



SMA

SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN ALLIANCE

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2022**

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## Introduction

The Sustainable Mountain Alliance (SMA) is a Swiss based non-profit association launched on World Tourism Day, 27 September 2021.

Our vision: to facilitate the transition to sustainable sports and tourism in the mountain environment.

Our mission: to provide a collaborative platform that identifies and supports inspirational, innovative solutions and a regenerative economy in the mountains, the most sensitive environment to climate change.

## Members

Since its establishment, the SMA has collaborated closely with numerous diverse stakeholders including civil society organizations, United Nations entities, governmental entities, academic institutions, international sports federations and international sports event organisers and their athletes.

The SMA Board agreed that, for the moment, membership fees would not be charged to members but rather a select group of diverse members contributing to achieving the mission of the SMA around the world would be invited to join the SMA.

Members are requested to sign the SMA Membership Commitment Form that serves as an ethical commitment to supporting the mission and vision of the SMA. The current members of the SMA include:

- Kilimanjaro Trail Run (Red Knot Racing Co.), Tanzania
- The Big Climb (the SMA is a founding partner), Kenya
- Mira Rai Initiative, Nepal
- Butterfly Help Project, Nepal
- Verbier Zero, Switzerland
- Cirkel Supply Co., Switzerland (ski clothing rental solution)
- Nu Cycle, Amsterdam (waste solution)
- Beauty Disrupted (beauty solution)

## Challenges

The first **SMA Challenge**, the Air Quality Challenge, was launched on 11 December 2021 International Mountain Day, together with ThinkSport, and the Sustainable Sport Lab (SSL).

The subject of Air Quality was selected as one of the greatest threats to humanity. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nine out of 10 people breathe dirty air, responsible for over seven million premature deaths per year. The impact air quality has on athletes, events, organisers, and spectators has become a growing concern across the sports industry and across the globe in recent years. In the Alps, clean air is expected for tourism, healthy sports activities and the protection of sensitive alpine ecosystems. Yet, given the unique orography of the Alps, there is frequently a concentration of atmospheric pollutants and complicated distribution in often densely populated valleys, especially in winter. By recognizing that no single solution has all the answers, by identifying good practice,

collaboration, technology and ideas, the SMA suggests a pathway to systemic, regenerative change that will benefit alpine communities around the world.

The Challenge was supported by prestigious stakeholders, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Athletics, Formula E, UCI and ENGSO. In the Press Release outlining the UCI's commitment to the Air Quality and Sport Challenge, Amina Lanaya UCI Director General noted: "We believe that such partnerships are a fantastic means to identify, develop, and promote new solutions to solve issues faced by various sports and organisations. Air quality affects all of our sports, our athletes, but also our wider communities, and such innovative challenges facilitate and speed up the development of new solutions to problems faced by different sports."



Solutions were sought across three categories: 1. Solutions that measure and mitigate the effect of poor air quality on athletes; 2. Solutions that clean polluted air and / or reduce air pollution and mobility solutions. The winners were presented at The Spot, an international sport and innovation event on 17 and 18 May 2022 in Lausanne and solutions are now implementing their solutions with sports partners. The winners included the following solutions: Active Giving GmbH, ADD Swiss Sàrl, Airly, Camfil AB, Environmental Instruments, LuftSpektrum (VISDA project), Plair SA, Pluvo Ltd, Qaptis Sàrl.

In 2023, the second Challenge will be organised on sustainability challenges in the mountain ecosystem (precise topic currently under definition) with winners to be announced at The Spot 2023.

## Programmes

### SPORT AND TOURISM

#### The Big Climb



In 2021, the Big Climb was established as the key annual event of the SMA. The Big Climb is a rebranding of an annual climb of Mount Kilimanjaro that was created in 2006 by Tim Challen, after he was shot and injured during an armed robbery in Nairobi, Kenya. He subsequently founded non-profit Kilimanjaro Initiative to assist youth from disenfranchised communities in Kenya and Tanzania. The flagship initiative of KI is the annual climb of Mount Kilimanjaro, 5895m. The Big Climb is in the process of becoming a registered non-profit organisation in Kenya of which the SMA will be a founding partner.

Since 2006, he has led over 650 climbers to the summit of Africa, 5895m, to raise awareness on social issues affecting our communities. The Big Climb sponsors youth to join The Big Climb, joining representatives from the private and public sectors. Together, they demonstrate solidarity in the face of adversity.



**The Big Climb Kilimanjaro 2021:** Immediately following the legal establishment of the SMA, The Big Climb Kilimanjaro 2021 took place<sup>1</sup> with the objective of raising awareness and funding for COVID19 support, reaching the summit on UN Day 2021.

**The Big Climb Kilimanjaro 2022** focused on Sustainable Mountain Development with 2022 being the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development. In September 2022, solar panels were installed on the Marangu Hospital roof to offset the carbon emissions related to The Big Climb (see Impact Fund below).

**The Big Climb Nepal 2022:** The Big Climb Nepal was launched in 2022 to further expand the concept and impact of The Big Climb Kilimanjaro.<sup>2</sup> UNESCO Nepal agreed to be the official partner with the expedition consisting of an 11-day trek to Everest Base Camp (5,300m) through the Sagarmatha National Park from 8-18 November 2022. The aim of the trek was to raise awareness about the challenges faced by indigenous mountain communities, and to highlight the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development.



The expedition was joined by Tim Challen, Founder of The Big Climb initiative, Michael Croft, UNESCO Representative to Nepal, Nepali champion trail runner Mira Rai (Mountain Partnership Ambassador, Salomon Athlete, and National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, 2017), along with youth trail runners from the Mira Rai Initiative, UNESCO colleagues from the Nepal Office, and representatives from the private and public sectors. The trek was led by Wild Yak expeditions. Funding and awareness was raised for local non-profit organisations: the Mira Rai Initiative and Butterfly Help Project. UNESCO will subsequently be publishing a mission report of the expedition to ensure that issues raised in the consultations that were conducted along the trek are acted upon.

## SCIENCE TO ADVOCACY PROGRAMME

### Project: SIEPPUR 'Sustainable Snow Management'

In collaboration with the International Biathlon Union (IBU), Peak 63, the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Svenskt Skidskytte AB (SSAB), the Polish Biathlon Association (PZB), the Slovenian Ski Association (SZS), the SMA has been successful in obtaining funds from the European Commission to develop and implement concrete measures to enhance the sustainability of snow management in Nordic snow sports. With climate change impacting access to snow in most parts of Europe, developing sustainable environmental practices and growing climate resilience of snow sports is critical to ensure the future existence of both recreational skiing and elite sport. The SMA will notably

<sup>1</sup> Press Release : [The Big Climb concludes Kilimanjaro COVID19 advocacy expedition, reaching summit on UN Day - Sustainable Mountain Alliance](#)

<sup>2</sup> Press Release: [The Big Climb Nepal 2022: UN International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development - Sustainable Mountain Alliance](#)



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contribute to the dissemination and impact of the project beyond Nordic snow sports. The project officially started on 1 December 2022.

#### Project: NTN Challenge: Data, 24 November 2022



The SMA joined experts in operational event management, data analysis, and in sustainability, as well as any other interested parties, to the Swiss Innovation Booster on the theme of “Data for Sustainability”.

#### Event: Verbier Summit, Verbier, Switzerland, 25 March 2022



The SMA moderated a panel on ‘How can we use sports to encourage a sustainable lifestyle?’ at the Verbier Summit, a Global Sustainability Forum, with the participation of Alicia Cenci, Freeride World Tour, Sustainability Manager and Andrea Sherpa-Zimmerman, Wild Yak Luxury, Director

#### Event: International Transition Festival, Sion, Switzerland, 22 May 2022



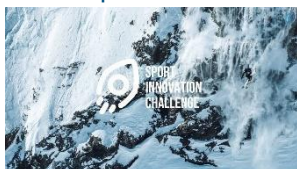
The SMA was the chair of a Roundtable on the topic of ‘Sustainability within events: from the Ocean to the Alps’. Panelists included the Ultra-Trail Mont Blanc (UTMB), the Ocean Race, Mountain Bike World Championships Valais 2025 and Ski World Championships Courchevel Meribel 2023.

#### Event: Moving Mountains Forum, Les Diablerets, Switzerland, 26 August 2022



On behalf of the SMA, Sarah Lewis, former Secretary-General of the Fédération Internationale de Ski (FIS) took part in a panel on sustainability within mountain sports outlining the objectives of the SMA.

#### Event: Sport Innovation Challenge, Synathlon, Lausanne, Switzerland, 8 October 2022



In collaboration with the Freeride World Tour (FWT), ThinkSport and the Haskins Sport Society, the SMA moderated the official launch of the Sport Innovation Challenge that calls upon student to find solutions to the following Challenges:

1. How can the FWT diversify their revenue streams and ensure a safe economic growth?
2. How can the FWT offer more value & make themselves an attractive partner for mountain resorts?
3. How can the FWT engage more girls and women as both athletes and spectators?
4. How can the FWT interact and grow their audience through new communication efforts?

Students will present their findings in December 2022 and will be evaluated on the issues of sustainability, Legacy, Innovation, Feasibility, Presentation.

## Event: Thinking Football, Porto, Portugal, 18 November 2022



The SMA participated on a panel entitled 'Sustainability, Ethics & Innovation' at the inaugural ThinkingFootball Summit in Porto, Portugal's Super Bock Arena alongside Francisco Spinola - General Manager EMEA - World Surf League, Ana Ignácio - ISO 2012 1 Expert for Olympic Games, B Corp Leader, moderated by Neil Beecroft - The SHIFT Chief Disruption Officer (Former UEFA EURO 2016 Sustainability Project Leader). The Panel enabled the sharing of experiences from surf and mountain sports with the football community.

## SOLUTIONS

We have continually sought to identify credible, scalable, ethical and sustainable solutions and social programmes that will contribute to the transition to sustainable sport and tourism in mountain communities around the world. The SMA fundamentally seeks to support solutions and programmes through policy advocacy, financial and strategic support.

In its first year, the SMA has signed with three start-up 'solutions', namely:

- Beauty Disrupted, founded by Svante Holm and Alban Mayne who were in the midst of their tech careers when they learned that 80 billion plastic shampoo and conditioner bottles get trashed every year. Few are recycled and many end up in the oceans. Beauty Disrupted's products are designed in Stockholm and consciously crafted in the South of France. All products are free of plastic and harsh ingredients.
- Cirkel Supply Co.: a Swiss based company that specializes in apparel rental, offering skiers & snowboarders a new, circular way to reduce the impact of their sport by renting premium outerwear. Because many skiers and snowboarders only get to the mountains for a week or so each winter, a huge amount of outerwear sits in a closet for most of the calendar year. Through Cirkel Supply Co., circular economic principles come into play, enabling those occasional adventurers to reduce the impact of their next big trip.
- Nu Cycle: a Finnish start-up, Nu Cycle is the first multi-stream waste offset service allowing companies and individuals to take responsibility for their waste impact. After waste reduction, Nu Cycle supports waste conversion technology solutions that provide circular solutions, powered by a simple, transparent and traceable offset service. The team has over a decade's experience in the circular economy working on some of the leading projects around the world creating a restorative future. Together, they have one goal to mine the waste of today to build a cleaner tomorrow.

## IMPACT FUND

In Tanzania, in collaboration with [The Big Climb](#), USD25,000 was raised for solar panels for the Marangu Hospital based at the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro. The SMA identified a leading solar power provider, conducted the appropriate due diligence and contracted the company 'Power Providers' to install solar photovoltaic panels in September 2022 that now serve in:

- Increasing energy security by reducing the need for diesel fuel;
- Providing reliable energy in a region that is blessed with year-round sunshine;



- Preventing localised air pollution by replacing the existing diesel power generators, that are often prone to break down;
- Saving the hospital money in electricity costs that can be spent on additional critical community health care services;
- Saving lives.

## COMMUNICATION

### Website

The SMA website is kept regularly updated with Press Release and the SMA Instagram feed that is integrated into the website.

### Social Media

The SMA Instagram and linked'in pages are kept regularly updated.

## GOVERNANCE

The co-founders of the SMA are Anne-Cecile Turner, President, Ingrid Beutler, Vice President and Pierre Germeau as Treasurer.

With resources now coming in from the European Commission, certain governance changes will be made, these notably include that the Vice President will rescind her position to take up a part-time, paid position within the association as of February 2023. Additional Board Members will also be proposed for election at the SMA General Assembly scheduled for February 2023.

## FINANCES

The SMA is yet to be financially independent, with the existing Board members supporting the SMA on a voluntary basis. Initial funds will be received from the European Commission for the 'SIEPPUR' project, expected in January 2023. Subsequently, resource commitments from diverse partners will be sought.