includes a toolkit that can be used separately, and organizations can include or remove parts depending on the interests of their green team. We first present the phases and then the resources which you can also find in the Pedagogical Material to Green Sport Events resource <sup>24</sup>.

The PlayGreen method has 4 phases or stages to create a green sport event and the mentoring follows in each part. The phases are: (1) Analysis of the environmental impact of a current sport event; (2) Planning green activities to mitigate the impact, (3) Implementation of the green practices and communicate about them and (4) Evaluation of their success. These stages are key and based on an adaptation of ISO 20121:2012 which specifies requirements for an event sustainability management or activity and provides guidance to the requirements. Before planning the mentoring is important to get familiar with the stages and know what learning the Green Team should acquire.

After having defined the way the Green Team is going to work, it comes the mentoring phase. This phase is the hardest one because young people’s lives are busy. Some volunteers may come and go so the mentoring should be adaptable and flexible but also have a structure in place. The structure we chose at PlayGreen is straightforward and has a practical and a knowledge part that will help the Green Team to define the green sport event.



**Image 3:** PlayGreen steps

Based on these stages, the mentoring is planned to provide knowledge and practical resources to guide the green team and provide tools to plan the green/sustainable sport event. As the image below shows, for each stage, there is specific knowledge to be acquired that is also linked with what the green team is going to put into practice. While the knowledge is thought as a transfer of specific ideas and research results from academics and inspiring professionals, the practice is thought as an open space to work with a specifically designed tool called the Green Tool, with the communication campaign and with the evaluation materials.

<sup>24</sup> Pedagogical materials to green sport events, PlayGreen, (2021), <http://gofile.me/3b3qc/pBvMplYzJ>



# PlayGreen

## METHOD AND MENTORING STAGES

### KNOWLEDGE

### PRACTICE

<b>01</b> ANALYSIS	Environmental impact of Sports	Green Tool Environmental impact sports event
<b>02</b> PLANNING	Green events best cases	Green Tool • Planning the green activities
<b>03</b> IMPLEMENTATION	Green Communication campaign	Green Communication campaign • resources for action
<b>04</b> EVALUATION	Evaluation of sustainable sport events	PlayGreen evaluation system and resources

Image 4: PlayGreen mentoring stages

Under the **analysis stage**, the green team together with the mentors should analyse the environmental impact of a typical sport event to see where there is a need to put more effort. To do so, a green tool <sup>25</sup> is specifically designed so that the Green Team can develop communication, analytical and critical thinking skills as well as knowledge on the environmental impact of Food, Energy and transport, waste, water and materials. In addition, by complementing the mentoring with the webinar <sup>26</sup> on environmental impact of sport events, the Green Team will gain knowledge on environmental impact, carbon footprint, planetary boundaries and climate change and sports.

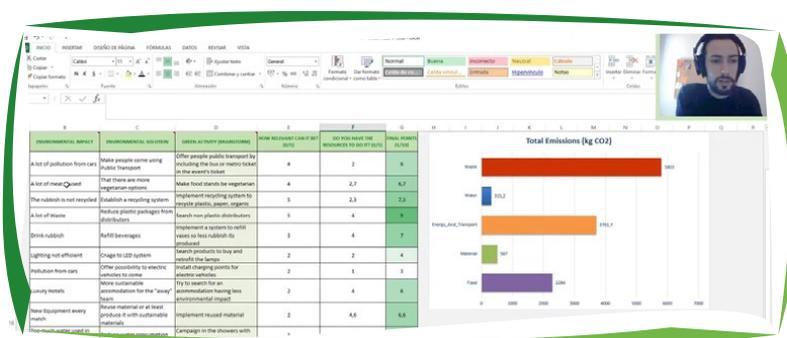


Image 5: Green Tool to measure the carbon footprint of grassroots sport events

<sup>25</sup> Find the tool here: <https://bit.ly/greentoolecoserveis>

<sup>26</sup> Webinar green tool: <http://bit.ly/greentoolwebinar>

During the **planning stage**, the Green Team will use critical thinking, research and teamwork skills to decide on the green activities that will be implemented to green the future green sport event. To do so, they will be able to use the planning section of the green tool. Some examples of activities can be seen on the video tutorial of the green tool and to gain more knowledge the Green Team can access the webinar from an academic expert on planning green sport events found under the [bit.ly/youtubeplaygreen](http://bit.ly/youtubeplaygreen).

During the **implementation stage**, the Green Team will implement the activities that have been created. To do so, it is important that they learn how to communicate about them and learn communication skills to also reach the attendees and players. As such, this stage is more focused on providing communication skills both in terms of developing a communication campaign and getting ideas on how to communicate it. The knowledge part, in this, case is recommended to be held by an inspirational speaker who is aware of the communication basics in relation to tackling climate emergency and climate change as well as the importance to do it in the field of sport. In that sense, the webinar on green communication campaign was recorded as a resource. Regarding the practice part, different resources are put in place for the Green Team and explained in a video-capsule. Both the webinar and video capsule can be found at: <http://bit.ly/youtubeplaygreen>

During the **evaluation stage**, the Green Team will be able to analyse the green activities being carried out. To do so, they will use the evaluation Green Tool section (previously defined) and compare it with the analysis. In order to be able to report on the activities being done and the communication campaign being held, the PlayGreen team also created resources to evaluate PlayGreen as a whole (see table below). Note, that the original edition of PlayGreen is based on 4 countries that competed against each other to see who created the most sustainable campaign and communicated the green messages in a creative and valuable manner that raised broader awareness. Nonetheless, this is applicable to any organisation that wants to implement the PlayGreen initiative under the purpose of creating more environment-friendly sports events with the help of volunteers. It is important to note that the analysis will be useful to plan future green events with the lessons learned from the original version.

While this guide already provides the content for the PlayGreen stages, we recommend you to be open to other topics that the Green Team may be willing to learn or are interested in. In addition, the knowledge sessions are online, but we recommend meeting with your volunteers face to face and invite local athletes who are advocates for green sports events. Regarding the practice part, as a mentor, you can help the Green Team use the Green Tool (mainly through the Green Activities commission or a team of green volunteers motivated to do so). As a mentor, you can also provide a lot of help with the Green Communication Campaign.

Before planning the mentoring sessions, we recommend asking the Green Team what their interests and motivations are and help them throughout the process. While specific resources can be found – Pedagogical materials to green sport events<sup>27</sup>, the reader can find a summary in the following table with key links to the resources registered online.

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<sup>27</sup> Pedagogical materials to green sport events, PlayGreen, (2021), <http://gofile.me/3b3qc/pBvMplYzJ>

	Analysis	Planning	Implementation	Evaluation
Knowledge	<a href="#">Environmental impact of sports</a>	<a href="#">Green Events Best Practices</a>	<a href="#">Green Communication campaign</a>	<a href="#">Evaluation of Sustainable Sport Events</a>
Practice	<a href="#">Green Tool- Environmental impact a sport event</a>	<a href="#">Green Tool- Planning the green activities</a>	<a href="#">Green Communication Campaign- resources for action</a>	<a href="#">PlayGreen evaluation system and resources</a>

## 2.5 Implement

The PlayGreen implementation can be adapted in each country. After developing the PlayGreen tournament, the partners bring insights that can benefit future PlayGreen implementers. While there is a whole section on the pilot's implementation, this one does a summary of different ways of implementing PlayGreen that can be useful to future implementers.

**Flemish FA:** The Flemish FA implementation adaptation is based on adapting a specific type of tournament that is already popular called VOETRIBAL and generated by the Flemish FA to make it greener. The 3 is central in Voetribal. During a match, 2 teams of 3 players compete against each other in 3 different disciplines. The points are always added up to a final score. Football Flanders proposes 6 disciplines (Trinalty, Football petanque, 3v3, Walking football, Tennis football and voleyfootball) where players need to choose 3 to compete in. By adapting PlayGreen in this amateur sport event, PlayGreen can reach a wider audience and used as a way to evaluate the impact of an already famous and established form of football. The event was defined to plan the green activities using the green tool and then use the green tool to evaluate another similar match.

**Estonia FA:** Estonia adapted PlayGreen implementing two big events. The first one was a one-day event called PlayGreen day. The event was a full day to play football and disseminate about environmental sustainability. To put it in other terms, it was Estonian Football Club Festival organized in an environmentally friendly way and which draw publics' attention to environmental issues. Three different football finals also took place that day and it was a chance for the Green Team volunteers to organize hand-by hand and plan green dissemination. Since in Estonia football is one of the most practiced sports, directing the Green Team of volunteers to engage into the Football community was a good motivator. The EFA used the Green Tool to measure the carbon footprint of this event. The second event gave the Green Team the opportunity to be the organizers. In this event the Estonia FA managed to invite various football clubs in addition to the public who came to watch the game.

**Malta FA:** Malta FA (MFA) implemented PlayGreen sport events at popular and familiar locations in Malta among the target audience in order to bring an extra value, as they can enjoy the location after the event. The MFA made a football tournament between students organization and created a commitment with their Green Team, their association and the tournament itself. Besides this, as part of the PlayGreen tournament events an environmental action that generated visual impact took place (e.g.

collecting 270 kilos of waste). This also brought personal reward to the volunteers as they were taking care of the environment while practising sport and having fun with friends. As the partners from Malta suggested: “We believe that our PlayGreen events develops a community feeling for them which is the most important engagement”.

**Lithuania FA:** The Lithuanian FA organized a one big event with the core team of volunteers. It used the Green Tool to give specific tasks of analysis and planning to the Green Team and took advantage of the lock-down meet online to plan the green activities in more detail.

As seen, implementation can take many shapes but there is a common denominator, the Green Team is engaged to plan and engage other young people to play and the Green tool is used to measure the carbon footprint of the event, plan the activities and engage the Green Team to implement them and report on the savings that are done.

## 2.6 Evaluate and report to the network

In order to know if the event achieved our expectations, there is a need to set indicators. In the case of PlayGreen the indicators chosen are number of people involved and their gender. This is because the goal is to be able to include people into doing sports and specially females.

### 2.6.1 Monitoring the program key performance indicators

In order to monitor PlayGreen, it is important to set indicators according to the organisation’s capacities. The indicators that are recommended and used to develop this first edition are:

- **Green Team:** volunteers who are mentored and plan the green event
  - » 20 volunteers
  - » At least 40% of the volunteers are females
- **Green Participant Volunteers:** people who will participate in the green sport events
  - » 60 members
  - » At least 40% of the volunteers are females
- **Staff and supporters:** connect with the staff in your organization to let them know about PlayGreen. The number of people contacted will vary depending on the organization’s size. We recommend targeting the whole organization’s staff, fans and even procurement companies that follow your organization on social media and through the newsletters or other dissemination platforms

### 2.6.2 Surveys for evaluation

The idea behind the surveys is to test the impact that the planning and implementation of the green sport event made both for the volunteers, players and staff members. In fact, the survey is based on the idea that the organisation implementing PlayGreen can evaluate whether the staff, players and the volunteers are more conscious of the environmental impact of sports

after PlayGreen is implemented. It is also created to see if the Green Team is more likely to be engaged in playing sports.

In order to define the survey, previous more qualitative versions were used and the PlayGreen team decided to create an easy to answer survey to get specific data<sup>28</sup>. By checking the differences between the answers before the project and/or a specific PlayGreen event, the implementers are able to see the changed in behaviour. Note that while PlayGreen is framed to be an environmentally related method, the idea is to see if the Green Team engaged into playing sports.

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<sup>28</sup> The survey can be found here: <http://bit.ly/PlayGreenForms>

Partners and Green Team discussing the method on how to green sport events



## DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

### 3.1

Communication Strategy

### 3.2

Visual Identity

### 3.3

Communication Channels

### 3.4

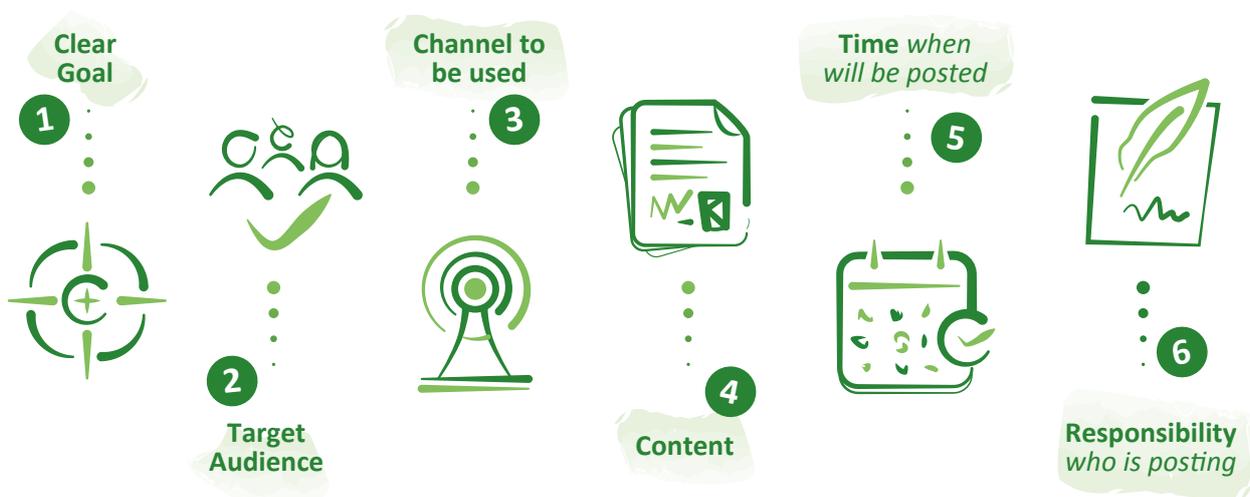
UEFA FAs Communication Strategies

## 3 DISSEMINATION STRATEGY

The guideline has a specific section about dissemination because is key part of the project. The Dissemination strategy in PlayGreen was designed with 3 goals in mind: (1) reach and engage a core group of Green Team volunteers; (2) Communicate about the events and the project thought the lifetime to media and key stakeholders and (3) disseminate the project results to other organizations.

### 3.1 Communication Strategy

For all the phases PlayGreen created a baseline recommendation method that can be adapted to each organisation. As such, the main dissemination strategy recommended is based on defining: (1) a clear goal, (2) the target audience to reach, (3) the channel that will be used for that specific target audience, (4) the content; what will be posted, (5) the time, so when it will be posted and finally (6) who is going to be in charge to post it. To that one could also add a final stage that is to evaluate the impact and reach of the post.



It is also essential to maintain consistency in following the above steps. This last part is very important since many ideas come to mind when planning a communication campaign but one of the challenges is the pathway from idea to practice. Under Pedagogical materials to Green Sport Events with Volunteers<sup>29</sup>, it is possible to find the resources to create a PlayGreen communication campaign.

<sup>29</sup> Pedagogical materials to green sport events, PlayGreen, (2021), <http://gofile.me/3b3qc/pBvMplYzJ>

### 3.2 Visual Identity

It is also important to note that the visual identity takes a big weight when it comes to communication. As such, using the same colours, logo and hashtag on social media helps to create a sense of community and belonging. There are three different versions for the logo to be used, depending on the context and format needed.



In addition to the main logo, there is a number of visuals that are recommended to enhance the visual identity, the reader can find it at <http://bit.ly/logoplaygreen>. Some of them are:



Finally, for uniformity reasons, it is important to try to always use the same fonts and colors. The headline font to be used is “Lauren”. Please note, as with every installable font, it needs to be installed and then word/your computer needs to be restarted once, before it appears selectable. For the main headlines, quotes and highlighting important aspects: **Font Lauren** [RGB- code: R: 40 G: 130 B: 40 (Saturation 100%)] and for sub-headlines and whenever applicable: **Font Lauren** R: 130 G: 190 B: 90 (Saturation 100%). For regular text, the font used recommended is Calibri (preferred), Trebuchet, Helvetica with colors: R: 120 G: 120 B: 120 (Saturation 100%).

### 3.3 Communication Channels

For an organization implementing PlayGreen it can be useful to connect with accounts that already exist using the same hashtags. There are two approach or strategies to use in this regard. An organization can chose to create a separate specific social media account to drive and appeal to new users or can use their existing account to communicate about what it's done to users. Specific accounts created to appeal to new users are: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#). Instagram has been proven to be more useful to connect with younger generations. That is, Green Team and Green Team Participant volunteers, as it has been the one with more followers.

Following online strategies, it is interesting to take into account two other strategies: the use of newsletters and online events. While on-sight events are preferable for one-to-one meetings, network and connections, the COVID-19 pandemic allowed PlayGreen members to learn that online events can be very useful to reach a wider audience. In this regard, webinars, when planned with time can be very good, especially when connecting with stakeholders who can be admired by young people or are experts in their field. This approach was taken during the mentoring phase of PlayGreen. Linked to the dissemination of the webinars it is useful to launch a newsletter to be able to create your own network of organizations interested in sustainability and sports in your country.

### 3.4 UEFA FAs Communication Strategies

As mentioned, each Football Federation developed its own strategy. Highlighted below the reader will find specific insights that the implementing PlayGreen clubs found relevant:

#### Flemish FA

Voetbal Vlaanderen used a lot of different methods in their efforts to engage volunteers. They used direct and indirect targeting. The FA reached a lot of people, especially in their Flemish football community that did not necessarily play sports, but it was hard to keep the volunteers engaged, due to the lack of perspective amid the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this did not put the Flemish FA off. The environmental driver and the mission of the PlayGreen project went to the forefront of the efforts and the team kept communicating trough their own channels, that already have a wide reach. The Flemish FA team did some quizzes trough Instagram stories, putting pictures on Facebook. The response on the posts on Facebook and Instagram was quite good to engage with the target audience and allowed to get energy and a team to plan a second event that was also cancelled due to COVID-19. They had a lot of great responses. In the final stage of the project the Flemish FA focused on dissemination-events following the PlayGreen mission.

#### Estonia FA

In Estonia, it was decided to involve volunteers from the football community, and as a result, campaigns, recruitment and evaluation were carried out differently than in other countries participating in the project. The advertising campaign for the introduction of the project was aimed at the football community through Football activities. The reason is simple, it is one of the largest fields of amateur sports, which involves a lot of people all over Estonia (men, women, young people and adults). In this regard, the main

outputs of the campaign were the various channels of the Estonian Football Association: EFA website; magazine JALKA; EFA press releases (news were published on major Estonian sports portals- Soccer.net, Delfi and Õhtuleht).

The project was introduced at various seminars organized by EFA: a seminar for community leaders, a seminar for coaches, meetings for self-employed people, etc. In addition, all Estonian Premium League clubs (12 clubs) received an introduction and an invitation to join the PlayGreen project. The campaign primarily involved green-minded companies (some: ABS Motors-Renault's official importer in Estonia; Tallinn Waste Management Center, CupLoop- cup circulation; Producer responsibility organization, Reet Aus- Upmade), Football clubs (FC Flora, FCI Levadia, FC Viljandi Tulevik, FC Nõmme Kalju) and volunteers.

### **Malta FA**

Malta MFA created a communication campaign using social media resources mainly as its the main communication channel used the main target audience. In order to achieve it, they created Instagram and Facebook accounts, and established collaboration with local NGOs, and Student organizations. Therefore, by sharing post with information about the PlayGreen project, the FA was able to gain visibility. As a strategy the FA also promoted "green prizes" on social media which helped gain followers.

To create all content, the FA focused on posting about environmental and sport-related current challenges and solutions with the aim to generate environmental awareness and promote sports participation. To identify their main target, they focussed on an age range between 18-30 years old from international students' organizations, environmental and sport associations giving special attention to women and the challenges they face in participating in sport. The campaign was developed by Malta FA which had been mentoring their Green Team in order to accomplish all the communication campaign targets.

### **Lithuania FA**

Lithuania's FA strategy was mostly related with 3 steps: (1) planning; (2) acting and (3) analysis of the results. In the planning stage, the most important part was to familiarize with the PlayGreen-related topic, review different types of best practises and then come up with goals and ideas on how to achieve them. Then, in the second part was the real communication planning: deciding what channels are most effective for communication, what type of messages should be shared, how frequent and who would be responsible. The dissemination part requested to use creativity and improvise, but they had a support of a smart team. To do so they specially relied on social media. After all they did the analysis of how many people interacted, how many people were reached and what were the outcomes.



Green Team in Estonia preparing green activities

# PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

4.1  
Economical



4.2  
Human resources

## 4 PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

### 4.1 Economical

The economical sustainability of the project depends on the financial status and resources of each organization running it. Some organizations can use the PlayGreen method as part of already running programs to attract new people to play sports. That is, to attract young people that come from different backgrounds and profiles. It can also be financed with external sponsors who are willing and committed to environmental sustainability and tackling climate change and see sport's appeal as a means to reach a wider and more diverse audience for their corporate social responsibility efforts. In addition, as part of organisations' Corporate Social Responsibility, some sports organizations can choose to invest in a sustainability and sports program and PlayGreen can be a perfect fit for it.

### 4.2 Human resources

When we talk about human resources, we are talking about both, the team of staff (here called mentors) and the team of volunteers.

**MENTORS:** mentors are understood as people who work at the Federation who help the Green Team members learn by doing. Being a mentor can be emotionally empowering but also time-consuming and challenging because keeping a team of volunteers engaged can be challenging. This is why it is important to set specific goals and count with the support of other staff members.

**VOLUNTEERS:** Keeping volunteers engaged is one of the challenges that all projects face. Young volunteers tend to have many commitments and while they can be full of energy and motivation at the beginning of the project, the challenge is to keep them engaged. This is why it is important to get to know the volunteers and know what are their goals, expectations and how much time they can dedicate. This means that it will be important for the mentors to create a bond with volunteers and make sure that they have referents they can learn from. In addition, having tangible and intangible rewards that do not necessarily need to be costly can be very beneficial for young people to get involved.

In order to keep volunteers engaged in doing sports and be more active, it is important to show them that sports are a safe space where they can be themselves. The initial incentive is tackling climate change but through that mission, it is important to set a healthy connection with the PlayGreen sport event and as such create a tournament or game that adapts to the type of players. For instance, walking football, which can be practised by both genders and people who are less or more experienced in playing football. But, since volunteers are different and the reality in each country or organization may be different, each Football Federation in the first implementation of the PlayGreen method had some different approach to keeping the volunteers engaged. The reader can see this in the following section.

Picture from Maltese  
Volunteers preparing the  
green field to play sports



## PLAYGREEN IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE • KEY STUDIES

**5.1**

Estonia FA

**5.2**

Malta FA

**5.3**

Flemish FA

**5.4**

Lithuania FA



## PLAYGREEN IMPLEMENTATION IN PRACTICE KEY STUDIES

While the PlayGreen partners developed a PlayGreen methodology that can be applied by any sports organization, it is important to note that the method was thought to be flexible enough so that each sports organisation can adapt it and create its own PlayGreen method adapted to their specific needs. As such, this section presents how each UEFA Football Federation used the PlayGreen method in practice. As such, if the reader is a member of a sports organization willing to involve young people into doing sports or a sports organization willing to green sports events (with volunteers), can follow a somewhat different approach <sup>30</sup>.



### 5.1 Estonia FA

Estonia carried out two big events on 04.07.2020 and 04.10.2020. The first one was a one-day event called PlayGreen day. The event was full day to play football and disseminate about environmental sustainability. To put it in other terms, it was an Estonian Football Club Festival organized in an environmentally friendly way and which draw publics' attention to environmental issues. Three different football finals also took place that day and it was a chance for the Green Team volunteers to organize hand-by hand and plan green dissemination. Since in Estonia football is one of the most practiced sports, directing the Green Team of volunteers to engage into the Football community was a good motivator.

Regarding the recruitment of volunteers, in October 2019, Estonian Football Association (EFA) organized volunteer recruitment campaign that was launched with a press release in the magazine JALKA which contained information on joining Green Team and the corresponding registration form and link. There was great interest in the project and 27 volunteers joined GreenTeam, most of them young women since the communication was focussed on being inclusive and also appealing to them even if football tends to still be a male-dominant sport in Estonia. Green Team's first meeting was in January 2020, where the event Green Team leader was appointed and a specific action plan was set, including a new meeting time in March. The Green Team was set up and running, and volunteers were very interested in the opportunity to participate in this project. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic also reached Estonia in March, with the eventual lockdown leading to all sports activities being suspended. As a result, all the activities planned within the PlayGreen project were cancelled. At that point, there was a lot of confusion among both the organizers and the volunteers and the main question was: "should we proceed and how?".

To keep the volunteers in the project, the Estonian FA invited them to participate in webinars organized by the project coordinator Ecoserveis (the reader can find them at [bit.ly/youtubeplaygreen](https://bit.ly/youtubeplaygreen)) as part of the mentoring which moved largely online. In addition, volunteers received information both by e-mail and online meetings (teams and Skype). Thanks to persistency and constant personal, direct communication with volunteers not to lose engagement of the Green Team, a second event was organized the 4th of October 2020. This was after the end of a "lockdown" which gave the Green Team the opportunity to be

<sup>30</sup> Each PlayGreen implementer Factsheet can be found here: <http://bit.ly/FactsheetsPlayGreen>

the organizers. In this event the Estonia FA managed to invite various football clubs (FC Flora, FCI Levadia, FC Legion, FC Nõmme Kalju, FC Viljandi Tulevik; etc.) in addition, members of the public were invited to come and watch the competition. The second wave of the pandemic also hit Estonia, and future planned activities were cancelled, and the volunteers were exhausted of planning and cancelling events.

**MENTORS:** Most of the energy of the mentors or project leaders in Estonia were placed in finding volunteers who did not play sports to be part of the Green Team and keeping volunteers engaged. The beginning was fairly easy since football is a popular sport and environmentally minded volunteers know of football and their relevance. In order for the entire PlayGreen project to succeed, EFA appointed a paid project manager whose main task was to prepare, introduce and implement PlayGreen.

**VOLUNTEERS:** In order to carry out the planned activities, a volunteer and a spokesperson with extensive experience and recognition in the wider society were involved as Green Team leaders. In a joint venture between the EFA project manager, the Green Team leaders and the 27 Green Team volunteers; the practical side of the project started with the already mentioned one-day environmental sports festival day with various events and activities.

When the pandemic COVID-19 reached Estonia in March 2020 lock-down started and sports activities were suspended. The Estonia FA had planned an overall of 4 activities and efforts were put to ensure that green events could take place, and volunteers were engaged. This was achieved by joining forces with Ecoserveis and the mentoring was done online. This example demonstrates the importance of partnership building and stakeholder relationships.

The Green Team involves 27 members, 4 of which are highly active working on the project resources, especially the Green Tool which is used to report on the environmental activities that took place. The rest of the volunteers are active preparing and carrying out the green activities and events when they take place. In that sense, they follow up the project and are engaged through the Green Team leaders who are the ones most engaged using the tools and reporting.

### **Estonia TIPS for future implementers**

- It is very important to keep in touch with the volunteers, communicate with them via Skype or Teams applications.
- Have joint web meetings and communicate easily and share impressions!
- Personal (not online) communication is also very important.
- It is necessary to take time to communicate with each volunteer individually, to map out someone's circumstances? and, if someone drops out, it's readiness to re-join the project. This was the case in Estonia after the COVID-19 crisis.
- For countries where Football is a well-known sport, directing the Green Team of volunteers to engage into the Football community was a good motivator. This can also be achieved by other sports.
- It is better to plan activities during the summer season. In Estonia, all planned activities were to take place in the summer when the volunteers have more free time and the football season is underway. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the

timing and conditions of the events became more difficult and there was a change in the entire football season calendar. If something like this happens to another pilot implementing PlayGreen, the lesson is to meet with volunteers to adapt to their school and work schedules.

- In a constantly changing situation where no definite plan can be made and multiple cancellation or postponement of events made the volunteers “tired”, it is important to empathise with them and be flexible and understanding.



## 5.2 Malta FA

Malta FA carried out a total number of 5 events, held in different location such as Birzebuggia, Golden Bay. All of them with more than 30 volunteers involved. Basically, they chose very well-known and famous locations, which offered both Green Participant Volunteers and the Green Team the opportunity of practising sports outdoors in the natural environment, which always seems nicer for those who either had not practiced any sport previously or were lapsed sport participants.

All the events were related to cleaning the natural area, which is a very crucial issue in Malta due to plastics and microplastics. The Malta FA chose clean ups because seeing all the amount of waste collected generated a huge impact among the volunteers as they could easily see the meaning and importance of their actions. Thus, it acted as an intrinsic reward for them for the actions taken and it also allowed a more diverse public to be able to get the PlayGreen message.

The Maltese formula was: Natural location + Environment current topic actions that generate impact+ sports + social relations.

This is in addition to reducing their environmental footprint by using the Green Tool from the beginning. According to Malta FA staff, nowadays the MFA has almost achieved their goals, which are reducing the impact of people attending the event (e.g. sharing transportation) and reducing paper consumption.

**MENTORS:** Mentors put a lot of effort gathering a team of volunteers. In the beginning, they contacted the University of Malta, refugees, green NGOs and Associations at colleges and local communities.

**VOLUNTEERS:** There were many people interested and inspired by the main idea of PlayGreen. They participated in two of our events but then, during winter, after a long break and subsequently a quarantine due to Covid-19, only the most motivated volunteers continued. That showed the MFA that it is very important to keep in contact with the volunteers on a regular basis by organizing small events/ sport activities (as part of socializing) and giving presents, even if the events are smaller. In that sense, the MFA learned that a good motivation for gathering students/

young people as volunteers is rewards such as certificates and recommendation letters, which they can use in the future for getting a job.

### Malta TIPS for future implementers

- When planning, having on-sight events is much better than online ones.
- To engage the Green Team and Green Participant Volunteers to play sports, it is important to provide a safe space and encouraged by community/activity leaders also playing with them.
- It works to have an environmental practice and then engage the Green Team to play because they have already created a sense of community and it feels easier for them to play with others.
- Providing perks that can use in sports matches and that are also sustainable gifts helps volunteers keep engaged.
- Providing rewards for their work keeps volunteers motivated.
- Letting volunteers organize events makes it easier for them to play afterwards.



### 5.3 Flemish FA

Voetbal Vlaanderen planned 2 very detailed big events. The first event that was planned was the Keizer Karel Cup. This is a 'minivoetbal' tournament in Ghent at the end of June 2020 with more than 1.000 participants. They had a formal and signed agreement with the company that is the main tournament organizer to 'PlayGreen' their event. The company and Voetbal Vlaanderen were looking forward to make this event more sustainable. Keizer Karel Cup could benefit from the PlayGreen method to make their event more sustainable. Voetbal Vlaanderen could benefit from the Keizer Karel Cup because they have a long history of organizing this tournament. They always reach a lot of young people so it would have been a great collaboration. We had 2 meetings with a retroactive planning of their event form 2019. With all that data (food orders, waste costs, ...) the Flemish FA were trying to find out, with the PlayGreen volunteers, where the biggest 'wins' could be achieved on the area of sustainability. But this was cancelled due to the first lockdown.

However, the Flemish FA carried on. In September / October 2020 a new perspective was followed to organize a new event.. This included organizing a Foot Festival, PlayGreen edition, in Leuven. On 11 November 2020 there was a big event planned, in collaboration with 4 clubs. 2 Red Flames (first team of Belgium, women) were going to be present as we were going to focus on young girls in this tournament. We already brainstormed about our Green actions and we ordered wooden, fully recyclable tokens for ordering drinks and food. We ordered PlayGreen sustainable lunchboxes... Everything was ready.

A couple of weeks before the actual event would have taken place, we entered the second lockdown in Belgium. As a result sport events were cancelled again.

**MENTORS:** when they entered the project the staff or mentors thought the Green Team ‘leaders’, who are volunteers, would have a lot of energy and drive to actually lead the Green Team. But as the project went on it was hard to keep them engaged. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was no perspective for the members of the Green Team. The leaders of the Green Team found other activities and they lost them during the project. This was not foreseen but gave the mentors relevant insights.

**VOLUNTEERS:** The Flemish FA started with a comprehensive communication plan to recruit volunteers. It went really well in the beginning. They combined a targeted social media campaign (direct approach) with intermediate communication throughout different organizations that work with young people that are engaged with sustainability.

The Green Team from Flanders showed a lot of will and motivation especially during the transnational meeting in Estonia. They not only engaged on the activities but also provided insightful ideas and contributed to filming and editing a Green Team video<sup>31</sup>. Locally, they had some great sessions with brainstorming and ideas for the Green events. Importantly as well, they had a great deal of diversity in the group that led to a planning success.

But when the role of the Green Team volunteers became more active, they saw a huge dropout. There are so many different activities and volunteering opportunities for young people that it isn’t easy to ‘stand out in the crowd’. They learned that the time and effort they asked from the volunteers was quite big. So they had to rethink their campaign and started to work with the Keizer Karel Cup to green their big, existing, tournament in Ghent. The Flemish FA made all the preparations using the Green Tool but then Covid-19 hit the country. The tournament was cancelled, and the enthusiasm of the Green Team reached a point below zero. As mentioned, in a second attempt the Flemish FA relaunched with a more targeted group of Green Team volunteers and analysed possible events they would develop. In the end they decided to develop a PlayGreen event linked with a the locally known Keizer Karel Cup.

### **Flemish TIPS** for **future implementers**

- The enthusiasm of volunteers is linked to activities and events.
- Volunteers need a concrete goal, perspective and timeframe to keep them engaged.
- Social Media is useful for a first communication and to be used during the project but direct messages and personal contact is better to keep them engaged.



## 5.4 Lithuania FA

The Lithuania FA started the pilot development with a communication plan. They spread the news about LFF joining the PlayGreen project and opened an online registration for volunteers to join the Green Team. At the first round not many community members registered and as such more efforts were put to make the communication wider by sending invitations to companies who engage with volunteers and are specified on environmental issues. That was useful to be able to gather a team of 20 Green Team volunteers.

The first online meeting with the team was very useful to understand why the volunteers registered and the Flemish FA realized that part of the volunteers registered were interested about the project but not to the activities. It is important to note that volunteering is not rooted in Lithuania, there is no tradition in the Lithuanian culture. As such, the Lithuanian FA decided to work with those members of the Green Team who were keener to get involved, and as such to focus on quality instead of quantity with regards to volunteer numbers. This allowed to achieve high quality activities and have a core group with a very involved Green Team.

The Lithuanian FA organized several online meetings to mentor the volunteers and adopted the strategy to give them specific tasks to stimulate their ideas, thoughts and inspire them to stay in the team. They managed to gather an extremely positive team with a big potential. In addition, while the variety of the planned activities was limited because of Covid-19, they managed to focus on available ways to reach the PlayGreen goals. To do so, they moved the planning online as much as possible and organized a tournament in February where they used the Green Tool to implement the green activities thought by the Green Team and implemented them.

According to the Lithuanian FA, changes can be achieved in two type of ways: by doing specific actions and by communicating about the topic. At the beginning of the project the Lithuanian FA decided to do both – implement specific tools, organize events, improve in daily behaviour, but also to run several communication campaigns, showing the main messages, inspiring people to join. Due to Covid-19 the FA had to change their plans and focus more on online activities: workshops, seminars, meetings and communication as well.

**MENTORS:** A specific person was appointed as the main manager of PlayGreen, In the Flemish FA it was a young person herself, which naturally helped in targeting and engaging the Green Team members. As she puts it “volunteers should be motivated and feel important members of the team”.

**VOLUNTEERS:** They can feel engaged when responsibilities are distributed between them. One of the tricks that was successfully used by the Lithuanian FA was a group photoshoot, which was win-win for FA and personally for every volunteer. They were pleased to have a free photoshoot and share photos to their social media accounts, and the Lithuanian FA was able to use those

pictures in the media to communicate about the project. Also, feeling important, recognised and useful for the team inspires to take part and put efforts.

Volunteers are key members to organize the events and engage other young people to play sports. In every online meeting each volunteer was asked to find some information, do a research on certain topics, prepare to present their ideas and other. What is more, during every activity everyone had a chance to share their opinion and thoughts. By giving space to do that, the FA was able to keep the Green Team engaged to plan the Green Activities and creating a secure and comfortable environment to play sports.

### **Lithuanian TIPS** for **future implementers**

- Be adaptable
- Quality is better than quantity
- Provide specific tasks to engage volunteers
- Challenges are normal and part of all the projects and programs
- Make volunteers feel part of the team, recognise their efforts in official communications, e.g., photos portraying them as part of the team, shared in the organisation's social media platforms

Cleaning in the beach  
before a sport event  
in Malta



## CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

*Key lessons to engage  
environmental volunteers  
to play sport*



*Key lessons learned  
regarding PlayGreen  
Method*

 6

## CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

To conclude, PlayGreen has become a method that sets a specific, well-organised structure with adaptable and flexible activities and recourses to enable various sports organisations to adapt it to the needs and nature of their sport, so that they can deliver similar results and outcomes to the original PlayGreen version. In this section, we want to point out the main lessons and learning outcomes that benefit future organizations implementing the PlayGreen method.

Engaging young people who are not practicing sports into doing sports through the environmental incentive is indeed a very innovative approach to involve more people into playing sports. The PlayGreen team made the effort to create a comprehensive unified method using a Green Tool as a method of analysis but allowed the method to be adaptable to implementers.

### *Key lessons to engage environmental volunteers to play sport*

- 1) Connect with organizations that have young people engaged or are young driven and who care about climate change and environmental protection.
- 2) Focus on ambassadors, a small group of engaged volunteers is always better than many individuals who are less engaged. If some of them already practice sports that can be good as well but there is a need to create a safe environment.
- 3) Have prominent role models to showcase the importance of the cause
- 4) Involve young people as leaders and mentors, apart from being good role models, people are more likely to trust someone that share some similarities with or 'looks like them'.
- 5) Ask for personal interests of volunteers to give tasks according to their interests in sustainability and the sports engagement will come after, once the football event is being planned.
- 6) Develop meaningful activities, activities they would value and show the impact of their actions, so that these can appeal to the intrinsic motivations of volunteers and keep them engaged.
- 7) Appeal to the human part, ask how they are feeling, what they like and fear about playing football or another sport (if they do).
- 8) Providing perks that can be used in sports matches and that are also sustainable gifts helps volunteers keep engaged.

- 9) Letting volunteers organize events makes it easier for them to play afterwards.
- 10) It works to first appeal to the environmental part by planning a green activity with them. Once it is done, you can engage the Green Team to play. This is because they have already created a sense of community and it feels easier of them to play with others they have planned the event with.
- 11) Doing sport events after doing an environmental practice such as collecting waste on the beach proves to work to have a higher participation of Green Participant Volunteers and engagement



*Key lessons learned  
regarding PlayGreen  
Method*

- 1) Use the Green Tool since the beginning to explain environmental concepts.
- 2) Use on sight places to meet to plan and treat with the meals or beverage. Make it vegan or vegetarian to start a conversation.
- 3) Provide lessons on climate change and sports as well as tools so that the volunteers can carry out the activities.
- 4) Create surveys that are easy to understand and practical
- 5) Invite the media and report on social media.
- 6) Ask the Green Team to create an online campaign explaining what they do

As a final note, we want to strengthen the fact that PlayGreen was tested in the field of football, but it is designed so that it can be used by any sport organization in different fields. In this regard, if this guideline comes into your hands do not hesitate to contact us in case you want to implement PlayGreen to engage environmental volunteers to play sports.



## ANNEX

### 7.1

#### ANNEX 1

PlayGreen volunteering position

### 7.2

#### ANNEX 2

PlayGreen Event Report Template

**ANNEX**

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**ANNEX 1 • PlayGreen volunteering position**

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**Mission**

Be part of our journey towards promoting environmentally sustainable behaviours in sport!

**About the Opportunity**

A Green Team Volunteer is an Ambassador of positive actions towards protecting and improving our environment, starting from sport. It has been shown that the environmental impact of sporting competitions is high, and Green Team Volunteers will help fighting climate crisis by finding new and creative ways of reducing this impact and make sport events more ecologically sustainable. If you aspire towards influencing and changing behaviour of the people around you, to help them make improvements to their local environment, we need you!

**Role Responsibilities**

The role involves organising 5 environmentally-friendly grassroots football tournaments within a 6-month period, with the support of a dedicated team from the Football Association of your respective countries. You will be able to provide creative solutions and ideas on how each football tournament could be 'greener', raising environmental awareness and promoting sustainable behaviours within your community.

**Why getting involved?**

- If you are keen to make a difference in providing solutions to minimise the ecological impact of sport events, and the resources or waste generated
- Develop and improve event coordination and planning skills
- Develop or improve Human resources Management skills
- Opportunities to travel abroad at selected events
- Opportunity to be part of a pan-European team of sport and environment enthusiasts
- Mentoring and training opportunities

**What are we looking for?**

- Self-motivated, with some knowledge of event planning or sport is helpful, but not necessary. Your local Football Association and a pan-European team of environmental sustainability experts will support you
- You will be part of a team of Green Volunteers working together across the site and driving forward positive change collectively

- You will be offered opportunities to run a team of other volunteers, manage data, liaise and engage with participants and members of Football Associations in your respective countries.

### Key Skills Required

- Able to work as part of a team, while taking initiative when necessary
- Good communication skills
- Some level of English understanding would be helpful, but not necessary
- Passion and commitment towards driving positive change
- Willingness to travel if deemed necessary

### Key Skills that will be gained

- Teamwork
- Data management
- Managing people
- Leadership
- Event planning and organising
- Environmental awareness

**Hours:** Flexible

### Expenses:

Your expenses are fully covered. E.g. your travels to the international project meetings will be covered by the federation for you.

**If you would like to find out more or apply, please get in touch with:**



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Sport volunteering research, engagement and consultancy: **Dr. Niki Koutrou** > [secretariat@ensgo.eu](mailto:secretariat@ensgo.eu)



Project coordination, sustainability and sports consultancy: **Cristina Bajet** > [info@ecoserveis.net](mailto:info@ecoserveis.net)

## ANNEX 2 • PlayGreen Event Report Template

### Event Characteristics

Please write the country, city and stadium where the event took place, timescale, when it happened, how many people attended as well as the impacts that you saw and wanted to tackle, what actions you took and how you feel about the results as well as what you learned

### Summary of the 6 environmental activities

Please insert the link where we can find the green tool:

### Green actions in short

Please add as many rows as you need. We provide an example.

Type of impact	Environmental Impact	Actions to make the event more sustainable	Results
Example: food	Only meat products are sold in the stadium	Serve vegan and vegetarian options	50% people ate vegan meals

### Communication campaign characteristics

Please write what you did to make people more conscious about the environmental impact and when suited add links. Explain as well what you think worked and what was challenging

### Communication Campaign in short

Please add as many rows as you need. We provide an example.

Goal	To whom (target audience)	Message (main)	What has been done	People reached (and when available prove)	Links
Example: make football fans that are not conscious about climate change realize the dimension of the problem	Football fans	Climate change matters and you have a role in tackling it!	Radio program explaining why you are doing the sporting event	The radio program had 100 listeners. We have an email from the person who directs the program telling us so	Link to the picture of one of us on the radio



Lithuanian  
Green Team

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