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Sailing Towards a Sustainable Future: Leveraging the Power of Watersports to Promote
Ocean Conservation and Development in Coastal Communities

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Abstract

This study explores the potential of watersports to drive sustainable development in coastal regions through the deployment of international sports events. With limited research on how to leverage such events to address environmental challenges, this study employs exploratory research methods to analyze the economic opportunities created by watersports and how they can incentivize coastal communities to protect their marine environment. The findings suggest that hosting international sports events can accelerate these opportunities, and provide guidance for long-term strategies to create lasting legacies. While further quantitative data is necessary, this research underscores the potential of sports as catalysts for sustainable development.

Keywords

Watersports; Coastal Regions; International Sport Events; Ocean Conservation; Sustainable Development; Event Legacy; Legacy Management.

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I. Introduction

The "Decade of Change", a term coined by The United Nations in 2020, urges communities to solidify efforts toward sustainable development. Nevertheless, the current environmental crisis aggravates the task and reduces opportunities for sustainable development. Given this, this research focuses on the conditions of coastal regions and the challenges of ocean conservation.

Albeit marine resources and ecosystem are pivotal for coastal communities' economic growth and livelihood, as well as contribute to US\$1.5 trillion of the global economy (MacBain, 2023), efforts for ocean conservation remains limited, whilst coastal regions are increasingly more exposed to ocean degradation's threats, aggravating the challenges to achieve sustainable development.

Nevertheless, researchers have suggested that individuals residing nearby marine ecosystems and/or conducting activities by or in the ocean, develop "innate" sustainable behaviors and attitudes. In turn, scholars investigated whether individuals' "connection with nature" could be positively correlated with increased motivation to protect the natural environments surrounding them (Fox, Marshall, and Dankel, 2021). Given this, we could infer that individuals that engage in activities that bring them in contact with the ocean, such as watersports, are more motivated to sustain efforts for ocean conservation.

On another hand, watersports are a booming industry: with more people involved in watersports, both as a leisure or professional career, experts predict an annual growth of 6.09% CAGR in the next years (Statista, 2022). Given this, watersports appear as profitable opportunities for coastal communities to capitalize on, advancing local economic growth and fueling development.

On that account, we investigate the hypothesis that watersports can be catalyzed to promote local development, whilst also enhancing individual mobilization towards ocean conservation, advancing effective solutions to protect the marine ecosystem. This research will address two main research questions: first, to what extent can watersports create opportunities for sustainable development and ocean conservation in coastal communities? Second, how can coastal communities leverage International sports events (ISEs) to accelerate mechanisms for ocean conservation and sustainable development through watersports?

This study will contribute to the understanding of watersports as funnels for sustainable development, accelerated by leveraging ISEs.

II. Literature Review

The bidding process for international sports events sparks heated debates. This is due to the historical tendency for host cities to incur significant debts and be burdened with unused sports facilities, also known as "white elephants.". In response, international governing bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), emphasize the importance of making ISEs more sustainable: that is, delivering benefits for the hosting community that remain even after the event.

Within the literature, the debate segments two main schools of thought. On one hand, scholars denounce the oxymoron between ISE and sustainability claim, which given their scale, infrastructural needs, and the displacement of the populations, make them inherently unsustainable. On the other, researchers eulogize ISE, for the effective management of their legacy, the planned and unplanned, positive and negative, intangible and tangible structures created through an event that remains after the event (Preuss 2007), can be leveraged to create solutions and benefits in the hosting community.

Nevertheless, we aim to make sense of this discussion: by first exploring the critiques outlined by the first group of scholars and then, navigating the praises for ISE as catalysts for sustainable development. Given this, we identify a gap in the literature, which fails to investigate the impact of ISE on environmental issues as well as, leverage ISE to formulate benefits and solutions for the environment in the hosting community.

The concept of a "mega-event strategy" refers to the pursuit of hosting high-profile events as a means of promoting and justifying local development efforts (Burbank, Andranovich, Heying, 2002). However, Andranovich, Burbank, and Heying (2001) have identified shortcomings in this approach. They highlight the fact that while host governments prioritize long-term objectives, international sports events (ISEs) are organized by private committees that prioritize short-term and immediate successes and lack any official commitment to public officials. This conflict of interest makes it difficult to integrate local development objectives into the ISE strategy, ultimately jeopardizing the event's sustainability.

Hayes and Horne (2011) echo this criticism, emphasizing the independent nature of ISE committees and their lack of involvement from the local community during the planning, implementation, and dissolution of the event. The scholars assert that this "top-down" and "elitist" governing structure of ISEs is incapable of delivering long-term benefits for the host community, underscoring the need for greater collaboration between local stakeholders and organizing committees.

Hayes and Horne (2011) further critique the environmental sustainability of ISEs. They note that since the environmental issues encountered during the Albertville Winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has required local Olympic organizing committees (OOCs) to integrate "green aspects" into their bids (Weiler and Mohan, 2010). To brand their

events as "environmentally sustainable," OOCs often implement "carbon neutral" schemes and "disposable" infrastructures that can be dissolved and reused for new purposes after the games. However, the authors question the effectiveness of these measures. They argue that carbon schemes only cover emissions released during the event, failing to mitigate the correlated carbon emissions released before and after. Additionally, while disposable infrastructures enable host communities to commit fewer resources to long-term urban development plans, their implementation and dissolution can still impact and alter the environment.

In contrast, there is a growing body of research that highlights their potential to address local development issues. These praises build upon Preuss' research on ISEs, which identifies and measures the development of an event's legacy as tangible and intangible impacts that remain after the event (2007).

Preuss and Chris Gratton later collaborate to develop a theoretical framework that delivers long-term benefits through ISEs' legacy management (2008). Leveraging these findings, scholars Danny O'Brien and Laurence Chalip identify different "leveraging resources" inherent to ISEs that can be catalyzed to create opportunities that advance economic and social objectives, ultimately enhancing the event's sustainability.

Furthermore, Weiler and Mohan (2010) argue that ISEs can bring attention to local challenges that have been silenced when organizing committees closely collaborate with the host community and integrate responses to their needs as part of the event's legacy strategy. This is why the OECD recognizes "mega event strategy" as a powerful tool to advance local development and tackle unaddressed issues, reiterating the importance of the local community throughout the event's planning, implementation, and dissolution (2017).

Finally, Pellegrino and Hancock (2020) showcase the force of ISEs in accelerating the fulfillment of local long-term objectives. The strict deadlines and added international attention motivate host governments to "do well" and implement the conditions necessary to achieve their goals more rapidly.

Overall, the literature on the sustainability of ISEs presents a complex and varied discussion. Scholars have examined both the limitations and potential benefits of ISEs for promoting local development and generating solutions to pressing challenges.

However, it is important to note that the literature has some limitations. While much attention has been devoted to exploring the potential of ISEs to promote social and economic sustainability, there has been little discussion of their potential to support environmental sustainability.

To address this gap, we aim to contribute to the existing body of research by investigating how ISEs can be leveraged to support environmental sustainability. Specifically, we will focus on the urgent issue of ocean degradation in coastal regions, exploring how ISEs can be used to create mechanisms for the sustainable management of ocean resources.

III. Watersport Economies as Catalysts for Ocean Conservation: Exploring the Opportunities for Sustainable Development

The town of Nazare, as described by former mayor Walter Chicarro, prides itself as an "international city" owing to its unique underwater topography that attracts visitors from around the globe to witness the famous "Nazare's big waves". Before its current status as a globally renowned surfing destination, Nazare's economy had been in decline for a considerable period. However, a surge in tourism occurred when Garrett McNamara achieved the feat of riding a

wave comparable to the size of a 10-story building, thus setting the world record for the "biggest wave ever surfed".

Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the phenomenon of utilizing watersports such as surfing and sailing for local development is not peculiar to Nazare, as several other towns in Portugal have experienced similar positive growth. Additionally, it is worth observing that these watersports hubs demonstrate a significant commitment to the preservation of their marine ecosystem.

Consequently, having examined the positive economic impacts of watersports, such as heightened tourism and business growth, we proceed to investigate the potential association between these benefits and the degree of motivation that local governments possess to pursue ocean conservation practices.

In recent decades, the tourism industry has experienced rapid expansion due to the growing availability of leisure time and accessible transportation. In tandem with this trend, there has been a shift in consumer preferences toward coastal and rural destinations, as individuals seek increased contact with nature, fresh air, and water (UNWTO, 2021). As a result, coastal economies have benefited significantly from this boom, with balneal tourism alone accounting for 39% of the Blue Economy's profit in Europe (European Commission, 2022).

However, despite the considerable benefits of coastal tourism, the seasonal nature of this industry, which sees a large influx of visitors within a limited timeframe, also presents challenges for coastal economies. During the low season, businesses temporarily shut down, resulting in limited economic activity that deprives residents of essential services and amenities. Consequently, coastal regions have begun to explore alternative tourism segments, such as sports tourism, to attract visitors year-round. A case in point is Vilamoura, which, having experienced the drawbacks of balneal tourism, undertook a strategic shift by developing

exceptional sailing facilities. This investment has transformed Vilamoura into a world-renowned sailing destination, regularly hosting international regattas, Olympic teams, and sailing enthusiasts (Informação, 2022).

In June 2021, Rita Marques, Portugal's Secretary of Tourism, embarked on the "Sun Cat I", a 12-meter catamaran powered entirely by Portuguese solar energy and equipped with Portuguese technology and expertise. This impressive vessel represents a significant breakthrough in nautical research and development, as well as a testament to the economic potential of watersports in creating local opportunities for growth and generating revenues. Moreover, the fact that the boat was designed and launched in the Algarve, highlights the positive association between the regions's positioning as a well-established sailing destination and its appeal to attract research, technology, and know-how for innovative developments in sailing.

Furthermore, the development of a watersports-based economy in coastal regions creates opportunities for business and employment. Ericeira, for example, has continuously strengthened its reputation as a world-leading "surf Mecca" since hosting the Surf World Championship in 1977, spawning numerous relevant businesses. "58" is currently the largest surf shop in Portugal and hosts events with elite surfers that are covered by international media. Ericeira represents an attractive ecosystem for new companies, with many entrepreneurs venturing into the surf-gear industry and beginning their journey there due to its proximity to consumers. "Palm & Pine", "Brusco", and "Semente" are just a few industry names that established themselves amidst the surf breaks of Ericeira.

Finally, as coastal regions invest in specific watersports amenities, the development of "educational" structures that provide training for amateur up to elite athletes stimulates GDP

growth. In 2019, surf-related training entities accounted for 400 million euros of Portugal's GDP (Do Canto Moniz Martins 2019).

It can be inferred that the economic benefits derived from watersports, including sports tourism and related businesses, motivate governments to implement ocean conservation measures. The revenue generated by watersports not only contributes to local development but also highlights the value of marine environments and the economic costs associated with their degradation. For example, Nazare has taken preventative and protective measures to safeguard its shores, including investing in sand-cleaning machines, limiting car traffic, and implementing waste management reforms, to ensure that its world-renowned big waves continue to attract international sports events, sports tourists, and global audiences (Wieser 2019). Similarly, Ericeira has adopted a conservation-guided plan to preserve its world-class surf breaks, leading to its designation as a "Surfing Reserve," which restricts infrastructure development, industrial fishing, as well as harmful oil and gas exploration (Surfrider Foundation 2011).

For this reason, we assert that watersports play a crucial role in promoting local development, thereby creating avenues to reinforce the conservation of marine ecosystems

IV. Grassroot Conservation: Pathway for Sustainable Ocean Management.

However, UNESCO acknowledges that successful ocean conservation efforts rely on the population's comprehension of their impact on and reliance upon the marine ecosystem. To achieve this, UNESCO advocates for increased "ocean literacy" among coastal communities, which refers to their knowledge of essential principles and fundamental concepts of the ocean's functioning. The existing literature suggests that watersports serve as an effective, albeit informal, means of educating practitioners and enhancing their ocean literacy (Steel et al., 2005).

It is important to note that as individuals become more aware of the pressing need for ocean conservation, they are increasingly driven to effect positive change (Rosznak, 1995). Consequently, there are several grassroots organizations focused on environmental conservation that have arisen from the watersports community. For example, in South Wales, Australia, "Take 3" was a campaign launched by two surfers who were dismayed by the state of their local beaches. By encouraging people to collect trash on the shorelines, the campaign has built a community of over 300,000 members and collected over 10 million pieces of rubbish in just one year (Dmytriak, van der Graaf, & Reker, 2019). Similarly, in Cascais, Portugal, "Movimento Claro" was initiated by scuba divers determined to clean and protect the town's underwater environment.

Grassroots movements are widely recognized as an effective way to advance solutions for environmental issues since they are rooted in the local community and have a better understanding of the environmental challenges the community faces (Dmytriak, van der Graaf, and Reker 2019). Moreover, these movements can leverage large international attention, as seen with the International Operating Surfing Foundation, which was founded in the USA in 1990 and now operates in 14 different countries. This foundation involves stakeholders across different sectors, including policymakers, coastal developers, scientists, and local volunteers, to formulate solutions to improve the oceans' health.

To advance ocean conservation, it is crucial that local governments become aware of the particular threats, challenges, and needs that degrading oceans entail for their community and implement solutions accordingly. Thus, it is recommended that local coastal governments strengthen their networks with local environmental grassroots movements and actively collaborate toward ocean conservation governance.

Watersports not only create economic opportunities for coastal communities but also make the value of the ocean ecosystem explicit, motivating coastal governments to undertake conservation measures. To sustain these efforts, the population needs to become more ocean literate, which can be achieved through watersports. This awareness motivates individuals to protect their oceans and enhances their value as an economic resource. Local governments should engage with their community by implementing effective ocean conservation governance, including collaborating with grassroots movements for more effective solutions to local environmental issues.

**V. Leveraging International Sports Events to Drive Ocean Conservation:
Mechanisms for Sustainable Development.**

The development of watersports economies can provide a catalyst for coastal development and foster better environmental practices. However, the urgency of the threats facing our oceans requires the rapid deployment of protective mechanisms. Drawing from the literature on International Sporting Events (ISEs), we propose that managing the legacy of ISEs strategically can integrate events to drive local development around watersports. Due to the high stakes, strict deadlines, and international pressure, this approach has the potential to accelerate the process. Therefore, coastal localities should aim to host ISEs that bolster their position as watersport tourism destinations and reinforce their economies, while also establishing collaborative networks between organizing bodies and the local community to advance shared solutions for ocean conservation that are relevant to locals.

To integrate long-term objectives into ISE organization and advance local development, coastal locations must bid for ISEs with relevant infrastructural development for the watersports amenities they wish to develop. Barcelona's successful strategy during the 1992 Olympics showcased this approach, where the city invested in infrastructural development, leading to

improved transportation, facilities, and urban regeneration to enhance its attractiveness as a tourist destination. Similarly, hosting ISEs revolving around watersports can boost coastal regions' watersport economies, as demonstrated by Vilamoura and Ericeira's regular hosting of ISEs around sailing and surfing. These ISEs promote the locations' branding as watersport destinations, showcasing their quality infrastructures and optimal habitat for watersports. Such an approach can also capitalize on the high stakes, strict deadlines, and international pressure of ISEs, accelerating the process of infrastructural development.

Furthermore, the collaboration between organizing committees, local municipalities, and local populations is critical to effectively manage the legacy of ISEs and promote sustainable development while addressing environmental threats faced by host locations. To achieve this, organizing committees should closely work with civic society groups to create collaborative networks that enable local populations to advance relevant issues and propose solutions. This approach has been successful in the past, such as in Toronto's bid for the 1996 Olympics, where the organizing commissions engaged the entire population, including mobilized groups, to integrate mechanisms that addressed long-standing issues and ensured inclusive participation in decision-making. Thus, close collaboration between organizing committees and local grassroots movements is necessary to deploy ISEs' legacy for sustainable development and environmental conservation in a way that is relevant and inclusive to local populations.

Coastal localities must recognize the significance of ISEs beyond their immediate economic benefits and instead focus on utilizing the events' legacy to promote long-term local development and ocean conservation through watersports. Furthermore, for ISEs to contribute

positively to local development, it is necessary to integrate a collaborative process into the planning of ISE to achieve an effective legacy and fostering greater receptiveness and engagement around solutions for ocean conservation.

VI. Advancing Ocean Conservation through an International Sports Event: The Implementation of the Sea Olympics

The urgency of tackling the world's biggest challenges in the next 10 years, encompassing social, economic, and environmental issues, has been called by the United Nations the "decade of change" (UN, 2020). To make this a reality, UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres has urged all sectors to mobilize action at global, local, and individual levels (Guterres, 2019). In response, we propose the Sea Olympics, an international sporting event dedicated to promoting ocean conservation solutions across three dimensions: global, local, and individual scales.

To achieve this goal, it is essential to leverage existing theories and knowledge from other international sports events (ISE) and integrate them into a project plan tailored to the Sea Olympics. This plan will justify the event's objectives and outcomes, highlighting how they will serve as catalysts for improved ocean conservation. The Sea Olympics' audience will be leveraged to develop a robust marketing and promotional strategy, and an overview of the event's revenue and costs will be provided. Strategies for engaging stakeholders necessary to fulfill the Sea Olympics' objectives will also be presented.

By rotating the event across coastal regions worldwide, showcasing diverse marine ecosystems, and involving local individuals in initiatives and decision-making processes for ocean conservation, the Sea Olympics aims to become a catalyst for change toward a better future. Its overarching mission is to promote solutions tailored to local coastal regions' needs while engaging a global audience in raising awareness of the urgency of ocean preservation.

Through its multi-dimensional approach, the Sea Olympics is poised to become a globally recognized ISE, promoting sustainable development and ocean conservation as its core values.

a. Overview and Concept

International Sports Events (ISEs) can be distinguished by their short-term and long-term impacts. Short-term impacts refer to temporary changes in the hosting locality, such as increased tourism revenue, media attention, or international visitors. Conversely, long-term impacts refer to the event's legacy, which extends beyond the event itself. It is important to note that both dimensions should align with the long-term objectives aimed to be achieved by hosting an international sports event.

With this in mind, the Sea Olympics aims to address the challenge of ocean conservation and sustainable development of coastal regions, fostering solutions with immediate and sustained impact. Its mission is to create a legacy, leveraging watersports competitions as a means of promoting ocean conservation by facilitating the development of sustainable mechanisms that enable the sustainable management of marine and coastal environments alike. The Sea Olympics will have diverse watersports competitions rotating amongst various coastal localities, showcasing different marine environments and cultures. Ultimately, the Sea Olympics aspires to become a world-renowned ISE that attracts top athletes in various watersports disciplines and leaves a lasting legacy that drives progress toward sustainable development and ocean conservation..

b. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

i. Objectives

The Sea Olympics' objectives contribute to its vision and act as benchmarks for host location to ensure a positive and impactful legacy:

1. Engaging the local community: Based on Toronto's successful collaborative bid for the Olympic Games, it is clear that the planning and legacy of the Sea Olympics must

involve the local population. This collaboration ensures that previously unaddressed issues are integrated into the event's planning and legacy, creating a more inclusive and sustainable impact on the host community. (Weiler and Mohan, 2010).

2. **Raise awareness:** In order to address the current shortcomings of ocean conservation, it is essential that all individuals take action. However, this can only be achieved through a mobilized and educated public that fully understands the issues at hand (Daigle and Vasseur, 2019).
3. **Showcase local culture:** Sports events have an emotional dimension that creates a bond between the audience and the hosting city's heritage, encouraging visitors to return to the city even after the event has concluded (Knott, Fyall, and Jones, 2016).
4. **Create new networks:** the involvement of various stakeholders in ISEs can create opportunities for partnerships between governing authorities and civil society groups such as NGOs, corporations, and international organizations (Gratton and Preuss, 2008).

ii. Expected outcomes

1. **Equal Benefits:** The collaborative and participatory organization of the Sea Olympics can ensure that the benefits of the games are distributed equitably among all populations, rather than being solely focused on the interests of the most powerful stakeholders (Weiler and Mohan, 2010).
2. **Strengthened Watersports Ecosystem:** by leveraging the infrastructural developments of the Sea Olympics and aligning them with the host locality's watersport offerings, a sustainable watersports ecosystem can be fostered (Gratton and Preuss, 2008).
3. **Community-led conservation:** Ocean-literate individual are more engaged in conservation: mobilizing into environmental groups they promote solutions coherent with local needs.

4. Advance scientific research: To guarantee a sustained and favorable effect on the environment, it is crucial to carefully observe the impact of the event on the natural ecosystem prior to and following the event's completion (Gratton and Preuss, 2008). In light of this, the Sea Olympics is committed to integrating monitoring and evaluation tools to continually assess the state of its marine ecosystem. This will offer coastal regions new data and measurement techniques to improve their endeavors towards ocean conservation.

c. Market Segmentation and Target Audience

i. Segmentation

The practice of user segmentation in sports events is still limited, but Pitta et al's (2015) research suggest an approach that begins with understanding the desired outcomes of the segmentation. Specifically, the scholar recommends segmenting sport event audiences to comprehend their attitude towards sponsored brand recall, to maximize sponsorships' return on investment. Building on this framework, we seek to segment the Sea Olympics audience to maximize their awareness and willingness to take action for ocean conservation, thereby increasing their ocean literacy. To achieve this, we will consider various factors that influence our variable (ocean literacy), including the level of education, disposable income, geographical location, interest in watersports, and age.

ii. Target Audience

To effectively promote ocean literacy and sustainable behaviors, the Sea Olympics must attract an audience that is receptive to these ideals and motivated to mobilize toward ocean conservation. Research suggests that individuals who live near marine ecosystems or engage in activities such as fishing or watersports are more likely to be receptive to ocean literacy. Additionally, higher levels of education and civic participation are positively correlated with "pro-environmental" behaviors. These factors are often associated with increased disposable income, which can enable individuals to participate in volunteer associations and other civic

initiatives. Age is also a significant factor, as younger individuals tend to associate more positively with the sea and demonstrate higher levels of ocean literacy and engagement in conservation efforts. Thus, by targeting individuals who exhibit these characteristics, the Sea Olympics can maximize its impact on ocean conservation and promotion of sustainable behaviors.

The Sea Olympics has identified a specific target audience composed of younger individuals residing in coastal areas and actively participating in marine activities, particularly watersports. This audience is characterized by higher levels of education and disposable income, suggesting a greater inclination towards ocean literacy and a heightened motivation to engage in sustainable and conservation actions. Hence, this target audience presents a valuable opportunity for the Sea Olympics' marketing efforts.

d. Marketing and Promotional Strategies

The London 2012 Olympic Games served as a significant catalyst for the evolution of marketing strategies in the international sports industry. Leveraging the proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the democratization of smartphones and wireless connections, innovative marketing strategies were implemented to enhance data collection and distribution mechanisms, as well as emphasize the use of social media channels. As a result, new opportunities have emerged for International Sports Events (ISE) to engage with their audiences by providing tailored experiences, resulting in increased fan expectations for a customized mix of physical and digital experiences (Santomier, Hogan, & Kunz, 2017).

Considering this trend, it is crucial for the Sea Olympics to recognize the importance of multiple communication channels and promotional techniques in order to reach and connect with its audience. Therefore, three marketing approaches are suggested to optimize event attendance, generate hype, and improve audience experiences.

1. *Influencer Marketing*: Incorporating prominent figures and athletes into the marketing strategy is imperative for establishing credibility and cultivating consumer trust as well as, influencers and athletes can serve as role models (Santomier, Hogan, and Kunz, 2017)
2. *Broadcast Partnerships*: broadcast partnerships have proven successful in increasing viewership for major events, as demonstrated by NBC's "pass the torch" campaign for the Tokyo Olympics. Hence, it is essential for the SEA Olympics to partner with broadcast channels to distribute the event and leverage its existing audience to garner international attention (Pollack, 2022).
3. *Sponsorships*: sponsorships and partnerships with internationally recognized entities can help raise the profile of the Sea Olympics and draw media attention by aligning with the athletes' and entities' agendas. The Ocean Race's international recognition, for instance, enables it to highlight the host locality's conservation efforts. Thus, collaborating with well-established brands can increase the Sea Olympics' notoriety and raise awareness of its significance.

e. Revenues and costs

The majority of International Sporting Events (ISEs) follow an auction-like process which often results in the "winner's curse", leaving host cities in economic distress despite promised benefits. A recent analysis by Flyvbjerg et al. (2021) has shown that the financial model used by ISEs, such as the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup, may be flawed. Specifically, costs are socialized and undertaken by the hosting government, while revenues are privatized and directed towards the decentralized organization committee and governing sports federation (*Fig. 1*). This imbalance can result in unexpected as bidding committees often fail to conduct sound economic evaluations during the feasibility study.

Drawing from the experience of Toronto's council-mounted task force, the "Toronto Olympic Commitment," it is recommended that a local task force be established to oversee the budget outline for the event and integrate local knowledge and needs into the feasibility study. Additionally, it is suggested that costs be decentralized between the organizing committee and the hosting government, with the former subsidizing a portion of the venues, security, and infrastructural costs undertaken by the hosting government (*Fig. 2*). This approach would increase the organization committee's stake in conducting accurate feasibility assessments and organizing the event. On the other hand, revenue streams, such as ticketing, sponsorships, licensing, and broadcasting, remain channeled towards the organizing committee whilst the host locality gains indirect revenue benefits both in the short term and through sound legacy management.

f. Sustainability and legacy planning

International Sporting Events (ISEs) are complex and costly projects, to ensure that these events are based on sustainable principles: yielding benefits for the hosting community and mitigating negative externalities, it is essential to integrate a sustainability model into the project management process (Sousa, Lima, e Martins 2016).

In the case of the Sea Olympics, we recommend few considerations to ensure the Sea Olympics' sustainability:

1. *Long-term strategy*: the event must be planned with a long-term strategy that considers the future objectives of the host city and blends the tangible and intangible legacies of the Sea Olympics with those objectives (Gratton e Preuss 2008).
2. *Sustainable Networks*: the Sea Olympics must foster public-private solid partnerships that can continue to create value after the event.

3. *Public Participation*: citizens must be consulted throughout all the organization phases to ensure that the Sea Olympics are integrated into the long-term vision of the host city (OCDE, 2017).
4. *Sustainability benchmarks*: it is necessary to outline specific indicators that can measure the progress of sustainability throughout the Sea Olympics and to integrate a plan to extract and analyze data regarding the conditions of the marine ecosystem and the criteria influencing it.
5. *Knowledge Handover*: to ensure continuous improvement and access to collected insights, it is crucial to implement a stable body in charge of transferring knowledge from one host city to another, and from one generation to another (Sousa, Lima, e Martins 2016).

VII. Assessing the Potential of Sea Olympics as a Sustainable and Meaningful Legacy for Cascais' Long-term Strategy.

The literature on international sports events reveals that their legacy is multifaceted and dynamic. Different events require different structures, attract distinct audiences, bring in diverse partners, and generate varying media coverage. However, it is possible to create synergies between event legacies, with some structures being prerequisites for others, such as sports facilities. Thus, a clear "event strategy" enables host communities to develop a coherent plan that leverages different events to achieve long-term objectives (Preuss, 2007).

The municipality of Cascais provides a prime example of an established event strategy. With 30km of coastline, Cascais regularly hosts various international events that deliver sustainable and meaningful legacies, fulfilling Cascais' long-term objectives. To positively contribute to Cascais' development, it is crucial to assess the value of the Sea Olympics' legacy in regard to Cascais' long-term objectives. Thus, it is essential to comprehend Cascais' current event strategy, objectives, and vision.

Therefore, we conducted informal interviews with the municipality's stakeholders, including the Head of Future, Head of Tourism, and Head of Environment. From this, the fit of the Sea Olympics within the strategy can be investigated as a catalyst for ocean conservation, promoting Cascais' agenda. We then also integrate a quantitative analysis to assess the Sea Olympics' audience and preferences, as well as Cascais' capacity to integrate them as hosts of the event.

For ISE to produce sustained benefits, legacy management must be early-on integrated into the event's planning. The type of legacy the host community aims to reap is part of a thought-out long-term strategy geared towards achieving long-term goals. As Marco Espineira noted during our discussions, Cascais' event strategy focuses on attracting internationally recognized events that increase Cascais' presence in global media outlets and connect it to the world. The Head of Tourism, Bernardo Barros, further explains that these events are vehicles for fulfilling long-term objectives, such as developing and promoting Cascais as a surfing and sailing destination, increasing international tourism, and growing the number of returning visitors.

Cascais hosts surfing and sailing events that are part of international competition circuits such as the World Surf League (WSL) and Volvo's Ocean Race. The infrastructure requirements for these events integrate Cascais' long-term demands and develop necessary amenities for surfing and sailing. Furthermore, the international profile of these events attracts global media, enabling Cascais to shape and promote its image as a surfing and sailing hotspot to worldwide audiences, increasing international sports tourism influx. Both WSL and Ocean Race advocate for ocean conservation, a commitment that aligns with Cascais' image and branding strategies.

Since 2017, Cascais has become a new addition to Iron Man's race calendar. Barros explains that the recurrent schedule fosters a sense of loyalty between participants and the location of the race, fueling an influx of returning tourists. This is valuable to Cascais' vision as returning tourists appear more likely to invest in Cascais real estate by becoming residents or buying property, enhancing Cascais' international culture.

This being said, to ensure the Sea Olympics contributes effectively to Cascais' vision as a surfing and sailing destination, it is essential that it showcases the town's offer in these areas by attracting interested audiences and media coverage. One strategy for achieving this is by hosting watersport competitions that are coherent with the natural topography of the hosting location. Cascais is well-positioned to leverage its existing sailing amenities, located at the Clube Naval in Cascais' marina, as well as, expertise in hosting regattas of international calibre. Similarly, Cascais' "linha" is home to various surf breaks, offering optimal conditions for long boards, short boards, and stand-up paddles (SUP). By hosting sailing and surfing events as part of the Sea Olympics, Cascais can showcase its culture and outstanding offer for surfing and sailing, reinforcing its position as a sailing and surfing hotspot.

Furthermore, as the Sea Olympics aims to highlight local natural environments and mobilize the population, Cascais can attract the attention of international media outlets. Research suggests that events that celebrate local natural and cultural heritage and foster a sense of community are more appealing to the media and help generate positive legacies (O'Brien and Chalip, 2008). Hence, the Sea Olympics appears to possess the necessary characteristics to leverage a positive legacy for Cascais and sustain benefits that advance its long-term vision.

To assess the viability of hosting the Sea Olympics in Cascais, it is crucial to first determine if there is an audience interested in attending in-person competitions that promote

sustainability values. Therefore, we conducted a survey targeting individuals who align with the Sea Olympics' target audience, sampling the Nova SBE community due to its proximity to the ocean, younger and educated demographic, and international composition. Results of the survey indicate a high level of interest in watersports (*Fig. 3*), with 72% of respondents stating they are "very interested", and 51% practicing a watersport often (*Fig. 4*). Of the watersports surveyed, surfing was the most popular at 38%, followed by sailing (31%) and windsurfing (19%), whilst "other" accounted for 12%, encompassing various water disciplines such as swimming, rowing and synchronized swimming (*Fig. 5*).

Hence, it is relevant that the Sea Olympics integrate the surfing, sailing and windsurfing as competitive events in order to engender greater public appeal and augment the aesthetic appeal of its environment. Notably, the specific types of competitions offered by the Sea Olympics have are considered by respondent a crucial determinant to attend to attend international watersports events (45%), closely followed by "location" (33%) (*Fig. 6*).

Additionally, there is a considerable interest towards environmentally sustainable international sport events: with more than half of the respondents, indicated an interest for events that are "conscious of their environmental impact and integrate sustainable practices" (*Fig 7*), whilst 79% of participants are willing to pay "higher ticket prices for events that promote sustainability and ocean conservation efforts" (*Fig. 8*).

Based on the survey results, Cascais appears to be a promising location for the Sea Olympics, as it already possesses the infrastructure and expertise to host surfing and sailing competitions, which aligns with the town's sports tourism strategy. Based on the findings of the survey, we have discerned a prospect for Cascais to enhance its appeal to windsurfing enthusiasts. Specifically, the Sea Olympics audience evinces a predilection for windsurfing competitions, which are well-suited to the natural topography of Cascais.

The survey results underscore a call for enhanced environmental responsibility in global sports events. Accordingly, we are optimistic that the Sea Olympics can address this demand by implementing effective solutions to environmental challenges. By doing so, the Sea Olympics can serve as an exemplar of heightened environmental commitment within the realm of international sports events.

In conclusion, the Sea Olympics aligns with Cascais' event strategy, making it a potential catalyst for advancing the town's local agenda and vision. By promoting Cascais as a hub for surfing and sailing, the Sea Olympics has the potential to create a positive legacy by attracting visitors from all over the world and generating international media coverage. Our survey of the Sea Olympics target audience confirmed their high interest in watersport competitions, particularly in surfing and sailing, which align with Cascais' natural landscape.

As a result, Cascais appears to be a strong contender for hosting the Sea Olympics, with existing expertise and infrastructure in place for these disciplines. However, the survey also revealed an opportunity for Cascais to explore the development of windsurfing infrastructure to further differentiate its sports tourism strategy. Overall, the Sea Olympics presents an exciting opportunity for Cascais to leverage its natural assets and promote itself as a premier destination for watersports.

VIII. Conclusion:

The objective of our study was to contribute to the academic discourse on the role of international sports events in promoting sustainable development. Through our investigation, we identified a positive association between watersports and greater environmental attitudes, increased awareness towards environmental challenges, and their potential to foster local development. Subsequently, we explored the possibility of utilizing these elements to enhance

ocean conservation through watersports within the context of an international sports event, the Sea Olympics.

While international sports events are definitely to be considered as enabling agents of accelerating the aforementioned mechanisms, it is crucial for hosting communities to integrate their long-term objectives early in the planning process to ensure the Sea Olympics aligns with their agenda and fosters a sustained positive legacy. However, it is important to acknowledge that our research has limitations. It provides an outline of the mechanisms that can yield better solutions towards ocean conservation and fuel local development, but further research is necessary to deepen these findings.

In fact, environmental sustainability requires constant monitoring and assessment to avoid the emergence of negative externalities over the long term. Thus, it is essential to advance this research and provide recommendations for hosting cities on the tools necessary to ensure sustained environmental sustainability.

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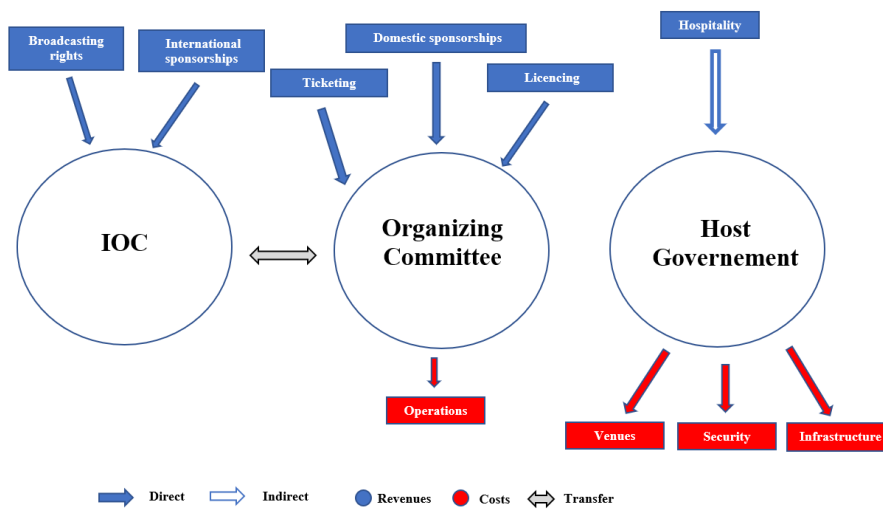
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X. Appendices

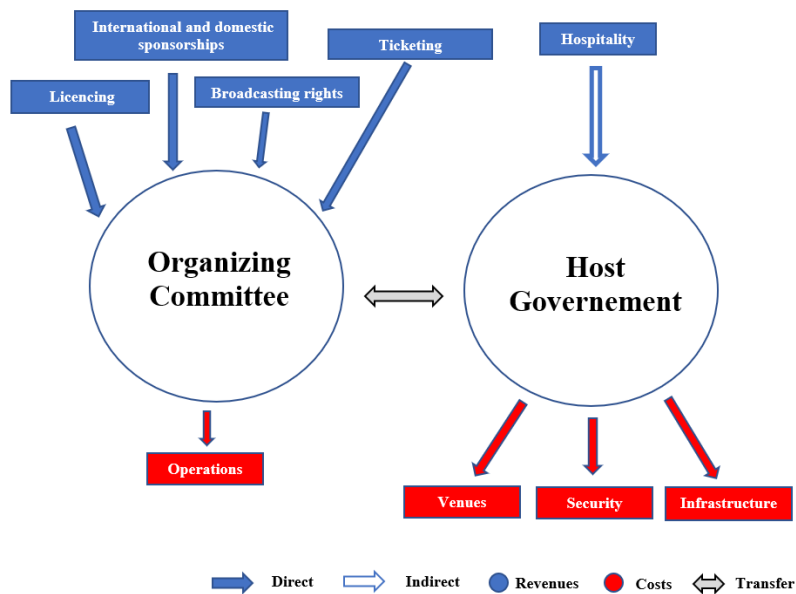
1. Sea Olympics' Financial Model Comparison From Olympic Games'

Modelling:

a. *Figure 1*; Olympic Games Financial Model



b. *Figure 2*; Sea Olympics' Financial Model



2. Interviews:

a. Marco Espineira, Cascais' Head of Future:

Purpose: To gain understanding of Cascais long term vision, event strategy and subsequent objectives

Transcription:

What is Cascais' current long-term vision? and what strategies are being implemented to sustain it.

Cascais' vision is to be an international municipality. We want to have a population with a lot of culture. One of our main strategies is to use sport as a tool to enhance Cascais' tourism positioning. We've been focusing on sports tourism, which has proven to be very successful for us.

So Cascais hosts a lot of international sports events, is this to support its sports tourism positioning?

Yes, Cascais is mostly known for surfing, sailing, and golfing, so hosting events for those sports has helped consolidate Cascais' image. But we also host a variety of other sports events that have international recognition, such as the Estoril Open and Ironman competitions. By hosting these events, we're able to connect Cascais to the world and reach a larger international audience.

In which way are these events important to Cascais' vision and tourism image?

these events have a high reach and enable us to develop tourist loyalty. For example, we have many fans of the Iron Man who return to our town each year to attend the event. By building these connections with tourists, we're able to sustain our tourism industry and keep Cascais on the map for years to come.

b. Ana Ferreira, Cascais' Department of Sea & Environment

Purpose: To comprehend the integration of environmental practises into Cascais vision and commitment of Cascais towards environmental sustainability.

Transcription:

How does Cascais integrate environmental sustainability into its long-term agenda? Are events planned with a legacy for the environment?

Cascais wants to be a role model as a sustainable city, and the environment is a crucial part of our long-term agenda. This is especially important for surf and sailing tourism, as the ocean must be in good health to support these activities. That's why we ensure that the events we host align with our commitment to the environment.

How do you ensure that events hosted in Cascais are sustainable?

We want to promote a sustainable image when we host events, so we don't host events that have a high carbon footprint or involve a lot of urban renewal. We take into account the environmental impact of each event and make sure that it aligns with our long-term sustainability goals.

What are Cascais' long-term sustainability goals?

Our long-term goal is to integrate innovations that make our area more sustainable. We aim to become a role model as a sustainable and “smart city”. We also focus on raising the community’s awareness on sustainable practices. We organize beach cleanups, educational workshops, and other events that encourage the population to get involved in sustainability efforts.

How important is community involvement in achieving Cascais' sustainability goals?

Community involvement is crucial to achieving our sustainability goals. We also have a designed "Sea Council" that brings together stakeholders from fishermen to corporations to consult and discuss decisions relating to the ocean. It allows us to take into account the different perspectives and interests of those who use and rely on the ocean and ensures that our decisions take into account different perspectives.

c. Bernardo Barros, Cascais' Head of Tourism

Purpose: Gain understanding of Cascais sport tourism strategy, focus, and the implications of hosting ISEs in Cascais.

Transcription:

What are your expectations regarding Cascais' tourism positioning when hosting an international sports event?

We value increased international communication about Cascais. This means that more people around the world will hear about our city and what we have to offer. This can help to attract more tourists to the area and increase awareness of Cascais as a tourist destination. That's why we host a lot of events that are already internationally known such as Iron Man, or the Ocean Race. They attract more media coverage.

What are the infrastructural implications of hosting surfing and sailing sports competitions in Cascais?

Well, surfing competitions don't have very many long-term infrastructural implications. For these competitions, the municipality builds temporary structures on the beach where the competition is being held. This could be at either Guincho or Carcavelos beach.

However, for sailing, it's a bit different. You need a lot of amenities to host the teams and the sailing boats. But we have invested throughout the year in the "Clube Naval" which has everything needed to host international regattas.

Was the choice to invest in sailing because a lot of tourists were sailing when they came to Cascais, or did you use sailing to attract tourism?

Actually, there was already a demand for sailing in Cascais because of our natural conditions for sailing. Our location, climate, and ocean conditions are perfect for sailing, so it made sense to invest in this sport. In addition, sports tourism is an important strategy for the area's development, so it was important to invest in sports that are coherent with Cascais' natural landscape but that also have the potential to give a profitable return on investments. The

decision to invest in sailing as a sport was also strategic in terms of promoting sports tourism in the area and attracting visitors who are interested in sports that are compatible with our natural surroundings.

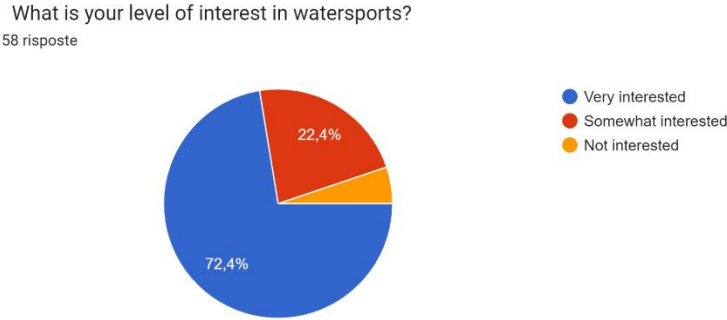
Would you then only consider international sporting events for surfing and sailing?

No, of course not. Different events attract different people and give different benefits. So our strategy is to coordinate these outcomes to promote our vision. That's why we also host marathons and tennis tournaments. We believe that these events contribute to the development of the area, by bringing in different audiences and showcasing the diverse potential of Cascais as a destination.

3. Survey Results

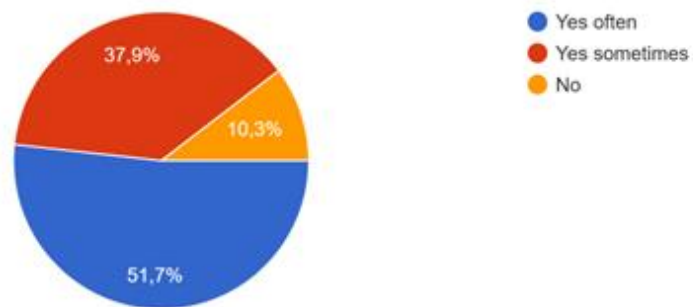
Purpose: Evaluate Sea Olympics' viability in Cascais given audience interest and sporting preferences vis a vis Cascais long term strategy, expertise and environmental offer.

a. *Figure 3*; “What is your level of interest in watersports?”

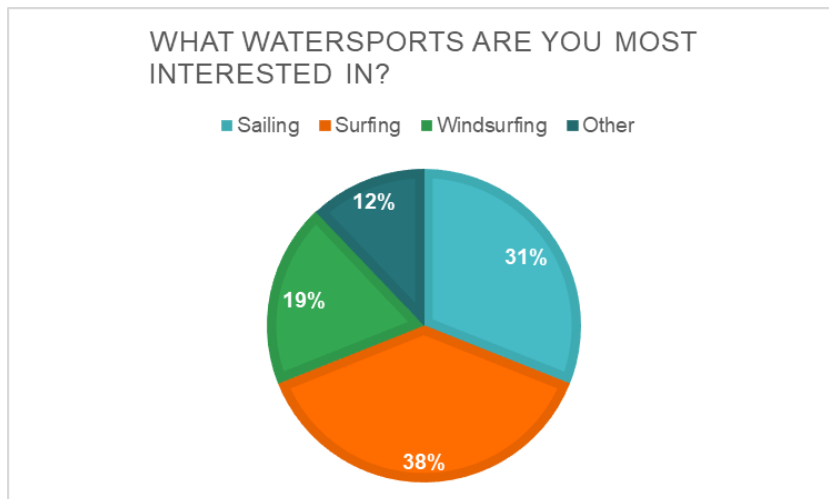


b. *Figure 4*; “Do you participate in watersports yourself?”

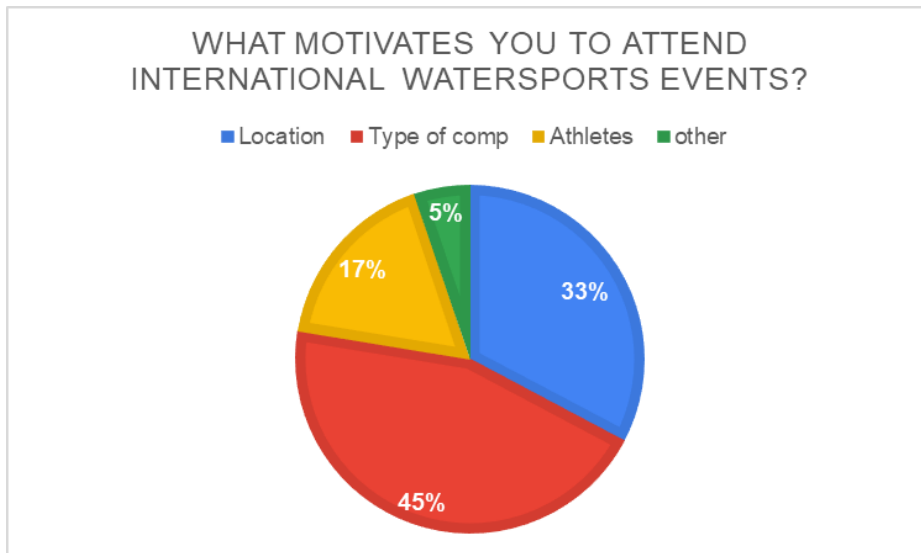
Do you participate in watersports yourself?
58 risposte



c. *Figure 5*; “What watersports are you most interested in?”



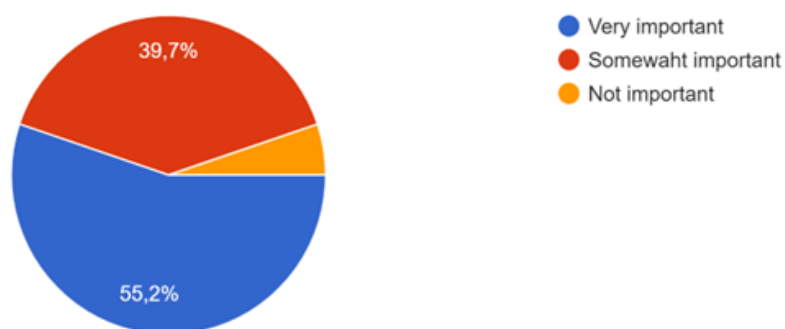
d. *Figure 6*; “What motivates you to attend International watersport events?”



- e. *Figure 7*; “How important is it for you that watersport events are conscious of their environmental impact and integrate sustainable practises?”

How important is it for you that watersport events are conscious of their environmental impact and integrate sustainable practises?

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- f. *Figure 8*; “ Would you be willing to pay a higher ticket price for an event that promotes sustainability and ocean conservation efforts? “

Would you be willing to pay a higher ticket price for an event that promotes sustainability and ocean conservation efforts?

58 risposte

