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Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

**Exploring the Potential of Santarém's Sports City Project: A Strategic Analysis of  
Economic and Touristic Prospects**

Sports Tourism - Concept, Market, Segments and its Economic Impact on Local  
Communities

João Andrade Botelho Vieira Farinha

Work Project carried out under the supervision of:

Prof. Pedro Miguel Soares Brinca

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## Group Part

### **Abstract**

In Portugal, the proliferation of Sports Cities and Academies is increasingly evident, with these initiatives playing a crucial role in nurturing young athletes and promoting physical activity within the sports ecosystem. However, challenges persist due to inadequate investment and a lack of specialization in key areas within the Portuguese football landscape.

This Work Project seeks to provide strategic recommendations for Santarém's Sports City, drawing insights from diverse case studies and best practices. The goal is to stimulate Sports tourism and enhance the local economy in the district of Santarém, contributing to the overall development of the region.

### **Keywords**

Sports Management, Sports Cities, Sports Tourism, Strategy, Urban Development, Economic Impact

**Table of Contents**

- 1. Literature Review .....5
- 2) Methodology ..... 15
  - a. SWOT Analysis ..... 15
  - b. Defining a Research Question ..... 18
- 3) Recommendations ..... 18
  - a) Women’s FootballPrioritizing Women’s Football..... 19
  - b) Education and Innovation..... 21
  - c. DiversificationPitch Rentals ..... 30
  - d. Sports Tourism..... 35
  - e. Community EngagementOpen-Air Public Spaces ..... 37
- 4) Conclusion..... 40
  - a) Limitations and areas for future research..... 40
- 5) References ..... 42
- 6) Appendix ..... 57

Group Part

### **List of Abbreviations**

SFA – Santarém Football Association

SCC – Santarém City Council

SAS – Sports Anonymous Societies

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

PFF – Portuguese Football Federation

ROI – Return on Investment

AI – Artificial Intelligence

PRE – Pre Sports City

POST – Post Sports City

## **1. Literature Review**

### **Case Study**

Following its inauguration in 2017, the Braga Sports City is nearing completion in 2023 (Record 2023). This sports complex serves as an innovative benchmark within Portugal, providing key learnings for organizations planning to embark on similar ventures. Spanning an area of 250 000 square meters, this facility is designed to cater to the needs of athletes, coaches, and staff of Sporting Clube de Braga. Daily, approximately 500 individuals utilize these infrastructures, demonstrating its significant role in the sporting community of Braga (Sporting Clube de Braga n.d).

Although it serves as a venue for various sports, the Sports City will primarily fulfill its strategic function in football. Sportingly, Braga aims for its youth teams to be the primary support system for its A team (Sporting Clube de Braga n.d). To this end, the Sports City is designed to be a true home for these young athletes, providing all necessary conditions for their sporting and academic success. Socially, the Sports City also seeks to establish itself as a key social hub for the community, extending the club's reach into the city and offering services and facilities that benefit both SC Braga members and the general public (Sporting Clube de Braga n.d). Financially, the Sports City must become a revenue source for the club. The total investment of 47 million euros was entirely funded by the club, and the president's ambition is to have this amount fully amortized by 2025 (Mais Futebol 2023).

Even though it's still too early to fully gauge the economic and social impact on the region, preliminary conclusions have been drawn regarding the sporting impact of the Sports City. The analyzed metrics are divided into two distinct periods: Pre Sports City (PRE), covering the

sports seasons from 2014-2015 to 2016-2017, and Post Sports City (POST), from 2017-2018 to 2021-2022 (Dias 2023). Beginning with the number of young athletes from the Under-15 to Under-21 levels who were called up for their respective National Teams, the most successful season in the PRE period saw 18 players selected. In contrast, the last year in the POST era witnessed a total of 48 players being called up, marking a significant increase of 166,67%. Of the total of 196 players in Sporting Braga's academy, around 9% were selected for the National Team in the best PRE year, whereas in the 2021-2022 season, this figure surged to nearly 25% (Dias 2023).

Another critical metric for Sporting de Braga's strategy is the transition of youth players to the first team. During the PRE seasons, there were no youth players who made it to the main football squad. However, following the construction of the Sports City, there has been a continual rise in this figure every season, reaching a peak in the 2021-2022 season with 18 players from the junior teams being promoted (Dias 2023).

Regarding the competitive success of Sporting de Braga's senior men's team, the club's best achievement in the PRE period was a 4th place finish in the Portuguese League with a total of 58 points. In the POST era, the club has consistently exceeded this 58-point mark in every season, notably securing a 3rd place finish in the 2019-2020 season. In terms of trophies, the POST period saw the team win two trophies - a Portuguese Cup and a League Cup - compared to one Portuguese Cup victory in the PRE era (Dias 2023).

A final indicator, concerning the number of athletes enrolled in the Under-6 to Under-9 categories, was analyzed for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 seasons. In the first year, the Under-6 category did not exist, and the total number of athletes in the other three categories amounted to 42. The following year witnessed the introduction of the Under-6 group, and in just one year, the total number of registered athletes across all four categories rose to 84, effectively doubling. (Dias 2023).

The conducted analysis shows that Sports City actively contributes to the club's strategic direction, making it a valuable asset to the club and its players.

#### **a. Sports Tourism and its Economic Impact**

In our fast-evolving society, driven by the quest for novelty and change, individuals are challenged to keep up. Today's culture is defined by the rise of self-expression, diversity in social choices, and an increasing complexity in the ways we live (Zarotis 2019). With a trend towards fewer hours spent at work and more time for ourselves, the significance of leisure and vacation periods has surged. This leisure time serves as a vital counterpoint to work, providing a space to meet a range of personal needs. In our search for varied and distinctive experiences to break the routine, it's clear that activities at the crossroads of sports, leisure, and tourism are especially adept at fulfilling these contemporary desires (Zarotis 2019).

Sport Tourism is a subset of the leisure tourism business that arises from the combination of two previously mentioned activities: sports and tourism (Melo 2019).

#### **Tourism**

Weed (2009) characterizes a tourist as a “leisure traveler on a voluntary, temporary, relatively long trip in pursuit of novelty and change”. Tourism inherently comprises three dimensions (Higham and Hinch 2018). First, the spatial component is emphasized, stating that for a person to be classified as a tourist, they need to travel outside of their home and then return. The second aspect of tourism is its transient nature, as most travelogues feature short stays away from home, typically lasting one or more nights. Furthermore, the third essential component consists of the goals or pursuits made throughout travel. Engaging in or spectating sports is one such activity, and more and more, Sports tourism has emerged as an increasingly popular form of Tourism (Higham and Hinch 2018).

In 2022, the global travel and tourism industry made a remarkable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing approximately 7.32 trillion euros to the global GDP (Statista 2023). The industry saw a resurgence in employment, with around 295 million people working in the sector. This employment figure marked a 7,9% increase from 2021 (Statista 2023).

## **Sports**

Sport can be defined as a human activity that involves physical exertion and skill, where the primary focus of the activity is on the physical aspect of it. It also involves elements of competition or social participation and is governed by formal rules and patterns of behavior established through organizations. Generally, any activity recognized as a sport is considered to fall under this definition (Clearinghouse for Sport 2021). Illustrating this, football stands as a prime example, holding the title of the most popular sport globally. In 2021, FIFA reported the identification of approximately 130 000 professional football players and over 4 400 professional clubs globally (FIFA 2021). As of 2023, the market size reached approximately 3.36 billion euros and is anticipated to continue its upward trajectory (Expert Market Research 2023).

## **Sports Tourism**

After contextualizing the two concepts, we may define sports tourism. Although it is a relatively new academic topic, the phenomenon itself has existed for many years (Melo 2019). Sports-related traveling dates back to 900 BC when the Greeks traveled to participate in the Greek and Roman Games and organized sports events that attracted crowds of fans and spectators (Melo 2019). The Sport Tourism industry has experienced substantial growth recently. By 2022, its global market value reached around 552.60 billion euros, and it is anticipated to maintain this upward trend. The industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17,5% from 2023 to 2030, reflecting its increasing economic significance and expanding market presence (Grand View Research 2022).

Between 1993 and 2015, over 30 different definitions of sports tourism were developed (Oliveira et al. 2021). Some academic authors believe that sports tourism happens when the primary reason for a person's travel is sports. For instance, if someone travels specifically to participate in a marathon, they're a sports tourist. However, if they just catch a local football game while on a trip, without planning for it, they're just a tourist who happens to enjoy a sports activity (Higham and Hinch 2018).

A point that needs to be mentioned to make the concept of sports tourism as complete as possible relates to the visit to sports attractions, such as stadiums, museums, and sports academies, among others (Chang et al. 2020). In this regard, Gibson (2006) refers to Sport Tourism as “a leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporality outside their home communities to participate and watch sports activities as well as visit sports attractions”.

Other authors focus more on distinguishing sports tourists into different segments. Visitors who attend major events such as the Olympic Games, Wimbledon Grand Slam, or FIFA World Cup are known as Event sports tourists. Active sports tourists are individuals who travel to engage in sports activities. Lastly, Nostalgia sports tourists aim to visit well-known sports halls and sites.

### **Sports Events**

Our next focus is one of the most common and popular forms of sports tourism, the participation or attendance in sports events. These events serve as robust indicators of the local impact they generate. The impact can swing between being positive and negative, with the dimension of the event and the volume of resources needed for its organization being significant determinants of this impact (Gibson et al. 2003). In this context, small-scale events encompass the regular seasons of sports such as football, basketball, volleyball, or hockey. They are marked by their utilization of pre-existing infrastructures, thereby eliminating the need for public funding for the event's execution. Also, due to their almost annual occurrence, these events bypass the

challenges of tourist seasonality and mitigate the financial and logistical burdens associated with organizing and hosting a large-scale event (Amador et al. 2016). Gibson et al., (2003) point out that small-scale events tend to have more positive effects on local communities compared to large-scale events. According to the American author, mega-scale events often lead to substantial debts for the host communities, fuel acts of corruption during the bidding process, and cause many locals to move out of the city due to infrastructure improvements, subsequently driving up local costs. Generally, the economic benefits outweigh the costs since the main cost, infrastructures, already exists (Margaret et al. 2003).

Establishing local relationships and coordinating efforts are crucial steps to produce dynamic and constant tourism flows in these small-scale events, encouraging tourists to revisit the location (Moradi et al. 2022). In this regard, planning by municipal councils along with tourist centers is essential to provide support and education to the various agents benefiting from sports tourism (Marijke et al. 2015).

Despite the efforts and collaborations required to attract and retain sports tourists, several other factors directly influence a tourist's decision to visit or not visit a particular location. Combined, these factors contribute to the competitiveness of the location, and the higher the competitiveness, the more attractive the location becomes (Moradi et al. 2022). To elucidate this rationale, we will discuss the model of Sport Tourism as a factor of economic development, created by Roche et al. (2013).

Understanding and crafting a correct strategy, considering factors P1-P12 (consult Appendix 13), such as financial cost, weather, safety, and perception of quality (among others), by sporting events managers, tourism agencies, and municipal chambers could not only enhance the presence of sports tourists at events but could elevate the destination's image, which in turn will boost tourism in general, creating an economic benefit for the locality (Chang et al. 2020).

We have identified the variables that contribute to a location's competitiveness, provided there is adequate strategy and planning by the decision-makers. But how do localities benefit from sports tourism? In the model, three benefits are outlined as P13, P14, and P15 (consult Appendix 13). Events vary in type, duration, and the segment of tourists attracted. However, generally, the more tourists, the higher the revenue, and this is precisely the premise of P13. In turn, the more tourists present in a locality, the more workers are needed, who will then spend (at least part of) their earnings in the local economy, creating a circular effect. P14 states that the more tourists in an area, the more employment is created. Lastly, premise P15 suggests that the more sports tourists travel to a locality, the more positive the image of that locality becomes. This factor is tied to the enthusiastic and contagious nature of sports, and according to Smith (2005), even non-sports tourists enjoy traveling to places where sports events are held due to the lively atmosphere created.

The model concludes that promoting a destination's attributes and culture attracts more visitors, thereby enhancing its reputation and appeal for both future and repeat visits. Sports tourism significantly impacts the local economy both directly and indirectly, with the potential to foster long-term economic growth through job creation, small business development, and an enlarged tax base (Roche et al. 2013).

### **Case Studies**

Two case studies will be discussed in this part - the first analyzes the effects of a large-scale event, while the second case focuses on the local effects of a smaller-scale event.

This first section evaluates the influence of the 2012 European Football Championship on Poland's tourism, as analyzed by Bergier et al. (2018). The event marked a significant increase in tourist numbers, with an additional 1.5 million visitors recorded in 2012, as demonstrated in Appendix 14. Notably, 650 000 of these visitors were attracted specifically by the Championship. Before this event, the annual tourist count in Poland had not surpassed 13

million. However, as Appendix 14 illustrates, there was a remarkable annual increase of over 3 million tourists from 2011 to 2015, with 2012 witnessing the most substantial year-over-year growth. While the Championship was a key factor, it was not the only contributor to this surge. The authors also mention that Poland's overall development played a significant role in enhancing its appeal as a tourist destination.

In terms of spending per tourist (consult Appendix 15), the year of the European Championship stood out among those analyzed, with a record value of 426 euros per person per day. This is logical, as sports tourists are typically willing to spend more financial resources than “normal tourists” to experience and participate in sports events (Allan et al. 2007). Further examining Appendix 15, in the years following the Championship, the amount each tourist spent was consecutively decreasing, with each of these years (2013, 2014, and 2015) recording lower values than in 2011. This effect could be explained by a negative trend identified following major events, which is the general rise in prices of goods and services (Melo and Sobry 2017). Bergier et al. (2018) also highlight that, according to a poll conducted by official Polish sources, 75% of the sports tourists who attended the European Championship expressed a desire to return to the country. The study concluded that the event served as an excellent promoter in terms of visibility and supported economic growth in the Polish tourism sector.

In the second case analysis, Amador et al. (2016) examine the economic impact of the Spanish football club, Cordoba CF, during the 2014-2015 season. This year marked a significant transition for the club as it moved up from the second tier to the first division, La Liga. The analysis is conducted under two different scenarios, labeled as conservative and progressive, which include varying rates of attendance and the average spending per spectator and match. Appendix 17 aggregates expenditures made in Cordoba's home games by group attendees outlined in Appendix 16 such as expenditures on coffee shops, public transport, restaurants, accommodation, tickets, and the expenditures of team supporters on away matches.

The 2014/2015 season marked a significant upturn in spectator attendance at games, with average numbers escalating from 9 910 in the 2013/2014 season to 20 000. This remarkable increase in spectators was mirrored by a rise in the number of other event participants, including journalists, indicating a heightened overall interest in these sporting events. Correspondingly, the economic impact of fan spending in local commerce was substantial. According to the conservative scenario, total fan expenditure in the economy surged from 5.9 million euros to 37.4 million, and in the progressive scenario, from 6.3 million euros to 41.6 million. Notably, a considerable portion of this spending was concentrated in the hotel and restaurant sector, emphasizing the significant contribution of these events to the local hospitality industry.

Considering the switching of expenditures between the seasons, a net effect has been determined by contrasting the impacts from the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 seasons. Appendix 18,19 and 20 display the effect of the shock of demand in terms of Total Production, GDP, and changes in labor after the shock, which represents the employment generated after the impact in each season, including the net effect (Amador et al. 2016).

The economic impact of expenditures related to Cordoba CF matches during the 2014-2015 season is analyzed in Appendix 17, with a focus on the contribution of broadcasting rights. These rights represent a net economic inflow to the provincial economy, which in turn stimulates new final demand, thereby enhancing production and employment levels. The increase in total expenditures, as a result of this inflow, leads to a 0.25% rise in Total Production and a 0,26% increase in Cordoba's GDP under the conservative scenario. Under the progressive scenario, these figures are even more significant, with Total Production and GDP rising by 0,28% and 0,29%, respectively. This suggests that each euro spent concerning Cordoba CF matches yields approximately 2,7 euros in production value in productive sectors. Additionally, the employment impact of this economic activity is noteworthy. The conservative scenario predicts the creation of 146 jobs, while the progressive scenario forecasts 166 jobs. Amador et

al. (2016) emphasize the positive economic implications of net expenditures associated with small-scale sporting events, noting their role in boosting not only the production of directly demanded goods and services but also the activities of suppliers.

The findings from this analysis not only highlight the substantial economic impact of Cordoba CF matches, particularly through broadcasting rights, on the regional economy but also underscore the role of sports tourism in driving economic growth. The significant upticks in total production, GDP, and job creation attest to the importance of sports events in catalyzing economic development and employment, making them crucial components of both the sports and tourism sectors.

### **New Trends & Challenges**

Despite the relatively short academic journey of sports tourism, there's already a substantial foundation for analysis regarding the concept, different segments, and sporting events, among others (Weed 2009). Gibson et al. (2018) pinpoint the key challenge for the future as delving into emerging sports contexts, such as youth sports, themed events, eSports, and fitness events, understanding how sports tourism can be leveraged into these segments. Another sector warranting research is women's football. Given the increasing participation and media coverage, it would be an intriguing challenge to discern the impacts of sports tourism on both mega and small-scale events in women's football (Oliveira et al. 2021).

To briefly provide a context of women's football's recent growth, the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup in France achieved remarkable television success, amassing a total viewership of 993 million on TV and an additional 482 million through digital platforms. The final alone attracted 260 million live viewers, including 14.3 million in the United States, surpassing the audience of the men's final in 2018 by 22% (Lee et al. 2020). The strategic foresight of this vision is further validated by the consistent attainment of registration targets for new female federated football players, as evidenced by SFA data in collaboration with the PFF. The data

reveals a substantial increase in registered athletes in football and futsal from 9 587 in 2019 to 11 038 in 2020. Within this growth, 6 552 individuals were actively involved in football (Silva 2022). Moreover, from 2020 to 2021, there was a notable rise in the number of players securing professional contracts, increasing from 75 to 125. This represents a significant progression from the 22 players with professional contracts in 2017. These statistics underscore a positive trajectory in the professionalization and popularity of women's football, aligning with global trends and contributing to the broader vision of promoting women's sports within the Sports City initiative (Silva 2022).

## **2) Methodology**

### **a. SWOT Analysis**

In this study, we adopted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis to gain a thorough understanding of the project in question. This approach is instrumental in dissecting both the internal dynamics and the external environment of a project. This is achieved by sidestepping any preconceived notions and concentrating on tangible, real-world scenarios that mirror SFA's actual operational context. The rationale behind employing this framework is to ensure that the analysis remains grounded in reality, free from subjective biases or ambiguous areas.

#### **Strengths**

Geographically, Santarém's Sports City will benefit from its strategic position. Less than an hour's drive from Lisbon Airport, Santarém offers convenient highway access for those coming from major cities like Lisbon, Porto, or Coimbra.

As mentioned earlier, the SFA will benefit from the project with the support of the PFF, offering two advantages. On one hand, the support from a renowned entity brings visibility to the project. On the other hand, there is the expertise factor, as the PFF has already developed its own Sports City, making it a valuable partner in suggesting best practices for the construction and

## Group Part

development of the Sports City in Santarém. Another advantage is the substantial number of registered football players in the Association, 8 756, indicating the local community's strong interest in the sport. Furthermore, the Tejo Cup stands out as a strength; it's Santarém's most prominent football event, attracting key figures from Portuguese football annually, and with new facilities, it could draw even larger audiences.

### **Weaknesses**

The weaknesses of SFA, closely tied to Santarém's region, include a significant aging population, with 204 elderly per 100 young people, reducing the potential sporting event participation (Pordata 2023). Accommodation is also a limitation, as Santarém has only four hotels, suggesting a limited capacity to handle high tourist influxes, impacting the organization of large events (Pordata 2023). Moreover, the professionalization of local clubs is weak; currently, only Casa Pia AC, which isn't originally from Santarém, plays in the Portuguese 1st Division.

Finally, SFA's marketing efforts are virtually non-existent. Their absence on major digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, unlike other football Associations, results in missed opportunities for visibility and attracting younger audiences. The Sports City project itself has had minimal national exposure, with only a few local newspapers highlighting it.

### **Opportunities**

In terms of opportunities, the foreseen Sports City in Santarém is primed to be a pivotal hub for the promotion of football, providing a significant boost to the industry within the district. Central to this endeavor is the SFA and PFF's shared commitment to the growth of women's football, aligning seamlessly with the project's strategic goals. This initiative promises to enhance the training facilities and competitive edge of local teams fostering superior athletic performance. Moreover, it presents an invaluable opportunity for nurturing young talent, offering a favorable environment for growth and development in sports.

## Group Part

The strategic location of the Sports City that was mentioned above presents a unique opportunity to host national and international tournaments, catalyzing the district's economic structure through sports tourism. One of the main effects of this promotion includes the attraction of financial opportunities, such as sponsorships, which are instrumental in infrastructure development and operational financing, ensuring the project's sustainable evolution.

Economically, the centralization of sports activities is anticipated to revitalize the business landscape, stimulating the emergence of various complementary enterprises including hospitality, restaurants, and recreation. This commercial expansion is expected to drive job creation, yielding substantial economic and social benefits for the Santarém community. Educational initiatives, aligned with the project, aim to provide upskilling opportunities, further bolstering local employment prospects.

With the project's completion targeted around 2030, coinciding with the World Cup, Santarém Sports City stands on the threshold of significant growth. The World Cup presents a remarkable opportunity to showcase Santarém on a global stage, potentially positioning it as an optimal location for team accommodations due to its high-performance facilities and cost-effective offerings, complementing the limited supply that currently exists and which is proving to be a weakness, as mentioned above. The anticipated influx of tourism, coupled with the city's enhanced visibility, promises a profound economic impact, the magnitude of which could be transformative for Portugal.

### **Threats**

In addressing potential threats, a nuanced strategy is essential, particularly given the Portuguese football industry's context, which, as noted in the literature review, is not as advanced as neighboring countries. Additionally, the project's initial phase is heavily contingent on the current economic climate in Portugal and globally, marked by significant uncertainty. It's a

## Group Part

common misconception that large projects will automatically rejuvenate local economies and improve their settings. Therefore, it's vital to consider the broader context and how it aligns with the project itself.

Financially, large construction projects often face risks like cost overruns, necessitating meticulous financial planning and continuous monitoring. Furthermore, legal and environmental challenges are inherent in projects of this magnitude. Given the goal to attract a significant number of people to Santarém, even for short periods, it's crucial to proactively mitigate potential impacts like pollution and traffic congestion.

### **b. Defining a Research Question**

In the literature review, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of topics crucial to enhancing the value of this Work Project. Following this, and after a thorough SWOT analysis, the logical progression is to narrow down the themes. This will provide clarity on how we can effectively contribute to the development of Santarém's Sports City.

To streamline the upcoming section, we have formulated a research question, aligning with the three aforementioned pillars: What strategic measures can be implemented in Santarém's Sports City to augment its social, sporting, and financial value?

### **3) Recommendations**

Following consultations with the participating entities in the project, the subsequent section presents a series of recommendations carefully crafted to enhance the Santarém Sports City. These recommendations are meticulously aligned with the project's foundation pillars – social, sporting, and financial. While acknowledging the organization's explicit indication that this project is not oriented toward financial sustainability, we posit the significance of incorporating financial viability into all projects. Consequently, our recommendations are geared towards the attainment of this objective. Mindful of the financial constraints faced by organizations

## Group Part

involved, emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the proposed initiatives yield tangible returns, be it in financial terms or for the broader sports ecosystem in the district of Santarém. Additionally, recommendations are strategically categorized into distinct core areas, each warranting a unique focus upon implementation.

The recommendations provided are rooted in the Sports Cities model outlined by Alzate et al. (2021) in the Literature Review above, which we perceive as a highly promising framework for a project of this nature. Beyond aligning with the three pillars mentioned earlier, our focus extends to crucial elements identified by the author as integral to the success of a Sports City: promotion of and access to sports, recreation, and physical activity; sports infrastructure and equipment; human capital and knowledge management; sports and economic development; and finally, big sports events.

### **a) Women's Football**

#### **Prioritizing Women's Football**

Elevating women's football to a central position within Santarém's Sports City should be a paramount objective for the SFA. This strategic emphasis aligns with the burgeoning interest in women's football, presenting a unique opportunity for the Sports City project to dedicate a significant portion of its resources and focus to this dynamic area of the sport.

To position Santarém's Sports City as a reference in this topic, the SFA can implement a comprehensive set of initiatives. Firstly, publicizing the Sports City project should be accompanied by a distinct emphasis on women's football. This entails actively seeking opportunities to host various youth selections, including the A National Team, and organizing training camps, friendly matches, and official fixtures. An additional critical aspect is the creation of a tailored environment that aligns with the commitment to women's football. Specific facilities, such as dedicated changing rooms and physiotherapy zones, should be integrated into the Sports City's construction to cater to the unique needs of female athletes.

## Group Part

Initiatives of this nature can potentially receive support through the application to the “Crescer 2024” fund, which is a fund established by the PFF for Associations and clubs. This fund is allocated to entities that achieve goals in five different aspects, one of which is the development of women’s football (Público 2023).

Furthermore, investing in the scouting of female talent becomes imperative. This can be realized through strategic partnerships with local schools, the organization of women's football tournaments, and the hosting of other events. Conducting talent recruitment training sessions and exploring innovative avenues for player development can also contribute to the growth of women’s football in Santarém. This recommendation is designed to augment the participation levels, aligning closely with the objectives outlined by the PFF. The PFF has set an ambitious target to achieve 75 000 federated athletes in football and Futsal by the year 2030 (PFF 2022). Active pursuit of collaboration with other organizations and clubs is essential for the SFA to foster synergies in the growth and development of women’s football. The presence of Atl. Ouriense, a prominent team in the Liga BPI, uniquely positions Santarém to establish itself as a dynamic hub in this matter. By strategically integrating Atl. Ouriense into the initiatives of the Santarém’s Sports City, this collaboration extends beyond the league matches. The Sports City can serve as a collaborative platform, where Atl. Ouriense players contribute to joint youth development programs, conduct specialized coaching clinics, and participate in community events. This synergy not only elevates the standard of women's football within Santarém but also establishes the Sports City as a unifying force that supports both the local clubs and the Liga BPI team. As Atl. Ouriense gains innovative resources and facilities, the broader community benefits from increased visibility, enhanced development pathways, and a shared passion for the growth of women's football in the region. This collaborative approach positions Santarém as a forward-thinking center for women's football, where the success of Atl. Ouriense

## Group Part

and the overall development of the sport become intertwined, creating a mutually beneficial relationship within the innovative Sports City framework.

One of FIFA's key objectives in its 2022 strategic plan for women's football resonates with the presented recommendation. This goal, which aims to achieve 60 million players by 2026, is complemented by the specific objective "Build the Foundations." This particular focus centers on the establishment of a women's football ecosystem at the local level, emphasizing the transfer of expertise among various sports stakeholders within the discipline (FIFA 2022).

In addition to these initiatives, exploring the introduction of mentorship programs, women's football clinics, and awareness campaigns can further enhance the visibility and inclusivity of women's football in Santarém's Sports City. These multifaceted efforts not only align with the global momentum towards gender equality in sports but also position Santarém as a progressive and influential hub for women's football in Portugal.

### **b) Education and Innovation**

#### **Increased Investment in Educational Programs**

A pivotal recommendation for the sustained progress of Santarém Sports City involves initiating and increasing investments in education, promoting continuous learning for all involved parties. It is crucial to emphasize that the sports industry goes beyond athletic performance and its outcomes. Proficiency in administration and management is essential for sports organizations and their stakeholders. Therefore, Santarém Sports City is encouraged to develop programs focused on vital areas such as Sports Management, Finance, Data Analytics, Marketing, Leadership, and Communication. Educated professionals within the sports domain contribute to enhancing the industry's reputation, attracting talent, investors, and sponsors who recognize the value of a knowledgeable and skilled workforce.

Concerning athletes, it's widely acknowledged that the conditions provided by clubs in districts like Santarém don't enable them to retire and sustain themselves solely through earnings from

## Group Part

their sports careers. In light of this, one crucial educational initiative in the Santarém Sports City should be an Athlete Transition Program. This program aims to support athletes in transitioning more smoothly from professional sports to the job market. It could encompass career advice, educational opportunities, and mentoring. Given that athletes have devoted their time primarily to sports from a young age, it's essential to equip them with resources and tools for building a career both within the sports industry and in entirely different fields.

One idea would be to establish an educational partnership with Instituto Politécnico de Santarém, a well-regarded institution in the job market with diverse educational options in areas such as sports, management, and education. The envisioned partnership has a dual purpose. Firstly, existing Sports courses at the Instituto could integrate components developed at the Santarém Sports City complex, like practical classes or even end-of-course internships. Secondly, a collaborative program would be formulated between the two institutions to retrain district athletes. This effort aims to support athletes in gaining new skills, not just to boost their professional growth but also to help them navigate the emotional and mental challenges that often arise during this transitional period. As noted by Stambulova et al. (2009), the shift from a professional athlete career can be quite stressful and present unexpected challenges, both in terms of career and mental well-being.

This phase also represents a noteworthy shift in athlete's financial situations, underscoring the importance of these programs in extending education and support in the realm of financial literacy. As highlighted by Cude and Kabaci (2011), the absence of financial education for athletes requires attention and rectification. The primary objective of this recommendation is to assist athletes in formulating a comprehensive plan for long-term financial stability. We emphasize the importance of offering this support while athletes are still active in their careers to ensure they are well-prepared in advance. Regrettably, not all sports organizations can furnish

## Group Part

these conditions, and therefore, we assert that this space will offer the necessary resources to facilitate this pivotal change.

Platts and Smith (2009) underscore the limited attention given to matters on the education and welfare provisions available to young players engaged in Academies and Centers of Excellence. The authors emphasize the significance of education, especially in light of the considerable number of players who do not progress to professional football levels or secure professional contracts. As illustrated by Platts and Smith (2009), “the Premier League and Football League state that between 60% and 65% of the 700 or so scholars taken on each year are rejected at 18. Even half of those who do win a full-time contract (at 18) will not be playing at a professional level by 21.”

Considering this information, our recommendation draws inspiration from the successful Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) implemented by the Premier League. This long-term strategy, initiated in 2012, focuses on cultivating homegrown players, incorporating a robust educational component. According to a Premier League article, “the League has its own Education Department that delivers a program to support the technical, tactical, physical, mental, lifestyle, and welfare development of all Academy Players” (Premier League 2012). Building upon this proven concept, we propose the development of a similar program tailored to the scale of our project.

An area of paramount importance for this project’s focus is women’s football, given its remarkable growth and significance in the sports industry. The Sports City organization should act as a catalyst for change, exemplifying these ideals throughout its entire structure. Foremost among the priorities should be an investment in educational programs dedicated to this topic. This investment reflects sports organizations’ acknowledgment of the importance of female athletes, signaling a positive stance on the significance of women’s sports within the Santarém community. By providing such training opportunities, organizations contribute to the

## Group Part

advancement of gender equality, fostering a more inclusive environment and culture. Additionally, this educational offering enables the cultivation of talent from grassroots levels to professional tiers, establishing a robust foundation for women's sports.

On a broader scale, educating individuals on this subject contributes to job creation in a future where market opportunities are expected to proliferate. The escalating interest and visibility of women's football have generated a heightened demand for trained and qualified professionals. A key objective of the PFF is to boost participation in women's football, and the SFA has consistently exceeded these targets annually, aligning with the PFF's goals. We believe that by adopting similar practices, this growth could be further amplified, positioning Santarém as a benchmark for other Associations and Clubs.

Our final recommendation concerning training aligns with a longstanding concern of the SFA – namely, the development of young talent. One of the principal aims of the Sports City's establishment is to prioritize the training, health, and well-being of young athletes. Therefore, we propose that the nurturing of emerging talent extend beyond the conventional academy and sporting performance aspects. We recommend establishing partnerships with schools in the district, where athletes can explore new sports and disciplines. Such programs can foster the development of leadership, communication, and teamwork skills – attributes crucial for both the professional and personal growth of the athlete. These activities could serve as extracurricular pursuits integrated into the athlete's school plan. Looking ahead, the Sports City might contemplate creating an ATL (Atividades de Tempos Livres) structure with study and development support.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Product Testers**

As Bodemer (2023) mentions, “the integration of AI in sports training has emerged as a transformative approach to enhancing individual performance, optimizing training strategies, and providing personalized insights for athletes and coaches”.

## Group Part

There has been a growing connection between AI and sports equipment, particularly in terms of wearable devices for athletes and sports apps used in training. These methods offer real-time monitoring of various parameters like heart rate, distance covered, and fatigue levels. This data not only helps optimize training but also plays a crucial role in preventing injuries and ensuring the overall well-being of players. Bodemer (2023) underscores that “by analyzing biomechanical data, training logs, and medical records, AI algorithms can identify injury risk factors and provide personalized recommendations to mitigate those risks”.

In the realm of performance improvement, AI algorithms analyze athlete’s training data, psychological measures, and performance metrics. By discerning patterns and correlations in the data, AI systems generate personalized training plans and optimized schedules (Bodemer 2023). This not only aids in decision-making but also provides coaches with valuable insights and recommendations.

This trend has encouraged numerous companies in the sports sector to integrate AI into their products, giving rise to new businesses. Raturi (2023) exemplifies this trend with companies like Playermaker, which employs sensors to monitor players’ performance during training and matches (see Appendix 22 for a product example). This technology enables the real-time tracking of data such as distance, speed, acceleration, and fatigue, offering immediate insights for optimal player usage.

In light of this growth, our recommendation is to encourage Santarém’s Sports City affiliated clubs to serve as test users for these AI-driven products. The Sports City can function as a pivotal testing ground, allowing athletes to utilize these products in authentic training scenarios. Such partnerships are instrumental in advancing the synergy between sports and technology, directly benefiting the development and well-being of football players. Companies can effectively test and refine their products, ensuring the highest quality, while simultaneously

## Group Part

elevating the reputation of Santarém Sports City and the district within the sports ecosystem, potentially attracting partnerships with various sports brands.

### **Sustainability Initiatives**

Incorporating sustainable practices into the construction of Santarém's Sports City is integral to fostering environmental responsibility and enhancing community well-being. This strategic emphasis on sustainability is designed to minimize Santarém's ecological footprint, optimize resource efficiency, and establish a sports facility that not only elevates the residents' quality of life but also contributes to the enduring health of the local environment. Such a commitment aligns seamlessly with global initiatives addressing climate change, positioning Santarém as a forward-thinking and environmentally conscious community.

FIFA has established a central message for organizations building new infrastructures: “Build the most efficient sustainable solution possible”. To align with this directive, FIFA outlines specific recommendations that sports organizations can adopt across five pivotal areas: carbon emissions, water, energy, waste, and ecology. Regarding carbon emissions, Santarém can enhance its sustainability efforts by considering the substitution of steel and concrete frames with timber alternatives, ensuring safety and compliance with fire safety standards in the design. Furthermore, a strategic choice in material suppliers is essential, favoring those utilizing renewable energy in their product development and/or located in proximity to the Sports City (FIFA 2022).

In the context of energy options, a practical step for designers to optimize energy efficiency involves consolidating all heated spaces. In the pursuit of sustainability, stadiums must rely on renewable energy sources rather than fossil fuels such as gas. Commonly employed renewable sources encompass photovoltaic (PV) panels, geothermal, wind power, hydrothermal, and solar thermal technologies (FIFA 2022).

## Group Part

In the realm of water conservation, a fundamental objective is the prudent use of potable water. Designers tasked with stadium planning should conduct a thorough evaluation of the glass components integrated into the building's facade, aiming to minimize water consumption during cleaning processes. Furthermore, the implementation of facilities for rainwater harvesting presents an avenue for sustainable water management, where captured rainwater can subsequently be utilized for field irrigation (FIFA 2022).

In an ecological context, the construction of stadiums should avoid areas of high ecological value and the use of products leading to biodiversity loss should be strictly avoided, with particular attention given to wood products (FIFA 2022).

Finally, for waste management, the exploration of innovative design solutions becomes imperative to foster a circular economy paradigm. This entails a departure from the conventional practice of discarding products as waste at the end of their life cycle. Instead, the emphasis lies on retaining these products within the economic system for reuse (FIFA 2022).

In this segment, we aim to illustrate initiatives undertaken by other sports organizations that can be readily adaptable to Santarém's Sports City. For example, Real Betis has new seats at their stadium crafted from fishing nets reclaimed from Spanish seas and ports (Euronews 2023).

In Germany, a legislative initiative mandates all clubs in the top four divisions to serve beverages exclusively in reusable cups, effectively curbing excessive plastic usage (Euronews 2023). When Tottenham Hotspur plays away matches, the club has implemented proactive measures to facilitate transportation for its fans, thereby reducing reliance on private vehicles (Pusey 2022).

These sustainability recommendations bring valuable insights from two distinct perspectives. On one hand, project decision-makers can consider adopting many of the recommendations outlined by FIFA, advocating for the construction of more sustainable sports infrastructures. On the other hand, the examples provided by sports organizations are easily replicable.

## Group Part

Furthermore, Santarém's Sports City should explore additional sustainability initiatives to distinguish itself in this sector.

### **Merchandising Initiatives for Santarém's Football Clubs**

As Sports City is not affiliated with any specific club, it serves as the collective home for all clubs within the SFA. In light of this, the SFA aims to promote its member clubs. To that extent, we propose incorporating the sale of merchandise from various clubs in the Santarém region within the future SFA facilities. The significance of merchandising sales has shown a rising trend in Portugal, as demonstrated by the financial reports of SL Benfica, Sporting CP, and FC Porto (Cunha 2021). In 2020, encompassing merchandising sales, sponsorships, publicity, and royalties' revenues, the total operational turnover for these clubs ranged from 22% to 31%. This reflects an increase from 2010 when commercial income directly linked to brand value constituted 18% to 26% of total operational revenues (Cunha 2021).

Within the Santarém Sports City, merchandising sales serve dual purposes: revenue increase and promotion of clubs, fostering a community atmosphere. Berqvist and Falck (2010) have validated these objectives as primary drivers for merchandising sales in Nordic clubs. Interviews with four Head Sales Representatives from prestigious Nordic clubs, including Malmö FF, underscored the shared goal of generating additional revenue and cultivating a sense of community around the club.

Tackie's (2018) analysis, involving a sample of slightly over two hundred football enthusiasts, highlights that the main factors influencing their decision to purchase club merchandise are the inherent product quality and the current success of the team. These considerations carry more weight than factors such as team popularity, the fashionable appeal of the attire, or any potential impact on personal athletic performance.

## Group Part

Santarém has the opportunity to leverage Tackie's (2018) findings effectively. The SFA, representing all teams in the district, ensures a constant base of satisfied fans, given the diversity of supported teams.

### **Local Business Partnerships**

According to Yuen (2012), Sports Cities projects typically encompass a combination of leisure, retail, and entertainment complexes, alongside sports stadiums, aquariums, and cultural facilities within multi-use complexes. For instance, the initial phase of Santarém Sports City is set to be constructed adjacent to the Santarém Aquatic Complex, a pivotal infrastructure in the district. While not explicitly profit-driven, this proximity can be considered a strategic partnership, critical for the project's human resource needs and the efficient operation and maintenance of the Academy, leading to cost savings (information provided in a meeting with Carlos Coutinho, the administrator of Viver Santarém).

Furthermore, a key priority for Santarém Sports City should be the cultivation of impactful partnerships with local businesses. As highlighted by Panas (2021), "local businesses are a vital part of the overall football economy across the world.". The sports ecosystem has faced financial challenges, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. With the resurgence of stadiums and sports infrastructure attendances since the 2021/2022 season, clubs and academies now have an opportunity to rejuvenate their revenue streams and play a significant role in revitalizing local economies through strategic partnerships.

By fostering these collaborations, the Sports City can transcend its conventional role as a sporting venue and become a dynamic community hub. Extending the positive matchday atmosphere beyond the playing field, as suggested by Xero (n.d), can strengthen ties and cultivate stronger relationships within the local business community. Specific recommendations include collaborating with local restaurants to diversify culinary offerings during events, forming partnerships with nearby shops for exclusive merchandise, and launching joint

## Group Part

promotional campaigns spanning various services. Implementation of loyalty programs to reward attendees with privileges at partnered establishments will encourage sustained engagement. Additionally, community events, such as charity drives and sponsorships for local teams, will further integrate the Sports City with the district's economic and social fabric. Through these collaborative initiatives, the Santarém Sports City project aspires not only to establish itself as a premier sports destination but also as a catalyst for the future economic and social prosperity of the district.

### **c. Diversification**

#### **Pitch Rentals**

The subsequent recommendation offers an approach to maximize the utilization of the Sports City during periods when the infrastructure remains idle, presenting an opportunity for incremental revenue. The proposal involves providing pitch rentals for group games, individual training sessions with personal trainers, and utilizing the space as an extracurricular learning environment for students. The Sports City organization itself could introduce fitness programs, encompassing group classes, yoga sessions, functional training, and more, to attract a broader audience and promote physical activity within the Santarém district. Establishing partnerships with local companies is another venue, allowing the Sports City to be used for corporate events such as lectures, workshops, team-building activities, and employee wellness programs.

The potential applications are myriad, contingent on the adaptability of the Sports City's infrastructure to diverse needs.

#### **Diversification of Tournaments**

The significance of a tournament like the Tejo Cup for the district of Santarém is widely acknowledged. Beyond the annual representation by a Patron, typically a revered figure in Portuguese football, this event assumes the character of a district-wide celebration of the endeavors undertaken by sports agents. It transcends the realm of sports, fostering interaction

## Group Part

and establishing formal and social connections among participants. The tournament represents a pivotal juncture in the sporting development of young players, promoting their value and growth as both athletes and individuals. For clubs, such events serve to spotlight and valorize the efforts invested in player development, offering a continual assessment ground for potential inclusion in district teams.

With the establishment and evolution of the Sports City, we see opportunities for diversification and the introduction of new tournaments throughout the season. Crafting a more compelling sports calendar not only benefits the athletes but also elevates the standing of the involved organizations. It serves as an additional platform to spot and nurture talent. We recommend the inception of tournaments across various levels, extending these opportunities to all age groups. These events also carry commercial advantages, providing an additional avenue to secure sponsorships and partnerships. Local companies and brands may find value in aligning themselves with distinctive tournaments, thereby contributing to increased revenue for the Sports City.

### **Utilization of Facilities for Non-Sporting Events**

Another impactful recommendation involves leveraging the Sports City facilities for non-sporting events, such as concerts, fairs, festivals, and exhibitions. This initiative provides Santarém with an opportunity to stand out among other regions by actively supporting the local community, showcasing its artists, promoting fairs, brands, and products. It also sets a precedent for other Sports Cities to follow, contributing to a more vibrant representation of local culture. This recommendation underscores a prevalent concern linked to investments in sports facilities. It is common to encounter difficulties when substantial investments are made in infrastructures designed for large-scale events, leading to a limited utilization rate post-event (Alm 2012). An instance of this challenge unfolded in Portugal following Euro 2004, where multiple municipalities grappled with debt, and stadiums remained largely underutilized throughout the

## Group Part

year, lacking a clear strategy for economic viability (Curado 2012). This issue is not exclusive to Portugal; after the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, where over 1 billion euros were invested in arguably unnecessary stadiums, many of these facilities transformed into "ghost stadiums" post the major event (Alm 2012).

While Santarém's Sports City may lack the scale of the mentioned stadiums, it remains imperative to optimize its facilities during periods of inactivity to mitigate potential challenges in unutilized spaces. Sports infrastructures possess the capability to host various social events, including weddings, meetings, trade shows, holiday parties, concerts, and other gatherings (Lee 2015). The author underscores the intrinsic suitability of these infrastructures for such events, citing their capacity to accommodate a sizable audience, expansive parking facilities, accessibility through public transportation, and the positive atmosphere that these venues generate (Lee 2015).

In Portugal, it has become a common practice for stadiums to serve as venues for non-sporting events, notably hosting concerts. A notable instance of this occurred in 2023 when the German band Rammstein held a performance at Estádio da Luz. SL Benfica, the club overseeing the stadium, affirmed its commitment to further explore this avenue to establish the stadium as a prominent entertainment venue in the country (Record 2023). A scenario more aligned with the potential trajectory of the Santarém Sports City was observed in the local festivities of Alcobaça. In 2021, nine performances were held at the Municipal Stadium of Alcobaça. The President of Alcobaça Municipality stressed the importance of utilizing these spaces for cultural events and articulated Alcobaça's objective to host an increasing number of non-sporting particularly during the summer months when there is a reduced frequency of games at the municipal stadium (Vieira 2021).

This strategic move aligns with two pivotal pillars of the project. From a financial perspective, the SFA has the potential to generate a significant revenue stream by renting out its space for

## Group Part

these diverse events, effectively optimizing the facility during periods of inactivity. On a social level, introducing this measure holds the promise of making a substantial impact on the community.

### **Renting the Lecture Room for Other Business/Educational Events**

The lecture room will be designated for essential processes and activities related to the operation of the SFA and the SCC. However, if its use is restricted solely to the obligations of these entities, its full potential may not be realized. The Sports City is an infrastructure with a social mission, aiming to bring together workers, youth, businesses, and athletes in a shared space dedicated to the practice and teaching of various sports. As indicated by Lee et al. (2015), there is potential to leverage sports facilities for various purposes, including social and educational events. In this context, given the room's capacity to accommodate a considerable number of people, sixty-eight to be precise, we believe it should be utilized for various types of events.

Kung and Taylor (2014) highlight the significance of sports organizations embracing athletes with reduced mobility to both enhance this specific segment and promote greater accessibility to sports. Integrating individuals with disabilities aligns with the social mission of the Santarém Sports City, aiming to make sports accessible to all. This approach would optimize the use of this infrastructure, turning it into a spatial resource for diverse activities that are of interest to the community.

In conclusion, this recommendation harmonizes well with the three defined pillars for the Sports City. Financially, it adds to the overall revenue, socially it serves as a valuable space for the community, and it contributes to the sports aspect if the intended use of the room aligns with sporting activities.

### **Introducing Padel in the Sports City**

Despite the primary focus of the Sports City being football, other sports will also be present in the Sports City of Santarém. The pavilion planned for the second phase is intended to host

## Group Part

sports such as futsal, volleyball, and basketball, among others. In the stadium, an athletics track is planned for construction. However, we believe that even more sports can be explored, to increase social impact, attract more visitors to the Sports City, and provide an additional source of revenue to contribute to the sustainability of the project.

One such sport that could be considered is padel. In 2021, a significant cohort of approximately 100 000 participants engaged in padel across Portugal, utilizing a network of over 550 courts (Ferreira 2023). Beyond the inherent allure of the sport, Kong (2023) posits that the attractiveness of padel is further heightened by factors such as the quality of infrastructure, the expertise of coaches, and the establishment of a wholesome, community-centric environment. Upon initiation into padel, individuals swiftly cultivate a “healthy habit”, evidenced by an impressive retention rate ranging between 80% and 90% (Moreira 2023).

In 2023, Ferreira evaluated the potential construction of a padel complex in the Palmela region of Portugal. The comprehensive cost analysis (consult Appendix 23) for constructing and fully implementing a padel court involved estimates from four distinct suppliers, ranging between 24 650 euros and 33 290 euros. Ferreira also details all additional investments and operating expenses required for the Palmela club to become operational and ready for athlete participation. The primary revenue streams for padel clubs include court rentals and lessons. Ferreira considered a competitive rental pricing strategy, varying between 16 and 21 euros, dependent on factors like the day and time. This pricing is not only competitive in Lisbon, where hourly rates tend to be higher, but also aligns with the 16 to 21 euros per hour range observed in the Santarém area, as indicated by Playtomic app data. In terms of lessons, the pricing structure ranges from 30 to 200 euros per month, depending on the number of lessons per week and the athlete's proficiency level.

Following an in-depth analysis of all potential revenues and expenses associated with the club, and a projection covering the initial five years of the project, Ferreira (2023) concluded that all

## Group Part

scenarios - pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic - demonstrated financial viability for the successful execution of the project at hand. Given the distinct contexts of Palmela and Santarém, presenting the final results might not serve as an accurate indicator for stakeholders in Santarém contemplating an investment in the padel courts. What proves to be more visually insightful and practical is understanding the payback period of the investment. In the pessimistic scenario, the payback period was 4 years and 6 months, in the realistic scenario, it was 1 year and 8 months and in the optimistic scenario, it was 1 year and 2 months.

This example is valuable due to its currency and inclusion of crucial values such as the investment required for court construction and the hourly rate. As indicated by Ferreira's analysis, the swift recovery of the investment in Santarém is evident given sufficient demand. Before committing to this investment, the primary focus should be on assessing whether there is a shortage of infrastructure for this sport in Santarém and whether there is a corresponding demand for such facilities. If the analysis yields positive results, stakeholders at the Santarém Sports City might find this investment worthy of consideration.

### **d. Sports Tourism**

#### **Hosting Training Camps for External Teams**

Within the envisioned plans for the Sports City, the incorporation of a Training Center opens up opportunities for accommodating teams beyond Santarém, including both national and international entities. While prioritizing local teams and sports agents remains paramount, exploring the facility's potential to host teams from across Portugal and abroad can yield multiple benefits. This recommendation is strategically divided into three distinctive offerings. Firstly, the Sports City of Santarém should aim to establish a partnership with the PFF, with a primary objective of hosting various levels of the Portuguese national football teams, both male and female. While accommodating the A-level men's team may pose challenges, hosting other

## Group Part

national teams, including friendly or official matches on the envisioned 11-a-side field, makes the training center a logical choice for their pre-event preparations.

Secondly, Santarém's strategic location and convenient road access make it an attractive option for professional football clubs in the 1st and 2nd Portuguese league. For instance, GD Chaves traveling from the north to the south of the country could consider renting the Training Center for one or two days. This would allow the team to break their travel, conduct training sessions, and prepare for matches without the physical strain of extensive travel. Moreover, this option could present a more cost-effective alternative compared to traditional hotel arrangements.

The third scenario, potentially the most financially appealing, involves renting the training center to foreign teams, aligning with plans to enhance sports tourism. Teams from Nordic countries, which often seek training opportunities during the winter, could find Santarém an economically attractive option compared to more established locations like the Algarve. Critical determinants in this decision-making process include the quality of accommodations, dining facilities, well-equipped sports infrastructure, and the diverse origin of participating clubs. The region's climatic advantages further contribute to its appeal. These considerations draw parallels with the preferences of teams favoring the Algarve region (Soares 2023).

In the summer of 2023, several prominent football teams, including Al Nassr FC, AS Roma, Celtic FC, SL Benfica, and others, chose to conduct their pre-season training camps in the Algarve region, with many of these clubs being regular patrons of the locale (Bruxo 2023). Notably, training centers are intensifying their focus on enhancing field conditions, overall infrastructure, strategic planning for complementary activities, and elevating the quality of staff to effectively cater to the needs of professional football teams (Bruxo 2023). Examples of such establishments include Browns Sports Resort, Cascade Wellness Resort, and the Melgaço Training Center, with nightly rates typically ranging between 150 euros and 300 euros, based on available information. Santarém offers a compelling opportunity to establish itself as a more

## Group Part

cost-effective alternative to the Algarve, potentially attracting a multitude of football teams to the region. This advantageous positioning is further underscored by Santarém's proximity to Lisbon, ensuring convenient accessibility. It not only facilitates the seamless organization of tournaments and events but also opens avenues for exploring complementary activities within the Lisbon metropolitan area and other nearby attractions, such as Fátima.

### **e. Community Engagement**

#### **Open-Air Public Spaces**

Constructing appealing open spaces emerges as a pivotal recommendation to enhance the aesthetics of Santarém's Sports City and promote community involvement and physical activity. According to recent data from the Eurobarometer survey conducted by the European Commission, Europeans engaging in exercise or physical activities predominantly favor informal settings, such as parks and outdoor public spaces (40%) (Borrego et al. 2018).

Considering this information, the integration of a central park within Santarém's Sports City is strongly advocated, designed to accommodate informal gatherings and non-sporting events. Incorporating walkways, biking trails, and outdoor gym equipment becomes imperative to encourage physical exercise. Borrego et al. (2018) highlight the motivational impact of providing suitable and conveniently located physical spaces on the cultivation and maintenance of active lifestyles. To further facilitate socializing during tournaments and pre-game settings, the establishment of a picnic area with accompanying facilities is recommended, aligning with prevalent Portuguese cultural tradition, and benefiting the Santarém community.

These open spaces must complement the primary purpose of the Sports City, namely football practice. Thus, a designated fan zone for watching important matches and major competitions, even if unrelated to Santarém, is proposed. Research by Hautbois et al. (2020) on fan zones during UEFA Euro 2016 indicates that such spaces offer cities opportunities for attractions, cultural events, and expanded visibility of games. The potential for developing marketing

## Group Part

strategies and engaging with fans in terms of gastronomy, entertainment, and merchandising is also highlighted by Hagemann (2010). Partnerships with local businesses, as suggested in the Local Business Partnership recommendation above, could play a crucial role in enhancing these venues and increasing the visibility of local businesses.

Considering the lack of such offerings in the district of Santarém, as noted by the Administrator of Viver Santarém in a meeting with our group, the proposed fan zone aims to address this gap. It collectively contributes to fostering a healthier and more inviting environment, providing a space where community members can relax, socialize, and participate in various activities, thereby promoting overall community engagement.

### **Innovative Fan Engagement Strategies**

Securing sustained fan engagement presents a contemporary challenge for clubs and sports organizations, transcending mere on-field excellence for stadium attendance. As outlined in the UEFA 2019-2024 plan “Together for the Future of Football”, which outlines a five-year path for the development of European football, a key objective involves clubs fostering continuous engagement with fans for the overall prosperity of football (UEFA n.d).

To strengthen the bond between fans and the Sports City, various innovative fan engagement strategies can be implemented with minimal investment. Firstly, endorsing existing fan initiatives for local teams is paramount. This may entail supporting organized fan groups that contribute to the development of these clubs, with potential backing from the Sports City. Drawing inspiration from the Liverpool FC Fan Engagement Plan (n.d), a framework (see Appendix 24) could be applied at the scale of Santarém’s clubs, offering advantages in terms of both fan engagement and club development. Similar to the English club’s approach, establishing a Supporters’ Council with representatives from all 1<sup>st</sup> League clubs in Santarém can facilitate discussions on various aspects related to football development in the district, aiming for continual improvement of the sporting ecosystem. To address additional topics

## Group Part

requiring input from a broader fan base, forums could be created, segmented into key themes, and subsequently shared with the wider fan community via the digital application mentioned below.

Recognizing the increasing significance of the digital realm in sports engagement, we propose the development of a digital mobile application for this purpose. As highlighted in a Barça Innovation Hub (2022) article, football organizations must produce distinctive, quality content to stand out. Beyond disseminating news from forums, this application could provide information on local teams, players, schedules, and news, fostering virtual interaction among fans. This initiative, with relatively low costs, has the potential to significantly benefit the Santarém community, even extending its reach to football enthusiasts beyond this context.

In a broader context, the regular organization of fan engagement events underscores a commitment to the community, maintaining fans' connection to the sporting reality of the district.

#### **4) Conclusion**

Following a comprehensive analysis of diverse facets within this project, we have discerned significant potential within Santarém's Sports City to yield economic and social impact in the region. The formulated research question has been complemented with a suite of recommendations addressing the three fundamental pillars of this initiative. Structured recommendations have been presented for each dimension, drawing inspiration from successful applications in analogous sports projects and tailored for potential adaptation to the specific context of Santarém's Sports City.

The primary drivers of the project, prominently featured within each pillar, entail the strategic intensification of efforts in sports tourism, women's football, educational initiatives, and sports accessibility for all. This concerted approach is essential for the seamless interconnection of each pillar, thereby optimizing the potential inherent in Santarém Sports City. Anticipating a favorable response to the identified project drivers, the ensuing economic and social implications for the region stand to be profoundly positive. Prospective benefits encompass job creation, increased investment in sports and related industries, local business development, social inclusion, enhancement of health indicators, infrastructural development, heightened social appeal, community engagement, and educational advancement.

##### **a) Limitations and areas for future research**

This chapter outlines the limitations encountered during this research. The constraints primarily stemmed from challenges in data collection, directly impacting the analysis of the project's impact. A notable limitation was the absence of a specialized data processing department within the District Football Associations. This organizational gap significantly restricted access to pertinent data, which is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of such projects. Given that similar projects in Portugal are just getting started, the lack of established models for comparison made these challenges even more difficult.

## Group Part

Moreover, the adherence to confidentiality concerning financial data and the economic impact of comparable projects on a national or European scale presented additional barriers. This confidentiality limited the scope of our benchmarking efforts, confining the analysis predominantly to non-financial aspects.

To navigate these challenges, the focus of the study was reoriented towards the social and sporting impact anticipated from the Santarém Sports City. This shift allowed for an examination grounded in the main trends within the sports sector and the regional context. The analysis thus concentrated on qualitative impacts rather than quantitative metrics.

These limitations underscore the need for future research in this area. Addressing these challenges would require a strategic shift towards the digitization and internationalization of sports organizations. Such a transition would facilitate more efficient data collection and availability, paving the way for more nuanced and comprehensive analyses in future studies.

The acknowledgment of these limitations is not to diminish the value of the present work but to provide a clear perspective on its scope and to guide future research in this evolving field.

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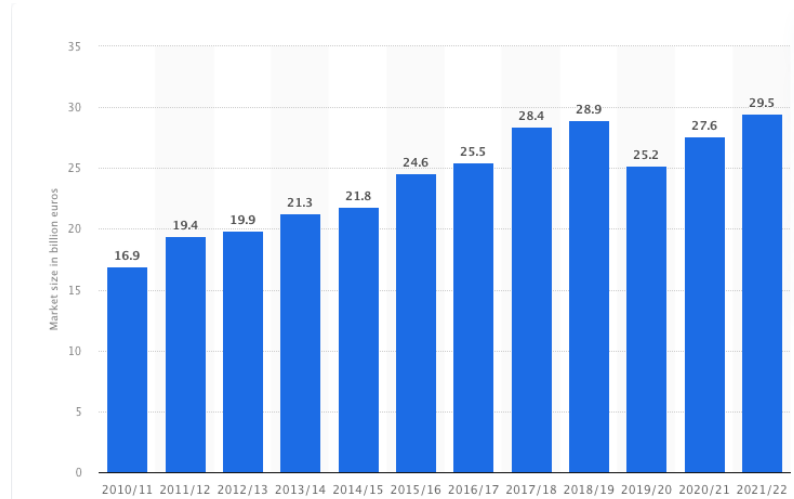
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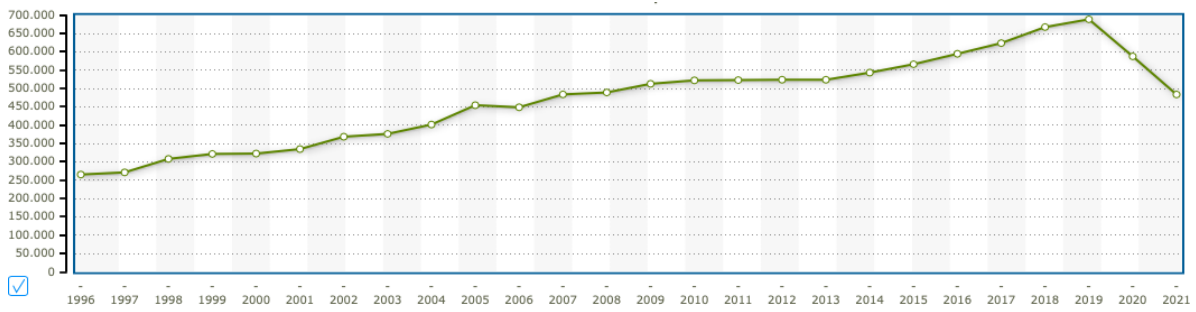
## 6) Appendix

### Appendix 1 – Market size of the professional football market in Europe (in billion euros)



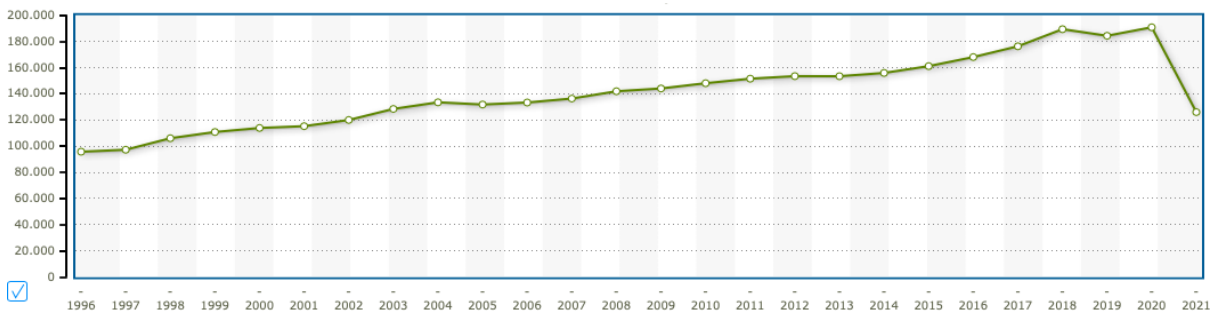
Source: Statista (2023)

### Appendix 2 – Total federated sports athletes by all sports federations



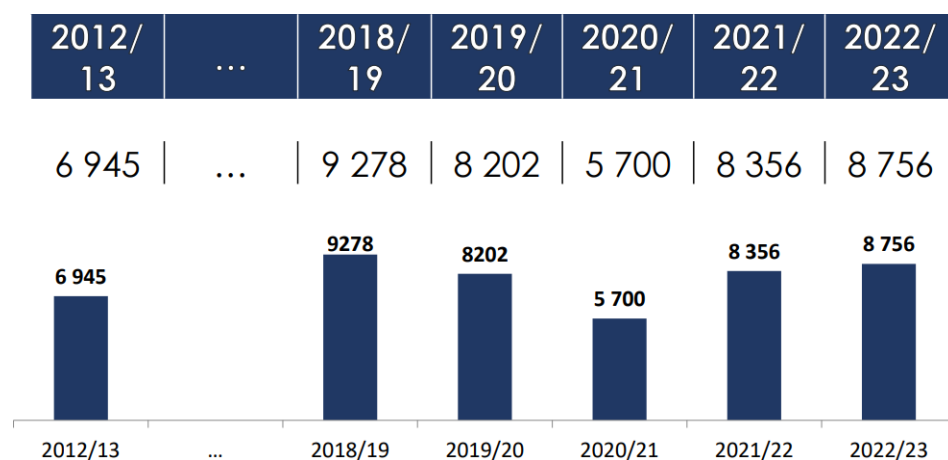
Source: Pordata (2021)

### Appendix 3 – Total federated football athletes by all sports federations



Source: Pordata (2021)

#### Appendix 4 – Number of registered players in the SFA



Source: SFA (2023)

#### Appendix 5 – Number of registered players in the top 10 Portuguese Football Associations

		<u>17/18</u>	<u>18/19</u>	<u>19/20</u>	<u>20/21</u>	<u>21/22</u>	<u>22/23</u>
1º	Porto	33 887	40 056	35 318	25 420	35 954	40 321
2º	Lisboa	33 197	33 532	33 015	19 325	30 578	33 420
3º	Braga	23 467	24 516	20 764	9 725	20 389	22 525
4º	Aveiro	16 173	18 549	16 267	13 089	16 736	17 904
5º	Setúbal	11 680	12 738	12 851	7 033	12 663	14 019
6º	Leiria	11 017	11 308	10 823	6 847	11 042	11 721
7º	Algarve	7 333	7 950	8 095	4 701	8 052	8 947
<b>8º</b>	<b>Santarém</b>	<b>8 038</b>	<b>9 278</b>	<b>8 235</b>	<b>5 700</b>	<b>8 356</b>	<b>8 756</b>
9º	Coimbra	7 398	8 907	7 815	5 630	8 029	8 701
10º	Viseu	6 504	6 950	7 164	5 229	7 195	7 607
...							
	<b>Total FPF</b>	<b>212 981</b>	<b>214 118</b>	<b>200 535</b>	<b>128 819</b>	<b>199 622</b>	<b>217 384</b>

Source: SFA (2023)

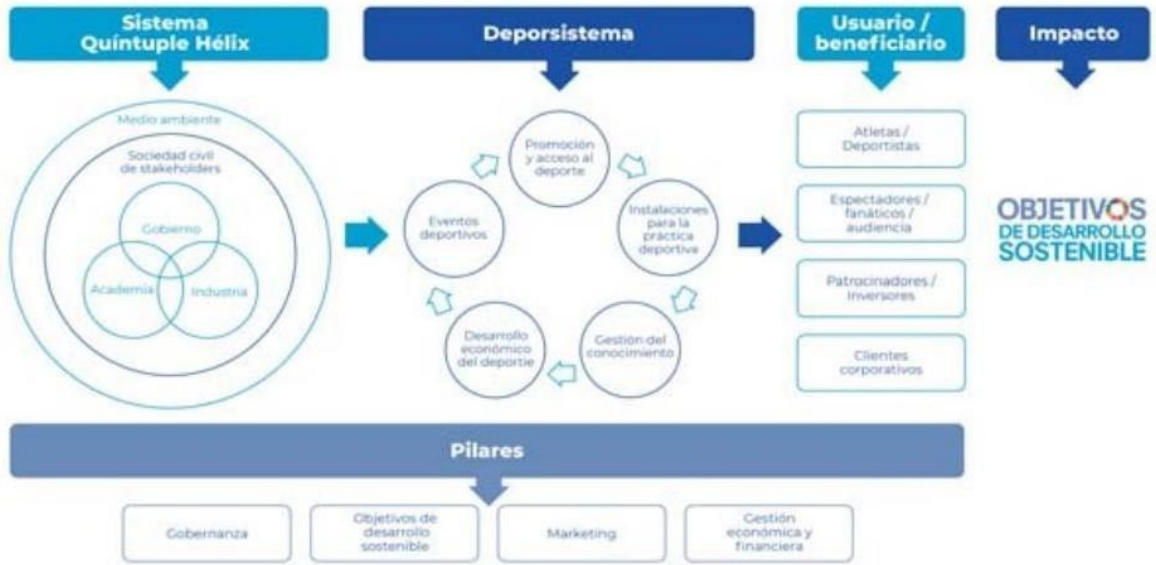
*Appendix 6 to 11 – Images of Santarém’s Sports City Project*





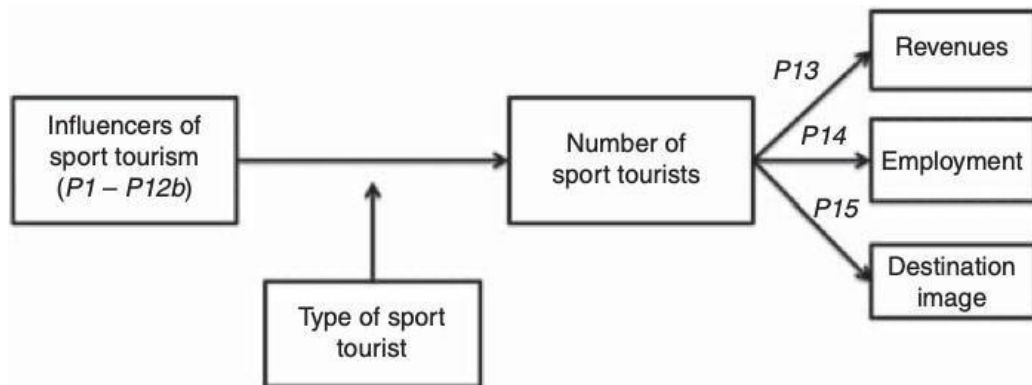
*Source: SCC (2023)*

**Appendix 12 – Quintuple Helix Model**



Source: Alzate et al. (2021)

**Appendix 13 - Model of Sports Tourism as a Factor of Economic Development**



Source: Roche et al. (2013)

**Appendix 14 - Number of Foreign Tourists Visits in the 2012 European Football Championship in Poland**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of tourists	13.5	14.84	15.65	16.0	16.7
Increase year on year	-	1.49	0.81	0.35	0.70
Increase in %	-	11.1	5.5	2.2	4.4

Source: Bergier et al. (2018)

**Appendix 15 - Tourist expenditure per person and per day in the 2012 European Football Championship in Poland**

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average per person	398	426	384	337	332
Increase in USD	-	+28	-42	-47	-5
Increase in %	-	+6,6	-9,9	-12,2	1,5
Average for 1 day	79	85	101	95	No data available
Increase in USD	-	+6	+16	-6	
Increase in %	-	+7,1	+15,8	-6,3	

Source: Bergier et al. (2018)

**Appendix 16 – Estimates of attendance for matches in Cordoba CF Stadium**

		2013–2014	2014–2015			2013–2014	2014–2015
Per match	Full site capacity	20,945	21,614	Journalists		6	18
	Average attendance	9910	20,000	Referee team		4	4
	Attendees			Rival team			
	Season ticket holders	8427	16,150	Player team		19	19
	Local supporters	1383	850	Coach team		3	6
	Rival supporters	100	3000	Managers		2	5
Season	Total attendance	242,610 <sup>a</sup>	380,000	Total attendance		782 <sup>b</sup>	988

Source: Amador et al. (2016)

**Appendix 17 – Estimates of the total shock of demand on Cordoba’s economy in the 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 seasons (euros)**

Expenditures	Conservative		Progressive	
	2013–2014 <sup>a</sup>	2014–2015	2013–2014 <sup>a</sup>	2014–2015
Commercial services	135,488	290,150	153,803	402,650
Coffee shops	1,008,128	1,641,200	1,031,660	1,796,000
Public transports	28,092	116,370	33,975	155,070
Merchandising and other expenditures	758,470	1,260,000	784,380	1,389,000
Accommodation	280,130	1,274,770	325,190	2,324,770
Restaurants	92,120	1,570,080	131,540	2,365,080
Tickets	932,694	1,908,500	1,020,840	2,722,500
Effect of player wages	2,506,624	12,407,018	2,506,624	12,407,018
Budget effect	0	9,730,630	0	9,730,630
Image effect	0	5,500,000	0	5,500,000
Total	5,954,246	37,498,719	6,350,512	41,672,719

Source: Amador et al. (2016)

**Appendix 18 – Impact on Cordoba’s economy in the 2013/2014 season (euros)**

	Conservative scenario		Progressive scenario	
	Impact	Percentage	Impact	Percentage
Total Production	16,785,043	0.05	17,847,798	0.06
GDP	6,211,084	0.06	6,609,837	0.06
Change in Labour after shock	33		35	

Source: Amador et al. (2016)

**Appendix 19 – Impact on Cordoba’s economy in the 2014/2015 season (euros)**

	Conservative scenario		Progressive scenario	
	Impact	Percentage	Impact	Percentage
Total Production	93,732,391	0.30	104,851,421	0.34
GDP	34,042,649	0.31	38,241,339	0.35
Change in Labour after shock	179		201	

Source: Amador et al. (2016)

**Appendix 20 – Economic impact on Cordoba’s economy over the net effect (euros)**

	Conservative scenario		Progressive scenario	
	Impact	Percentage	Impact	Percentage
Total Production	76,947,348	0.25	87,003,623	0.28
GDP	27,831,565	0.26	31,631,502	0.29
Change in Labour after shock	146		166	

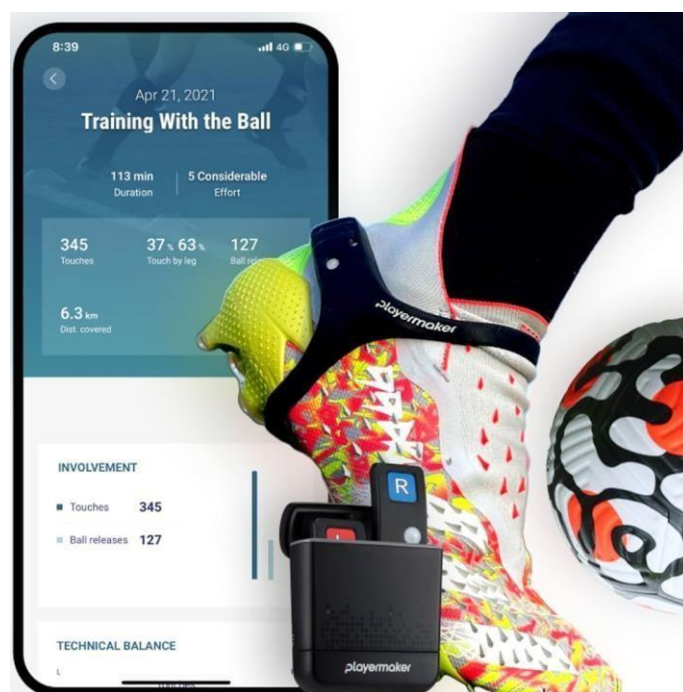
Source: Amador et al. (2016)

## Appendix 21 – SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic location with convenient accesses</li> <li>• Portuguese Football Federation support</li> <li>• Number of registered football players in Santarém</li> <li>• Tejo Cup host</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elder population</li> <li>• Limited hospitality offers in the district</li> <li>• Weak professionalization of local clubs</li> <li>• Marketing strategy</li> </ul>
	Opportunities	Threats
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of football industry within the district</li> <li>• Growth of Women's Football</li> <li>• Nurturing young talent</li> <li>• National and international tournaments host</li> <li>• Financial opportunities (sponsors)</li> <li>• Complementary businesses</li> <li>• Job creation</li> <li>• Educational initiatives</li> <li>• World Cup 2030</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portuguese Football context</li> <li>• Global economic uncertainty</li> <li>• Over relying on the project to rejuvenate local economy</li> <li>• Financial costs overruns</li> <li>• Over dependence on other institutions</li> <li>• Environmental challenges</li> </ul>

Source: Own Elaboration

## Appendix 22 – Playermaker products



Source: Playermaker.com

## Appendix 23 – Total Cost Analysis of a Padel Court in Palmela

Total price for 1 standard court				
Entry/Suppliers	InCourts	GreenPark	Mediterra	Qifan Fitness
Price per unit standard court	15.700 €	22.240 €	13.500 €	12.200 €
Installation	3.000 €	-	1.500 €	1.500 €
Construction Work	10.450 €	10.450 €	10.450 €	10.450 €
Transportation	1.700 €	600 €	1.065 €	500 €
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.850 €</b>	<b>33.290 €</b>	<b>26.515 €</b>	<b>24.650 €</b>

Source: Ferreira (2023)

## Appendix 23 – Liverpool FC Fan Engagement Plan Framework



Source: Liverpool FC (n.d)