

PROJECT 101184396
ERASMUS-SPORT-2024



ReSea Sports

“SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS PRACTICE TOWARDS THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL REGENERATION OF MARITIME AND COASTAL AREAS”

WP1 – REGENERATIVE Sea Sports Methodology

D1.1_ REGENERATIVE SEA SPORTS Methodology

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS: ENOS, AETHNIC

VERSION 1.0, DATE: 28/08/2025



Structure of the deliverable

The deliverable is structured in 3 main parts:

- Inventory conceptualisation & identification: page 4 of this document.
- Integrated Management & Governance Methodology: page 52 of this document.
- Methodology of Monitoring including battery of indicators: page 95 of this document.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ReSea project, co-funded by the European Union, advances the shift from sustainable to regenerative sea sports management, with the ambition of fostering socio-ecological renewal in maritime and coastal areas. By engaging the 5-Helix multistakeholder model, the project integrates perspectives from environmental organisations, sport operators, public authorities, civil society, and the tourism sector. This deliverable (D1.1) lays the conceptual and practical groundwork through three interconnected components: the **“Inventory conceptualisation & identification”**, the **“Integrated Management & Governance Methodology”** and the **“Methodology of Monitoring including battery of indicators”**.

The Inventory compiles and analyses literature, case studies, policy frameworks, and expert insights to outline the state of knowledge and practice in regenerative sea sports. It identifies both the limitations of conventional sustainability approaches and the opportunities offered by regeneration, illustrating how activities such as sailing, surfing, diving, and kayaking can actively contribute to ecosystem restoration, carbon reduction, and community empowerment.

Building on this, the Methodology proposes a conceptual framework for regenerative sea sports management. It defines the principles, values, and operational dimensions that distinguish regenerative approaches, and provides guidance on how stakeholders can align governance, practice, and culture with ecological and social renewal. This framework offers a shared reference for project partners and external actors seeking to embed regenerative thinking in sea sport initiatives.

Finally, the Indicators establish an initial set of measurable criteria for assessing the regenerative impact of sea sports. They encompass ecological, social, cultural, and governance dimensions, enabling organisations and policymakers to evaluate progress, identify gaps, and strengthen accountability. These indicators will serve as a practical tool for monitoring the effectiveness of regenerative strategies across diverse contexts.

Together, these three parts form the foundation for the next stages of ReSea. By consolidating evidence, defining a common methodology, and proposing actionable indicators, this deliverable positions regeneration as a tangible pathway for sea sports to contribute to ecological renewal, cultural vitality, and coastal resilience.



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WP1 – D1.1_REGENERATIVE Sea Sports Methodology

Inventory conceptualisation & identification

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS: ENOS

VERSION 1.0, DATE: 24.08.2025



PREFACE

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Executive Summary

The ReSea project, a groundbreaking initiative co-funded by the European Union, is committed to advancing sustainable and regenerative sea sports practices. By leveraging the 5-Helix Multistakeholder governance model, which brings together environmental associations, public authorities, sports clubs, civil society organisations, and tourism companies, the project aims to create a cohesive framework for the sustainable management of maritime and coastal sports practices. At its core, ReSea explores the transformative concept of regenerative marine sports and tourism where the goal is to not only minimize harm but actively restore natural ecosystems, empower local communities, and drive climate resilience.

Through an extensive body of research, this initiative defines regenerative sea sports management and identifies actionable practices that exemplify this shift. The methodology employed spans desktop reviews, interviews with experts, policy analyses, and real-world case studies from partner and external countries. The findings address how marine sports activities such as diving, kayaking, sailing, and snorkelling can transition from sustainable operations to regenerative approaches. Regenerative practices include ecosystem restoration, like seagrass planting and coral reef rehabilitation, reducing carbon emissions through renewable energy use, and embedding cultural preservation into tourism narratives.

The project reveals pressing challenges. For example, although sustainability efforts such as plastic-free policies and eco-friendly equipment are becoming common in the industry, they often fall short of reversing the ongoing ecological degradation. This underscores the urgency of a regenerative approach that prioritizes net-positive impacts. Among the insights, the research identifies key areas where current practices can evolve:

- **Ecosystem Restoration:** Marine sports operators are encouraged to actively contribute to habitat recovery by engaging in actions like seagrass restoration, coral reef rebuilding, and creating artificial reefs.
- **Carbon Neutrality:** Renewable energy solutions, hybrid transport options, and low-emission gear manufacturing are vital for reducing the industry's ecological footprint.
- **Cultural Integration:** Activities must safeguard and celebrate the maritime heritage of coastal communities while promoting local traditions and crafts.
- **Community Engagement:** Empowering local stakeholders to participate in tourism planning ensures equitable benefits while enhancing resilience.

This report has also documented inspiring examples of regenerative practices within and outside of partner countries. For instance, the Wilderness Scotland initiative promotes local reforestation efforts through adventure travel, while GreenKayak in Denmark connects kayaking with environmental cleanup efforts. Such case studies provide a blueprint for translating theory into action.

From a policy perspective, the study examines strategic frameworks, including those in Scotland, Catalonia, and Hawaii, that emphasize sustainable development, community-centered tourism, and regenerative outcomes. The European Green Deal's alignment with regenerative principles further establishes the policy foundation for scaling these practices.

The data analysis reveals significant trends and gaps. For instance, 47% of organizations involved in marine sports in partner countries engage local communities, yet only 15% explicitly mention reducing carbon footprints. This highlights an urgent need for comprehensive measures, such as monitoring and reporting systems, to achieve measurable outcomes.



Structure of the deliverable

The deliverable is structured in 7 main chapters along with a series of references:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Identification of examples of good practice
- Chapter 4: Case Studies
- Chapter 5: Policies
- Chapter 6: Interviews with experts
- Chapter 7: Conclusion

1. Introduction

Scope and objectives of the deliverable

Regenerative Sport Management – Task 1.1

This report is created from a series of desktop research studies undertaken by partners of the ReSea project to prepare a state of the art of policies to protect nature and reverse the degradation of ecosystems. It includes a definition of the concept of REGENERATIVE SEA SPORTS management as well as the identification of capitalizable knowledge and inputs through examples of good practice.

Partners involved in the research were:

- ENOS (France)
- AETHNIC (Spain)
- DAN (Malta)
- HASK (Croatia)
- Nautilus (Italy)

The work was broken into 7 distinct elements:

1. To develop a draft definition for what we mean by regenerative sport practices in maritime and littoral settings.
2. To undertake a literature review on the topic of sustainable and regenerative practices in marine sports
3. To identify examples of good practice and systems that showcase both sustainable and regenerative marine and outdoor sport activities and tourism within the partners' own countries and a series of other relevant countries (as agreed by the partners).
4. To create a series of case studies of good sustainable and regenerative practice by providers of marine sports and activities
5. To identify and highlight policies in sustainability and regenerative practices relevant to the marine water sports sector.
6. To undertake interviews with a number of experts in this area.

The development of a definition for regenerative marine sport practices.

Regeneration (according to the Cambridge English Dictionary) is “the act of improving a place or system, especially by making it more active or successful.” In the biological context it is “the act of something growing or being grown again.”

Regenerative agriculture has been increasingly recognised on a global scale as intensive agriculture has depleted soils to the extent that there are concerns about the ability to feed humanity in the future. The World Economic Forum has defined regenerative agriculture as follows:

- Regenerative agriculture focuses on improving the health of soil, which has been degraded by the use of heavy machinery, fertilizers and pesticides in intensive farming.
- There may not be enough soil left to grow food to feed the world within 50 years.
- Regenerative agriculture and other farming methods that don't harm the climate can improve farmers' incomes, as well as cutting emissions and boosting soil health.



Sustainable Tourism has been a strong focus within both the tourism and environmental protection area for many years. The EUROPARC Charter for Sustainable Tourism principles have been developed to govern how tourism is developed and managed in Protected Areas:

1. Giving priority to protection.

A fundamental priority for the development and management of sustainable tourism should be to protect the area's natural and cultural heritage and to enhance awareness, understanding and appreciation of it.

2. Contributing to sustainable development.

Sustainable Tourism should follow the principles of sustainable development which means addressing all aspects of its environmental, social and economic impact in the short and long term.

3. Engaging all stakeholders.

All those affected by sustainable tourism should be able to participate in decisions about its development and management, and partnership working should be encouraged.

4. Planning sustainable tourism effectively.

Sustainable Tourism development and management should be guided by a well-researched plan that sets out agreed objectives and actions.

5. Pursuing continuous improvement.

Tourism development and management should deliver ongoing improvement in sustainable environmental impacts, visitor satisfaction, economic performance, local prosperity and quality of life, requiring regular monitoring and reporting of progress and results.

These principles already go beyond simply sustainability and already highlight the need for "improvement".

However, while sustainable tourism is well documented and talked about, in reality it can be readily seen that it is failing across many tourism destinations including those of a maritime nature.

Dianne Dredge, Director of The Tourism CoLab in Australia talks about changing the language away from simply economics and not doing harm to "...ensuring the visitor economy delivers a net positive benefit for communities, the environment, and the destination."

Therefore, we need a definition that:

- Actively and intentionally creates the conditions for communities and places to thrive and flourish.
- Gives back more than it takes
- Delivers net benefit to all stakeholders.
- Takes steps to ensure that the natural and human resources that make up tourism can sustain and regenerate.

It should involve a bottom-up approach that supports communities to think about tourism as a means to achieve well-being for the people who live and work in the area rather than growing visitor numbers and GDP.



Regenerative tourism in the context of marine and water sports in Europe seeks to not only minimise negative impacts but actively contribute to the restoration, enhancement, and resilience of marine ecosystems and coastal communities. This concept must embrace environmental stewardship, cultural respect, and economic equity.

Key aspects of regenerative tourism include:

1. **Ecosystem Restoration and Protection:** Regenerative tourism prioritizes the recovery of degraded marine habitats, such as seagrass meadows, coral reefs, and coastal wetlands, through tourism-driven conservation projects. Operators and participants in water sports, such as diving or kayaking, would be involved in actively supporting restoration efforts.
2. **Climate Action:** In line with the European Green Deal, regenerative tourism aims to achieve carbon neutrality by adopting low-emission practices in travel to the area, the marine activities, reducing pollution, and investing in renewable energy solutions for operations like boat tours or sports equipment manufacturing.
3. **Sustainable Tourism Principles:** Supports sustainable resource use, engages local communities in decision-making, and ensures that economic benefits are distributed fairly. Activities like surfing schools or yacht charters should promote local employment and partnerships with conservation initiatives.
4. **Education and Advocacy:** Regenerative tourism integrates education into marine and water sports, raising awareness about marine biodiversity, the impact of human activities, and the importance of sustainable practices among tourists.
5. **Cultural Integration:** Respecting and celebrating local maritime heritage, regenerative tourism fosters a deeper connection between visitors and host communities. It emphasizes cultural sensitivity and promotes traditions, cuisine, and crafts linked to Europe's rich maritime history.

The European Green Deal

Climate change and environmental degradation have been highlighted as an existential threat to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, the European Green Deal aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring:

- no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
- economic growth decoupled from resource use
- no person and no place left behind

The Green Deal focuses on a number of key factors and these should be reflected in any Regenerative definition

Climate – Becoming the first climate neutral continent by 2050.

Energy - A clean and efficient energy transition

Environment and Oceans - Protecting our biodiversity and ecosystems

Agriculture - A healthy food system for people and the planet

Transport - Providing efficient, safe and environmentally friendly transport



Industry - An industrial strategy for a competitive, green and digital Europe

Research and Innovation - Its role in driving transformative change

Finance and Regional Development - Sustainable investments to deliver the European Green Deal

New European Bauhaus - A creative and interdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences

Definitions

What do we mean by sea sports:

By “Sea Sports” we are focused on the sports that take place in, on or adjacent to the sea. These include but are not limited to:

On the sea	In the sea	Adjacent to the sea
Sailing	Surfing	Coastal trail hiking
Canoeing and kayaking	Open water swimming	Beach volleyball
Rowing	Snorkelling	Sea cliff climbing
Stand up Paddle Boarding	Sub aqua diving	Coasteering
Kite surfing	Diving	Land yachting
Angling	Skim boarding	



What do we mean by regenerative sea sports and activities.

We define regenerative sea sports and activities as those that place an onus on:

- **Minimising the carbon and environmental impacts of travel, activities, accommodation and food.**
- **Restoring and enhancing ecosystems and habitats.**
- **Engaging, empowering and improving communities.**
- **Safeguarding cultural and intangible heritage.**
- **Optimising net positive environmental, social and economic impacts.**
- **Empowering everyone to understand fragile marine ecosystems and how they can be involved in championing protection and/or restoration.**
- **Building nature connectedness and promoting regeneration of self in nature.**
- **Measuring and monitoring impacts both positive and negative and acting on findings.**

With the implementation of the Green Claims Directive – it will be essential to prove how a Marine Tourism Provider is not only sustainable but regenerative. Therefore, it will be essential to monitor, measure and verify the impacts (both negative and positive) and this must be at the heart of a system.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

As global ecological challenges intensify, the relationship between environmental conservation, tourism and recreational sports has become increasingly significant. Marine and coastal environments, which are of critical importance for biodiversity and community livelihoods, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of tourism-related activities. While conventional sustainable practices have mitigated some of these impacts, they frequently fail to address underlying ecological degradation in a comprehensive manner (Baltranaitė et al., 2025). In response to these challenges, the concept of regeneration has emerged as a promising alternative, seeking to achieve more than mere harm reduction by actively restoring ecosystems, enhancing community wellbeing, and fostering innovation within tourism and recreational sports (Buckton et al., 2023; Bellato & Pollock, 2023). The regenerative approach emphasises proactive renewal and improvement, aligning closely with key EU policy frameworks, such as the European Green Deal, the Blue Economy strategy, and the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 – Life Below Water.

This literature review explores the existing research and practical insights into regenerative sea sports. It identifies specific strategies and opportunities for the integration of regenerative principles into the management of marine tourism and sports.

Methodology

The methodology for this literature review was specifically designed to align with Erasmus+ standards, emphasizing practical relevance and accessibility for stakeholders involved in marine tourism and recreational sports management.

The review systematically looked at diverse sources, including peer-reviewed academic papers from open-access databases, such as ResearchGate, Semantic Scholar, Google Scholar, EU policy documents, Erasmus+ project reports, institutional publications, and credible grey literature from environmental and tourism-related organizations. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the topic, with a particular emphasis on materials published between 2010 and 2025.

Structured keyword searches included: “regenerative tourism,” “marine sustainability,” “blue economy,” “eco-tourism,” “coastal recreation,” “water-based sports,” and “regenerative sports management,” combined using Boolean operators to ensure comprehensive, interdisciplinary coverage across environmental science, tourism studies, marine policy, and sports management.



Initial searches of the selected databases yielded approximately 7500 documents. Following a rigorous screening process for relevance, practical applicability and thematic alignment with Erasmus+ priorities, approximately 52 resources were selected for in-depth analysis. The selection process prioritised resources that provided clear insights and practical recommendations applicable to the European marine tourism and sport context.

Global Environmental Challenges and Sustainability

Global environmental degradation, including climate change, biodiversity loss and the decline of marine ecosystems, is one of the most pressing challenges facing contemporary societies (UN, 2022; UNESCO, 2024). Human activities, particularly tourism and recreational sports, have contributed significantly to these environmental pressures. Tourism, while economically beneficial, often results in habitat destruction, increased carbon emissions and marine pollution (ETC, 2024; Baltranaitė et al., 2025). Similarly, recreational sporting activities in marine and coastal areas often lead to habitat disturbance, erosion and negative impacts on local wildlife (Guo et al., 2024).

While traditional sustainability frameworks have provided essential guidance for reducing some environmental impacts, they have been criticised for emphasising incremental improvements rather than transformative systemic change. Such approaches, which typically focus on maintaining ecological balance rather than active restoration, often overlook deeper ecological and socio-economic issues, limiting their effectiveness in fully addressing global environmental crises (Reed, 2007; Du Plessis, 2012; UNEP, 2021). In response, regenerative frameworks have gained increasing attention as a more comprehensive strategy to address global environmental challenges, as they aim to restore and enhance ecosystems to address issues such as land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change (Giller et al., 2021; Huck, 2022; Mach & Ponting, 2023).

Marine ecosystems are particularly vulnerable and face compounding threats such as climate-induced ocean acidification, overfishing, pollution and habitat destruction, which are severely undermining marine biodiversity and ecosystem resilience (UNESCO, 2024; Baltranaitė et al., 2025). Addressing these challenges is congruent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 14, which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources (UN, 2022). The implementation of regenerative practices in marine tourism and sports has the potential to contribute to the achievement of these goals by promoting ecosystem restoration and the creation of sustainable livelihoods (Huck, 2022; Mach & Ponting, 2023; Tennakoon et al., 2024).

The State of the Ocean and Coastal Areas



Marine and coastal ecosystems are essential to the planet's ecological balance, socio-economic prosperity and cultural heritage. Ecologically, oceans are home to extensive biodiversity, provide critical habitats and food for countless marine species, and support vital global processes such as carbon storage and climate regulation (IPCC, 2019). Economically, marine and coastal environments support key industries, particularly fisheries and tourism, which underpin the livelihoods of coastal communities worldwide (OECD, 2025). Culturally, the oceans are of immense importance to local communities, many of whom have traditions, identities and heritage closely linked to marine resources (UNESCO, 2023).

Despite their importance, marine ecosystems are increasingly threatened by multiple human-induced pressures. Plastic pollution has become a critical global issue, affecting marine biodiversity through ingestion and entanglement, posing risks to human health and degrading coastal habitats (UNEP, 2021). Overfishing continues to undermine marine biodiversity, disrupting food chains and ecosystems, and harming local economies dependent on fishing (IPBES, 2022). In addition, habitat degradation caused by coastal development, unsustainable tourism practices and destructive fishing methods is exacerbating the ecological crisis facing the marine environment (FAO, 2020; UNEP, 2021).

To address these growing pressures, the European Union and other international institutions have actively promoted the Blue Economy as a strategic framework. The Blue Economy aims to balance economic growth, environmental health and community well-being through the sustainable management and use of marine resources (European Commission, 2021). Within this framework, ecotourism has emerged as a key approach, emphasising responsible travel, biodiversity conservation and tangible benefits for local communities. Ecotourism initiatives promote environmental awareness and community engagement and thus offer practical opportunities to move towards regenerative practices in marine and coastal tourism, including recreational marine sports (UNWTO, 2021; Tennakoon et al., 2024).

From Sustainability to Regeneration

The shift from sustainability to regeneration represents a significant evolution in environmental and social strategies, particularly relevant to tourism and recreational sport. Recent literature increasingly acknowledges the shift from sustainability to regeneration, recognising the need to move beyond mere impact reduction to the active restoration and enhancement of ecological systems, community wellbeing and local economies. (Bellato & Pollock, 2023).

Differences between sustainable and regenerative approaches



Conventional sustainability focuses primarily on minimising damage and maintaining equilibrium, aiming for a neutral or less negative impact on ecosystems. Regenerative approaches, however, take a proactive stance, deliberately restoring and improving ecosystem and community vitality to achieve positive ecological and social impacts (Reed, 2007; Du Plessis & Brandon, 2015). In agriculture, for example, sustainable practices typically aim to reduce soil degradation, whereas regenerative agriculture actively rebuilds soil health, increases biodiversity and improves overall ecological resilience (Giller et al., 2021).

Revision of regenerative principles from other industries

Regenerative principles are gaining recognition in many sectors beyond agriculture. In architecture, regenerative design aims to create buildings that positively contribute to their surroundings by generating energy, purifying water and supporting local biodiversity (Cole, 2012). Urban planning is similarly embracing regenerative approaches, designing urban spaces that actively restore ecological balance and enhance community wellbeing, transforming cities into vibrant ecosystems (Thomson & Newman, 2018).

Definition of regenerative tourism and its emphasis on leaving destinations better than found

Within tourism, regenerative practices build on sustainable tourism by proactively ensuring that visitors and tourism operators contribute positively to the environmental, economic and cultural aspects of destinations. Regenerative tourism involves travellers and tourism businesses in restoration initiatives such as reforestation, local conservation activities and community-based development, ultimately leaving the areas visited better, healthier and more resilient than before (Ateljevic, 2020; Cave & Dredge, 2020).

How regenerative tourism creates a pathway for incorporating regeneration into recreational activities, including sea sports

Applying regenerative principles specifically to marine recreation offers significant opportunities for ecological restoration and community empowerment. Regenerative tourism initiatives in coastal and marine environments can include organised beach clean-ups, marine habitat restoration (such as coral reef and seagrass projects), wildlife conservation programmes, and educational activities that promote environmental stewardship among participants and local communities (Erasmus+ Green Sports Hub, 2022). Activities such as surfing, sailing, diving and kayaking can become vehicles for ecosystem restoration, actively aligning recreational sports with broader regeneration goals.

These actions not only mitigate the environmental footprint of sea sports but also actively enhance the vitality of marine environments, aligning recreational pursuits with ecological restoration goals (Ateljevic, 2020). Consequently, the transition from sustainability to regeneration necessitates a proactive approach that aims to enhance and revitalise ecosystems and communities. The application of regenerative principles to tourism and sea sports offers a pathway to the preservation and enhancement of the natural environments upon which these activities depend, thereby ensuring their resilience and abundance for future generations.

Sustainability in Marine Tourism and Sea Sports

The adoption of sustainable practices in marine tourism and marine sports has made significant progress in recent decades, driven by the growing global recognition of the sector's environmental impacts. Marine and coastal tourism activities are increasingly reflecting environmental awareness through the implementation of sustainability certifications, guidelines and green technological innovations (Lucrezi et al., 2017; UNWTO & UNEP, 2005). However, despite these advances, concerns remain about the ability of traditional sustainability approaches to fully address ongoing ecological degradation in marine environments (Budeanu et al., 2016; UNEP, 2009).

A key aspect of sustainable change is the use of environmentally friendly equipment and responsible operating practices. Notable initiatives such as the Green Fins programme, supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), promote sustainable diving and snorkelling by establishing codes of conduct for marine tourism operators. These guidelines emphasise reducing damage to coral reefs, minimising marine debris and promoting responsible tourist behaviour (UNEP, 2021). In addition, innovations such as electric and hybrid boat engines have emerged, reducing underwater noise pollution and carbon emissions from recreational marine transport (Grosso et al., 2021; IMO, 2020).

Sustainable development in marine sports is also facilitated by advances in materials and manufacturing techniques. In the past, equipment such as surfboards were made from environmentally harmful materials such as polyurethane and fibreglass. Recent innovations have shifted to sustainable alternatives such as bio-resins, recycled materials and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes, significantly reducing their environmental footprint (Sustainable Surf, n.d.; UNEP, 2018). Non-motorised sports such as stand-up paddleboarding, sailing, and kayaking have grown in popularity significantly due to their minimal environmental impact (Gregori-Faus et al., 2025). This aligns closely with sustainability principles and Erasmus+ objectives, which promote environmentally responsible sporting practices.

The implementation of these practices within the marine tourism industry is illustrated by means of practical examples. Dive centres are increasingly adopting plastic-free policies, offering reusable or compostable packaging in place of single-use plastics. Additionally, integrating conservation practices into marine infrastructure, such as artificial reef development, contributes to biodiversity enhancement, reduces pressures on natural reef systems, and enriches sustainable tourism experiences (Einarsson et al., 2020). These initiatives serve dual purposes: enhancing marine biodiversity and providing engaging, sustainable tourism experiences.

Nevertheless, sustainability alone may not sufficiently reverse or fully address the escalating pressures facing marine ecosystems, especially the cumulative effects of climate change, ocean acidification, and habitat degradation. For instance, coral reef ecosystems worldwide continue experiencing rapid decline despite current sustainability efforts (IPCC, 2023; UNEP, 2021). These persistent ecological challenges highlight the limitations of sustainability practices focused primarily on harm reduction rather than ecosystem restoration.



While the sustainability of marine tourism and marine recreation has been greatly enhanced by the development of innovative equipment, the implementation of reduced impact operational practices and the emergence of a conservation-minded tourism sector, it is becoming increasingly clear that regenerative models may offer a more effective long-term strategy. By integrating restoration as a fundamental component of recreational marine activities, the industry can facilitate a more direct contribution to the revitalisation of the ecosystems on which it depends.

Regenerative Sea Sports Management

The transition from sustainable to regenerative practices in marine tourism and marine sports represents a pivotal shift towards proactively enhancing marine ecosystems, empowering local communities and catalysing industry innovation.

Benefits of regenerative approaches in sea sports

The implementation of regenerative practices in sea sports has been demonstrated to engender a multitude of benefits.

- **Marine ecosystems:** Initiatives such as coral reef restoration, seagrass restoration and regenerative marine farming are actively increasing biodiversity, improving water quality and strengthening coastal resilience, thereby restoring ecosystem functionality and health (Duarte et al., 2020; IPBES, 2022).
- **Local communities:** Regenerative tourism practices have proven effective in promoting community resilience and economic growth, while strengthening cultural connections to the marine environment. Community-driven regeneration initiatives support sustainable livelihoods and strengthen local identity, directly benefiting coastal communities (Ateljevic, 2020; Cave & Dredge, 2020).
- **Sports industry:** Adopting regenerative models can significantly increase the market attractiveness and sustainability of marine sports businesses, attracting environmentally conscious participants. This approach ensures the long-term viability and competitiveness of the industry, aligning commercial interests with environmental responsibility (Erasmus+ Green Sports Hub, 2022).

Summary



In summary, Regenerative Marine Sports Management represents a holistic evolution of sustainability that offers significant benefits to marine ecosystems, local communities and the sports industry. It advocates a proactive, systems-thinking approach that restores ecological balance, strengthens local economies and ensures the long-term viability of marine recreation. By embedding regeneration into policy, operations and community partnerships, stakeholders can ensure both the vitality of the marine environment and the prosperity of the coastal cultures that depend on it.

Practical implementation of regenerative sea sports management is illustrated through diverse case studies and best practices collected by project partners across Europe. These examples demonstrate the practical application of regenerative principles and highlight successful models of marine ecosystem restoration, community engagement, and sustainable sports practices. The following chapter of this report provides detailed examples collected directly from project partners, showcasing innovative regenerative sea sports initiatives currently implemented in their respective countries, along with additional selected best practices from across Europe and beyond.

3. Identification of examples of good practice and systems

These examples of good practice showcase both sustainable and regenerative marine and outdoor sport activities and tourism within the partners' own countries and a selected group of other countries.

The first stage was to agree a set of sports and activities that should be included within this initial desktop research and these were as follows:

1. Sailing
2. Dinghy sailing
3. Canoeing and kayaking
4. Surfing
5. Snorkeling
6. Diving
7. Open water swimming
8. Coastal rowing
9. Kite surfing

Partners used an Excel template to search for information from websites (or from their own knowledge) in relation to the following criteria:

1. Name of organisation



2. How information was found (online search, known contact or project, word of mouth from colleagues)
3. Web address
4. Type of programme
5. Target market
6. If and how carbon impacts are minimised
7. If and how local nature impacts are minimised
8. If and how impacts are reduced within accommodation and food
9. If and how there is community engagement and empowerment
10. If and how ecosystems and habitats are restored and / or enhanced
11. If and how cultural and intangible heritage is protected
12. What other positive environmental, social and economic impacts are generated
13. What systems are used for monitoring measuring and reporting

Partners were given approximately 5 weeks to start searching for examples of good practice within their own country and in a set of agreed other countries. All the countries from which information was provided was as follows:

Own countries

- Spain, Italy, Malta, Croatia, France, The United Kingdom, Ireland

Additional countries

- Portugal, Sweden, Canada, The Maldives, Greece, Panama, Finland

This resulted in 131 examples of good practice being found and key elements of data were recorded in an excel spreadsheet that allowed for further analysis. Links to the organisations' websites were also provided by partners to allow for further examination of how they deliver on sustainability or regenerative practices.

An analysis of the findings includes both quantitative data and qualitative insights in terms of how impacts on the environment, community, and cultural heritage are managed.

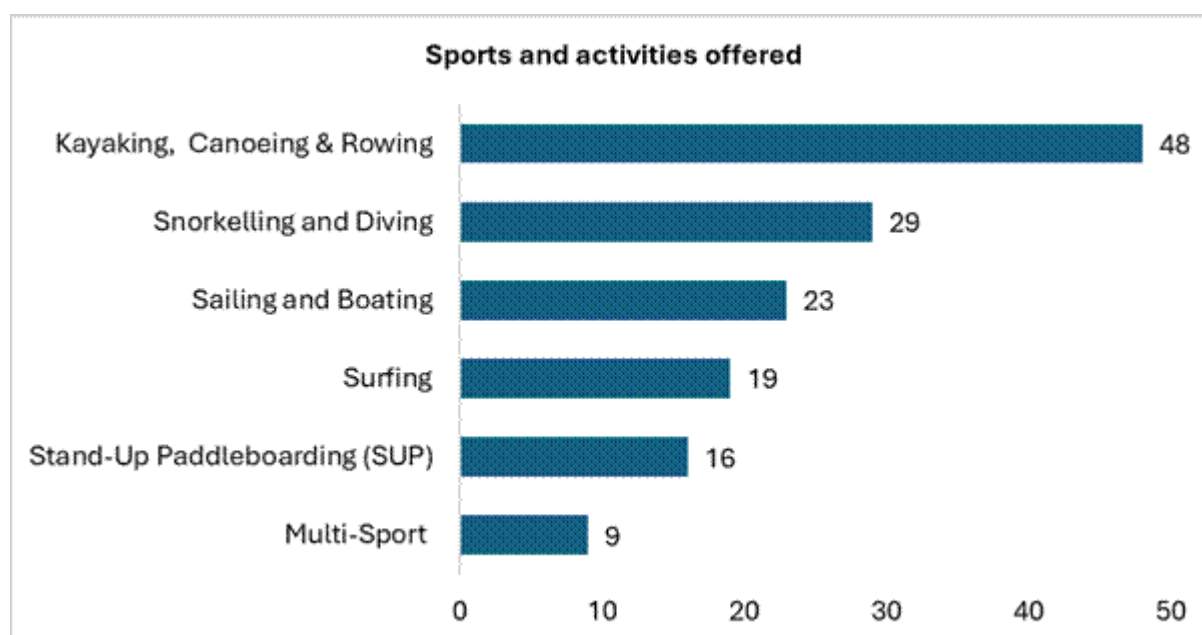
Key Findings

Of the 131 organisations for which data had been provided, 29 of these were environmental organisations that had a clear mandate for nature conservation and/or restoration in a marine setting. While the data on these was retained and there were some excellent examples of how communities are involved in nature restoration, there were no links to sea sports and activities and no indication as to how sports organisations were connecting with these organisations.

Therefore, they were excluded from further analysis as they tended to skew the results significantly due to the nature of the work that they do.

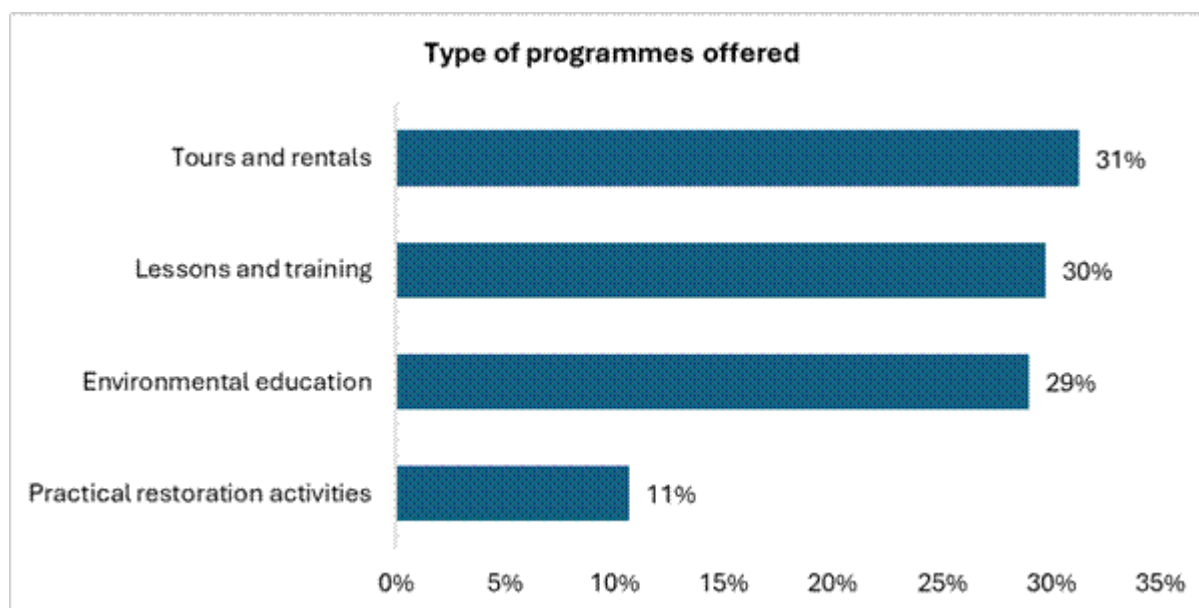
However, this left a list of 102 organisations that were analysed, operating across 14 different countries. These organisations were a mixture of non-profits, eco-tourism companies, clubs, sports federations and businesses. They focus on the provision of services and opportunities through sea sports and recreation, sustainable maritime tourism, community engagement and education.

The main water sports provided by these organisations were noted and there were some that offered one or two sports as well as those that noted a large range of sports (classified as multi-sport). Some providers offered canoeing and kayaking and sailing but were not necessarily branding themselves as multi-sport. Some organisations highlighted were more focused on environmental education or environmental protection and so did not provide information on any sport activities offered.



Types of Programmes provided

Of the 102 organisations 38 (29%) offered some form of environmental education programmes – often linked to activity lessons, training and tours. 39 (30%) of the organisations highlighted that they run some form of lessons or training while 41 (31%) provide tours and rental opportunities. The tours may be multi day or single day. 14 of the organisations found (11%) undertake some form of practical restoration activity in the marine environment (or in some cases on their own site through habitat improvement).



Partners examined the websites to look for how the organisation undertook activities that reflected their commitment to sustainability or regeneration.

Positive impacts generated

Overall 75 organisations (74%) showed that they had something that generated positive impacts on the environment. The majority of these were focused on environmental education and nature connectedness which while important does not guarantee to make a positive concrete impact.

Community engagement / empowerment: 66 of the organisations (65%) indicated how they supported, empowered and interacted with local communities that brought about positive influence and change.

Nature impacts minimised: 52 organisations (51%) have systems of education and awareness raising or policy information on how they minimise disturbance or other impacts on local wildlife.

How ecosystems and habits restored: 43 of the organisations (42%) indicated that have some system in place of the restoration of ecosystems and habitats. There were some very inspiring examples including sea grass planting but many were focused on removal of litter and beach cleans.

Carbon impacts minimised: 36 organisations (35%) explicitly mention any form of carbon reduction activities or mechanisms, such as using solar-powered premises and avoiding fuel-based activities.

How cultural heritage is protected

29 organisations (28%) were found to have information on how they protected cultural heritage in marine environments.

Systems used for measuring and reporting

26 organisations (25%) highlighted that they had systems to measure and report on their impacts.

Accommodation and food impacts minimised: Only 22 organisations (22%) mentioned how they minimise the impacts of accommodation or how they use locally sourced, organic and sustainable food.



4. Case Studies

As a result of the searches a number of case studies emerged that highlight how organisations are exemplifying regenerative practices.

1. Wilderness Scotland

Website: [Wilderness Scotland](https://www.wildernessscotland.com/)

Country: UK (Scotland)

Wilderness Scotland is an adventure travel company that has embedded sustainability into its core operations with very clear information provided on their website. Their sustainability policy encompasses reducing carbon emissions, promoting local conservation efforts, and supporting community-based tourism. They utilize eco-friendly transportation options, minimize waste, and educate clients on environmental stewardship.

They collaborate with local conservation organisations to protect natural habitats and wildlife and have initiatives to promote and support reforestation projects, wildlife monitoring, and local economies through sustainable tourism practices. The company has received numerous awards and certifications for its commitment to sustainability, making it a leader in the adventure travel industry.

2. GreenKayak

Website: <https://www.greenkayak.org/>

Country: Denmark

GreenKayak is an innovative organisation that combines kayaking with environmental activism and is based in Denmark. They offer free kayak rentals in exchange for participants collecting trash from waterways. This unique approach promotes outdoor recreation while actively contributing to cleaning up rivers and lakes but also offers no cost low cost solutions to engaging people with nature and healthy outdoor activities.

It partners with local businesses and municipalities to expand their reach and impact and their model has successfully engaged the public in environmental conservation and raised awareness about water pollution. Their efforts have resulted in 84653 people volunteering using GreenKayak and the removal of 134 tons of waste from aquatic environments. Their approach demonstrates how sports can be leveraged for environmental activism.

3. Surf Clube de Viana

Website: <https://www.surfingviana.com/>

Country: Portugal



Surf Clube de Viana is a surf school and club that integrates sustainability into its core values. They focus on environmental education, beach clean-ups, and sustainable surf tourism. The club promotes the use of eco-friendly surfboards and equipment and has implemented measures to reduce their carbon footprint. They are accredited by STOKE which is the **Sustainable Tourism and Outdoors Kit for Evaluation**, the world's first sustainability certification body with standards built specifically for surf and ski tourism operators.

Surf Clube de Viana collaborates extensively with local environmental organisations to protect coastal ecosystems and marine life but also with community organisations to provide enhanced opportunities for older people and people with disabilities. Their commitment to sustainability has made them a leader in the surf community, fostering a stronger culture of environmental awareness within the surf community.

4. Preseli Adventure

Website: <https://www.preseliventure.co.uk/>

Country: UK (Wales)

Preseli Adventure is an outdoor adventure company that prioritises many aspects of sustainability in its operations. They have a clear focus on reducing their environmental impact through eco-friendly practices, such as using renewable energy, minimising waste, and promoting sustainable tourism.

Preseli Adventure engages in conservation efforts, including habitat restoration and wildlife protection and have strong focus on the education of their clients regarding environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. Their commitments to the local natural environment and global climate action is an excellent example of how sustainable and regenerative practices can be embedded in an outdoor sport coastal provider.

5. Killary Adventure Centre

Website: <https://killaryadventure.com/en/environment>

Country: Ireland

Killary Adventure Centre is an outdoor adventure company that showcases how it integrates sustainability into its operations by being a certified "B-Corporation" company. They focus on reducing their environmental impact through eco-friendly practices, such as using renewable energy, minimising waste, utilising reed bed (nature based solutions for waste water) and promoting environmentally sensitive activities.

Killary Adventure Centre engages in practical conservation efforts, including habitat restoration within their site and wildlife protection. They also provide a strong focus on educating clients on environmental issues and sustainable practices. Killary Adventure Centre's initiatives have been recognised within Ireland and they have won a number of small business awards for their sustainable practices.



6. Les Glénans

Website: <https://www.glenans.asso.fr/nos-valeurs>

Country: France

Les Glénans is a renowned sailing school in France that has integrated sustainability into its core values and operations. Founded in 1947, the organisation is dedicated to promoting sailing while preserving the marine environment. Les Glénans has implemented a comprehensive sustainability policy that includes reducing carbon emissions, minimising waste, having a zero single use plastic policy and promoting eco-friendly practices among its members and students.

Their initiatives include using renewable energy sources and so use 100% renewable energy to power their facilities and promoting the use of eco-friendly sailing equipment. Les Glénans also engages in environmental education, teaching students about the importance of marine conservation and sustainable sailing practices.

Les Glénans collaborates with local environmental organisations to support conservation efforts and raise awareness about the impact of human activities on marine environments and they organise regular beach clean-ups and participate in marine conservation projects to protect coastal ecosystems.

7. Kayak Lanzarote

Website: <https://www.kayaklanzarote.com/english/index.php>

Country: Spain

Case Study: Kayak Lanzarote is a water sports company based in Lanzarote, Spain, that focuses on sustainable kayaking and eco-tourism. Right from their foundation in 2014, the organisation is dedicated to preserving the natural beauty of Lanzarote's coastal and marine environments while providing exciting and educational kayaking experiences.

Kayak Lanzarote has implemented several sustainability initiatives to minimise their environmental impact. They provide filtered water to try and reduce the reliance on single use plastics, use eco-friendly kayaks made from recycled materials and promote responsible kayaking practices among their clients. The company organises regular beach clean-ups and participates in marine conservation projects to protect local ecosystems.

Environmental education is a key component of Kayak Lanzarote's operations. They offer guided tours that include information about the local flora and fauna, the importance of marine conservation, and the impact of human activities on coastal environments as well as information on the local cultural heritage.

Kayak Lanzarote collaborates with local environmental organisations to support conservation efforts and underwent training by *Fundación Biodiversidad*, which is attached to the Ministry of Ecological Transition.



8. The Ocean Race

Website: <https://www.theoceanrace.com/>

The Ocean Race is a premier sailing competition that has made significant strides in promoting sustainability. The race organizers have implemented a comprehensive sustainability strategy that includes reducing carbon emissions, minimizing waste, and promoting ocean conservation. They have partnered with various environmental organisations to raise awareness about marine pollution and the importance of protecting ocean ecosystems as well as a strong focus on ocean literacy.

One of the key initiatives of the Ocean Race is the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, to support race operations. The race also promotes waste reduction and responsible resource use and has also supported scientific research on water quality through sample collection.

9. World Surf League (WSL) – One Ocean Campaign

Website: <https://www.worldsurfleague.com/wsloneocean>

The World Surf League (WSL) launched the One Ocean campaign, an initiative focused on ocean conservation and sustainability along with its subsidiary partner WSL Pure aimed at protecting the ocean to preserve the future of surfing for generations to come. One Ocean engages fans and hosts event-based local impact projects throughout the WSL Championship Tour season with WSL PURE grantee organisations.

WSL PURE funds ocean protection around the world through a grant program for grassroots nonprofits focused on WSL priorities of coastal restoration and conservation, eliminating plastic and taking climate action. The campaign has been very successful in mobilizing and empowering the surfing community to take action for ocean conservation.

10. The WiSe Scheme: A Model for Sustainable Activity Providers

Website: <https://www.wisescheme.org/>

The WiSe (Wildlife Safe) Scheme is a UK-based national training program designed to promote best practices around marine and coastal wildlife to minimize disturbance. This initiative serves as an exemplary model for how activity providers can integrate environmental sensitivity into their operations, ensuring that their activities are responsible and contribute positively to conservation efforts.

Background The WiSe Scheme was established to address the growing need for responsible wildlife watching and marine activities to help protect wildlife that may be vulnerable to disturbance from human activities. The scheme aims to educate and certify individuals, businesses, and organisations on how to interact with marine wildlife in a manner that respects their natural behaviours and habitats.



Sustainability Initiatives The WiSe Scheme has implemented several key initiatives that make it a standout example of behaviour management in the activity provider sector:

1. **Education and Training** The core of the WiSe Scheme is its comprehensive training program. The scheme offers expert-led courses that provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to act responsibly around marine and coastal wildlife. These courses cover a wide range of topics, including species identification, understanding wildlife behaviour, and the impact of human activities on marine ecosystems.
2. **Codes of Conduct** The WiSe Scheme has developed detailed Codes of Conduct in line with government Marine Wildlife Codes. These codes provide clear guidelines on how to interact with marine wildlife safely and sustainably. All WiSe-trained individuals agree to abide by these best practice codes, which help to standardize responsible behaviour across the industry. This commitment to following established guidelines ensures that interactions with wildlife are conducted in a way that minimises disturbance and promotes conservation.
3. **Community Engagement** The WiSe Scheme actively engages with local communities and stakeholders to promote sustainable practices. By involving local businesses, tour operators, and marine professionals, the scheme fosters a collaborative approach to conservation. This community engagement helps to build a network of responsible activity providers who are committed to protecting marine wildlife and their habitats.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation** The WiSe Scheme places a strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its initiatives. Regular assessments are conducted to ensure that certified individuals and organisations are adhering to the Codes of Conduct and maintaining high standards of sustainability. This continuous evaluation process helps to identify areas for improvement and ensures that the scheme remains effective in promoting responsible wildlife watching.
5. **Public Awareness** Raising public awareness about the importance of sustainable marine activities is a key component of the WiSe Scheme. The scheme provides educational resources and information to the general public, encouraging them to support responsible activity providers and make informed choices when engaging in marine activities. By increasing public awareness, the WiSe Scheme helps to create a culture of sustainability that extends beyond the certified individuals and organisations.
6. **Impact and Recognition** The WiSe Scheme has had a significant impact on promoting sustainability within the marine activity sector. Thousands of operators and marine professionals have attended WiSe courses, leading to a widespread adoption of best practices. The scheme has been recognized for its contributions to marine conservation and has received support from various environmental organisations and government agencies.

Through education, adherence to Codes of Conduct, community engagement, monitoring, and public awareness, the scheme ensures that marine activities are conducted responsibly and contribute to the protection of marine wildlife. As a model for sustainable activity providers, the WiSe Scheme demonstrates that it is possible to enjoy and benefit from marine activities while safeguarding the environment for future generations.

5. Policies

Policies are essential enablers for the transition of marine sports into and beyond sustainability to regenerative practices. As can be seen from the case studies, while many individual operators adopt eco-friendly measures, it is policy frameworks that provide the structure, accountability, and long-term vision needed to embed regeneration across the sector. They ensure that positive initiatives, such as waste reduction, habitat restoration, or cultural and community integration, are not isolated gestures but part of a systemic shift with measurable impacts.

By aligning with broader frameworks such as the European Green Deal, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action Framework or the UN Sustainable Development Goals, policy adherence empowers the marine sports sector to contribute to positive climate and biodiversity action. Importantly, policies also create common ground between stakeholders including governments, NGOs, sports providers, and local communities—ensuring that recreational activities directly support ecological recovery and equitable community benefits.

The project partners sought out examples of policies through desktop research that demonstrate how they can effectively begin to drive change. Scotland’s *Outlook 2030* places community well-being and environmental responsibility at the core of tourism. Catalonia’s *Responsible Tourism Roadmap* integrates social justice, territorial balance, and biodiversity protection into tourism strategies. Hawaii’s *Regenerative Tourism Bill* goes a step further, embedding regenerative principles into state law, while initiatives like Ireland’s *Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030* and New Zealand’s *Tiaki Promise* show how cultural values and ecological stewardship can be woven into national commitments.

Together, these policy frameworks illustrate that adherence can go beyond being simply a bureaucratic formality but rather a catalyst for innovation, investment, and long-term competitiveness. For the marine sports sector, this means improved ecosystems, empowered coastal communities, and resilient tourism economies, ensuring that recreation on the sea not only minimizes harm but actively regenerates the environments and societies on which it depends.

1. “Tourism in the EU: sustainability as a driver for long-term competitiveness”

Adopted on 27/02/2025

The European Economic and Social Committee:

- Emphasises that the transition to sustainable tourism should be accelerated and regenerative tourism strategies must be implemented to ensure that regions highly specialised in tourism can fully contribute to boosting the EU’s competitiveness through tourism. Regenerative tourism goes further than sustainable tourism: it uses practices designed to restore and strengthen natural, social and economic capital, with a positive and lasting impact on destinations and communities;



- recommends that the new EU legislative cycle should promote tourism policies that include active regeneration objectives and take into account how all the components of a tourist destination are interconnected: ecosystems, communities, the local economy and visitors;
- proposes developing clear guidelines and concrete measures to accelerate the transition to a tourism model centred around active regeneration and social value in the framework of the sustainable tourism strategy. This strategy should be accompanied by appropriate funding and research programmes, as well as social and training policies to ensure that it is implemented effectively;
- stresses that training and upskilling employees in sustainability and the circular economy is key to increasing job quality and attracting and retaining the talent needed to make the transition to regenerative tourism possible and viable. To achieve these objectives, efforts should be made to involve consumers more. The combination of economic incentives, accessible models and strategies to encourage year-round tourism is key to involving them more widely and more effectively.

2. Scotland Outlook 2030

Scotland Outlook 2030 is a bold new approach that will see tourism act positively in the common interest of Scotland's communities, businesses and everyone who visits and stays in the country.

It recognises that the role of tourism has changed as a result of our climate crisis, advances in technology, EU exit and changes in consumer behaviour which is reflected in the demands of today's traveller.

Tourism is no longer just about tourists; it's about people. Success means more than numbers; it's about enrichment and prosperity for residents and our visitors. Tourism can and will benefit every person who lives in Scotland, visits Scotland and works in Scotland. That is the vision of 21st century tourism.

Key Objectives:

- **World Leadership in Tourism:** Establish Scotland as a pioneer in sustainable and responsible tourism.
- **Economic Growth:** Enhance the value of tourism to Scotland's economy.
- **Community Benefits:** Ensure tourism positively impacts local communities.
- **Environmental Responsibility:** Promote sustainable practices to protect Scotland's natural and cultural heritage.

Strategic Actions:

- **Focus on People:** Invest in skills development and create opportunities for those working in tourism.
- **Support Thriving Places:** Develop infrastructure and services to enhance visitor experiences while supporting local communities.



- **Empower Diverse Businesses:** Provide resources and support for tourism-related businesses to innovate and grow.
- **Create Memorable Experiences:** Highlight Scotland's unique cultural, historical, and natural assets to attract visitors.
- **Commit to Sustainability:** Implement responsible tourism practices to ensure long-term environmental and social benefits.

The strategy emphasizes collaboration among public, private, and third-sector organizations to achieve these goals

3. Ireland Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030

The Ireland Tourism Policy Framework 2025–2030, introduced on November 6, 2024, by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media, Catherine Martin TD, aims to harmonize economic growth with environmental and social sustainability. This policy was developed through extensive engagement with tourism stakeholders and public consultation

Key Objectives:

1. **Sustainability:** Establish a baseline figure for tourism-associated emissions and set specific emission reduction and biodiversity targets.
2. **Economic Growth:** Achieve an average annual 5.6% growth in revenue from overseas visitors and domestic tourism.
3. **Quality Employment:** Ensure quality, year-round jobs nationwide.
4. **Environmental Responsibility:** Reduce average carbon emissions associated with each visitor bed night by 60%

Strategic Actions:

- **Tourism Leadership Group:** Establish a group to oversee the implementation of the policy objectives.
- **Regional Distribution:** Promote balanced regional distribution of tourism to ensure all areas benefit.
- **Food-Based Offerings:** Grow Ireland's food-based offerings for visitors.
- **Waste Reduction:** Minimize the environmental footprint of holidays by reducing waste

Implementation: The framework includes 61 policy proposals across environmental, economic, and social pillars. It aims to make Ireland a world-class and sustainable destination by balancing growth with sustainability.

This policy framework is designed to ensure a resilient and flourishing tourism sector in Ireland by 2030.

4. Catalonia's Responsible Tourism Roadmap

Catalonia's Responsible Tourism Roadmap outlines 67 initiatives aimed at promoting sustainability and inclusion within the tourism sector. This roadmap is a strategic response to the significant changes and challenges faced by the tourism industry, emphasizing the need for a more sustainable, inclusive, and balanced tourism model

Key Objectives:

1. **Environmentally Sustainable Tourism:** Focus on reducing environmental impact and promoting eco-friendly practices. This includes initiatives to protect natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, and promote biodiversity
2. **Socially Just Tourism:** Ensure that tourism benefits all members of society, promoting social inclusion and equity. This involves supporting local communities, enhancing accessibility, and improving working conditions within the tourism sector
3. **Territorially Balanced Tourism:** Promote a balanced distribution of tourism across different regions to avoid over-tourism in popular areas and ensure that all regions benefit from tourism activities
4. **Innovation in Tourism:** Encourage innovation and adaptation to new visitor trends, leveraging technology to enhance the tourism experience and improve sustainability

Strategic Actions:

- **Environmental Initiatives:** Implement 23 initiatives focused on environmental sustainability, including waste reduction, energy efficiency, and conservation efforts
- **Social Initiatives:** Develop 19 initiatives aimed at promoting social justice, such as community engagement, cultural preservation, and inclusive tourism practices
- **Regional Initiatives:** Launch 13 initiatives to ensure territorial balance, including promoting lesser-known destinations and supporting regional tourism infrastructure
- **Innovative Initiatives:** Introduce 12 initiatives to foster innovation, such as digital transformation, smart tourism solutions, and research and development

Implementation: The roadmap is the result of collective participation and consensus among various stakeholders, including government entities, businesses, and local communities. It aims to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient tourism sector in Catalonia by 2030

5. Strategy for Development and Transformation in Finnish Tourism, 2015–2025

Introduction: The Strategy for Development and Transformation in Finnish Tourism, 2015–2025, was introduced by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland. This strategic plan aims to position Finland as the leading tourist destination in Northern Europe by 2025.

Key Objectives:



1. **Strengthening Cooperation:** Enhance theme-based cooperation between tourist centers and networks of tourism enterprises. This includes new initiatives in product development, sales, and marketing
2. **Competitive Offerings:** Develop comprehensive and competitive tourism offerings by integrating tourism with other fields
3. **Effective Marketing:** Increase the effectiveness of marketing activities and make travel services easier to purchase
4. **Operational Environment:** Create a competitive operational environment that supports growth and renewal in the tourism sector
5. **Accessibility:** Improve accessibility to ensure easy travel to and within Finland

Strategic Actions:

- **Finrelax:** Position Finland as a top destination for wellbeing tourism
- **Finnish Archipelago:** Promote the Finnish archipelago internationally

Implementation: The strategy includes various measures to promote the achievement of these objectives, supported by financial instruments within the administrative branch of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment.

6. The Tiaki Promise

is a national initiative in New Zealand that encourages both residents and visitors to care for the country, protect nature, and respect local communities. It embodies the principles of regenerative tourism by promoting environmental stewardship and cultural respect

Key Objectives:

1. **Protect Nature:** Encourage actions that preserve and enhance New Zealand's natural environment. This includes minimizing waste, conserving resources, and protecting wildlife
2. **Respect Culture:** Promote understanding and respect for Māori culture and traditions. This involves engaging with local communities and honoring cultural heritage
3. **Travel Safely:** Ensure safe travel practices that protect both visitors and locals. This includes driving carefully, being prepared for outdoor activities, and following safety guidelines

Strategic Actions:

- **Environmental Stewardship:** Act as guardians of the land, sea, and nature by treading lightly and leaving no trace
- **Cultural Respect:** Travel with an open heart and mind, respecting the culture and local communities
- **Safety and Preparedness:** Show care and consideration for all, ensuring safe and responsible travel



Implementation: The Tiaki Promise is a shared commitment among various stakeholders, including government entities, tourism businesses, and local communities. It aims to create a sustainable and respectful tourism experience for everyone visiting New Zealand. This initiative highlights New Zealand's dedication to preserving its natural beauty and cultural heritage while promoting responsible tourism practices.

7. Hawaii Regenerative Tourism Bill

On June 29, 2024, Governor Josh Green signed Senate Bill 2659 into law, incorporating regenerative tourism frameworks into the Hawaii State Planning Act. This landmark legislation aims to transform Hawaii's tourism industry by promoting sustainability, cultural preservation, and economic diversification.

Key Objectives:

1. **Environmental Sustainability:** Reduce the ecological footprint of the visitor industry by implementing policies that decrease impacts on beaches, reefs, and ocean life.
2. **Cultural Preservation:** Support community efforts to protect cultural and natural resources, ensuring that sensitive areas are safeguarded from excessive visitor traffic.
3. **Economic Diversification:** Engage more local businesses in the tourism value chain and support other economic sectors to reduce Hawaii's dependence on tourism.
4. **Community Empowerment:** Offer capacity-building opportunities, job training, and education to enhance career mobility within the visitor industry.

Strategic Actions:

- **Regenerative Framework:** Integrate regenerative tourism principles into the Hawaii State Planning Act and the state's Tourism Functional Plan.
- **Support for Local Communities:** Empower local communities to protect their cultural and natural heritage while benefiting economically from tourism.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Implement policies that promote sustainable tourism practices, such as waste reduction and energy efficiency.

Implementation: The bill was championed by the Native Hawaiian Caucus and supported by various stakeholders, including legislative leaders, community proponents, and the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA). It represents a collaborative effort to create a thriving, diverse, and resilient tourism industry that prioritizes the well-being of Hawaii's communities and cultural heritage.

This legislation marks a significant step towards a more sustainable and regenerative tourism model in Hawaii, ensuring long-term benefits for both the environment and local communities.

8. The Strategic Tourism Plan for Italy 2023–2027



The plan aims to transform the tourism sector by focusing on sustainability, innovation, and global cooperation. This plan is designed to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of Italy's tourism industry while adapting to global trends and challenges.

Key Objectives:

1. **Sustainability:** Promote environmentally friendly tourism practices to protect Italy's cultural and natural heritage.
2. **Innovation:** Leverage digital technologies to improve tourism services and marketing.
3. **Economic Growth:** Strengthen the competitiveness of the tourism sector and diversify offerings.
4. **Inclusivity:** Ensure tourism benefits all regions and communities, including lesser-known destinations.
5. **Resilience:** Build a tourism industry that can adapt to global challenges, such as climate change and economic shifts.

Strategic Actions:

1. **Green Transition:** Implement policies to support sustainable tourism and ecological practices.
2. **Digital Transformation:** Invest in technology to enhance visitor experiences and streamline operations.
3. **Community Engagement:** Collaborate with local communities to promote cultural and regional tourism.
4. **Skill Development:** Provide training programs to improve career opportunities in the tourism sector.
5. **Global Cooperation:** Foster international partnerships to boost Italy's appeal as a global tourism destination.

This strategic plan aims to create a resilient, competitive, and sustainable tourism industry in Italy by 2027.

9. Destination France, a plan to reclaim market shares and transition the tourism industry

In June 2021, the President of the Republic announced a recovery plan to revitalize French tourism after the crisis and to support its renewal and ecological transition. While the COVID crisis had a major impact on tourism, it also brought an opportunity to highlight its structural challenges and trends.

The plan is backed by a budget of €1.9 billion and steered by the Minister of Tourism. This 10-year roadmap sets the course for the development and transition of the tourism sector. The aim is to consolidate France's position as the world's leading tourist destination and to make it the foremost destination for sustainable tourism. French tourism is on a path to generating excellence, growth and jobs based on a more sustainable, resilient, qualitative model corresponding with the



expectations of today's consumers in France and all over the world. Destination France ambitions focus on 20 measures in five strategic areas:

- Attracting and recovering talent
- Strengthening the resilience of the sector and supporting the quality of the offer
- Promoting and developing tourism assets in France
- Meeting the challenges of ecological transition
- Promoting France as a destination and consolidating its market share

Key Objectives:

1. **Reclaim Market Share:** Strengthen France's global appeal and competitiveness in the tourism industry.
2. **Sustainability:** Transition to a more sustainable tourism model that aligns with ecological and social goals.
3. **Economic Growth:** Boost the tourism sector's contribution to the French economy.
4. **Resilience:** Build a tourism industry capable of adapting to global challenges, such as climate change and economic shifts.
5. **Cultural and Regional Promotion:** Highlight France's diverse cultural and natural assets to attract a wide range of visitors.

Strategic Actions:

1. **Talent Development:** Enhance the attractiveness of tourism-related professions through training and career opportunities.
2. **Quality Improvement:** Invest in infrastructure and services to elevate the quality of tourism offerings.
3. **Sustainable Practices:** Promote eco-friendly tourism initiatives and reduce the industry's environmental footprint.
4. **Digital Transformation:** Leverage technology to improve visitor experiences and streamline operations.
5. **Global Marketing:** Strengthen international promotional campaigns to attract tourists and investors.

The plan is supported by a significant budget and involves collaboration between public and private sectors to achieve its ambitious goals.

10. The Journey to Decarbonisation of the Canary Islands Destination

The Canary Islands have embarked on an ambitious journey towards decarbonisation, aiming to transform their tourism sector and overall energy landscape to achieve climate neutrality. This report outlines the key strategies, milestones, and future goals in this endeavour.

is a forward-thinking initiative aimed at transforming the Canary Islands into a sustainable tourism model while addressing climate change.



Key Objectives:

1. **Halve CO2 Emissions by 2030:** Commit to reducing carbon emissions significantly in alignment with the Glasgow Declaration.
2. **Achieve Climate Neutrality by 2050:** Transition to a tourism model that eliminates the carbon footprint across the value chain.
3. **Promote Sustainability:** Integrate ecological practices into tourism to protect the islands' natural beauty and biodiversity.
4. **Support Local Businesses:** Empower businesses to adopt sustainable practices and contribute to the decarbonization effort.

Strategic Actions:

1. **Climate Action Master Plan:** Provide tools and guidance for businesses to measure and reduce their carbon footprint.
2. **Regenerate Ecosystems:** Focus on restoring and protecting the islands' natural habitats.
3. **Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Work with private companies, local communities, and international organizations to achieve climate goals.
4. **Digital Tools for Decarbonization:** Introduce innovative solutions to help businesses assess and diminish their environmental impact.

This initiative underscores the Canary Islands' commitment to leading the way in sustainable tourism.

6. Interviews with experts

The format of the interviews was to create a conversation on the topic of regenerative sport tourism and activities in the marine context. In advance of the interview which was held via Zoom, six key questions had been created to try and elicit a suitable conversation. The interview did not stick rigidly to the questions but rather used them to shape the conversation. The questions were modified based on the interviewees.

Interview 1

Date: 27.03.25

Time 14.00

Interviewees: Steve Taylor, Manuel Sand

Questions:

1. Could you please tell us about your background and involvement in outdoor sports
2. Tell us about the courses you are involved in running at the university?
3. How significant a part of the activity tourism courses are focused on sustainability and/or regeneration?
4. We sent you our draft definition for regenerative practices – did you feel we were missing anything essential in this?
5. Have you come across any organisations that you feel are at the forefront of good practice in relation to regenerative practices?
6. Would you or your students be interested in keeping connected to the project?

Background information

Dr Steve Taylor

Steve is on the Steering Group for the Adventure Tourism Research Association.

He has a background in sustainable travel developing transport policy, writing successful European funding applications and managing projects such as the Interreg IIIIC 'Concept' sustainable transport project.

He achieved his adventure tourism PhD in New Zealand and his thesis was focused on understanding Dedicated Participation in Mountain Biking.

His role at the University of Highlands and islands in Scotland is focused on research and oversight of post graduate doctorates.

He is currently working on two key projects:

Tourism (In)justice: Rendering a Spatial Justice Approach for Tourism', along with researchers in Spain and Sweden, in a five-year collaboration to understand the form and process of (in)justice as



it unfolds within specific place-based contexts, rendering a new conceptual framework for tourism research.

Developing rural community collaborations to integrate community assets with healthcare systems to reduce place-based health inequalities'. This project will develop and test a replicable collaborative model for integrating rural community assets with the statutory healthcare system with the aim of reducing rural place-based health inequalities.

Professor Manuel Sand

Manuel is also on the Steering Group for the Adventure Tourism Research Association.

He is Professor of Outdoor Sports and Adventure Management at the University of Applied Management .

He is head of the Outdoor Studies programme and an expert in the field of adventure tourism.

His research focuses on the motives and user profiles of adventure travellers, sustainability and regenerative adventure tourism, as well as the positive effects of adventure travel on well-being. He is a member of the steering committee of the Adventure Tourism Research Association and associate editor of the Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism. He has been involved in recent research on the transformative impacts of regular nature-based adventure activity engagement and its long-lasting effects on eudaimonic well-being (EWB), specifically mental health.

The courses that are taught and links to sustainability and regenerative practices

Steve highlighted that he is not directly involved in teaching now but rather focused on research. Manuel is still involved in teaching practical outdoor education elements and in terms of sustainability and regenerative practices he highlighted that it features in a lot of modules and courses and it is talked about in different aspects – but it is significant

Global challenges and future skills module – sustainability and climate change and how nature is affected and there is a partnership with Outward Bound Germany who provided Leave No Trace certificates for the student

The draft definition

It was noted that we had cited Diane Dredge but they also flagged that Anna Pollock was influential in developing thinking on regenerative tourism and especially conscious travel.

Steve noted that the definition we created captures things well and that there is no agreed definition for regenerative tourism yet. However from his point of view it was not making things worse but actually trying to make things better. Also the concept of achieving better balance between the needs of tourists and the everyday lives of the communities where the activities take place. Making sure that tourism isn't too extractive an industry.



How do we measure the success of tourism – historically it has been via numbers and spend but other factors may be more qualitative and it would be interesting to look at this.

Manuel indicated a “native peoples and communities” aspect. He also indicated that there would be value in considering the “together” aspect. Bringing people together and making something as a collective

Paradigm shift from growth perspective – not a way to make money but to make things better for everyone involved

Other organisations

Munster Technological University and the focus was on events including the Mulranny Stone Wall festival and then UHI had worked more on community programmes including the Gale Community Action Forum which integrates community and tourism really well. Steve also mentioned that Visit Flanders is very engaged in this topic. Manuel highlighted some interesting aspects from Australia. He noted that the term has not really caught on in Germany but there are providers there that could be interesting to look at. He also highlighted that the Government of Hawaii established a regenerative tourism law and that there is also The Local 2030 Islands Network is the world’s first global, island-led peer-to-peer network devoted to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through locally driven and culturally informed solutions.

Interview 2

Date: 04.04.25

Time 14.00

Interviewee: Teresa Pastor

Questions:

1. Could you please tell us about your background and your role in your organisation
2. Tell us about any experiences you have had in relation to outdoor sports and sustainability (especially in marine settings)
3. Does the term regenerative as opposed to sustainable activities or tourism help or hinder the cause for environmental management of protected areas
4. We sent you our draft definition for regenerative practices – did you feel we were missing anything essential in this?
5. Have you come across any organisations that you feel are at the forefront of good practice in relation to regenerative practices?
6. Would you or your members be interested in keeping connected to the project?

Background



Teresa Pastor is a passionate advocate for sustainability and nature conservation, with over two decades of international expertise in the Protected Areas sector. She has held prominent leadership roles, including eight years driving key programmes at the EUROPARC Federation, such as the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, and 15 years coordinating FEDENATUR, the European Peri-urban Parks Association.

Teresa's work spans a diverse range of areas, including biodiversity conservation, sustainable tourism, climate change adaptation, peri-urban parks, green infrastructure, marine ecosystems, and environmental management.

A Ph.D. graduate in Biological Sciences from the University of Barcelona, Teresa has a specialisation in species conservation, where her scientific background combined with her extensive practitioner experience has provided impactful, forward-thinking solutions. She has a holistic systemic understanding of the natural environment and the challenges it is facing which provides a unique perspective that generates innovative solutions.

Experiences in Outdoor Sports

Whilst her professional focus has been on nature conservation, sustainable tourism and protected areas, Teresa is an enthusiastic sailor and also has a passion for hiking and other outdoor sports. She is involved in a sailing club just outside Barcelona and also has had extensive experience of working in partnership with the European network of Outdoor Sports on environmental education for outdoor sports leaders and guides etc.

She therefore understands the perspective of the sports practitioner and has a strong empathy for their passions and enthusiasm for their activities.

Regenerative v Sustainable

Teresa felt that the term “regenerative” is helpful because it helps to convey that something is “not good enough” and that the environment, habitats and ecosystems are degraded and not what they used to be. Sustainability would suggest keeping things as they are but that is not good enough. Even if a protected area manager is doing excellent management – there are factors that out-with of all our control that are degrading habitats. Sustainability is losing power and for now regenerative helps to convey something more. However probably in the future regenerative will also lose power!

Definition

Teresa felt that the definition was fairly complete however, there is something about the power to use experiences to regenerate yourself to have a new outlook on the environment. She indicated that its not just the participants who can be empowered but that it can also be the staff, communities and others – in other words “everyone.”

Good practice examples

Teresa highlighted a number of examples especially some citizen science projects. These can be seen as regenerative as they are “improving the knowledge”



Observadores del mar (<https://www.observadoresdelmar.es/>) is a project that promotes the fact that divers have a unique view and can be there at the right place and time to find evidence beyond the reach of the scientific community.

Delta Polet: (<https://www.deltapolet.com/>) is a family-run nature and knowledge guide company, from the Ebro Delta. The founder Polet, promoted the creation of the Delta de l'Ebre natural park to protect natural spaces from agricultural and tourist speculation, so frequent in that decade, which sought to expand crops and build housing developments in these spaces. He then created a tourist product that valued the conservation of natural spaces and the culture that we inherited from our ancestors, making the company a European benchmark in ecotourism.

Diving clubs that organise clean-ups of the seabed:

<https://www.saitadiving.org/en/scuba-diving-club-barcelona/>

<https://www.planctondiving.cat/en/snorkel-and-diving-center-lametlla-de-mar/>

Projecte Sèpia (ES)

PROJECTE SEPIA has the aim of **improving the breeding conditions** of cephalopods and repopulating the waters of the Empordà, Spain. **Together with local, artisanal fishermen**, the project wants to preserve traditional fishing and promote sustainable practices.

<http://www.projectesepia.com/blog/>

El Rei del Mar, from Montgrí, Illes Medes i Baix Ter Nature Park, created extensive collaboration with a diverse range of significant partners. Their dedicated efforts in marine species conservation, training initiatives, and monitoring activities with clear conservation goals are exemplary. They actively participate in the “Adopt a Diving Spot” program, ensuring the care and maintenance of specific underwater areas. Additionally, they contribute to citizen science by reporting fish biomass through photography, conducting sea floor cleanups, and partnering with an NGO to monitor grooper populations.

Ongoing connection

Teresa agreed to be on the advisory board for the project and is keen to be kept up to date with the outputs.



Interview 3

Date: 07.04.25

Time 14.00

Interviewee: Esther Bossink

Questions:

The questions were the same for Esther as they were for Teresa

Background

Esther studied comparative European ethnology, so is more of a social scientist. As part of this Esther was in the Philippines for nine months as a semester abroad and there she was motivated or inspired to do more in the field of sustainable development and social justice. The impacts of what we do here and how we live and how that impacts people that we have no clue about was very clear there.

Involvement in Marine Sports

In personal life Esther is an avid surfer and that's her main connection to coastal areas. She has also been involved in a MPA for Change project (which is based in and around the Mediterranean) and is about the management plans of marine protected areas, ensuring that there is a climate change adaptation aspect to them.

Sustainable or Regenerative

Esther highlighted that this is an interesting debate and can be semantics – but the main thing is are we managing to be sustainable as step 1 and she highlighted that many people, projects and organisations are not even managing that so how can we then move to regeneration. However she thinks there is merit in the debate and we should always focus on making positive change. A big question is how are we measuring this and the data is essential. The ultimate goal should be improving the status of biodiversity. Do we know what the baseline is. There also should be a strong focus on what we do with information. Can outdoor sports providers help participants make small changes and use the information to make a difference. Education should lead to implementation.

Definition

The only thing that could be added to the definition would be in relation to the monitoring and measuring and then to act on the findings.

Anything else

Esther highlighted that most models of development even from a Regenerative perspective are about “more” whereas there needs to a difficult discussion about simply doing less!!

7. Conclusion

The findings of the ReSea project initial research highlights a clear need for transition in marine sports and tourism from practices that have just a sustainability focus to trying to embrace regenerative practices. While sustainability rightly aims to minimise harm and maintain balance, regenerative practices seek to actively restore ecosystems, enrich communities, and drive net-positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

This element of the project highlights the transformative potential of regenerative sea sports. Practices such as coral reef restoration, seagrass planting, and local habitat improvement go beyond preservation to actively repair degraded marine and littoral ecosystems. These initiatives not only help to improve biodiversity but also support increased resilience with respect to climate change and other environmental stressors. Reducing carbon footprint through renewable energy integration and low-impact operational practices including bans on single use plastics, illustrates the industry's capacity to combat broader global challenges like carbon emissions and ocean pollution.

Community engagement emerges as a cornerstone of regenerative tourism. By engaging with and involving local stakeholders in decision-making processes, marine sports providers can build equitable relationships and empower coastal communities. This collaboration fosters cultural preservation, promotes economic opportunities, and strengthens local identity. Examples such as partnerships with indigenous communities and the inclusion of cultural education within tourism experiences illustrate how regeneration is as much about social equity as it is about environmental action.

However, the research also sheds light on significant gaps that need addressing for a systemic shift toward regeneration. For instance, the low prevalence of monitoring systems among organizations reflects a need for robust measurement frameworks. By tracking both positive and negative impacts, stakeholders can ensure accountability and demonstrate tangible benefits. Similarly, while there is a growing awareness of the importance of cultural heritage protection, only a small percentage of organisations were found that actively integrate this into their operations.

Policy and legislative frameworks, such as those in Catalonia, Scotland, and Hawaii, provide a glimpse into how regenerative principles can be embedded at a governmental level. These strategies emphasise collaboration across sectors, capacity building for local stakeholders, and the creation of enabling conditions for regeneration.

The ReSea project demonstrates that fostering international partnerships and aligning with global frameworks, such as the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, will be critical in scaling these efforts.

Ultimately, the ReSea project illustrates a blueprint for reimagining marine sports and tourism. By adopting regenerative practices, the sector can contribute to thriving ecosystems, resilient communities, and a more equitable world. However, for these aspirations to become reality, stakeholders must work collaboratively, integrating innovation, inclusive governance, and long-term strategic planning. The path forward requires commitment not only from marine sports operators but also from policymakers, investors, and participants.

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ReSea Sports

*“SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS PRACTICE TOWARDS THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL REGENERATION
OF MARITIME AND COASTAL AREAS”*

WP1 – D1.1_REGENERATIVE Sea Sports Methodology

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE METHODOLOGY

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION: AETHNIC

VERSION 1.0, DATE: 31/07/2025



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PREFACE

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16/07/2025	0.1	First version of the deliverable
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31/07/2025	1.0	Final version of the deliverable

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DELIVERABLE

This report presents the Integrated Management and Governance Methodology for Regenerative Sea Sports. It explains the main objectives, the key context, its overall goals, and the method used to create it. As sea and coastal areas face increasing pressure, new and effective governance models are needed more than ever. This plan directly deals with these challenges, focusing on the active area of regenerative sea sports.

The main goal of this governance plan is to create a strong and flexible framework for managing regenerative watersports in coastal and marine environments. This plan offers a clear background and explains the exact purpose of such a governance structure, aligning with the ReSea project's goal to improve 5-Helix multi-stakeholder governance for sustainable sport management in these areas. The plan aims to define how decision-making, coordination, and participation can be set up to encourage activities. These activities should not only reduce negative impacts but also actively help to restore nature, improve social well-being, and strengthen the economy.

Context and rationale

Coastal and marine environments have many different interests, stakeholders, activities, and sensitive natural parts, making effective management complex. Understanding this complexity is key for making a governance model (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022) that is efficient and inclusive.

Why an integrated governance methodology is needed for regenerative sea sports

Traditional governance models often work in separate parts, which leads to disconnected policies and uncoordinated efforts. However, regenerative sea sports involve many areas, such as environmental protection, tourism, recreation, local economies, and public health. An integrated method is essential to connect these parts. It makes sure we have a complete approach that considers how environmental, social, and economic aspects are linked. For regenerative practices to truly succeed, they need a unified framework that helps different sectors understand each other, share goals, and work together. This integrated approach prevents unwanted negative results in one area because of decisions made in another, thereby getting the best positive outcomes for both people and the planet.

Key challenges in managing multi-stakeholder governance in coastal and marine environments

Managing different groups in coastal and marine areas has several challenges. These include conflicting interests, as different stakeholders often have different priorities and goals, which can lead to arguments about how to use resources, who can access places, and what rules should be followed. The sea environment changes a lot, so governance structures need to be very flexible and quick to react, though it is difficult to put these ideas into practice. Moreover, sometimes many different authorities manage coastal areas, meaning their duties can overlap or there are gaps in rules. This causes confusion and slows down efficient management (European Commission, 2021). Lastly, efficient management needs reliable and up-to-date information, but data about marine ecosystems and human effects can be fragmented or hard to get, meaning decisions are made without complete knowledge.

Goals of the Integrated Management and Governance Methodology

The Integrated Management and Governance Methodology aims to enhance collaboration between public authorities, sports clubs, tourism operators, environmental organizations, and civil society. A main goal is to break down old barriers and encourage real, active collaboration among all key stakeholders within the 5-Helix model. By making collaboration more effective, which supports stakeholder participation (United Nations, 2020), the plan aims to create shared understanding and goals, use combined knowledge and resources, agree on important issues, and encourage shared ownership of initiatives. This greatly increases commitment and the long-term success of regenerative projects.

Sustainability and inclusivity are the two main supports of this governance plan, and they are closely linked for long-term success. "Sustainable" here means not just reducing negative impacts on marine ecosystems; it also means actively helping them to recover, making sure they are healthy, diverse, and productive for future generations. This fits with the ReSea project's focus on actively restoring natural ecosystems. "Inclusive" means that the governance processes are designed to include different voices, actively seeking and bringing in the views of all affected parties, including those often left out of environmental decisions. It also aims to promote fair access, ensuring that the benefits of regenerative sea sports (like healthy environments, economic chances, and fun recreation) are shared fairly among communities, preventing anyone from being excluded.

Methodological approach

Developing the Integrated Management and Governance Methodology is based on a strict and participatory method composed of three main parts: comprehensive research, targeted survey findings, and collaborative partner contributions. Comprehensive research forms the base of the plan, including a wide review of existing writings and policy rules about marine governance, coastal management, sustainable tourism, and environmental protection. Targeted survey findings make sure the plan truly meets real-world needs, gathering insights on challenges and priorities from various participants to help shape recommendations. Collaborative partner contributions allowed us to illustrate each part with good practices.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The deliverable is structured in 9 main chapters:

Chapter-1: Introduction

Chapter-2: Survey results

Chapter-3: Governance framework and decision-making structures

Chapter-4: Stakeholder participation and engagement plan

Chapter-5: Policy and regulatory framework

Chapter-6: Conflict resolution and trade-offs

Chapter-7: Key elements of the integrated management and governance methodology and conclusion

Chapter-8: References

Chapter-9: Appendix

2. SURVEY RESULTS

A comprehensive survey was carried out by ReSea partners to gather public perceptions and experiences of regenerative sea sports (see Appendix for the full survey questionnaire). This section presents the key findings and their implications for governance design.

2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

To gather comprehensive insights, this survey was distributed by each partner of the ReSea project to a diverse group of participants, reflecting various connections to sea sports and marine environments. A total of **249 individuals** participated, sharing their views, experiences, and knowledge. Participants included individuals with occupations such as sport managers, administrative staff, teachers, bankers, filmmakers, students, and marine conservation professionals, among others. Their ages spanned a broad range (18 to 87 years old), and locations extended across numerous European countries like Spain, France, Germany, and Croatia, as well as Argentina and other global regions. Most respondents identified as occasional or regular participants in sea sports like freediving, sailing, kayaking, snorkeling, and open water swimming, while a notable portion were workers or professionals in the field, sometimes linked to sports clubs, environmental NGOs, or sport tourism companies (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

The survey explored several key themes such as environmental impacts, familiarity with governance, and stakeholder collaboration. These themes included participants' familiarity with local marine ecosystems and their views on the biggest threats to these environments. It also assessed their understanding of "regenerative sea sports" and whether they consider environmental impact when engaging in such activities. Questions also touched upon the perceived positive impact of sea sports, who should lead in promoting sustainability, and experiences with collaboration between different groups like sports clubs, businesses, and environmental organizations. Finally, the survey investigated the main barriers to effective collaboration and gathered suggestions for improving cooperation (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

2.2 KEY FINDINGS

The survey revealed important insights into public awareness and stakeholder perceptions regarding marine governance and regenerative practices. In terms of direct awareness, **only 20.1% of respondents** stated they were familiar with the concept of regenerative sea sports. Despite this limited pre-existing familiarity with the term, many participants provided thoughtful and accurate definitions when prompted, frequently describing activities that aim not only to minimize environmental harm but also to actively contribute positively to the marine ecosystem through actions such as clean-ups, educational initiatives, and restoration efforts (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

Despite the limited awareness of the precise term "regenerative sea sports," the survey underscored a strong underlying environmental sensitivity among participants. A significant majority of **63.1% reported that they actively consider the environmental impact** when engaging in sea sports, while an additional **16.1% indicated they sometimes do**. Furthermore, **over 83% participants believe that sea sports can indeed have a positive impact** on the marine environment, especially when these activities are practiced with care, conscious intention, and a deep respect for natural ecosystems (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

In terms of governance and collaboration, respondents consistently advocated for a shared governance approach when asked who should take the lead in promoting regenerative sea sports. Public authorities were the most frequently mentioned entities, often with environmental NGOs, sports clubs, tourism operators, civil society organizations, and occasionally businesses. This reflects a widely held belief that effective and sustainable solutions necessitate inclusive and collaborative efforts across various sectors (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.). Approximately **40–45% of respondents** reported having witnessed or heard of collaborative initiatives between sports clubs, businesses, and environmental groups aimed at marine protection. These collaborative efforts typically involved practical actions such as beach or underwater clean-ups, public awareness campaigns, or participatory monitoring and conservation activities. Such examples demonstrate that practical cooperation is already occurring, though the survey indicates it is not yet widespread or at a comprehensive scale (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

Participants also identified several common barriers hindering effective collaboration among stakeholders. These consistently included a **lack of communication between stakeholders**, **insufficient funding for sustainability initiatives**, **inadequate knowledge and training**, a **lack of mutual understanding** between different groups, and **conflicts of interest** among the involved parties. To overcome these multifaceted challenges, respondents emphasized the crucial need for clear and supportive governance frameworks, the establishment of dedicated public-private partnerships, the development of accessible training and education programs, and the provision of incentives and funding specifically for regenerative practices. They also highlighted the importance of fostering more inclusive dialogue spaces and establishing long-term collaboration models. Several respondents further noted the significance of involving local communities and youth in these efforts,

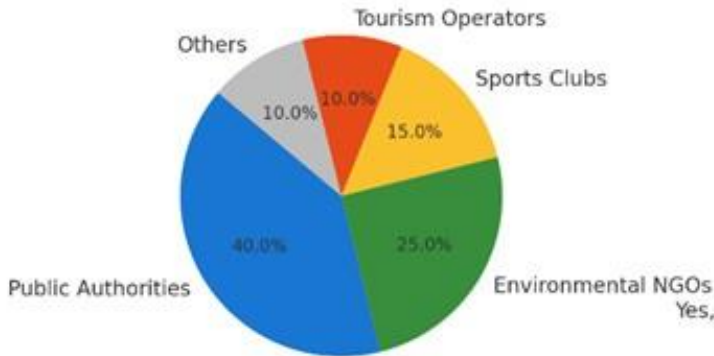
ensuring that environmental protection evolves into a shared responsibility rather than remaining a task confined to specific sectors (Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance, n.d.).

These comprehensive findings indicate that while there is an underlying environmental awareness and willingness to contribute positively through sea sports, significant efforts are required to formalize governance structures, bridge communication and knowledge gaps, and foster robust multi-stakeholder collaboration.

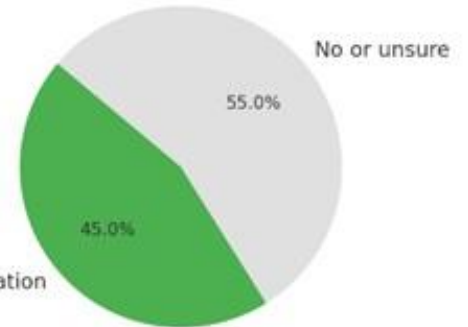
The following graphs provide a visual summary of key findings from the survey regarding governance roles, collaboration experiences, and perceived barriers. It illustrates public expectations, stakeholder relationships, and systemic challenges that must be addressed in the governance model.

2.3 FIGURE TABLE

Who Should Lead Regenerative Marine Governance?



Experience with Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration



Top Barriers to Effective Governance Collaboration



Figure 1 – Governance and collaboration – survey insights

2.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE METHODOLOGY

The detailed survey results provide crucial insights that will directly inform the governance recommendations within this methodology. The identified low direct awareness of "regenerative sea sports" among the public, coupled with their general environmental sensitivity, underscores the need for clear definitions and targeted educational campaigns within the proposed governance plan. This implies that decision-making structures should prioritize transparent communication strategies that simplify complex concepts and clearly articulate the benefits of regenerative practices for all stakeholders, encouraging both understanding and adoption.

3. GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

This section analyzes leading governance models and proposes their application to regenerative sea sports.

A governance model is fundamentally “a framework that defines the structure, roles, and responsibilities of decision-makers in an organization or system, ensuring accountability and effective coordination” (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). Within sea sports, governance encompasses how decision-making, coordination, and responsibilities are structured among key actors, including public authorities, various sports clubs, tourism operators, environmental associations, and diverse civil society groups.

For the ReSea Sports project, the focus is on integrated governance. This approach signifies a governance model that ensures strong coordination across multiple sectors, such as tourism, environmental conservation, sports, and public authorities. Furthermore, it promotes effective collaboration among different levels of governance—local, regional, national, and European Union. It engages all essential stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure the sustainable management of regenerative sea sports.

3.1 PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE

Integrated governance for regenerative sea sports emphasizes coordination across multiple sectors, including tourism, environmental conservation, sports, and public authorities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). It promotes collaboration among different governance levels—local, regional, national, and European Union—to ensure comprehensive and effective management (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). A crucial principle involves engaging all essential stakeholders in decision-making processes to achieve sustainable outcomes for regenerative sea sports (United Nations, 2020). This holistic approach ensures that multi-stakeholder collaboration, operational transparency, overarching sustainability, and clear accountability are central to all activities.

3.2 DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE IN SEA SPORTS

Establishing clear decision-making structures is fundamental for effective governance in sea sports, defining both who governs and the mechanisms for decision implementation.

Governance in sea sports typically involves a multi-faceted approach, with responsibility shared among various entities. Decision-making authority often rests with a combination of public authorities, which set policies; private entities like sports clubs and tourism operators, managing operations and economic activities; and non-governmental organizations, including environmental associations and civil society groups, advocating for conservation and community interests. The involvement of all these groups is crucial for comprehensive and fair decision-making.

Decisions in sea sports governance are made through various mechanisms, all designed to ensure broad participation and effective issue resolution. These include formal voting among designated stakeholder representatives on proposals, and regular consultations (forums, workshops, public hearings) for gathering diverse input. Consensus-building efforts aim to achieve broad agreement, particularly on complex issues, prioritizing long-term cooperation. Lastly, established dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation or arbitration, ensure disagreements are resolved constructively without hindering progress.

3.3 STAKEHOLDER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective governance in regenerative sea sports relies on clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each key stakeholder group within the 5-Helix model. Public authorities provide crucial policy oversight, developing and enforcing regulations, and integrating regenerative practices into broader maritime policies. Sports clubs are responsible for operational management of sea sports activities, organizing events, training participants, and promoting responsible environmental stewardship. Tourism operators are central to economic integration, facilitating recreational access and promoting regenerative tourism experiences that contribute to local economies with minimal environmental impact. Environmental organizations offer essential conservation guidance, conducting research, advocating for marine protection, and monitoring ecological sustainability. Finally, civil society groups focus on community engagement, mobilizing public support, collecting local knowledge, and ensuring governance decisions reflect community needs and aspirations, fostering collective responsibility.

3.4 BEST PRACTICES FROM EXISTING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Examining successful governance structures from various sectors—including sea sports, coastal tourism, and broader regenerative/sustainable projects—provides valuable insights into effective strategies.

Strangford Lough and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Marine Protected Area (MPA)

Strangford Lough is the largest sea lough in the British Isles, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and a Marine Protected Area (MPA) (Strangford Lough, n.d.). The governance of this area is overseen by a Partnership, led by a local authority and guided by Terms of Reference, which outlines the collaborative relationship between members. This Partnership includes representatives from the sport and recreation sector (sailing, rowing, and canoeing clubs). Their commitment to conservation and enhancement is detailed in a five-year Management Action Plan.

South Arran Marine Protected Area (Scotland)

This MPA, established in 2014, is spearheaded by the Community Of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), focusing on community-driven marine recovery (COAST, n.d.). Its mission involves empowering communities, influencing policy, and supporting the local marine economy. The area is managed through community-led efforts that emphasize stakeholder engagement and scientific research, promoting sustainable fishing and supporting recreational activities such as sea angling, kayaking, and diving.

Azores Marine Protected Area Network (Portugal)

In 2024, the Azores established the largest Marine Protected Area (MPA) network in the North Atlantic, covering nearly 287,000 square kilometres (Blue Azores, n.d.). The governance model for this extensive MPA network emphasizes science-based decisions and transparent collaboration. The Regional Government of the Azores initiated a stakeholder engagement process to involve communities, fishermen, tourism operators, scientists, and local communities directly in the planning and management processes, sharing their interests and knowledge. This participatory approach balances ecological preservation with economic activities.

National Marine Park of Zakynthos (Greece)

The National Park of Zakynthos, founded in 1999, has all the characteristics of a Mediterranean ecosystem, with a main purpose of protecting specific fauna like Loggerhead turtles and Mediterranean Monk Seals (Zanteisland.com, n.d.). The park employs a bottom-up governance approach focused on integrating conservation with local society. Local stakeholders are actively engaged in monitoring, surveillance, and developing ecotourism codes of conduct. This collaborative management ensures tourism activities, including marine excursions, are conducted sustainably, aligning economic interests with conservation goals.

Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park (Germany)

The Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is part of the Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage Site and the largest continuous area of mudflats in the world (Waddensea World Heritage, n.d.). The park integrates conservation with traditional uses like fishing and tourism through a cooperative approach. The park administration collaborates with local communities, fishermen, and tourism operators to manage activities via voluntary agreements. This strategy enhances local support, ensuring that recreational activities such as mudflat hiking and boat excursions are conducted in harmony with conservation objectives.

Cabrera Archipelago Maritime-Terrestrial National Park (Spain)

Established in 1991, the Cabrera Archipelago Maritime-Terrestrial National Park is Spain's first maritime-terrestrial national park, encompassing the entire Cabrera Archipelago south of Mallorca (Illes Balears Travel, n.d.). Managed by the Balearic Islands' regional government in coordination with Spain's National Parks Autonomous Agency, the park's governance is guided by a "Master Plan for Use and Management" (PRUG). This plan outlines permitted activities and conservation strategies, ensuring that outdoor recreation activities—including hiking, diving, and boating—are limited and strictly regulated to minimize human impact on sensitive ecosystems. The governance ensures sustainable management of tourism and recreational activities.

3.5 IMPLEMENTING AND ADAPTING THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IN PILOT SITES

Implementing the Integrated Management and Governance Methodology in pilot sites requires a strategic approach that considers local specificities and aims for practical applicability.

Implementation should involve several phases:

4. Initially, a thorough baseline assessment of each pilot site's unique environmental, social, and economic context is necessary. This step identifies existing governance structures, key stakeholders, current challenges, and opportunities for regenerative practices (World Bank, n.d.-b).

5. Following this, the framework's principles and proposed mechanisms should be introduced to local stakeholders through workshops and collaborative sessions to ensure understanding and initial agreement (UNEP, n.d.).
6. Implementation then proceeds with establishing formal or informal agreements among stakeholders, defining clear responsibilities and communication channels.
7. Pilot projects applying regenerative sea sport activities with integrated governance can then be initiated, with regular monitoring and evaluation (European Commission, n.d.).

How to make it adaptable to each pilot site's specificity

Adaptability is crucial for the long-term success of this Methodology. To ensure flexibility, the framework should provide a set of guiding principles and a toolbox of adaptable mechanisms rather than rigid rules. This allows pilot sites to tailor specific decision-making processes, stakeholder engagement strategies, and coordination mechanisms to their unique local contexts, existing governance structures, and specific ecological characteristics (Frontiers, 2024). Moreover, regular feedback loops, involving local stakeholders and experts, are essential, allowing for continuous learning and adjustments based on practical experience and evolving needs, ensuring the Methodology remains relevant and effective across diverse locations.

4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

This section aims to establish how different stakeholders can participate in governance processes, to research best practices in stakeholder participation and to propose tools for effective engagement.

"Stakeholder participation refers to the process of involving individuals, groups, or organizations with a vested interest in a decision-making process, ensuring that diverse perspectives contribute to governance and policy development" (United Nations, 2020). This is a vital component of integrated governance in regenerative sea sports, ensuring all actors—including public institutions, private companies, sports organizations, NGOs, and local communities—have a voice in management decisions, leading to more inclusive and long-term outcomes for coastal and marine activities.

For stakeholder engagement to be effective, various participation mechanisms can be used. These include **public consultations**, which allow the broader community to provide feedback on proposed policies. **Stakeholder workshops** offer interactive settings for in-depth discussions, problem-solving, and co-creating solutions. **Digital platforms**, such as online forums and surveys, expand engagement and facilitate continuous interaction regardless of geographical location. Finally, **co-management strategies** involve power-sharing arrangements where government bodies collaborate directly with local communities and other stakeholders, leading to shared decision-making and responsibilities in managing resources.

4.1 ENSURING INCLUSION AND LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

To be truly effective, governance structures must encourage continuous involvement from all actors and make sure different interests are represented fairly. This means actively creating chances for all relevant groups, even those who were traditionally marginalized, to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes (United Nations, 2020). Strategies to ensure fair representation can involve:

- setting clear rules for how stakeholders are chosen

- employing facilitators who are skilled in inclusive practices
- providing accessible information in many formats and languages so it is easy to understand.

To encourage long-term engagement, it is important to build trust through transparent processes, show how stakeholder input affects the outcomes, and create platforms for ongoing dialogue and feedback (OECD, n.d.-b). This continuous involvement helps stakeholders feel more ownership and commitment, which is very important for regenerative sea sports initiatives to be successful for a long time.

4.2 BEST PRACTICES & CASE STUDIES IN STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Examining successful examples of stakeholder participation from various marine and coastal sectors provides valuable insights for regenerative sea sports.

MedPAN – Mediterranean Protected Areas Network

MedPAN, the Mediterranean Protected Areas Network, operates across EU and non-EU countries in the Mediterranean Region. It employs a collaborative network approach, fostering participatory management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) at a collaborative and consultative level of engagement (MedPAN, n.d.). Key stakeholders involved include MPA managers, local communities, NGOs, scientists, fishers, tourism operators, and public authorities. MedPAN has enhanced the management effectiveness of MPAs by promoting stakeholder involvement, knowledge sharing, and capacity building across the Mediterranean, leading to more sustainable and inclusive marine conservation efforts (MedPAN, n.d.). Incentives for stakeholder involvement include access to funding opportunities, technical support, training programs, and a platform for sharing best practices. Challenges like varying levels of stakeholder engagement and resource limitations were addressed by providing tailored support, facilitating workshops, and promoting inclusive governance models.

Baltic Stakeholder Dialogues – Coalition Clean Baltic

The Baltic Stakeholder Dialogues, organized by Coalition Clean Baltic in the Baltic Sea Region, utilize stakeholder dialogues and participatory workshops for consultative and collaborative engagement (Coalition Clean Baltic, n.d.). Key stakeholders involved are local communities, NGOs, governmental agencies, fishers, and tourism operators. These dialogues have facilitated mutual understanding among stakeholders, leading to more coherent coastal policies and improved marine conservation strategies in the region (Coalition Clean Baltic, n.d.). Incentives for involvement include opportunities to influence policy decisions, share local knowledge, and collaborate on sustainable initiatives. Barriers such as language differences and varying national policies were mitigated through multilingual resources and harmonized policy frameworks.

Plymouth Sound National Marine Park – United Kingdom

The Plymouth Sound National Marine Park in the United Kingdom established a multi-stakeholder governance board, fostering a collaborative and co-decision-making level of engagement (Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, n.d.). Key stakeholders involved include local government, the Royal Navy, environmental NGOs, academic institutions, tourism operators, and community groups. This inclusive governance structure has fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders, leading to enhanced marine conservation efforts and increased public engagement with the marine environment (Plymouth Sound National Marine Park, n.d.; Blue Marine Foundation, n.d.). Incentives for stakeholder involvement include influence over park management decisions, opportunities for community-led initiatives, and promotion of sustainable economic activities. Initial skepticism about the park's impact was addressed through transparent communication, community events, and demonstrations of tangible benefits.

Sanniang Bay, Guangxi, China

In Sanniang Bay, Guangxi, China, a multi-stakeholder platform was formed involving villagers, researchers, NGOs, and local authorities (Song et al., 2023). This community-led approach established a fishery conservation group and integrated scientific monitoring into local practices. Incentives included monthly subsidies for beach patrols and support for eco-tourism initiatives (Song et al., 2023). Barriers were addressed by conducting community surveys, focus groups, and educational programs to build trust and awareness.

Ningaloo Coast, Australia

The Ningaloo Coast in Australia adopted a whole-of-community approach with broad stakeholder engagement through workshops and consultations (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, n.d.). This process generated over 200 proposed reef management actions, with 140 forming the backbone of their Resilience Strategy. Incentives involved empowering community involvement in management and fostering partnerships for ongoing stewardship. Barriers were addressed by ensuring all stakeholders had opportunities to voice opinions and see their input reflected in decisions (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, n.d.).

Gili Trawangan, Indonesia

Gili Trawangan, Indonesia, implemented participatory coastal management involving villagers, tourists, and local government (Bachtiar, 2015). This approach resulted in strict rules to protect coral reef ecosystems and regulate sustainable marine tourism. Incentives included promoting local economic growth through sustainable tourism practices. Barriers were addressed through collaboration with NGOs and the private sector to enforce regulations and educate stakeholders (Bachtiar, 2015).

4.3 HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT PLAN IN PILOT SITES

Implementing the stakeholder participation and engagement plan in pilot sites requires a structured approach that adapts to local contexts.

- This process should begin with a comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise to identify all relevant groups, their interests, influence, and current levels of engagement (OECD, n.d.-a).
- Following this, a tailored engagement strategy should be developed for each pilot site, outlining specific participation mechanisms, communication channels, and desired outcomes (UNEP, n.d.-a).
- Capacity-building workshops should then be conducted for both stakeholders and governance bodies to enhance their understanding of regenerative practices, governance procedures, and effective collaboration techniques (UNEP, n.d.-b; World Bank, n.d.-c).
- Finally, establishing clear feedback loops and monitoring mechanisms is crucial to track engagement levels, assess the effectiveness of participation mechanisms, and allow for adaptive management based on lessons learned (European Commission, n.d.-a; European Commission, n.d.-b).

4.4 KEY BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Several challenges may hinder effective stakeholder engagement and governance. One significant issue is **low motivation among stakeholders**, often stemming from a lack of perceived benefits, time constraints, or past negative experiences with participation initiatives. Solutions involve clearly communicating the tangible benefits of engagement, such as improved decision-making and direct influence on outcomes, and providing incentives like recognition or capacity building (World Bank, n.d.-c).

Additionally, a **lack of awareness or knowledge on governance procedures** can impede meaningful participation. Many stakeholders may not fully understand the processes, their roles, or the technical aspects of regenerative practices. This can be addressed by developing accessible educational materials, conducting regular training sessions on governance procedures, and creating easily understandable summaries of policies and decision-making frameworks (UNEP, n.d.-b).

Lack of clear governance structures and coordination challenges among stakeholders are also common issues, characterized by ambiguous roles, responsibilities, and fragmentation across different sectors. Establishing clear, transparent governance structures with well-defined roles and communication channels is crucial (OECD, n.d.-a). Implementing inter-agency coordination mechanisms and multi-stakeholder platforms can foster collaboration and a holistic approach to management.

Finally, **limited integration of regenerative practices and policies** can lead to stakeholder disengagement if efforts are not supported by the broader system. Comprehensive policy frameworks that explicitly support regenerative sea sports across relevant sectors should be advocated to ensure a cohesive policy environment and a clear roadmap for stakeholders (European Commission, 2021).

5. POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The goal of this section is to assess policies influencing governance, to identify regulatory gaps, but also to conduct policy research and propose necessary legal adjustments.

“A regulatory framework consists of the laws, policies, and institutions that define how a specific sector is governed, ensuring compliance, enforcement, and oversight” (European Commission, 2021). Policies and regulations set the legal framework for governing sea sports and marine environments. These laws define who has the authority to manage, protect, and regulate coastal and marine areas. Understanding best practices in regulatory frameworks will help align the ReSea governance methodology with existing policies.

5.1 BEST PRACTICES IN POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

We looked at several regulatory frameworks at the EU and national levels that are relevant for the governance of regenerative sea sports.

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) – 2008/56/EC

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC) sets up a common framework for EU marine environmental policy, aiming to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) of marine waters by 2020. This directive focuses on promoting sustainable use and protecting the marine environment (European Parliament and the Council, 2008). Key regulatory principles include ecosystem-based management, which requires all measures to consider the structure, function, and productivity of marine ecosystems; adaptive management, meaning national strategies must be regularly reviewed and adjusted; and integration and coordination across Member States and policy areas like Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

For enforcement, each Member State must prepare a national Marine Strategy that includes an initial environmental assessment, a definition of GES, environmental targets, monitoring programs, and a program of measures (European Parliament and the Council, 2008). Regular reports are submitted to the European Commission. The directive supports sustainability by requiring the integration of environmental objectives into all human activities, including marine recreation and sports, encouraging Member States to balance ecological health with economic and social uses of marine space.

EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)

The EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) is a strategic policy framework aiming for a more coherent approach to maritime issues through increased coordination across different sectors like transport, environment, fisheries, and tourism (European Commission, n.d.-c; European Commission, n.d.-d). It promotes sustainability and economic growth through key cross-cutting policies.

One important policy is **Blue Growth**, which supports innovation and job creation in sectors like coastal tourism and offshore energy, aligning with the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. **Marine Data and Knowledge** promotes European and international cooperation and open access to data to support science-based ocean governance (European Commission, n.d.-d). **Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)** addresses the increasing demands for marine space, focusing on strategic planning, zoning, and ecosystem-based management of marine areas. **Integrated Maritime Surveillance** improves efficiency by enhancing data sharing among maritime authorities. Finally, **Sea Basin Strategies** offer tailored approaches for different regions like the Atlantic Ocean, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and Black Sea, promoting cooperation and research.

The IMP is relevant to ReSea because it offers a strategic framework that integrates environmental, economic, and spatial planning aspects. Its focus on stakeholder coordination, MSP, and sustainable use is highly relevant for developing multi-actor governance models in regenerative sea sports. Data sharing and regional cooperation frameworks can support monitoring, innovation, and responsible access to marine spaces.

Natura 2000 Marine Network – Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) establishes the Natura 2000 Marine Network, a legally binding directive at the EU level aimed at protecting habitats and species of EU importance through a coherent network of protected areas (European Commission, n.d.-e). Key principles include biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and maintaining ecological integrity.

Enforcement involves implementing site-specific management plans and conducting environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for activities, along with ongoing monitoring and reporting. The directive balances human activities, like recreation and sports, with strict conservation requirements to protect vulnerable habitats and species. Challenges often arise from conflicts between conservation goals and users such as fisheries and tourism operators, and some areas suffer from under-resourced management and enforcement. This directive directly regulates spatial and activity-based restrictions on water sports within protected Natura 2000 marine sites, providing a legal framework for sustainable and regenerative sports governance in sensitive marine environments.

Spanish Coastal Law – Law 22/1988 and its Amendment Law 2/2013

The Spanish Coastal Law (Ley de Costas) regulates the use, protection, and public access to Spain's coastal and maritime-terrestrial zone (DPMT) (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2013). The 2013 amendment aimed to improve legal clarity and facilitate sustainable coastal development and address climate change risks. The law emphasizes the public ownership of beaches and coastal waters, restricting permanent constructions and private uses in the DPMT. It introduced a system of administrative concessions and focuses on environmental protection and adaptation to climate change (Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2013).

Enforcement is managed by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition (MITECO) with regional coordination, involving strict licensing for infrastructure and sanctions for non-compliance. The law promotes low-impact and reversible uses and requires environmental compatibility for concessions, including those for sports clubs.

Critical challenges exist, such as legal uncertainty for sports clubs and coastal associations due to complex concession renewals. Traditional beach-based sports infrastructure often faces difficulties in complying with the law. The bureaucratic complexity and slow concession process hinder adaptation to seasonal or regenerative sport activities. Conflicts also arise between environmental protection and public access to recreation and sport.

The Coastal Law shapes the legal feasibility of many regenerative water sports practices. While it ensures environmental integrity and public access, its rigid and complex administrative framework often discourages innovation and limits the development of beach-based sports clubs. Future governance models should explore more flexible, participatory, and adaptive regulatory approaches for these actors.

Marine Spatial Planning Plan (POEM) – Spain 2023

The POEM (Plan de Ordenación del Espacio Marítimo) is Spain's official Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) instrument, developed in compliance with EU Directive 2014/89/EU (Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico, n.d.). Its main goal is to plan and coordinate human activities in the marine environment to ensure ecological sustainability, coexistence of uses, and efficient use of maritime space.

Key principles include rational and sustainable use of maritime space, applying an ecosystem-based approach, and ensuring compatibility of uses like fishing, tourism, sports, and conservation. Activities must adhere to precautionary and preventive principles. The POEM is legally binding for national public authorities and requires inter-ministerial coordination, including mandatory compatibility assessments for new projects.

The plan integrates sustainability by identifying priority conservation areas and restricting incompatible uses. It designates zones for sustainable economic activities, including non-motorised sea sports and ecotourism. Challenges include complex multi-level governance coordination, limited awareness and participation from sectors like small-scale maritime sports operators, and enforcement gaps (Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico, n.d.). The risk of zoning rigidity may limit the flexibility needed for innovative or regenerative marine sports.

The POEM is a fundamental regulatory and planning framework for the governance of regenerative marine sports in Spain. It offers legal recognition and spatial planning for sustainable water-based activities, integrating biodiversity conservation and long-term ecosystem health. However, its top-down approach and limited inclusion of sports clubs and local actors highlight the need for improved participatory mechanisms in future revisions. ReSea can use POEM to advocate for adaptive, stakeholder-inclusive governance models that align recreation, tourism, and environmental goals in coastal areas.

5.2 IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR PILOT SITES

When implementing policies in pilot sites, it is important to understand the specific regulatory environments of each location. This requires a detailed analysis of local regulations and how they interact with national and EU policies. Ensuring compliance with national and EU policies is crucial for legal stability and consistency. However, the implementation should also allow for flexibility to

adapt to the unique characteristics of each pilot site, balancing local needs with broader regulatory requirements.

5.3 CHALLENGES AND POLICY GAPS

There are several challenges and policy gaps that hinder the effective governance of regenerative sea sports. One significant issue is the fragmentation of responsibilities across different levels of government, which can lead to bureaucratic hurdles and inconsistent application of policies. Furthermore, there is a need for regulatory updates to align with current sustainability goals, as many existing policies are outdated and lack clear regenerative principles. Weak enforcement of sustainability policies also presents a challenge, making it difficult to ensure compliance and achieve conservation objectives.

6. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND TRADE-OFFS

The objective of this section is to identify potential governance conflicts and propose resolution strategies. Also, to provide a brief overview of key conflicts and propose governance solutions.

“Conflict resolution refers to the process of identifying, addressing, and resolving disagreements or disputes that arise among project stakeholders, partners, or participants. This process involves structured approaches such as communication, negotiation, and mediation, supported by formal procedures and clear guidelines to address issues transparently and fairly” (European Commission, Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2023). In the governance of sea sports, conflicts can arise between different stakeholders regarding economic interests, environmental protection, or overlapping

responsibilities. Finding best practices in conflict resolution will help ensure cooperation and sustainable decision-making.

6.1 TYPES OF CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Governance of sea sports is often complicated by various types of conflicts. **Economic conflicts** emerge when balancing tourism interests with conservation goals. **Social conflicts** involve disputes over access rights between recreational and commercial users. **Institutional conflicts** stem from a lack of coordination and overlapping responsibilities among authorities.

To manage these issues effectively, several resolution mechanisms are crucial.

- **Mediation strategies** involve a neutral third party facilitating communication to find mutually acceptable agreements.
- **Negotiation platforms** provide a structured space for stakeholders to discuss interests and reach compromises.
- Additionally, **regulatory adjustments** may be needed to revise policies and clarify institutional responsibilities, helping to prevent future disputes.

Effective conflict resolution must be adaptable to each pilot site's specificity. This requires a detailed assessment of the local context, identifying key actors and their interests. Strategies should be flexible and allow for local community participation, incorporating traditional knowledge and adapting mechanisms to changing dynamics.

Balancing economic and environmental interests

A central challenge is balancing economic interests with long-term environmental sustainability. Governance recommendations should focus on creating shared value, developing policies that protect the environment while generating economic benefits for local communities. Implementing marine zoning systems allows for the coexistence of different uses, designating areas for conservation and sustainable economic activities. Promoting investment in innovative, regenerative practices and ensuring transparency in decision-making are fundamental for building trust and support among all stakeholders.

6.2 BEST PRACTICES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN GOVERNANCE

We have examined several best practices in conflict resolution within governance, which offer valuable insights for regenerative sea sports.

BIODIVERSA - Small-scale fisheries and co-management schemes

The BIODIVERSA project addressed conflicts between short-term fishing profits (economic) and long-term biodiversity conservation (environmental), along with institutional conflicts related to policy implementation and weak stakeholder engagement (BIODIVERSA, n.d.). Social conflicts also arose from differing stakeholder perceptions regarding conservation versus exploitation.

The primary resolution method was **participatory decision-making** and informal mediation led by local leaders. This approach was effective because inclusive stakeholder participation built trust and reduced resistance to regulations. Co-management fostered a sense of ownership, increasing compliance and constructive conflict resolution. Long-term outcomes showed that active participation in monitoring and enforcement, combined with strong local leadership, sustained cooperation, even in low-collaboration contexts.

BLUE4ALL PROJECT

The BLUE4ALL project managed conflicts related to balancing marine protection with sustainable use of resources (economic vs. environmental), institutional coordination, and social concerns from local industries affected by new zoning regulations (BLUE4ALL PROJECT, n.d.-a).

The project used **participatory decision-making** through consultations and workshops to co-develop the zoning plan. This inclusive approach reduced tensions by ensuring transparency, building trust, and facilitating dialogue-based conflict resolution, which is preferred over top-down solutions. The long-term governance outcomes include sustainable resource management, strengthened institutions, improved stakeholder collaboration, and greater social equity.

Multi-Stakeholder Networks and ICT Tools (Spain)

This initiative focused on institutional conflicts arising from regulatory barriers and fragmented collaboration in the blue biotechnology sector in Spain, and social conflicts due to low public awareness (MDPI, 2024).

The resolution methods involved **participatory decision-making** via the BBHub network and the **collaborative digital tools** like the ICT Matchmaking Tool. These platforms facilitated dialogue and co-creation of solutions, promoting collaborative governance and avoiding top-down approaches. The project's effectiveness is shown in inclusive stakeholder engagement and collaborative problem-

solving, which address institutional barriers. Long-term outcomes include a more sustainable and collaborative sector, stronger institutions, and increased public support for the technologies.

Tikanga, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Marine Governance (New Zealand)

This project addressed deep **institutional conflicts** between indigenous Māori governance and Western legal systems, as well as **social conflicts** over historical marginalization and disputes regarding marine resource management (Sustainable Seas Challenge, n.d.).

Resolution relied on **participatory decision-making** and **collaborative governance**, integrating Tikanga Māori and Treaty principles into formal structures. Facilitated dialogues served as mediation. The effectiveness stemmed from recognizing Māori governance principles, which built trust and addressed historical grievances. The long-term governance outcomes include a more inclusive and equitable system, promoting environmental stewardship through Māori principles like *kaitiakitanga* and empowering Māori communities.

PEMALM, Marine Litter Monitoring (Brazil)

PEMALM addressed **environmental conflicts** related to marine litter and **institutional conflicts** among various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, by harmonizing their goals (MDPI, 2023; ResearchGate, 2023).

The key methods were **stakeholder analysis** and **participatory decision-making**, fostering a collaborative governance environment. This approach was effective in reducing tensions and building trust by actively engaging stakeholders from the beginning. Long-term governance outcomes include enhanced collaboration and more effective environmental governance in the reduction of marine litter.

7. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE METHODOLOGY AND CONCLUSION

This section brings together all the main ideas developed in the previous chapters and presents a practical summary of the Integrated Management and Governance Methodology. It also explains how the methodology can be applied in pilot sites.

7.1 MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE METHODOLOGY

The methodology is built around five key components, each essential for promoting regenerative sea sports in a sustainable, inclusive, and collaborative way.

Survey insights: understanding public perception

- The survey showed that most participants are not familiar with the term “regenerative sea sports”, but many already behave in ways that are environmentally responsible.
- Key takeaways:
 - 63% of respondents already consider their environmental impact when doing sea sports.
 - Over 80% believe sea sports can help protect the marine environment.
 - People want more information, training, and opportunities to collaborate with others.

Integrated governance framework

- Coordinate actions between key sectors (sports, tourism, environment, and local institutions) is essential to ensure common goals and shared responsibilities.
- Different levels of governance (local, regional, national, and EU) should be involved to align local actions with broader strategies.
- Responsibilities must be defined clearly with each actor to reduce confusion and improve accountability.
- Allow flexibility enables each pilot site to adapt the governance tools to fit its unique context, needs, and existing structures.

Stakeholder participation and engagement

- Governance must include the voices of all relevant groups, especially those that are usually left out.
- This includes using:
 - Stakeholder mapping to identify who should be involved
 - Workshops and consultations to co-create decisions
 - Digital tools and local meetings to reach more people
 - Participation must be long-term, not just one-time. Trust, transparency, and feedback are key to maintaining involvement over time.

Policy and regulatory framework

- The methodology is aligned with important legal frameworks like the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, POEM in Spain, and the Natura 2000 network.
- However, current regulations are often too complex or rigid, especially for small sport-based organisations.
- It is important to advocate for more flexible and accessible policies that support innovative and regenerative sea sports.

Conflict resolution and managing trade-offs

- Conflicts are common when different groups (tourism, conservation, sport) use the same coastal space.
- The methodology promotes:
 - Dialogue and mediation to find common ground
 - Shared decision-making spaces where interests are openly discussed
 - Marine zoning that allows different uses to coexist while protecting the environment

7.2 HOW TO APPLY THE METHODOLOGY IN PILOT SITES

The methodology is flexible and should be adapted to the local realities of each pilot site. A 4-step process is recommended:

Understand the context

- Study the site's environmental, social, and governance conditions.
- Identify existing challenges and opportunities.

Work with stakeholders

- Organise meetings and workshops to discuss the methodology.
- Adjust tools and strategies to fit the site's needs and capacities.

Start with small actions

- Launch regenerative sea sport activities using the governance model.
- Clearly define responsibilities and keep communication open between all actors.

Evaluate and improve

- Monitor progress using simple indicators.
- Gather feedback regularly and adapt the approach when needed.

By following this methodology, ReSea can help coastal communities create new governance models where sea sports not only reduce harm but actively contribute to restoring marine ecosystems, improving social well-being, and supporting sustainable economic development.

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9. APPENDIX: “AWARENESS OF REGENERATIVE SEA SPORTS AND THEIR GOVERNANCE” QUESTIONNAIRE

15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

This survey is part of the Erasmus+ Sports project "ReSea" (sustainable management of sports practice towards the socio-ecological regeneration of maritime and coastal areas). The aim of this survey is to assess the public's social awareness of regenerative marine sports. The answers will be useful to us to define the best governance model and will serve as a basis for designing and implementing participatory education initiatives.

The results of this survey will be anonymous.

* Indica que la pregunta és obligatòria

1. Age

2. Gender

3. Occupation

4. Location (city/ region/ country)

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1F2w65yoc3Ct4YzQbjUpQzDCPTepb_FHbQ2oupnYgfjk/edit#settings

15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

5. Which of the following activities have you practiced ? *

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- Sailing
- Dinghy sailing
- Canoeing and kayaking
- Surfing
- Snorkelling
- Diving
- Open water swimming
- Coastal rowing
- Kite surfing
- Altres: _____

6. Relationship with sea sports *

Marqueu només un oval.

- regular participant
- occasional participant
- professional level
- worker in the field

15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

7. Relationship to sea sports management - Please indicate if you are a member of one of these categories *

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- public authorities
- sports clubs
- environmental NGOs
- business related to sea sport
- sport tourism companies and operators
- civil society organisations
- Altres...

8. How familiar are you with the local marine ecosystem? *

Marqueu només un oval.

- Not at all familiar
- Very familiar



15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

9. What do you think are the biggest threats to the local marine environment?

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- Pollution
- Overfishing
- Climate change
- Coastal development
- Altres: _____

10. Do you know what "regenerative sea sports" are? *

Marqueu només un oval.

- YES
- NO

11. If yes, please briefly describe your understanding of the concept



15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

12. Do you consider the environmental impact when participating in sea sports? *

Marqueu només un oval.

- YES
- NO
- SOMETIMES

13. If yes or sometimes, please explain how

14. Do you think sea sports can have a positive impact on the marine environment? *

Marqueu només un oval.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

15/07/2025, 15:46

Awaseness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

15. Please explain your answer

16. Who do you think should take the lead in promoting regenerative marine sports? *

Selecioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- public authorities
- sports clubs
- environmental NGOs
- businesses
- sport tourism companies and operators
- civil society organisations
- Altres: _____



15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

17. Have you ever seen or heard about any collaboration between sports clubs, businesses, and environmental groups to improve marine protection?

Marqueu només un oval.

YES

NO

18. If yes, what kind?



15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

19. What do you think is/are the main barrier(s) for different groups (government, businesses, sports clubs,...) to work together to make sea sports more sustainable *

Seleccioneu totes les opcions que corresponguin.

- lack of funding
- lack of communication
- lack of knowledge on the subject
- lack of understanding of the stakeholders involved
- conflict of interests between the stakeholders involved
- Altres: _____

20. What would help different groups (government, businesses, sports clubs,...) work together better to make sea sports more sustainable *



15/07/2025, 15:46

Awareness of regenerative sea sports and their governance

21. Do you have any other comments or suggestions related to regenerative sea sports or marine conservation?

Google no ha creat ni aprovat aquest contingut.

Google Formularis

PROJECT 101184396
ERASMUS-SPORT-2024



ReSea Sports

“SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS PRACTICE TOWARDS THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL REGENERATION OF MARITIME AND COASTAL AREAS”

WP1 – D1.1 REGENERATIVE Sea Sports Methodology

**METHODOLOGY OF MONITORING INCLUDING BATTERY OF
INDICATORS**

RESPONSIBLE ORGANIZATION: AETHNIC

VERSION 1.0, DATE: 25/08/2025



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PREFACE

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History of Changes:

Date	Version	History of changes
31/07/2025	0.1	First version of the deliverable
15/08/2025	0.2	Peer-reviewed version from partners
25/08/2025	1.0	Final version of the deliverable

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DELIVERABLE

The ReSea project, a ground-breaking initiative co-funded by the European Union, is committed to advancing sustainable and regenerative sea sports practices. As part of this initiative, this report presents a comprehensive set of indicators designed to illustrate how sea sports activities are transitioning from merely sustainable operations to actively regenerative approaches.

These indicators have been developed in line with the project's definition of regenerative sea sports (from T1.1) and with the governance and management methodology (from T1.2). They are strategically organized into 7 key areas of operation and management, providing a clear and measurable framework to demonstrate how sports clubs and organizations are not only minimizing environmental harm but also actively contributing to the restoration of natural ecosystems, the empowerment of local communities, and the enhancement of climate resilience. Adhering to the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely), this framework is intended as an evolutive tool that, when combined with previous project tasks, will serve as a powerful mechanism for implementing, evaluating, and refining integrated management governance. Its application will be assessed at three distinct moments: a baseline phase (May-September 2025), a first phase (May-September 2026), and a second phase (May-September 2027), ensuring continuous monitoring and improvement within the sector.

This report is created from a piece of desktop work to review the definition and develop a series of indicators that could be used to showcase the how a marine sports club or operator could evidence that they were operating in ways that are sustainable and regenerative. The indicators selected reflect a robust, systemic approach to understanding and enhancing the sustainability profile of marine-based sports organisations.

The starting point was to use the definition and the data from the research element of the project to develop broad topics and key elements to focus on as follows:

1. Governance
2. Carbon impacts and resources
3. The Local Environment
4. Community
5. Heritage
6. Learning and Well-being
7. Regulations

Within each of these topics a series of standards and associated questions were developed to capture data on impacts and positive actions.

The partners within the ReSea project were keen to develop both a qualitative and quantitative approach to the data and so a scoring system was developed for each of the topics and associated questions / data capture. This scoring system is somewhat subjective and quite basic and there is some weighting given to particular answers. It should not be viewed as a “scientific” approach to measuring either sustainability or regenerative approaches but rather a mechanism that can help both the sports organisations and the partners understand what more can be done to improve how they operate in ways that go beyond sustainability to regeneration.

Most of the questions were two-fold. First they were asked a primary question if a specific criteria / information applied to them. If they answered “Yes” – then between 2 and 5 points were provided with more weighting given to more critical elements (such as impacts on the local environment). Also, a follow up secondary question would aim to understand how they did it. For the majority of these secondary questions they could only select one and were graded with increasing points between 1 and 3 points. Some of the secondary questions also asked for them to tick all elements that apply and these would elicit 1 point for each element ticked.

If a respondent answered “No” or “I’m not sure” then they gained 0 points and immediately moved to the next primary question or section.

A maximum score for each section was calculated as well as the actual score for any individual organisation. The scoring system for each question in the seven sections has been highlighted in the explanation of each and the overall scoring available for each section is also provided. The report highlights the key elements and the questions asked as well as the scoring for each one and the maximum score for any one section.

1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The deliverable is structured in 9 main chapters:

Chapter-1: Introduction

Chapter-2: Governance

Chapter-3: Carbon impact and Resources

Chapter-4: Local Environment

Chapter-5: Community

Chapter-6: Heritage

Chapter-7: Learning and Well being

Chapter-8: Regulations

Chapter-9: Conclusions

2. GOVERNANCE

Having strong and effective governance is essential for any organisation and while sports clubs and businesses often have excellent governance systems (with templates and support provided by National Governing Bodies and Federations) – they are often focused on staff management, finances, operating procedures etc. (all of which are essential) but neglect environmental and sustainability aspects.

These indicators associated with Environmental and Sustainability Governance evaluate the presence of structured and accountable environmental systems that the club or operator works to providing a clear commitment to go beyond ad-hoc action toward systematic planning. They also integrate sustainability into organisational culture and provide alignment with global good practices ensuring credibility and comparability.

The first thing asked in the survey was if they had a sustainability policy. If they answered “Yes” then they received 5 points and the secondary question asked them to tick all the elements that the policy dealt with from the following list:

- Carbon footprint
- Water usage
- Energy usage
- Transport
- Waste management
- Noise pollution
- Light pollution
- Single use plastics
- Equipment repair and circular economy
- Minimising local impacts on flora and fauna
- Connections to protected area management
- Climate adaption and resilience
- Local employment
- Supply chains for food

- Use of local businesses and suppliers
- Provision for engagement of local young people
- Inclusion
- Cultural heritage protection
- Education and empowerment of participants
- Well being
- Nature connectedness
- Compliance with local and national environmental regulations

This comprehensive list of 27 indicators provides information on the scale and scope of the policy and 1 point is allocated for each element that they included. These indicators are further explored throughout the survey as they form the basis of sustainable and ultimately regenerative practices.

The provider was then asked if they have a dedicated officer or committee member focused on environmental management. If they responded “Yes” – a further 5 points was provided. Having a dedicated person that is focused on and “champions” environmental aspects can be instrumental in progressing a more sustainable culture.

The next question asked was whether they have any recognised training or accreditation on environmental management? For example Leave No Trace / Sustainable Tourism & Outdoors Kit for Evaluation STOKÉ / Wildlife Safe operator (WISE). If they answered “yes” – they were allocated 5 points. A secondary question was then asked to highlight which of the following best described what they have and the associated points allocated are highlighted in brackets:

1. We informally align to a system (1 point).
2. Training has been undertaken by all staff and we are aligned to a system (2 points).
3. We are certified and accredited through an independent accreditation system (3 points).

If they ticked “c” to claim that they were certified and accredited by an independent system – they were asked to provide a link to it. This will help to further build a database of potential accreditation options.

The total maximum score achievable in this section was 40 points.

3. CARBON IMPACTS AND RESOURCES

In the research element of WP1.1, many sports clubs and providers that did have some form of information on their websites about environmental systems – tended to be very focused on local impacts and environmental education with only 35% of those who had environmental information claimed to do anything about carbon impacts and climate action. Measuring and reporting on carbon impacts is central to climate accountability and essential as:

- Carbon emissions are a core metric in sustainability.
- Tracking resource use pinpoints inefficiencies and opportunities for transition through elements such as, but not restricted to, renewable energy, circular practices etc.
- Transparency through public reporting builds trust and incentivises improvement.

Therefore, the first primary question asked was whether they measure the carbon footprint of the programmes they run? If they answered “Yes” then they received 5 points and were asked to provide the total CO₂e generated in 2024. The next secondary question automatically opened and they were asked about the elements that this covered as follows:

- Travel (2 points)
- Accommodation (1 point)
- Food (1 point)
- Heat (1 point)
- Lighting and electricity (1 point)
- Equipment purchased (1 point)

For each element that they included they were allocated 1 point apart from travel which was weighted higher at 2 points. There is evidence from the [UNFCCC “Sports for Climate Action”](#) reporting that travel and mobility is the largest scale emission issue for the sports (including the outdoor sports) sector. Hence there was increased weighting provided to this element.

The next question was a set of responses to highlight how they record and if they report on their carbon measurements with each element worth 1 point.

- We record all aspects of our carbon footprint (1 point).
- We have systems in place to reduce our carbon footprint (1 point).
- We provide data on our carbon footprint and mechanisms to reduce it publicly on our website (1 point).
- We measure our carbon footprint and provide it an independent organisation such as the UNFCCC Sports for climate Action (2 points).

If they confirmed that they provide data on their carbon footprint to an independent organisation they were asked to provide the link which again helps to further build a database of potential accreditation options.

They were then requested to confirm if they recorded usage of the following resources (1 point being allocated for each).

- Water (1 point).
- Energy (1 point).
- Air conditioning (1 point).
- Light (1 point).
- Heat (1 point).
- Plastics (1 point).
- Equipment (1 point).

For each element that they confirmed – they were asked to provide the quantum used in 2024.

The next primary question was starting to go beyond sustainability by asking if they mitigate their carbon impacts through a nature restoration scheme. If they answered “yes” then they received 5 points and were asked in the secondary question which of the following statements best describes what they do:

- We do some mitigation through nature restoration on our site (low cost) (1 point).
- We provide resources equivalent to our carbon impact to a 3rd party environmental organisation (2 points).
- We provide resources and partner with a local environmental organisation to deliver biodiversity net gain (3 points).

The final question in the carbon and resources section was on whether they have a system for managing redundant equipment and/or for purchasing new gear? If they answered “Yes” then they received 5 points and the secondary question with options of what they do opened up. Each statement was worth 1 point and they could tick multiple options:

- We undertake ad hoc repairs when we get the chance (1 point).
- We have a dedicated repair process to keep equipment in operation as long as possible
- We only purchase equipment made from recycled materials (1 point).
- We give old equipment (provided it is safe) to local young people to support their development (1 point).

The total maximum score available in this section is 39 points.

4. LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

This section focuses on how sports clubs and operators minimise their impacts on the local marine environment and also whether they collaborate with the local protected area management organisation.

It is recognised that there is a biodiversity crisis with global losses recorded at approximately 73% in the past 50 years (albeit this is 56% in the marine environment)¹. A previous Erasmus (Sport) project – Sustainability and Environmental Education in Outdoor Sports (SEE Project)² highlighted that one of the main issues in relation to outdoor sports in protected areas as perceived by protected area managers (including marine protected areas) was disturbance of wild fauna. Marine based fauna – especially sea birds, seals and cetaceans are increasingly under threat from habitat loss, over-exploitation, invasive species pollution, disease, dwindling food supply and climate change. Disturbance can therefore have significant impacts on rest periods, digestion and breeding – and outdoor sports providers who are aiming to be sustainable and/or regenerative in their practices should have systems in place to minimise the impacts that they may have on both flora and fauna. Understanding impacts is a first step to minimising and mitigating them and so liaison with protected area managers can make a great difference in this respect.

As this is such a fundamental element to develop sustainable, responsible and ultimately regenerative practices, the weighting assigned to the responses is higher with 10 points allocated of the initial questions and up to 6 for the subsequent follow up ones. Collaboration between the environmental and outdoor sports sector has also been recognised by both the EUROPARC Federation and the European Network of Outdoor Sports as critical to ensuring positive local relationships between the two sectors.

The first question asked was “Do you manage your activities to minimise disturbance or damage to local flora and fauna?” If the provider answers “Yes” they were allocated 10 points and the secondary question automatically was provided and they have to choose which statement is most relevant with each worth different points. The rationale is that the three different statements indicate a sliding scale of commitment and training with the first being a minimalist approach and the latter being the most robust.

- We are reactive to signs of disturbance such as birds making a noise and then withdraw (2 points)
- We have clear policies and procedures in place to ensure that staff minimise impacts in sensitive areas (4 points)
- We provide regular training of all staff in how to minimise impacts in partnership with local environmental agency (6 points).

The next primary question was “Do you collaborate with marine parks or conservation area managers?” As noted, understanding what impacts can be created by different outdoor sports activities is important and also this liaison can help providers understand which areas or seasons are most sensitive and should be avoided. If the provider answered “Yes” they were allocated 10 points and the secondary question followed that asked them to describe which statement best applied:

- We have occasional and informal contact with protected area staff (2 points).
- We are involved in some form of active partnership with protected area staff (4 points).
- We have formal arrangements for their involvement in our governance and / or vice versa (6 points).

The final primary question in this section was “Does your organisation plan for and respond to climate-related impacts?” Those who responded “Yes” were awarded 3 points. While this may seem like an anomaly in comparison with the other questions in this section – it is important to see if they understand both the impacts on their own business models but also how climate change has impacts on local habitats, systems and environments.

Extreme weather events, like storms and heatwaves, can lead to cancelled events, damaged infrastructure, and increased safety risks for participants and staff. Altered weather patterns can impact the length and suitability of activity seasons, affecting workforce availability and potentially reducing participation.

- **Infrastructure vulnerability:**

Rising sea levels and increased storm surges can damage coastal facilities and equipment, requiring costly repairs and renovations.

- **Increased costs:**

More frequent extreme weather, UV degradation, and other climate-related issues can lead to higher operational costs, potentially impacting pricing and affordability.

- **Extreme weather events:**

More frequent and intense storms, heatwaves, and other extreme weather can pose significant safety risks to participants and staff, requiring enhanced safety protocols and potentially limiting participation.

- **Sea level rise and coastal erosion:**

These changes can make existing launch sites, mooring areas, and other facilities more vulnerable to damage and displacement.

- **Water quality and marine life:**

Climate change can impact water quality and the distribution of marine life, potentially affecting the enjoyment and safety of water-based activities.

- **Public perception and participation:**

Increased awareness of climate change and its impacts can affect public perception of marine sports, potentially leading to decreased participation if organizations are seen as not being environmentally responsible.

- **Environmental regulations:**

Climate change is driving new environmental regulations and policies, and organizations that are not prepared for these changes may face increased costs and restrictions.

- **Economic viability:**

Climate-related impacts can affect the long-term economic viability of marine sports businesses, particularly those reliant on specific weather conditions or coastal locations.

- **Community engagement:**

Marine sports organizations can play a role in educating the public about climate change and encouraging sustainable practices.

- **Mitigation and adaptation:**

Organizations can take steps to reduce their carbon footprint and adapt their operations to the changing climate.

- **Collaboration and innovation:**

Working with other organizations, researchers, and policymakers can help to develop effective solutions and build resilience in relation to climate change.

The maximum score overall for the “local environment” section is 35 points.

5. COMMUNITY

The next section focuses on how the sports club or provider engages with and is integrated into the local community and also the benefits that they bring to that community. This is an important aspect that was included in the definition we have adopted for the Resea project that includes the principles of “engaging, empowering and improving communities.”

The indicators developed for the project focus on employment, products and services, training and youth development, equality and inclusion. The outcomes of community focused indicators should be to:

- Support social equity and economic resilience in coastal communities.
- Empower future stewards of the marine environment.
- Encourage marine sports organisations to become drivers for community development.

The first primary question was whether local people are employed in guiding support or administration roles. If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 2 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicate which one best describes their situation:

- Only administration staff are from the local area (0 points).
- Up to 50% of all the staff are from the local area (1 point).
- Between 50 – 90% of all staff are from the local area (2 points).
- Over 90% of all staff are from the local area (3 points).

As technical instructional staff need to be appropriately experienced and qualified, it is not always possible to recruit such staff from the local area. However, where the provider engages with the community and trains up staff - then this can prove mutually beneficial.

The next primary question focused on goods and services whereby respondents were asked if local, organic food, lodging, etc. actively recommended or integrated? If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 2 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes their situation:

- Up to 50% of our products and services are procured locally (1 point).
- Between 50% and 90% of our products and services are procured locally (2 points).
- Over 90% of our products and services are procured locally (3 points).

The third primary question in this section asks whether training, internships, or access are offered to local youth? If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 2 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicate which one best describes their situation:

- We do this on an informal and occasional basis (1 point)
- We have a structured programme in place (2 points)
- We have a partnership in place with local youth agencies / education authority to support marginalised young people. (3 points)

The final set of three primary questions were in relation to inclusion on whether they specifically have activities adapted for gender, people with disabilities or people from low socio-economic backgrounds. If they answer yes for any or each of these they receive 2 points and the secondary question appears which asks them to highlight which best applies

- We do this on an informal and occasional basis (1 point)
- We have some dedicated equipment and programmes specific to the (gender / disability / socio-economic) inclusion topic (2 points).
- We have fully designed our equipment, have trained staff and are dedicated to make the programmes accessible for everyone. (3 points).

The total maximum score for the section on “Community” is 30 points.

6. HERITAGE

The next section is focused on heritage. By valuing local heritage, these indicators acknowledge the intrinsic link between place and practice. They also embed marine sports activities within the historical and cultural context of their local and/or regional environment. Protecting and supporting the heritage of an area is therefore an important aspect of sustainable and regenerative practices.

The first primary question is “are physical or intangible heritage sites respected/protected?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicate which one best describes their situation:

- Basic information is provided to staff and clients on protecting local heritage.(1 point)
- Staff are trained and there are designed in safeguards to programme operating procedures on protecting local heritage. (2 points)
- There is a clear partnership in place with local heritage society / organisation to ensure promotion and protection of local heritage. (3 points)

The next primary question is about how heritage is communicated and is “are local stories and identities part of the experience?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes their situation:

- These are provided in an ad hoc and informal way (1 point)
- There is integrated, authentic storytelling from trained staff. (2 points)
- We have a partnership with local historians etc for knowledge and storytelling as part of the experience. (3 points)

The maximum number of points available for this section on “Heritage” is 16

7. LEARNING, ADVOCACY AND WELL BEING

This section was deemed to be essential as indicators to demonstrate how marine sports organisations can progress beyond operational impact to foster behaviour change and positively impact on well-being among participants, .

It highlights ways that marine sports programmes can contribute to developing better ecological citizenship and long-term environmental values. It also shows how marine and outdoor sports can be advocates for environmental sustainability and regeneration.

The first primary question in this section is “Do activities include environmental learning?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes what they do:

- These are provided in an ad hoc and informal way (1 point)
- We organise interactive, participatory education by trained staff. (2 points)
- We have a partnership with local environmental organisation to deliver expert led sessions. (3 points)

The next primary question in this section is “Do activities include action-taking on environmental improvements?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes what they do:

- These are provided in an ad hoc and informal way (1 point)
- We organise beach cleans, native flora (including marine flora and algae) planting etc. on a regular basis. (2 points)
- We have a partnership with local environmental organisation to support their environmental improvement work. (3 points)

The next primary question in this section is “Do activities promote mental health, sense of place, and connection to nature?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes what they do:

- We believe that these are integral to the activities and no need to further promote (1 point)
- We integrate reflection, moments of calm and observation into all programmes (2 points).
- We promote local, national and international mechanisms to help people connect with nature such as I-naturalist. (3 points)

The final primary question in this section is “Do you advocate and promote the work of environmental organisations?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicated which one best describes what they do:

- We do this in informal ways as opportunities arise (1 point)
- We have structured programmes to advocate for nature. (2 points)
- We have a partnership with our local environmental organisation to promote their work. (3 points)

The maximum number of points available for this section on “Learning, Advocacy and Well-being” is 32

8. REGULATIONS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

This final section highlights adherence to requirements but also if and how the respondents manage feedback. This embeds accountability mechanisms, gauging how well marine sports organisations are meeting both legal and ethical responsibilities and generates data to inform improvements based on lived experience.

The first primary question in this section is very much about adherence to legal requirements “Are programmes and activities fully aligned with environmental and safety regulations in protected coastal areas?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicate which one best describes what they do:

- We believe that we are compliant but have not checked (1 point)
- We have systems to check compliance with all regulations and staff are trained in the requirements (2 points).
- We have independent and third party checks to ensure that we are fully compliant. (3 points)

The next primary question in this section (and the last one of the survey) is about customer satisfaction. “Do you track customer satisfaction and attitudes to the marine environment?” If the respondent answered “yes” they automatically receive 5 points and the secondary question asks the respondent to indicate which one best describes what they do:

- We have a basic customer satisfaction survey to see how much they enjoyed their experience (1 point)
- We have a customer satisfaction survey that also asks about any changes to attitudes to the marine environment (2 points).
- We have a scientific approach to customer satisfaction and use recognised peer reviewed survey tools to measure mental well-being (e.g. WHO 5³) and nature connectedness (Nature Connectedness Index⁴)

The maximum number of points available for this section on “Regulations and Customer Satisfaction” is 8

9 CONCLUSION

This report provides a systematic and practical tool for sea sports organizations to assess and validate their progress toward sustainable and regenerative activities. The indicators are systematically classified into seven key operational areas: governance, carbon and resource impact, local environment, community, heritage, learning and well-being, and regulation. For each area, a specific set of standards and associated questions has been formulated to facilitate the collection of data on both environmental impacts and proactive positive actions. An integrated rating system, comprising both qualitative and quantitative elements, accompanies these indicators. Ultimately, this comprehensive framework is designed as an evolving tool to support the implementation, evaluation, and refinement of integrated management.

The indicators embedded in this survey are effective not only for auditing environmental impact, but also for reimagining the role of sea sports in contributing to both planetary and local ecosystems and empowering communities.