

# The OCEAN Project

## Olympic Committees of Europe Approaching Carbon Neutrality



## A CASE STUDY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### ***Leadership in Sustainability Skills for Climate Action Officers at National Olympic Committees.***

The Olympic Committees of Europe Approaching Carbon Neutrality (OCEAN Project) comprises of 18 National Olympic Committees across Europe, with ambitious pledges to reach carbon neutrality. Moving from pledges to action and reducing emissions can prove challenging, as it requires leadership buy-in and a cultural shift.

Climate Action Officers within NOCs often encounter resistance and isolation when championing sustainability initiatives, hindering progress towards carbon neutrality.

Through a tailored Leadership in Sustainability training program for the OCEAN Project, we equipped these officers with essential leadership skills and a comprehensive understanding of the business case for sustainability.

Building the community of Climate Action Officers and providing them with solution-focused professional coaches to address their specific challenges, we empowered the officers to navigate complexities and drive meaningful change towards a more sustainable future for European Olympic Committees.

## OBJECTIVE

To equip the OCEAN Climate Action Officers (CAOs) with practical leadership skills and executive competencies to accelerate the results of their NOC's sustainability goals.

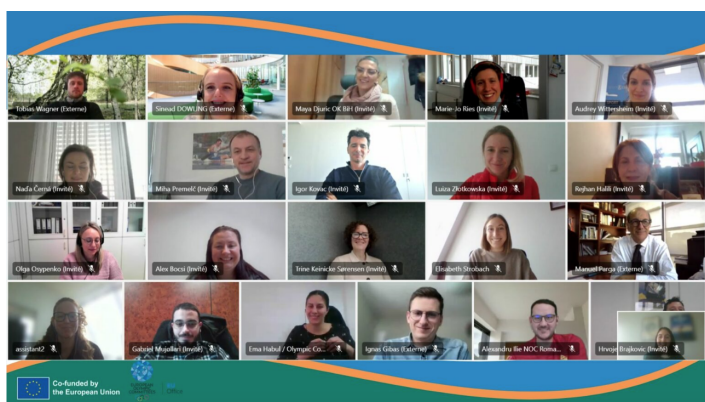
The OCEAN Project training empowers NOCs to acquire relevant knowledge to:

- **Measure** their carbon footprint
- **Define** carbon reduction strategies in order to
- **Reduce** their carbon emission and
- **Strengthen** good governance in the field of climate action.

## FORMAT

The live online training was delivered in four 2-hour weekly sessions. Participants engaged in active learning, discussions, practical exercises, review of relevant case studies, and live feedback on concrete issues they were facing.

In addition, each Climate Action Officer received 3 one-on-one professional coaching sessions following the conclusion of the program.



## GUEST SPEAKERS

In every project we undertake, meticulous thought and effort are invested to ensure it is not only relevant and impactful but also customized to meet our clients' unique needs. Setting us apart is our ability to leverage our extensive network and connections within the industry. This enables us to invite distinguished professionals and renowned figures to serve as guest speakers, offering our clients invaluable insights and a deeper understanding of sustainability and climate related topics.

- **Nigel Topping, UN Climate Change High-Level Champion**
- **Julie Duffus, IOC Sustainability Senior Manager**
- **Jon Wyatt, Sport and Sustainability Director of the International Hockey Federation (FIH)**
- **Nick Gardner, Premiums for the Planet, Salesforce**

*"Acknowledging moments of doubt, we choose to believe that a better solution is possible and commit to a better future by surrounding yourself with positivity. Belief in your abilities is the first step towards achieving the seemingly impossible. Embrace to choose optimism and then put in the hard work."*

- Nigel Topping,  
UN Climate Change High-Level Champion



## THE PROBLEM

Climate Action Officers designated to implement sustainability programs at many NOCs - despite being extremely capable individuals - often face staggering challenges:

- **Inadequate resources and time**
- **Insufficient decision-making authority**
- **Lack of executive leadership buy-in**
- **A challenging culture of misinformation and skepticism**

To overcome these challenges and fully embrace the potential of NOCs to leverage sports as a platform for positive environmental and societal change, there is a critical need for specific types of leadership skills, crucial to sustainability leaders.

Additionally, there is a need for a community of peers to share best practices and draw inspiration from.

# THE SOLUTION

To empower Climate Action Officers with sustainability leadership skills and executive competencies to accelerate the outcomes of their NOC's sustainability missions, Climate Executive Coaching developed a four-week-long curated program comprising of four distinct modules:

## 01 **Leading for Sustainability in Sport** *Cultivating Executive Presence & Building Resilience*

In module 1, participants developed key skills; leading for change, building resilience, and effective decision-making. A coaching approach was utilized, focusing on neutral presence, active listening, backtracking, strategic questioning, and mindful tone of voice.

The learning outcomes included creating ownership throughout the value chain, emphasizing that sustainability is the responsibility of all. Participants also identified challenges and opportunities associated with Scope 1, 2, & 3 emissions, honed their mindset to maintain 'laser-sharp' focus, and fortified their resilience. Furthermore, they applied a decision-making framework and enhanced their executive capacities through the application of coaching techniques.

## 02 **Change Management Skills** *Building Opportunities*

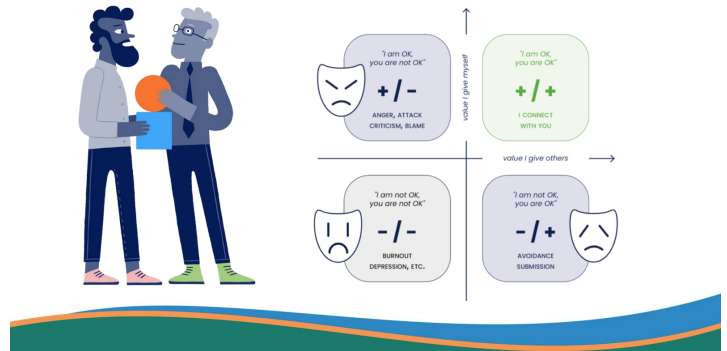
In module 2, participants honed essential skills for fostering community, generating buy-in, and navigating objections. Led by our coaches, attendees delved into emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and critical thinking techniques. The program emphasized adaptability and engagement strategies while equipping participants with conflict resolution and change management communication techniques.

Through interactive sessions, participants gained insights into their own communication styles, decoded others' behaviors and needs, and mastered the art of opening effective communication channels.

Climate Action Officers must be able to foster collaboration across multitude of stakeholders.

By fine-tuning messages and promoting team cohesion, attendees enhanced their ability to foster strong, sustainable relationships within their organizations.

Communicating : A State of Mind



## 03 **Culture Change Skills** *Building Trust, Safety & Inclusivity*

In the 3rd module, participants focused on developing key skills such as building safety, inclusivity, and empowerment, as well as fostering collaboration and honing influencing, motivating, and persuading skills.

Learning outcomes included understanding the impact of storytelling and recognizing the structure of successful stories for transformation using 'The Hero's Journey' framework.

Participants also improved their emotional intelligence through adaptive storytelling, delved into the neuroscience behind storytelling, and learned to harness the power of metaphors.

Moreover, they gained insights into motivating and influencing others through positive storytelling and establishing incentives for behavior change.

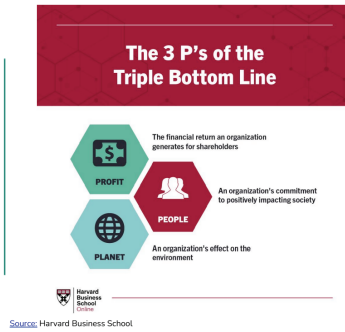
## 04 **The Business Case for Sustainability** *Stakeholders Engagement Skills*

In our final module, participants gained a comprehensive understanding of sustainability from a 360-degree perspective, exploring partner and stakeholder engagement strategies, purpose-driven partnerships and collaborations, navigating difficult partnership situations, and enhancing business acumen.



## What is the Triple Bottom Line?

- The triple bottom line (TBL) is a business concept where organizations measure their social and environmental impact – in addition to its financial performance – rather than solely focusing on generating profit, or the standard “bottom line”.



They utilized the Triple Bottom Line framework to effectively communicate the value of sustainability to their organization's stakeholders and connected sustainability strategies to their organization's value chain to address challenges and create opportunities.

Moreover, they developed techniques and best practices for the successful implementation of stakeholder engagement plans within their organizations, crafting tailored plans to address their organization's needs and objectives.

## What is the Value Chain?



**“The training provided by Climate Executive Coaching ticked all the boxes: connection between participants, sense of belonging to the project's objectives and confidence building for all those who have been trained to lead for climate action in their National Olympic Committee, all of that with great professionalism and fantastic energy from all coaches. Highly recommend!!”**



- Eva Rebmann, Deputy Director of the European Olympic Committees EU Office, Coordinator of the OCEAN Project

## RESULTS

After four weeks of tailored training and programs, Climate Executive Coaching successfully united the Climate Action Officers from the 18 different National Olympics Committees into one community of climate leaders.

Trained by our coaches, CAOs got equipped with newfound executive capacities to help them accelerate results in driving meaningful change towards a more sustainable future.

### Executive Skills & Competencies

Participants developed a wide range of essential skills, including leadership for change, building resilience, effective decision-making, fostering community, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, critical thinking, and influencing, while also refining their coaching techniques and communication strategies.

### Awareness & Understanding

The program fostered a deeper understanding of sustainability principles and challenges, such as Scope 1, 2, & 3 emissions, stakeholder engagement, and the ‘Triple Bottom Line’ framework. Participants gained insights into their own communication styles, as well as the importance of storytelling and building safety, inclusivity, and empowerment within their organizations.

### Collaborative Community and Action

By bringing together CAOs from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, the program created a collaborative community focused on addressing sustainable challenges collectively. Participants were empowered to take ownership of sustainability initiatives throughout their value chains, fostering strong, sustainable relationships and driving positive change within their organizations and beyond.



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