NOC Sustainability Project
GIVE THE REEF ANOTHER CHANCE
The world faces significant challenges across a wide spectrum of economic, social and environmental matters. The Olympic Movement has both an opportunity and a duty to actively contribute to the global sustainability debate in line with its vision of “Building a better world through sport”.

With this in mind, and in response to Olympic Agenda 2020, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) launched the International Federation (IF) Sustainability Project in 2016 to obtain an overview of IFs’ sustainability initiatives – identifying common topics, challenges and good practices while also sharing information among the IFs.

One outcome of the project was a series of case studies illustrating how IFs are actively contributing towards a more sustainable world. These case studies, which now also showcase National Olympic Committees’ (NOCs) best practices, form part of a strategic support system given to the Olympic Movement through the IOC Sustainability Strategy.

Each case study is aligned with one or more of the IOC’s five sustainability focus areas: infrastructure & natural sites; sourcing & resource management; mobility; workforce; and climate. They are also aligned with one or more of the United Nations’ (UN) framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a common framework for organisations to explain how they plan to contribute to sustainable development and tackle the key global sustainability challenges.

This framework is pivotal for the Olympic Movement – in September 2015, the UN General Assembly confirmed the important role that sport can play in supporting the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

The IOC provides support to NOCs and IFs in the definition, design and development of their sustainability strategies.

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognise the growing contribution of sport to the realisation of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

Paragraph 37, UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
THE NOC OF SRI LANKA HAS LAUNCHED A PROJECT TO HELP SAVE LOCAL CORAL REEFS

OBJECTIVES
Created by the Sri Lanka NOC, Give the Reef Another Chance is a project that aims to:
• Raise awareness about the importance of preserving local reefs and marine life.
• Implement measures to help restore local reefs.
• Show that sport can help to tackle environmental issues and be a catalyst for social change.

On 25 June 2019, the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC SL) launched Give the Reef Another Chance at Polhena Beach in Matara under the auspices of Olympic Solidarity. This three-year project aims to raise awareness about the importance of coral reef conservation along the Sri Lankan coast and implement actions to help restore the diminishing reef of Polhena.

Give the Reef Another Chance began with a beach-cleaning programme, which involved a wide variety of participants – from schoolchildren and adult volunteers to local prisoners. Then, around 2,400 schoolchildren took part in an art competition, with the best drawings displayed in a local hotel. The key attraction of the day was a coral replanting programme, for which coral was planted on a series of cement domes that had been placed on the reef.

Sri Lankan sport stars and the NOC SL President and Secretary General took part in the day’s programme, which also featured NOC-coordinated demonstrations of beach volleyball, kabaddi, lifesaving, sea swimming and surfing – five sports that are practised by athletes from the region and could inspire local children to become the Olympians of tomorrow.
The NOC SL President opened an Information Centre for Coral Reef Conservation and Preservation, which will remain open to the public at a local hotel for the next three years. In addition, a workshop for schoolchildren, their parents and their teachers was organised with the assistance of the National Aquatic Resources Research & Development Agency.

EVALUATION
Through Give the Reef Another Chance, NOC SL has brought together the ideas of environmental awareness and Olympism, setting up key partnerships with stakeholders as varied as the National Aquatic Resources Research & Development Agency, the Sri Lanka Navy, businesses such as Tokyo Cement Group and local hotels. It is hoped that the project will be extended to other Sri Lankan reefs.

“WE GOT THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT THE OLYMPIC VALUES AND CORAL PRESERVATION. WE MUST GET MORE EXPOSURE TO THINGS LIKE THIS – WE COULD LEARN A LOT ABOUT THE COUNTRY AND THE LAND THAT WE LIVE IN.”
LOCAL SCHOOL STUDENT

CONTACT: Maxwell de Silva, Secretary General of the NOC of Sri Lanka maxsports@sltnet.lk
https://olympic.lk/spage/19

BENEFITS
• NOCs can help to resolve environmental issues through sport.
• The scope of a NOC sustainability project can grow through collaborations with a wide variety of local stakeholders.
• Such initiatives are great opportunities for an NOC to introduce itself and the Olympic values to local communities.