



**Sports
for Nature**



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Cricket for Nature Toolkit

Building resilience in the
game while contributing to
nature

Founding partners



International
Olympic
Committee



Convention on
Biological Diversity



DONA BERTARELLI
PHILANTHROPY

Introduction

In cricket, the weather conditions have always shaped the game. The sudden mountain mists and rapid temperature rise at Dharamsala; a dry, cracking surface at Multan that hands the game to spin as the pitch wears; and the slow, abrasive surface that develops at the Kensington Oval. Each demand their own combination of patience and judgement. So too do the fast, bouncy wicket at the WACA, the swirling sea breeze off Table Mountain at Newlands, and a damp morning at Lord's.

However, climate change is disrupting these conditions everywhere cricket is played, affecting the reliability of fixtures, the safety of players, and the long-term viability of grounds. Recent seasons have provided visible reminders of this crisis. During the 2018 Ashes series in Australia, players battled through extreme heat. Images of Joe Root on his haunches at the Sydney Cricket Ground as temperatures climbed into the high forties became emblematic of the physical toll such conditions impose. In South Asia, a number of matches played in Delhi in recent years offered their own version of that image: players training in masks amid smog-choked air - a reminder that deteriorating air quality, not just heat, is now a growing threat to player welfare across the region.

Across the world, changing rainfall patterns are also beginning to reshape cricket. [Recent analysis](#) found that more than a third of international white-ball matches in both 2023 and 2024 in the UK were disrupted by rain, underlining how heavier downpours and greater weather variability are becoming practical resilience challenges for the game. In some parts of the world, cricket will need to evolve and adapt to conditions it has never seen before, and the forthcoming LA28 Olympic Games, where cricket will be making its first appearance since 1900, will be focusing on how sport can be [Resilient by Nature](#).

Across the world, cricket grounds also represent a vast and often overlooked network of managed green spaces across the cricketing world. From the gullies of Kolkata to the school fields of the Caribbean or the international stadiums of Cape Town, these landscapes share trees, soils, water systems and habitat edges that can support biodiversity and ecological resilience when managed with nature in mind.

This project sent a survey to several cricket organisations to explore how cricket is understanding the changes and its relationship to nature. The majority of responses came from the UK from a variety of types of cricket club and organisation.

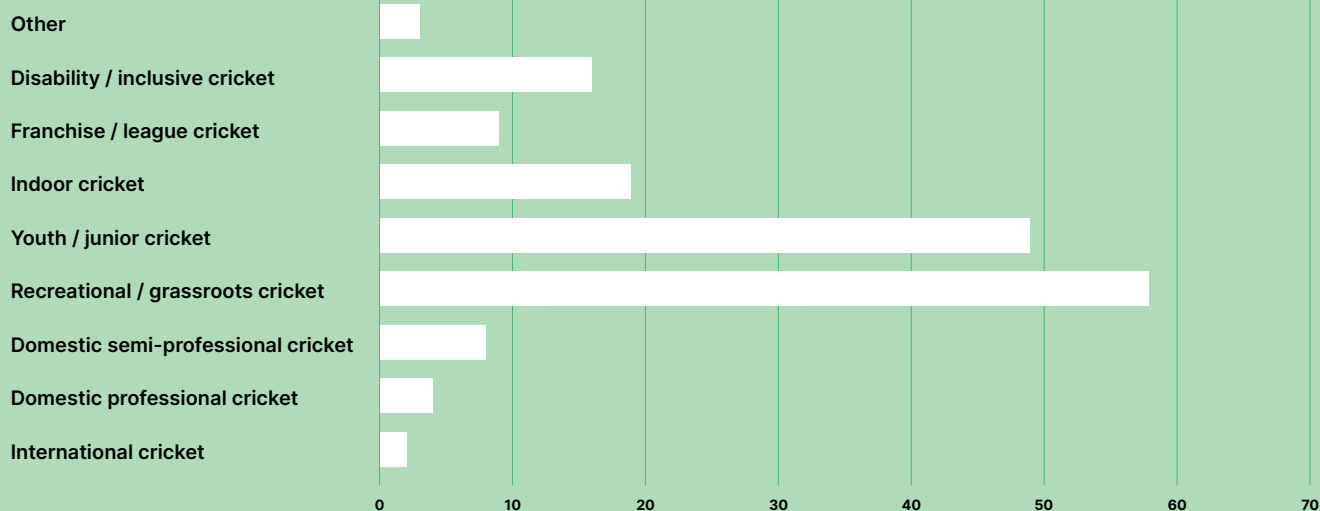


Piyush Sharma@cricket.com

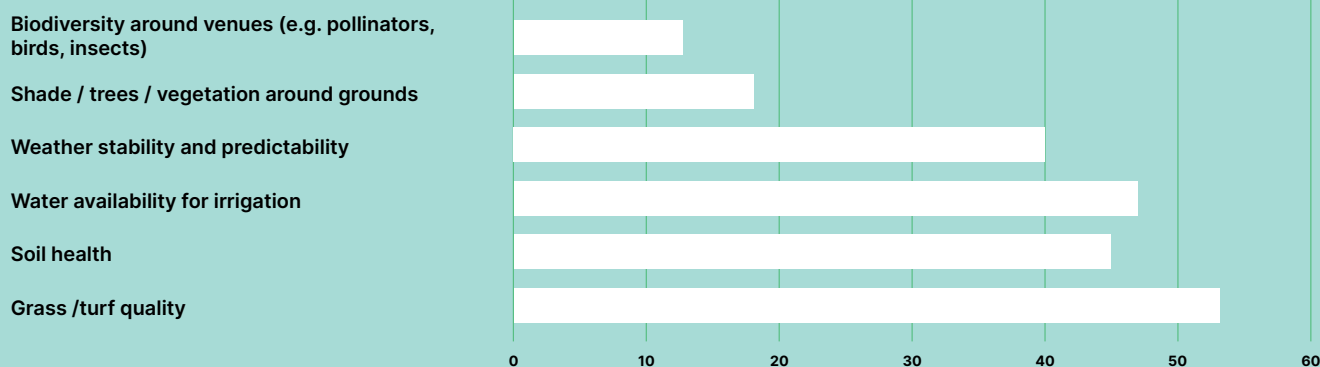
Of these cricket organisations, 76% thought nature was important to the game of cricket in their context. The pitch and water are the two most important areas, but nature also impacts on the ability of the club to adapt to extreme weather like heat and weather instability.

Despite this recognition of the impact of nature on cricket, 69% of these organisations did not have specific policies or measures in place to mitigate risks to nature and biodiversity.

What types of cricket activities does your organisation oversee?



Which aspects of nature are most important to cricket in your context?



Whilst funding was the main barrier for these cricket organisations, 64% also said that there was a lack of clear guidance or tools. As a consequence, the Cricket for Nature framework has been developed as a first-ever start to fill in this gap. This framework is informed by the global [Sports for Nature initiative](#) and adapts its core principles: *protecting nature*,

restoring ecosystems, reducing risks to nature in supply chains, and inspiring positive action for nature across sport, specifically for cricket. In so doing it reflects the game's long horizons, deep connection to landscape and ongoing need to adapt to changing conditions.

Sports for Nature principle	Cricket for Nature section	Steps
Protect Nature	Protect Nature	1. Protect Your Wicket: Establish a nature baseline 2. Restrict the Boundaries (limit 4s and 6's): Safeguard existing habitats
Restore Ecosystems	Restore Ecological Systems	3. Catches Win Matches: Strengthen climate resilience
Reduce risks to nature in supply chains	Reduce Environmental Risk	4. Maintain Your Over Rate: Be energy and water smart 5. Recruit Wisely: Reduce environmental impact through procurement
Inspire Positive Action	Educate and Inspire Action	6. Raise the Bat: Use cricket's platform to champion nature
(cross-cutting)	Measurement and Accountability	7. Rotate the Strike: Measure, report and strengthen accountability

Table 1: How this toolkit maps to the Sports for Nature Framework

The Toolkit translates these four global principles into seven practical steps designed to help cricket organisations respond to growing environmental pressures through better risk awareness, stronger resilience, nature-positive management and ongoing accountability. Outside of the square, great richness resides. Nature can be the twelfth teammate for cricket, supporting resilience, shading and reducing impacts of more extreme weather, it just needs to be picked.

From community grounds to international venues, this document offers a practical structure for cricket organisations to understand environmental risk, strengthen resilience, protect and restore nature, reduce exposure, and support environmental action. It is designed to help clubs, leagues and governing bodies to act now and help secure the practice and enjoyment of our game for generations to come through climate resilience, environmental stewardship and positive action for nature.

Protect Nature

Step 1 | Protect Your Wicket: Establish a nature baseline

Every cricket ground sits within a wider landscape system. Before taking action, organisations need to understand what natural assets already exist, how water and ecological systems function on site, and where pressures are emerging. Establishing a clear baseline provides the foundation for credible, measurable and long-term nature-positive management.

What to do

- Map the site and identify vegetation, trees, hedgerows, habitat patches, water flows and built surfaces.
- Identify ecological pressures such as soil compaction, heat stress, flooding, water scarcity and invasive species.
- Record existing biodiversity assets and areas of potential enhancement.
- Use a simple baseline template to document current condition and future opportunities.
- Assign responsibility for reviewing and updating the baseline annually.

Reading the conditions

- Skip this step, and later habitat or water investments have no baseline to prove they made any difference.
- A documented baseline turns isolated initiatives into a multi-year programme that survives committee and volunteer turnover.
- Year-on-year data becomes evidence a club can put in front of funders and local authorities.
- Without it, every future improvement is a guess rather than a measured result.

From the game

Desert Vipers launched a [BioBlitz](#) between the UAE and Mumbai, India to discover, document, and celebrate the wildlife around cricket. They wanted to engage players, families, and fans to connect with nature as well as collecting meaningful data.

At [Lord's Cricket Ground](#), biodiversity across the estate reflects a shift from viewing the venue only as sporting infrastructure to recognising it as a living landscape with ecological value. This kind of baseline work helps identify what habitats and environmental assets already exist, where pressures are emerging and how an urban cricket venue might contribute to wider nature-positive goals through more informed long-term planning.

Getting started

- Walk your site and sketch a simple map of key features with a lead nominated to take ideas forward.
- Identify areas where water pools, turf struggles or wildlife is already present.
- Take photographs to create a visual record.
- Start simple and build understanding over time.
- Review and update annually.

For additional information

- [Sports for Nature Self-Assessment Tool: Mapping Your Relationship With Nature](#)
- Factsheet: [Principle 1 of the Sports for Nature Framework](#)
- [Sports for Nature Urban Playbook](#)

Step 2 | Restrict the Boundaries (limit 4s and 6's): Safeguard existing habitats

Across many cricket grounds, ecological value already exists in habitats, mature trees, boundary hedgerows, grass margins, ponds and areas of unmanaged scrub. Protecting these existing habitats is often more effective and more achievable than attempting to create new ones from scratch. Safeguarding what is already present strengthens biodiversity, reduces unnecessary disturbance and builds early momentum for wider environmental action.

What to do

- Recognise and protect habitat areas such as trees, hedgerows, boundary vegetation, ponds and shaded zones.
- Introduce simple protection measures such as buffer zones around hedgerows and adjust mowing and maintenance regimes around habitat edges, including tree lines and grass margins, adapting practices seasonally where appropriate.
- Reduce unnecessary pesticide and herbicide use where feasible, particularly near habitat areas and water features.
- Embed habitat protection into facilities planning and redevelopment decisions from the outset.

Reading the conditions

- Undocumented habitats get cleared or degraded by accident, long before any restoration budget exists to replace them.
- Protecting what's already there costs a fraction of restoring it later; money saved is money available for the next step.
- Small changes to mowing or spraying regimes show measurable biodiversity gains within a single season.
- Early, visible wins build the credibility a club needs before asking members or sponsors to back larger projects.

From the game

At [Fillongley Cricket Club](#) in Warwickshire, England, volunteers focused on protecting and enhancing boundary hedgerows and restoring a previously neglected pond that now supports greater wildlife activity. The club planted over 200 metres of hedging and established wildflower areas while working with the existing landscape. The project began with safeguarding and improving natural assets already present before introducing new features.

Not every example is a success story. In Sri Lanka, a proposed new international stadium on Mandaitivu Island, set within the ecologically sensitive Jaffna lagoon system of mangroves and coastal wetlands, has drawn concern from environmental groups and conservationists, who point to a similar earlier case where a stadium was built within elephant habitat. It's a reminder that habitat screening needs to happen before site selection and design, not after. This is precisely why Step 1's baseline and this step's safeguards belong at the start of any redevelopment or new-build conversation, not the end.

Getting started

- Identify one habitat feature that can be better protected.
- Adjust maintenance schedules in that area.
- Protect mature trees and vegetation during redevelopment.
- Focus on protection before addition.

Protecting existing habitats is an important first step, but healthy ecosystems also depend on how water moves through the landscape.

For additional information

- [Sports for Nature Urban Playbook](#)

Restore Ecological Systems

Step 3 | Catches Win Matches: Strengthen climate resilience

Availability of water is one of the most immediate ways climate change affects cricket. Flooding, drought and extreme rainfall alter ground conditions and increase maintenance pressures. Managing landscape design with water movement and absorption in mind allows clubs to strengthen both ecological function and operational resilience over time.

What to do

- Observe how water moves across your site during rainfall and identify where water pools or drains rapidly.
- Identify opportunities to slow, capture or redirect runoff using planting, hedgerows, swales or small wetland features.
- Maintain or restore ponds and natural drainage systems.
- Use trees, hedgerows and vegetation to increase soil absorption and reduce surface run-off. Strategic planting can also provide shade for spectators while improving air quality and overall appeal.
- Collect rainwater and use where extended dry periods are likely, such as collect during the wet season collection and use during the dry season.
- Integrate water planning into redevelopment and long-term capital decisions.
- Explore irrigation from natural water bodies rather than a mains water system. This could include rivers, lakes or even a well.

Reading the conditions

- Without water planning, one heavy storm or one dry spell can force fixtures off entirely.
- Ponds, swales and absorbent planting keep a ground playable through both flood and drought, not just one or the other.
- Nature-based drainage and irrigation cost less to install and maintain than mains water or engineered systems over a ground's lifetime.
- Water and landscape decisions made now shape a club's resilience, and its neighbours' flood risk, for decades.



From the game

As part of their [Go Green](#) initiatives, Royal Challengers Bangalore helped rejuvenate three lakes in Bengaluru. This included extensive de-weeding and planting of indigenous and medicinal plants.

However, not all infrastructure investment automatically builds resilience. Pakistan's 2025 renovation of Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium delivered new floodlights and facilities ahead of the ICC Champions Trophy, but matches were still abandoned due to a waterlogged outfield after rain. It underlines why water movement and drainage (this step) needs to be planned alongside, not after, headline infrastructure upgrades.

Getting started

- Observe how water behaves on your ground after rainfall.
- Identify small opportunities to improve absorption or reduce pooling.
- Introduce improvements incrementally rather than through major redesign.
- Consider long term climate trends in future planning.

Strengthening ecological systems is one important part of climate resilience. Cricket organisations might also consider how facilities, infrastructure and resource use affect their ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions.

For additional information

- Factsheet: [Principle 2 of the Sports for Nature Framework](#)



Reduce Environmental Risk

Step 4 | Maintain Your Over Rate: Be energy and water smart

Energy and water pressures are becoming a significant concern for cricket organisations. Rising temperatures, water scarcity and higher energy prices are placing growing pressures on clubs and venues, driving up operational costs and creating new challenges for facility management. Strengthening resilience at facility and infrastructure level is therefore central to protecting performance standards while maintaining long-term financial stability.

What to do

- Conduct a basic audit of water and energy use.
- Assess exposure to heat, drought, flooding or storm disruption.
- Explore water efficiency measures including harvesting and reuse where viable.
- Install energy efficient lighting and appliances.
- Integrate resilience planning into redevelopment and long-term capital plans.

Reading the conditions

- Rising temperatures push irrigation demand up, and with it, water bills.
- Unmanaged water risk, either too much or too little, leads to postponed, relocated or abandoned fixtures.
- Energy price volatility hits club finances directly wherever efficiency work is deferred.
- Clubs that don't act on resource use now face growing scrutiny from regulators, members and the public as expectations rise.

From the game

In India, environmental scrutiny has highlighted the scale of water and energy pressures facing elite cricket. But it has also shown how infrastructure investment can strengthen resilience. At [M. Chinnaswamy Stadium](#) in Bengaluru, rainwater capture, a sub-air system beneath the pitch and roof-mounted solar panels offer one example of how major venues can reduce disruption, manage resources more efficiently and build longer term resilience.

At grassroots level, the Bangladesh Cricket Board responded to a record-breaking heatwave in 2024 by shortening its national schools tournament from 50-over to T20 matches, moving start times earlier in the day, adding a drinks break every 40 minutes, and providing ice and ice-bath facilities where available. It's a reminder that climate variability affects schedules as much as infrastructure, and that format flexibility, decided in real time, can be just as important a tool for organisations without large capital budgets.

Getting started

- Review water and energy bills to understand usage patterns.
- Identify quick efficiency gains.
- Explore phased infrastructure upgrades.
- Build resilience into future facility improvements.



Step 5 | Recruit Wisely: Reduce environmental impact through procurement

For many cricket organisations, environmental impact extends far beyond the boundary of the ground. Catering, equipment, construction and event operations all form part of wider supply chains that influence land use, resource consumption and waste. Embedding sustainability within procurement decisions therefore reduces environmental pressure while strengthening organisational accountability.

What to do

- Include environmental criteria within supplier tenders for catering, construction, equipment and event operations.
- Assess major suppliers for environmental credentials, transparency and responsible sourcing practices.
- Prioritise lower impact catering, seasonal produce and local sourcing where feasible.
- Match food ordering to be consistent with estimates of attendance to avoid food waste.
- Reduce single-use materials in match day operations.
- Track major purchasing decisions to better understand environmental impact across supply chains.

Reading the conditions

- Every procurement decision ripples into land use, food systems and waste far beyond the boundary rope, for better or worse.
- Tournaments that ignore their environmental footprint face growing public and media scrutiny.
- Sponsors increasingly screen partners against ESG commitments, while organisations without a procurement standard risk losing them.
- Proactive sourcing choices reduce both financial exposure and reputational risk before either becomes a crisis.



From the game

Procurement and supplier relationships can play an important role in reducing environmental impact across cricket.

Punjab Kings introduced a [Green Protocol](#) at their Holkar stadium in Indore. In particular, they want to reduce the amount of plastic in their cheering merchandise by providing cloth flags and banners to fans during the matches instead of plastic cheer sticks. They also procured cricket shirts and the bails that were made from reclaimed ocean plastics, as well as having branding material on recycled cloth material as in some tournaments up to 15,000 sq metres of plastic materials is produced with no second life plan.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Green Game initiative has evolved from symbolic gestures toward material change, with match jerseys now made using recycled polyester derived from textile and plastic waste, an example of how procurement decisions on kit and merchandise can be a visible, fan-facing extension of a franchise's environmental commitments.

The [M. Chinnaswamy Stadium](#) offers an example of how infrastructure investment and operational decision-making can work together, combining solar power generation, waste segregation and a move away from single-use plastic signage.

The national team jerseys from the Sri Lanka men and women's ICC World Cup jerseys were made by [MAS](#) from recycled plastic bottles.

Cricket Australia partnered with Origin Energy to launch [Power Up Play](#) to install and deliver solar, battery and energy management solutions for local clubs.

At [Lord's Cricket Ground](#), sustainability and accessibility considerations have also informed venue planning and supplier relationships, including practical attention to how materials, services and operations are delivered across the ground.

Taken together, these examples show that procurement is not only about what people buy, but about how venues, contractors and partners can work together to reduce waste, manage resources more carefully and build longer-term resilience.

Getting started

- Review your main suppliers and ask basic sustainability questions.
- Reduce single-use plastics throughout your value chain.
- Players reusing and rewear jerseys, where possible.
- Work with local producers where possible.
- Include sustainability considerations in future purchasing decisions.

For additional information

- [Sports for Nature Sustainable Sourcing Framework](#)
- Factsheet: [Principle 3 of the Sports for Nature Framework](#)



Educate and Inspire Action

Step 6 | Raise the Bat: Use cricket's platform to champion nature

Cricket's cultural influence reaches audiences that traditional environmental campaigns may not. Clubs and franchises can use their visibility to elevate biodiversity, inspire behavioural change and convene partnerships that extend beyond infrastructure control. Platform-based leadership is a powerful lever for environmental progress across the game.

What to do

- Integrate nature messaging into match day communications.
- Partner with environmental organisations and schools.
- Identify and support players who care about nature and the environment to leverage digital platforms to amplify biodiversity stories.
- Align campaigns with recognised sport environment frameworks.
- Design activations that generate measurable outcomes.

Reading the conditions

- Cricket's platform reaches audiences that dedicated environmental campaigns cannot reach
- Sustained education influences culture over years, not seasons
- None of this requires owning a stadium or a facilities budget, even a club with no capital can still lead here.



From the game

In India, the Tata Group and BCCI have linked dot balls in the Tata IPL and Tata WPL directly to tree planting, with each dot ball contributing multiple saplings to plantations across several states. The initiative has planted several hundred thousand trees to date, alongside a fan-facing digital campaign and an in-stadium award recognising bowlers for their contribution. It illustrates how a routine on-field statistic can be reframed as a nationwide sustainability signal. However, ongoing public debate about equitable distribution of plantations across regions is a useful reminder that transparent, evidence-based reporting (see Step 7) matters as much as the headline number.

Also in India, a partnership between the ICC and Coca-Cola India Foundation launched [MaidaanSaaf](#) to support cleaner stadiums, better waste segregation, and recycling in the ICC Men's and Women's T20 World Cup 2026 matches. This included adding in recycling infrastructure, but also [engagement with fans](#) to help show them what to do.

The Desert Vipers have embedded biodiversity into their sustainability strategy through a [BioBlitz](#) programme delivered in partnership with environmental organisations in the UAE and India. In the UAE, activities took place near Dubai and in Hatta. In India, the work extended to Mumbai, where naturalist Shahid Doshi guided species identification and ecological interpretation. In its second season, the initiative documented 634 species over a 12-day period. The franchise engaged school children in biodiversity learning, demonstrating how franchise cricket can use its visibility to promote and inspire ecological awareness across different communities.

Sri Lanka legends Mahela Jayawardena and Kumar Sangakkara supported the '[Clean Sri Lanka](#)' initiative, illustrating the power and influence of the athlete voice.

Barbados' Coral Reef Restoration Alliance ([CORALL](#)) linked a "Beach Cricket Blast" at Browne's Beach to International Biodiversity Day, promoting environmental awareness.

Getting started

- Partner with a local school or youth group for a biodiversity activity, or explore how CRIIO could support this work.
- Invite a naturalist to guide a species walk.
- Run a simple species count day.
- Share outcomes publicly to build momentum.

For additional information

- Factsheet: [Principle 4 of the Sports for Nature Framework](#)



Measurement and Accountability

Step 7 | Rotate the Strike: Measure, report and strengthen accountability

Lasting progress depends on credible measurement and transparent reporting. Establishing clear indicators and tracking outcomes helps organisations understand whether actions are improving biodiversity, reducing resource use and strengthening environmental resilience. Sharing progress builds trust and helps environmental commitments become part of everyday decision making across the game. Accountability transforms sustainability from aspiration into embedded practice.

What to do

- Establish simple indicators for biodiversity, water use, energy consumption and procurement practices.
- Track progress annually.
- Share progress publicly where appropriate, for example through annual reports or club communications.
- Align reporting with recognised frameworks where possible.
- Review and refine actions based on evidence.

Reading the conditions

- Without measurement, sustainability work stays as an aspiration, we need to show what it worked.
- Transparent reporting is what earns trust from members, funders and partners.
- Consistent, year-on-year data turns guesswork into evidence-based decisions.
- Visible accountability is what separates credible action from good intentions across the sport.

From the game

Across cricket, environmental scrutiny is beginning to take more concrete form through measurement, reporting and improved data. The Desert Vipers have published their carbon footprint and aligned their work with recognised sport-environment frameworks, helping to build credibility and attract sustainability-focused partners. At [Lord's Cricket Ground](#), procurement and supply-chain data are also being refined to improve accuracy and consistency over time. Together, these examples show that accountability is not a one-off report, but an ongoing process of measuring impact, strengthening evidence and using that evidence to guide better decisions and continuous improvement.

Getting started

- Identify three indicators you can realistically track this season.
- Start with available data rather than waiting for perfection.
- Share progress internally before publishing externally.
- Improve consistency year by year.



Other Resources

- ↗ International Olympic Committee (IOC) - [Sustainability Strategy](#) - aims to minimise IOC's footprint and maximise positive influence across social, environmental and economic spheres.
- ↗ LA28 [Resilient by Nature strategy](#) – aims to minimise environmental impact, through the use of existing venues and prioritise reuse across the Games' temporary infrastructure, as well as prioritising the use of clean energy and transportation.
- ↗ [Sports For Nature](#) – joint initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, International Olympic Committee, United Nations Environment Programme, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy, which aims to deliver transformative action for nature across sports, by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration.
- ↗ [The Next Test](#) – a non-profit organisation providing education and resources on cricket and climate change, including [ideas about nature](#).
- ↗ [Cricket For Climate](#) – established by Australian men's player, Pat Cummins, this is a player-led movement to raise awareness of the impact of climate change on cricket.
- ↗ [BASIS](#) – UK-based association for sustainability in sport. Resources include the [Hit For Six](#) report about the impact of climate change on cricket
- ↗ [Cricket Development Network](#) – UK-based organisation providing support for cricket clubs.

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About Sports for Nature

Sports for Nature is a joint initiative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Olympic Committee (IOC), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Dona Bertarelli Philanthropy.

It aims to deliver transformative action for nature through sports, by 2030 and beyond, enabling sports to champion nature and contribute to its protection and restoration. It provides a game plan for sports – at all levels – to accelerate and inspire others to take action for nature.

Founding partners



International
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For more information:
team@sportsfornature.org
www.sportsfornature.org