

In collaboration
with Oliver Wyman



Sports for People and Planet

INSIGHT REPORT
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Foreword



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Sport is one of humanity's most powerful social and economic forces – shaping culture, health and community life across the globe. It evokes a multitude of images: watching athletes at the Olympic and Paralympic Games, a weekend hike in the mountains or a childhood ball game with friends. Few fields have such a profound influence on culture and community, uniting people across borders and backgrounds.

Today, the sports economy is a fast-growing, multitrillion-dollar ecosystem powering global sporting mega-events, adventure tourism, sporting goods and equipment, and active lifestyles. It unlocks business opportunities, drives trade, creates jobs and enhances workforce productivity. This potential is especially significant in emerging markets, where sport serves as a catalyst for economic and social development. For millennia, sport has connected humanity and nature – on fields, in oceans and atop ski slopes. Far beyond entertainment and elite competition, it is a vital force for health, inclusion and connection: a microcosm of the systems that shape how societies thrive. Yet rising health and environmental risks, from sedentary behaviour and extreme heat to air and water pollution, threaten not only the growth of this dynamic economy but also its positive impact on people and communities.

A thriving sports economy is inseparable from a thriving natural environment; the two are fundamentally intertwined. The ability of sport to inspire, unite and drive well-being depends on the health of the environments in which it takes place. At the same time, the sector faces a double imperative: to safeguard the natural systems that make play possible and to reduce its own footprint, from carbon emissions and resource use to waste generation, so that its growth reinforces rather than depletes the foundations on which it relies.

At this pivotal moment, sport has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to redefine prosperity by integrating financial performance with societal health and environmental well-being. It is for this reason that the World Economic Forum, with the support of Oliver Wyman, has developed *Sports for People and Planet*. This report underscores the critical importance of public-private collaboration and cross-sector leadership to future-proof sport – showcasing innovative case studies and examples of partnerships that enhance industry resilience, and pathways that actively shape the conditions needed to create more active societies and thriving natural ecosystems. Together, we can ensure that the future of sport is not only competitive and inspiring, but also sustainable, inclusive and resilient – for people and planet alike.