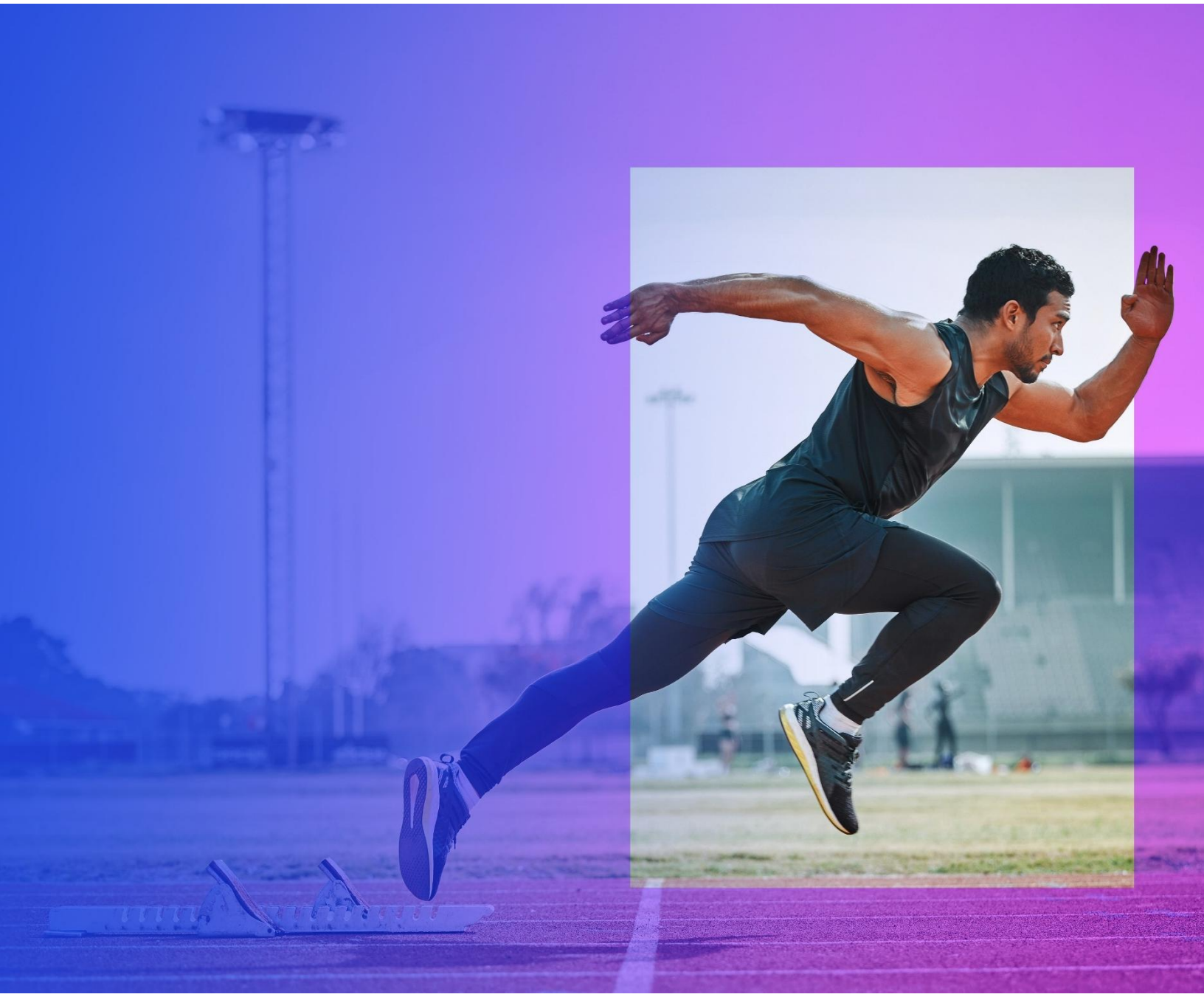

JINDAL STAINLESS FOUNDATION

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SPORTS PROGRAM AT HAU GIRI CENTER, HISAR

April 2026

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Strictly Private & Confidential

Jindal Stainless Foundation

Corporate Head, CSR,

O.P. Jindal Marg, Hisar-125005, Haryana, India

Date: 30. 04. 2026

Subject: Final report for Impact assessment for Sports Programme for Jindal Stainless Foundation

Dear Pritika Chand,

This refers to our [engagement letter/engagement contract] dated 13th March 2026 with Jindal Stainless Foundation ("you") ('the Contract').

We appreciate the opportunity to assist Jindal Stainless Foundation in providing Impact assessment services to their Sports program at Hisar.

This is our draft report as described in the Engagement Contract. The performance of our Services and the report issued to you pursuant to the Services are based on and subject to the terms of the Contract.

This report is solely for your benefit and information and is not to be referred to in communications with or distributed or disclosed for any purpose to any third party without our prior written consent. We have been engaged by you for the Services and to the fullest extent permitted by law, we will not accept responsibility or liability to any other party in respect of our Services or the report.

It has been our privilege to work with you, and we look forward to continuing our relationship with you.

Yours sincerely

Jignesh Thakkar

Partner, ESG, KPMG Assurance and Consulting services LLP

CONTENTS

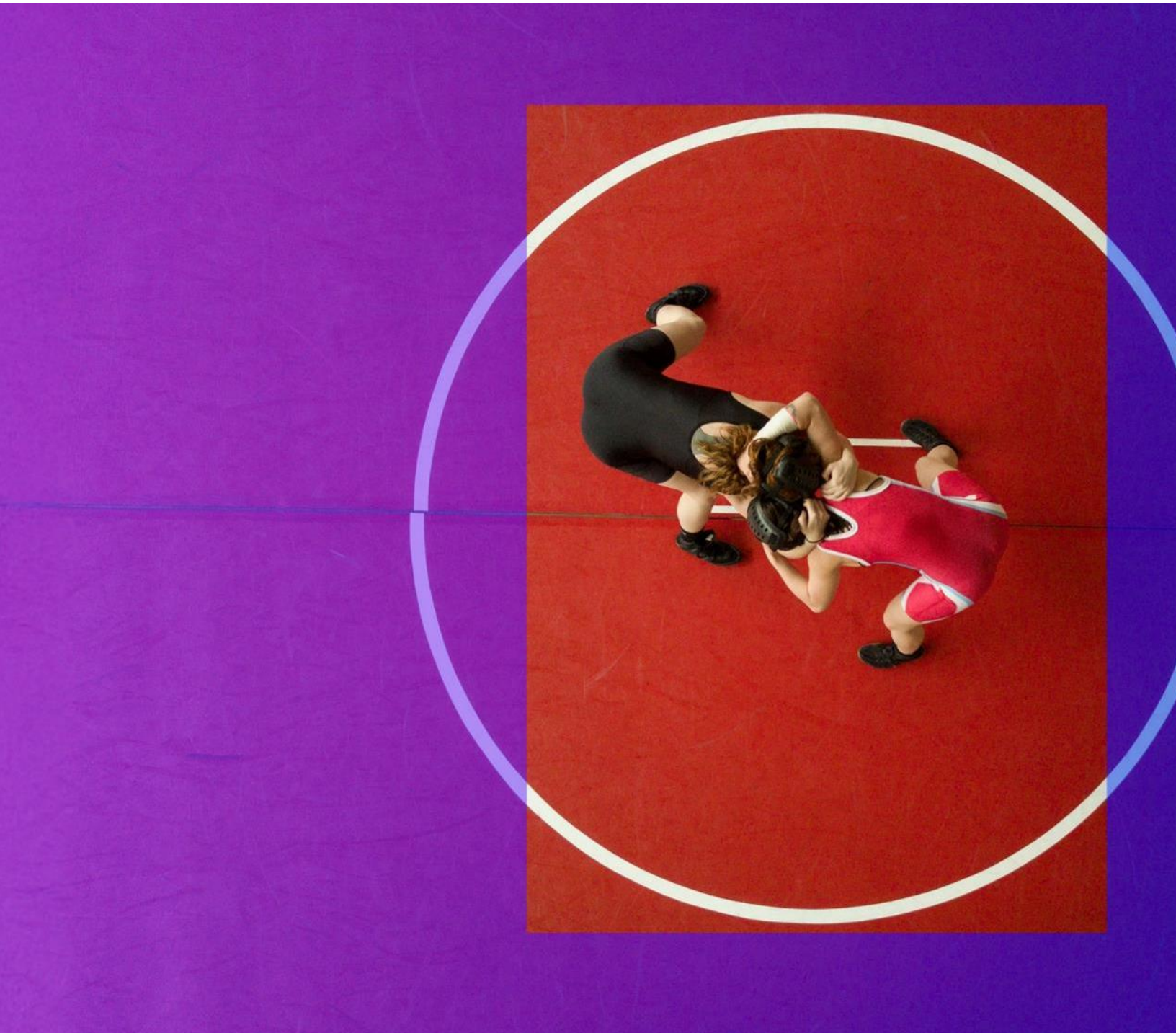
DISCLAIMER AND NOTICE TO READERS

- Our report shall be prepared solely for Client. KPMG does not accept or assume any liability, responsibility, or duty of care for any use of or reliance on this report by anyone, other than our client, to the extent agreed in the Agreement.
- Impact assessment is limited to the project allocated by Client. OECD-DAC assessment framework shall be used in preparing the report as detailed herein. No professional assurance standards ex. ISAE, SSAE etc. shall be applied while preparing this report and accordingly the rigors applicable under such standards are not applicable for the scope covered by our report.
- Procedures, analysis and recommendations, if any, shall be advisory in nature basis the information collected from Client's website and those provided by the Client.
- Our observations represent our understanding and interpretation of the facts based on reporting of beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- Our report, by its very nature, may involve numerous assumptions, inherent risks, and uncertainties, both general and specific. The conclusions drawn shall be based on the information available with us at the time of preparing the report.
- We shall not perform an audit and shall not express an opinion or any other form of assurance. Further, comments in our report shall not be intended, nor should they be interpreted to be legal advice or opinion. Client shall be fully and solely responsible for applying independent judgment, with respect to the findings included in the report, to make appropriate decisions in relation to future course of action, if any. We shall not take responsibility for the consequences resulting from decisions based on information included in the report.
- While information obtained from the Client's website has not been verified for authenticity, accuracy, or completeness, we have obtained information, as far as possible, from sources generally considered to be reliable. However, it must be noted that Client's website may not be updated regularly. We assume no responsibility for the reliability and credibility of such information.
- Our work shall be limited to the specific procedures described in this Engagement Letter and shall be based only on the information and analysis of the data obtained through interviews of beneficiaries supported under the CSR project, selected as sample respondents and discussions with Client team and stakeholders of the CSR projects. Accordingly, changes in circumstances or information available after the review could affect the findings outlined in our report.
- In no circumstances shall we be liable, for any loss or damage, of whatsoever nature, arising from information material to our work being withheld or concealed from us or misrepresented to us by any person to whom we make information requests.
- In accordance with its policy, KPMG advises that neither it nor any of its partner, director or employee undertakes any responsibility arising in any way whatsoever, to any person other than Client in respect of the matters dealt with in this report, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise, howsoever caused.
- In connection with our report or any part thereof, KPMG does not owe duty of care (whether in contract or in tort or under statute or otherwise) to any person or party to whom the report is circulated to and KPMG shall not be liable to any party who uses or relies on this report. KPMG thus disclaims all responsibility or liability for any costs, damages, losses, liabilities, expenses incurred by such third party arising out of or in connection with the report or any part thereof.
- By reading our report, the reader of the report shall be deemed to have accepted the terms mentioned hereinabove.

ABBREVIATIONS

S. No.	Abbreviation	Full Form
1	CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
2	DAC	Development Assistance Committee
3	EWS	Economically Weaker Section
4	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
5	HAU	Haryana Agriculture University
6	IDI	In-Depth Interview
7	IIS	Inspire Institute of Sports
8	JSL	Jindal Stainless Limited
9	JSF	Jindal Stainless Foundation
10	KPI	Key Performance Indicator
11	KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
12	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
13	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
14	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
15	SAI	Sports Authority of India
16	SC/ST/OBC	Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes / Other Backward Classes
17	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

This report aims to assess the impact of Jindal Stainless Limited's (JSL) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) support to the Hau Giri Centre in Hisar, Haryana, implemented in partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS). In this section, a broad overview of JSL and its sports development initiative at the Hau Giri Centre in Hisar is provided.

About Jindal Stainless Limited

Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL) is one of India's leading stainless-steel manufacturers, with operations spanning manufacturing, value-added products, and solutions for infrastructure, mobility, and consumer applications. JSL implements its CSR programmes through the Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF), its dedicated CSR arm. JSF serves as the primary vehicle for planning, executing, and monitoring the company's social development initiatives in alignment with statutory CSR requirements under the Companies Act, 2013, as well as national development priorities. The Foundation follows a long-term, community-centric approach, with an emphasis on measurable outcomes and institutional strengthening.

JSL's CSR strategy is structured around strengthening community resilience and improving quality of life outcomes for marginalized and vulnerable populations. The design of interventions is aligned with national frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sectoral government schemes, and state-level development priorities. A defining feature of JSL's CSR approach is its reliance on partnerships. JSF collaborates with academic institutions, implementation agencies, and government departments to deliver programmes on a scale and ensure sustainability.

Key Focus Areas:

About the project

The Hau Giri Centre, Hisar, is a satellite high-performance sports facility designed to strengthen grassroots-to-elite athletic pathways in India. Established in April 2021, the Centre operates as a feeder and development hub supporting combat sports and athletics, with a particular focus on rural talent. The center functions in partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), India's first privately funded high-performance sports center, and Sports Authority of India (SAI). The Hau Giri Centre is located within the CCS Haryana Agricultural University campus, leveraging institutional land, connectivity, and youth access in one of India's strongest sporting belts.

The Hau Giri Centre programme is structured across four verticals addressing key gaps in India's sporting ecosystem:

- **Talent Identification**: Nationwide scouting programmes are conducted to identify high-potential athletes from underserved regions.
- **Athlete Development**: Selected athletes receive structured coaching, strength and conditioning, rehabilitation support, and injury prevention services, alongside life-skills and psychosocial development inputs.
- **Competitive Exposure**: The programme facilitates participation in state, national, and even exposure to international training camps or competitions, mitigating financial constraints that often limit exposure for rural athletes.
- **Sports Science Integration**: Performance tracking through biomechanics, psychology, nutrition, and recovery science is used to benchmark athletes against global standards.

191 athletes supported

68 female athletes supported

166 medals won

69 athletes supported in Boxing

83 athletes supported in Wrestling

39 athletes supported in Athletics

Source: IIS Report 2024-25 shared by the program team

The Hau Giri Centre represents an integrated model for rural sports development, linking CSR investment with high-performance training expertise and publicly owned infrastructure. By bringing together early-stage talent identification, structured coaching, sports science, and regular competitive exposure within a single ecosystem, the Centre addresses several systemic constraints that rural athletes traditionally face. This approach contributes to building a stronger and more equitable athlete pipeline from non-metro regions, particularly in disciplines such as wrestling, boxing, and athletics.

India's rural regions have historically produced many high-performing athletes in combat and strength-based sports. However, research consistently highlights persistent gaps in grassroots sports participation, uneven infrastructure distribution, and limited access to qualified coaching and scientific training support in rural and semi-urban geographies[1]. Given this context, early-stage talent development plays a critical role in shaping athletic outcomes. Strengthening fundamentals, providing exposure to structured and progressive training regimes, and ensuring access to qualified coaches and modern equipment significantly enhances the likelihood of athletes reaching higher performance levels.

The reality for many grassroots athletes in India is that success is often achieved despite systemic challenges. Athletes frequently rely on limited financial resources, minimal technical guidance, and fragmented support systems while balancing education, household responsibilities, and training[2]. This makes the transition from grassroots to competitive levels unpredictable and heavily dependent on individual resilience rather than structured developmental pathways.

High-performance centers that integrate coaching, sports science, nutrition, recovery, and mental conditioning therefore play a critical bridging role. When such centers are in or connected to rural regions, they help democratize access to high-quality training environments that have traditionally been available only to select urban clusters or national camps. These ecosystems create a pathway for rural athletes to compete at state, national, and international levels on a more equitable footing.

[1] Gautam, A. K., & Dwivedi, S. K. (2023). *Towards sustainable growth: Overcoming challenges in Indian athletics coaching*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 28(12, Series 1), 96–100. https://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.28-Issue12/Ser-1/N28120196100.pdf

[2] Bindhu, S., & Mathews, A. (2025). Socio-economic and gender-based analysis of sports participation, achievement and continuity among collegiate athletes. International Journal of Sports, Health and Physical Education, 7(2), 14–20. https://doi.org/10.33545/26647559.2025.v7.i2a.219

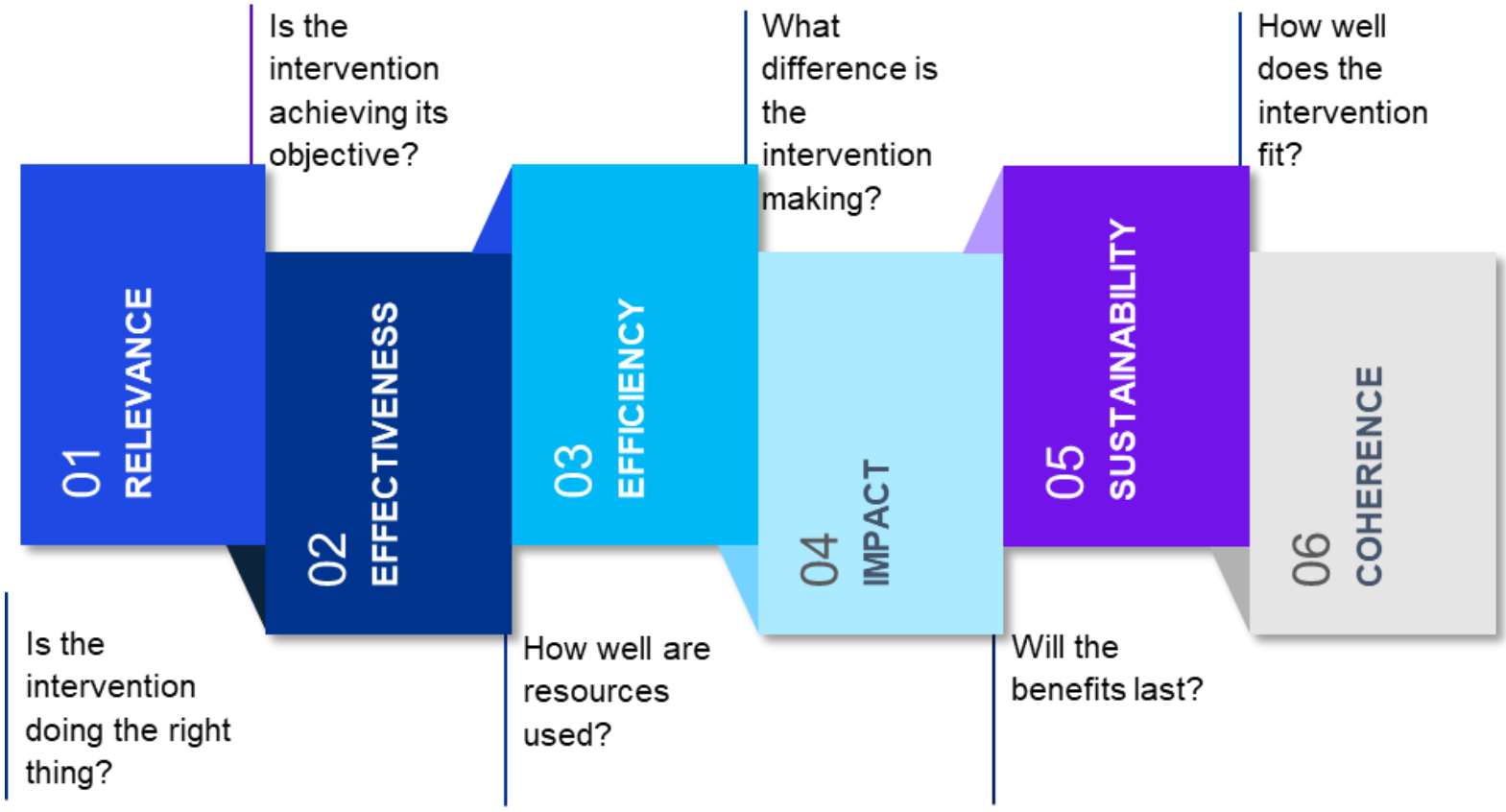
APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

This impact assessment study examined the support provided by Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL) during the FY 2024–25 period, with a focus on understanding its contribution to athlete development across multiple sporting disciplines. The assessment was guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation framework, a globally recognized approach for evaluating development and social impact initiatives.

OECD-DAC

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) first laid out the evaluation criteria in 1991. It is a framework that comprises a set of criteria that aid in systemic assessment of on-going or completed development programs. This method helps to effectively assess various facets of the program and gain qualitative insights along with quantitative impact. The six evaluative criteria in accordance with the OECD-DAC evaluation framework are as follows:



These evaluation criteria have been defined below along with illustrative questions:

Evaluation Criteria	Illustrative Evaluation Questions	Cross-cutting Objectives
Relevance	A measure of the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. ▪ To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid? ▪ Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal? ▪ Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?	*Commitments of the stakeholders are integrated into Project design and planning*
Effectiveness	A measure of the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. ▪ To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved? ▪ What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	*Achieved cross-cutting objectives during project implementation*
Efficiency	A measure of the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. ▪ Were activities cost-efficient? ▪ Were objectives achieved on time? ▪ Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?	*Resources are provided and efficiently used for participation of all stakeholders*
Impact	A measure of the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects. ▪ What has happened as a result of the project? ▪ What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries? How many people have been affected?	*Achieved real and long- lasting positive changes in the lives of intended beneficiaries*

Sustainability	A measure of the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. ▪ To what extent did the benefits of a project continue after donor funding ceased? ▪ What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? ▪ What can be some of the innovative ways to make the project sustainable in the long run?	*Likelihood that project achievements will continue after project*
Coherence	A measure of the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. ▪ Does the project address the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions in the same organization and in the same sector/policy landscape? Does it weaken or enhance the impact of any current programs or policies? ▪ Does the program lead to duplication of efforts?	*The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention and vice versa.*

Methodology

The following section discusses the methodology employed by KPMG in this program evaluation, which has been broken down into four phases.

Phase I: Consulting & Scoping

Activity 1: Inception meeting	As a first step, the KPMG team set up a scoping and kickoff meeting with the JSF team to discuss the proposed work plan detailing out the various tasks to be conducted along with stipulated timelines. The KPMG team developed a detailed project plan to drive the engagement. A communication mechanism was charted out by mutually identifying the SPOCs from both KPMG and the client's side.

Activity 2: Desk-review and internal stakeholder engagement	The team conducted desk reviews of documents and reports shared by the client such as MoU, project report, etc. Additionally secondary research was conducted to develop an in-depth understanding of the project locations, interventions, etc. Discussions with JSF team and implementing agencies were conducted to understand the project interventions' KPIs and determine sampling strategy and size.

Phase II: Research Design

Activity 1: Development of Impact Map/Theory of Change	A theory of change/ impact map has been developed to establish the outcome and impact parameters for the project. An impact map is defined as a logical chain/ framework giving an overview of how inputs (actions taken, or work performed) result into outputs (changes resulting from the interventions relevant to the outcomes), causing outcomes (likely or achieved short or medium-term effects arising out of the outputs of intervention) and impact (positive or negative, intended, or unintended, direct, or indirect effects created by the interventions). The figure below shows a condensed version of the impact map developed and finalized in consultation with JSF and IIS team.
Activity 2: Stakeholder Mapping and Sampling strategy	Stakeholder mapping is the process of identifying all the stakeholders involved in a project and their roles and responsibilities on one map. Stakeholders who experience change, whether positive or negative because of the interventions carried out were considered for the study. Key Stakeholders include: • Athletes • Coaches • Sport Science Staff: High-Performance Manager, Physiotherapy, Strength & Conditioning, Nutritionist, Sports Masseur • IIS Hisar Center Administration • JSF Program team • SAI & HAU

IMPACT MAP

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
JSF funding & Partnerships with SAI, IIS.	Provision of regular high-quality training sessions (technical + strength and conditioning)	Number of athletes trained (wrestling, boxing, athletics) *(Gender Disaggregated Data)*	Percentage of athletes reporting improved technical knowledge and capabilities	Increased access to structured training and competitive opportunities for athletes from underserved regions.
Facilities & Equipment at Hau Giri Centre.	Competition planning & logistics: calendarised participation at national/international events and camps.	Number of training sessions delivered to atheletes	Percentage of athletes reporting improved sport-specific technique and physical conditioning	Strengthened foundational training ecosystem at Hau Giri Centre, contributing to improved national-level performance in boxing, wrestling and athletics.
Human Resources	Sports science support: physiotherapy, rehab, recovery, assessments	Number of physio/rehab/S&C sessions provided	Percentage of athletes reporting improved psychological readiness and confidence	Strengthened pipeline of athletes progressing to IIS and national camps, creating long-term potential for representation at international competitions, including the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and Olympics.
	Performance tracking & athlete data management	Number of Life skills sessions delivered to Athletes	Percentage of atheletes reporting improved health indicators (BMI, injury reduction)	
	Residential (for selected athletes) and holistic athlete care (safety, health, nutrition)	Number of coaches trained	Percentage of coaches reporting improved technical knowledge and greater ability to integrate sports-science practices into training	
	Provision of technical training to coaches/trainers	Number of training sessions delivered to coaches	Increase in number/percentage of athletes progressing to national/international competitions.	
		Number of competitions participated in (state*/national/international)	Increase in number/percentage of athletes winning medals at state/ national/international competitions.	

Sampling and Coverage

Primary data collection included in-depth interactions with **50 athlete respondents** across three sports-Athletics, Boxing and Wrestling (Approx. 25% of total athletes (191) supported in 2024-2025). The sample was gender-inclusive, with approximately 44% of respondents being female. To complement athlete perspectives, the study also conducted **8 Key Informant Interviews** with coaches and sports science staff at the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), Hau Giri Center.

Sample Covered	Total	Male	Female
Boxing	24	9	15
Athletics	8	8	0
Wrestling	18	11	7
Total	50	28	22

Activity 3: Development of Research Tools	This study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. After desk review and development of research design, survey instruments were developed based on the impact map to collect data from a sample population to gather information on athlete's experiences. Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders such as coaches and sport science staff were also designed. Tools prepared include: • Online survey tools for athletes • Discussions guide for coaches/staff

Phase III: Data Collection

Activity 1: Development of field-visit plan	The KPMG team planned stakeholder interactions through mutual discussion with the JSF and IIS team. The data collection team consisted of two members from the KPMG core team. The administration team at IIS Hisar center scheduled and facilitated the interactions with athletes and coaches keeping in mind the availability and training schedules of the athletes.

Activity 2: Conducting Data Collection	KPMG team conducted stakeholder consultations through individual interviews, group discussions and IDIs with other stakeholders from 20th April- 21st April 2026. The data collection process was monitored for completeness and accuracy by engagement lead.

Phase IV: Analysis & Reporting

Activity 1: Data analysis and preliminary findings	During the data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative analysis were conducted on the data collected. The data and observations obtained during the primary data collection phase and document review were analyzed to inform report writing. Preliminary field observations were presented and shared with the JSF Team.
Activity 2: Development of report and presentation	A comprehensive and detailed report was created for JSL at the Program-level encompassing the key observations, analysis, findings, and recommendations. The report adhered to the guidelines provided by the OECD-DAC framework. Before finalizing the report, a draft version was shared with the team at JSF for discussion and their valuable inputs.

Ethical considerations for data privacy

KPMG has followed the guidelines outlined as per the latest Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act guidelines by implementing robust data governance frameworks, conducting internal compliance reviews and ensuring protection of data. For the data collection process, KPMG has adhered to ethical considerations for data privacy:

- Informed Consent: All participants were briefed about the purpose of data collection and asked for consent before participating.
- Confidentiality: Personal identifiers were removed or anonymized to protect participants identity.
- Secure Data Storage: All collected data has been stored in secure, access-controlled environments to prevent unauthorized access.
- Limited Access: Only authorized personnel involved in the project have access to the project data.
- Use of Data: Data is used solely for research and program evaluation purposes, in line with the consent provided by participants.

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis and key findings of the assessment, structured around evidence gathered from programme data and field interactions. The findings are organized in alignment with OECD-DAC evaluation parameters to provide a clear understanding of performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.

The study covered 50 athlete respondents from three sports: Athletics, Boxing and Wrestling.

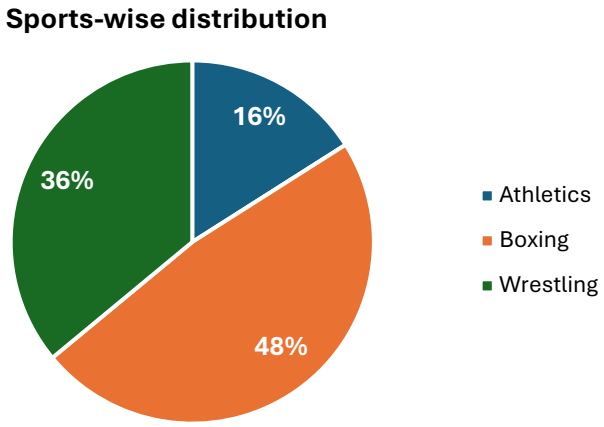


Figure 1: Sports-wise distribution of respondents. n=50

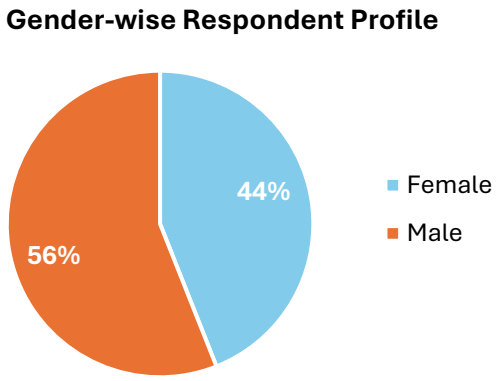


Figure 2 Gender distribution of respondents. n=50

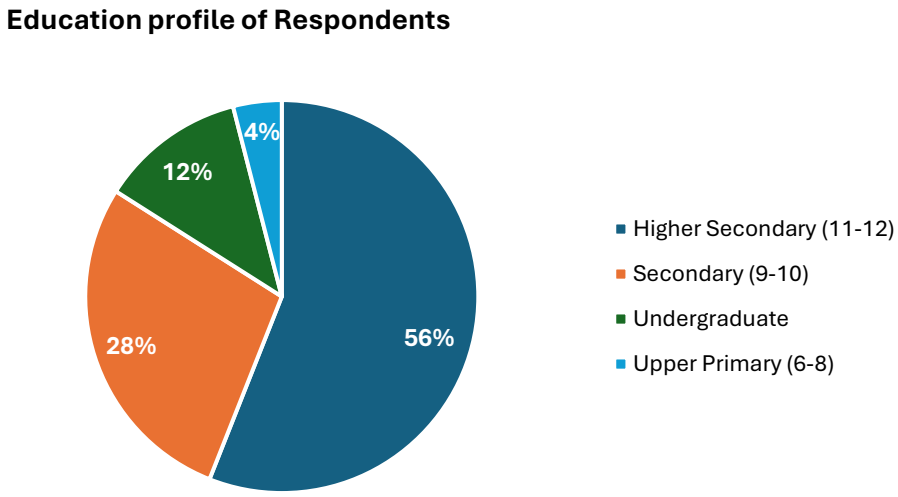


Figure 3 Education profile of respondents. n=50

Relevance

A measure of the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

The center functions as a satellite high-performance hub, enabling athletes from remote and underserved geographies including remote districts across Haryana as well as states like UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh to access structured technical training, sports science services, and high-quality coaching that would otherwise be unavailable locally. Around 9 states across India are represented in the sample respondents, including remote border districts like Kinnaur (HP), Sriganganagar (Rajasthan) and aspirational district like Mirzapur in UP.

Prior to joining the programme, most athletes trained in local private academies or municipal stadiums, where coaching quality, equipment, competitive exposure, and sports-science support were limited. A central challenge relates to low awareness of professional pathways; many young athletes lacked information about structured training environments or opportunities beyond district-level competitions.

Financial constraints further restricted access to quality coaching, equipment, and travel support, making high-performance training unattainable for many talented athletes from low-income households. Social barriers, particularly hesitation within families due to uncertainty about long-term career prospects, also influenced athletes' ability to pursue sport consistently. Geographic and infrastructure limitations added another layer of difficulty. While basic training spaces were available locally, access to specialized facilities such as combat halls, physiotherapy services, and sports-science expertise was minimal.

Around 96% of respondents stated they would not be able to continue this level of training without the support provided at center. Athletes also emphasized that the center enables them to train alongside peers in their own weight category which enhances their skill development. This was particularly important for female wrestlers, who shared that in their hometown they often trained only with boys due to the absence of other girls in the sport.

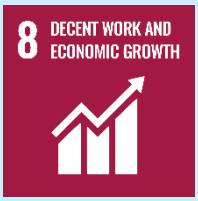
The HAU Giri Centre addresses these gaps by offering an integrated system for athlete development, creating a more structured and equitable pathway for talent from underserved regions.

Coherence

A measure of the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

The center operates through a multi-stakeholder partnership model involving university infrastructure (HAU), national sports alignment (SAI), Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS) and long-term corporate sponsors like JSL.

The program is aligned with national sports development strategies and complementing government schemes like Khelo India. Due to the nature of the intervention, the programme has an impact on a wide range of SDG-related outcomes, as shown below:

SDGs	Target/ Subsection	How it aligns
	**3.4** Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being	Promotes physical fitness, mental resilience, and wellness through structured training, sports science integration, physiotherapy, and nutrition planning. Community outreach encourages youth fitness and healthy lifestyles.
	**4.4** Increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship	Provides scientific and evidence-based learning on sports and sports science for athletes and coaches.
	**8.5** Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men	Creates economic opportunities in coaching, sports science, and allied careers. Scholarships and residential facilities reduce barriers for underprivileged athletes, enabling equitable access to training and future employment prospects.
	**10.2** Empower and promote social, economic, and political inclusion of all	Ensures representation of athletes from underprivileged backgrounds. Inclusive outreach and grassroots scouting democratize access to elite training.

	**17.17** Encourage effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships	Complements national schemes like Khelo India. Build partnerships with technology providers, nutrition experts, and government bodies to enhance innovation and resource optimization.

Effectiveness

A measure of the extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

As part of the study, athlete satisfaction was examined across key service areas that directly influence training quality, performance outcomes, and day-to-day functioning at the HAU Giri Centre. Feedback collected from athletes provides important insights into how well programme inputs are translating into perceived value and utility at the beneficiary level.

Aspect	Average Rating (out of 5)	% Respondents reporting high satisfaction (4-5 Stars)
Strength & Conditioning	4.9	100%
Facilities	4.6	98%
Nutrition Support	4.8	96%
Technical Training	4.7	92%
Travel and Logistics	4.42	90%
Physiotherapy	4.4	82%
Coach	4.3	82%

Overall, athlete satisfaction with core high-performance components is consistently high, indicating strong effectiveness of programme design and implementation in its primary mandate of athlete development. Athletes reported particularly high levels of satisfaction with Strength and Conditioning, Technical Training, and Nutrition Support, reflecting the value of structured, sport-specific, and scientifically informed training practices offered at the Centre. Satisfaction with Coaches reflects trust in technical guidance, training methodologies, and day-to-day mentorship provided by the coaching staff. Support systems related to Facilities and Infrastructure also received strong ratings.

Athletes highlighted the availability and quality of training spaces, equipment access, and overall facility management as key enablers of focused and uninterrupted training. Travel and logistics

arrangements for competitions and camps were positively rated, indicating effective planning and execution that allows athletes to participate in competitive exposure without financial or administrative burden. Physiotherapy and Injury and Rehabilitation support were rated as effective by most athletes, particularly for injury management and recovery during high training loads.

Aspect	Average Rating (out of 5)	% Respondents reporting high satisfaction (4-5 Stars)
Center Staff	3.94	60%
Injury & Rehabilitation	3.75	54%
Living Conditions	3.64	54%
Female Health*	4	50%
Equipment	3.58	50%

Female health support showed moderate satisfaction, indicating the presence of services but also suggesting scope for further strengthening. Satisfaction with Centre staff and Living Conditions was moderate to high, reflecting functional support systems that enable athletes to focus on training.

92% of respondents reported high satisfaction (4 or 5 stars) with the technical training provided.

Around **96%** of respondents provided high ratings for the nutrition counselling support provided to them.

Efficiency

A measure of the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

In the 2024-25 cycle, the program had effectively supported 191 athletes (124 Male, 68 Female) across three sports- boxing, wrestling, and athletics, by providing access to state-of-the-art facilities, advanced training spaces, expert coaching, physiotherapy, and recovery and rehabilitation services.

From an operational perspective, training services are delivered regularly and consistently, and athletes reported that schedules, facility access, and day-to-day arrangements are managed in a

manner that supports uninterrupted training. The use of existing university infrastructure, combined with IIS technical expertise, contributes to a reasonably efficient deployment of resources, reducing the need for creating parallel systems. Stakeholder interactions suggest that the programme maintains clear communication channels with university officials and sports authorities, enabling timely access to spaces, equipment, and administrative support.

In terms of financial efficiency, the program's design helps minimize duplication of services. Athletes reported that they are not receiving similar high-performance support from other schemes or academies, which indicates that programme resources are reaching the intended group without overlapping. The program's ability to centralize strength and conditioning, technical coaching, sports science services, and residential arrangements within one campus also contributes to operational efficiencies. Shared facilities and coordinated staffing structures enable the programme to offer comprehensive support without significant administrative duplication.

Impact

A measure of the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects.

Improved Athletic Performance and Technical skills

The study highlights substantial improvements in athletes' technical capabilities following their participation in the programme. Around 86% of respondents reported an improvement in their

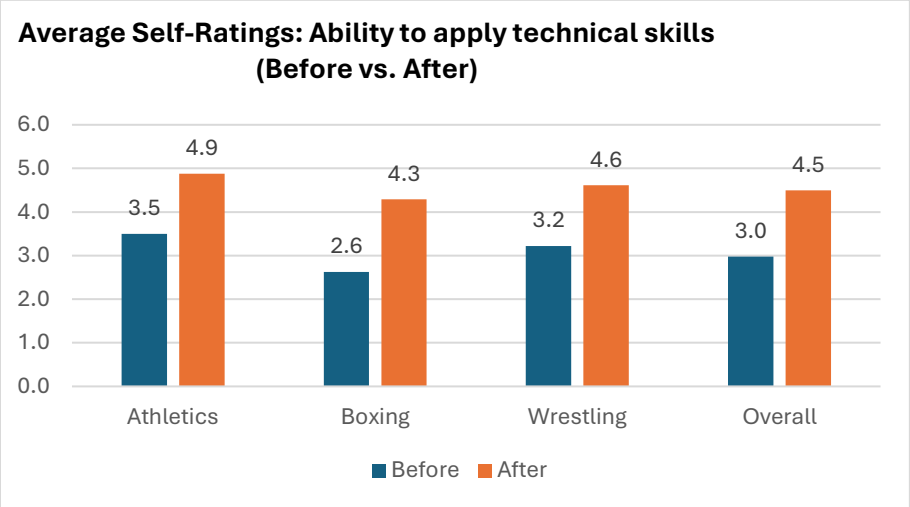


Figure 4: Athletes' self-ratings on application of Technical Skills, , before and after joining program. n= 50

ability to correctly apply technical skills during training and competition. Average self-ratings increased across all three disciplines, reflecting enhanced precision, tactical execution, and sport-specific technique. About 94% of respondents shared that there has been improvements in their overall sport-specific physical conditioning.

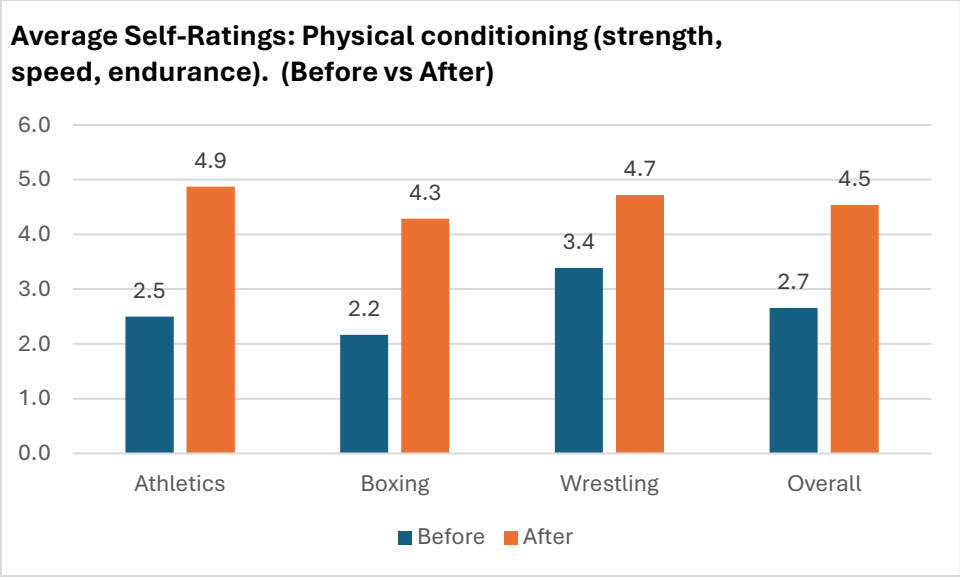


Figure 5: Athletes' self-ratings on overall physical conditioning, before and after joining program. n= 50

Athletes highlighted the higher quality of coaching at the center, describing the shift as moving from "hard work to smart work." They explained that earlier training environments relied heavily on volume and repetition, whereas the center emphasizes strengthening their fundamentals, technique correction, structured drills, and evidence-based training methods. This approach has helped them understand why a technique matters, how to break it down, and how to apply it under different competitive scenarios. Respondents also stressed that improved technical skills were closely linked to better management of fatigue and injury prevention. With access to strength and conditioning coaches and physiotherapists, they now receive guidance on load management, warm-up routines, and recovery protocols.

86% of respondents reported improvement in their ability to apply technical skills correctly during training/competition.

Around **94%** of respondents reported improvements in their overall sport-specific physical conditioning.

Competitive Progression

The study indicates measurable upward mobility in athletes' competitive levels since joining the Centre. Overall, 52% of respondents reported that they had moved up at least one competitive tier (for example, from District to State). Among those who had entered at the district level, all respondents reported progression to a higher tier. At the aggregate level, while around half of the cohort initially competed at District or State levels, 68% of the current athlete pool now competes at the National level or above.

In Athletics, 62.5% of respondents reported moving to a higher competitive level. All athletes who began at the district level in this discipline reported progressing directly to National-level competitions. In Boxing, 54% of respondents indicated upward movement. Among male boxers, 57% reported improved competitive standing, including individuals who maintained existing National-level status. Among female boxers, 50% reported upward movement, with several transitioning from State to National competition levels. In Wrestling, 50% of male respondents and 40% of female respondents reported moving up at least one level. A considerable share of the wrestling cohort is now competing on the National circuit.

The study indicates that 18% of respondents received international exposure through tournaments or training camps facilitated by the programme. This includes participation in camps held outside India (such as Ireland and Iran) as well as international training camps conducted within India. Of the nine athletes who accessed international exposure, 88.9% did not compete internationally at the time they joined the Centre, suggesting that the programme has enabled first-time access to global training environments. Furthermore, 44.4% of these athletes entered the programme at the State level, indicating upward progression among athletes who began with limited competitive exposure.

Athletes described international camps, whether abroad or within India at the IIS center, as important for understanding global training standards, adapting to different competitive styles, and gaining exposure to higher levels of physical and technical intensity. Several respondents noted that training alongside international athletes helped them benchmark their own preparedness and identify areas requiring further improvement. Respondents also emphasized the broader experiential aspects of these opportunities. For some, international travel and participation represented the first time they engaged with athletes from other countries. One athlete remarked that flying for the first time and interacting with foreign athletes increased confidence and his aspirations for competing internationally and representing the country.

Increased confidence and resilience

Confidence, examined through the athletes' self-reported ability to perform under competitive pressure, showed consistent and significant gains across sports.

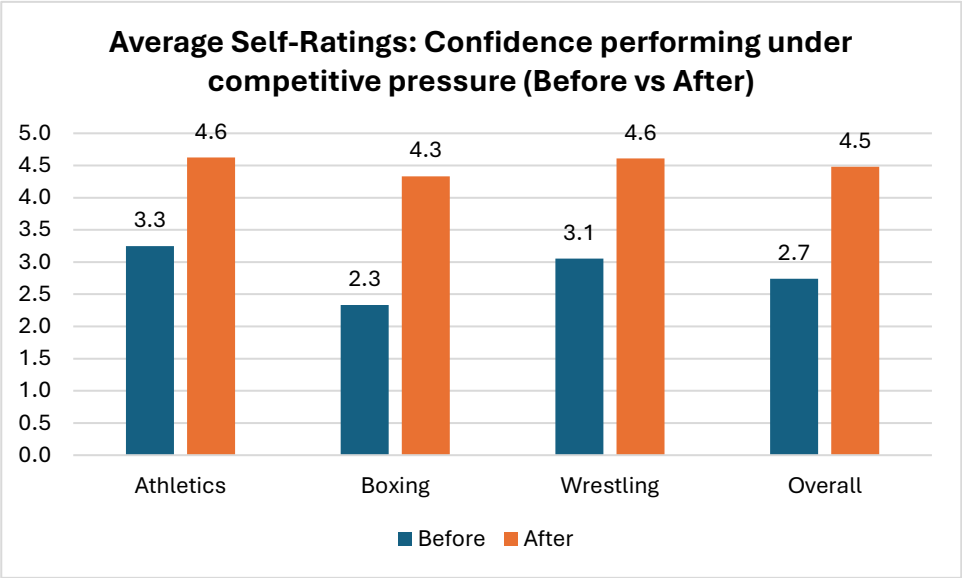


Figure 6: Athletes' self-ratings on confidence, before and after joining program. n= 50

Overall average confidence scores increased from 2.7 (prior to joining program) to 4.5, indicating a marked shift from low–moderate confidence to high confidence levels. 82% of all respondents reported an improvement in confidence, with sport-specific improvements reported by 75% of athletics athletes, 83% of boxing athletes, and 83% of wrestlers. This suggests that the programme components, such as structured training, exposure to competitive settings, and skill reinforcement, played an important role in strengthening athletes' ability to manage pressure and perform consistently in competitive environments.

The study captured athletes self-perceived resilience or their ability to recover quickly after mistakes or failures.

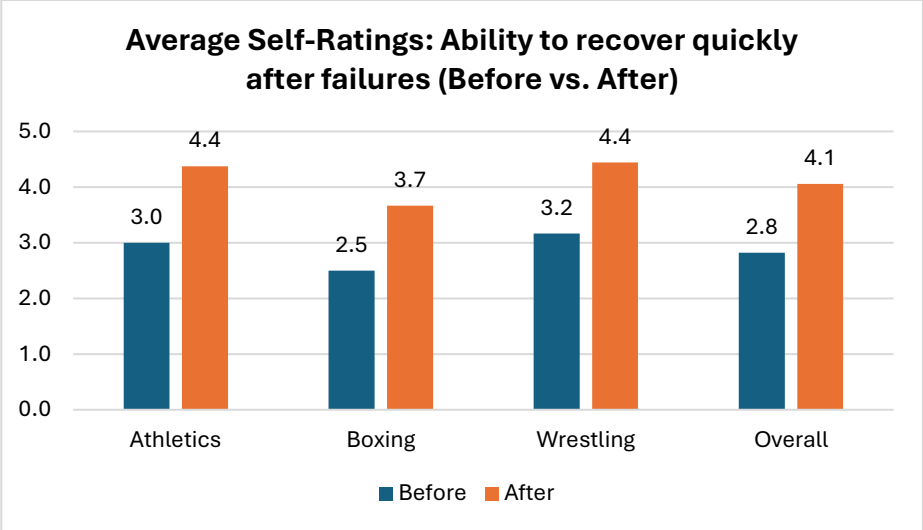


Figure 7 Athletes' self-ratings on ability to recover quickly after failures, before and after joining program. n= 50

At an aggregate level, resilience scores increased from 2.8 before joining the center to 4.1 after the program, reflecting a considerable enhancement in athletes' coping mechanisms and emotional regulation following setbacks. Athletics respondents recorded one of the strongest trends, with average scores increasing from 3.0 to 4.4, and 88% of respondents reported improvement in their ability to recover quickly after mistakes.

82% of respondents shared that there was an improvement in their confidence level post joining the center.

70% of respondents self-reported increase in their ability to recover quickly after losses.

"Earlier I would often get sad after losing a game and skip training for few days. Being here has helped me overcome this. Now, I show up to training the next day and see losses as part of the process."

- 15-year-old girl, Wrestling, Trained in 2024-25

Improved Knowledge and Awareness

The programme led to improvements in athletes' knowledge and awareness around nutrition, weight management, and physical wellbeing, with 94% of respondents reporting improved nutritional knowledge following the intervention. This highlights the effectiveness of structured nutritional guidance provided through both professional nutritionists and reinforced messaging by coaches.

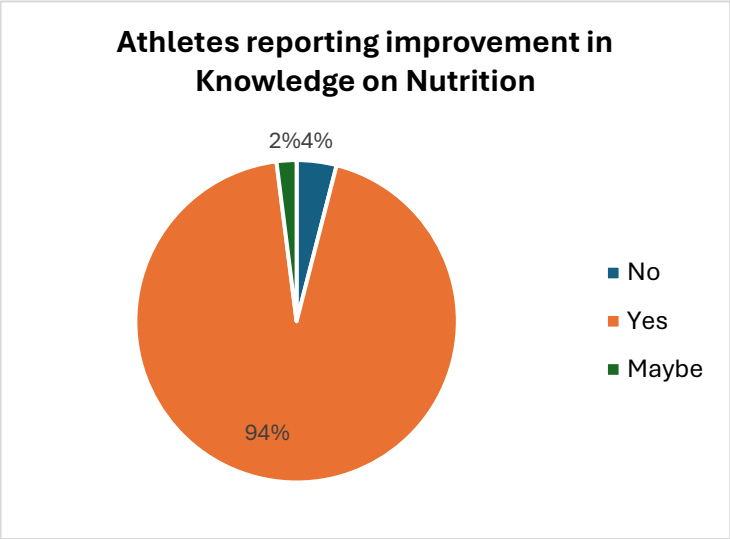


Figure 8: Percentage of Athletes reporting improved knowledge on nutrition.n=50

Respondents shared that they now have a clearer understanding of how to manage weight in a healthy and informed manner without compromising muscle mass, strength, or performance. Inputs from nutritionists equipped participants with practical knowledge on balancing calorie intake, hydration, and training demands, especially around competition periods. Coaches also reported that athletes now have more realistic expectations about weight management, understanding what is physiologically feasible and safe. For instance, athletes are increasingly aware that minor weight adjustments (around 500-700 grams) can be managed safely through planned nutrition and hydration strategies, whereas extreme weight cuts of 4-5 kilograms close to competitions are neither realistic nor healthy.

In addition to awareness, most respondents shared that they have been able to apply this knowledge in their daily routines. 60% of respondents reported that they mostly follow the nutrition advice or meal plans provided, while an additional 24% strictly adhere to the recommended guidelines.

Beyond nutrition, athletes also reported improved awareness related to strength and conditioning, fatigue management, recovery, and injury prevention. Exposure to S&C inputs helped athletes better understand how training loads, rest, and recovery interact with performance, enabling them to train more intelligently rather than pushing through exhaustion or pain. Respondents shared that they are now more attuned to signals related to fatigue, recovery needs, and injury prevention, and demonstrate a better understanding of their own physical strengths and limitations. This increased awareness supports timely engagement with physiotherapy, rest, and recovery strategies, contributing to improved overall physical health and reduced risk of injury escalation.

Strengthened Support Systems

Coach and Sports Science Staff Development

There is a strong and deliberate focus on the continuous upskilling of coaches and sports science staff. IIS facilitates regular opportunities for knowledge exchange, professional learning, and exposure to evolving best practices in sports coaching and performance science. Coaches and sports science staff consistently highlighted that the institution is highly supportive of their professional growth, including financial reimbursement for relevant courses and educational programmes they wish to pursue. The coaching team is notably experienced, including prior experience at institutions such as ASI Pune, as well as former professional athletes themselves. This blend of practical experience and formal training enriches the quality of coaching delivered to athletes.

Coaches also reported valuable exposure to international coaching methodologies, including interactions with foreign coaches and exchanges with coaches associated with national-level champions. Such engagements were described as critical for staying updated on changing rules, strategies, and advances in sport-specific training and sports science. In addition, coaches have begun participating in online coach-management and capacity-building courses, further strengthening institutional leadership and coaching effectiveness. This structured investment in coach development ensures that athletes consistently benefit from current, evidence-based, and high-quality training approaches, reinforcing the program's long-term impact.

Athlete Selection and onboarding

Athlete intake at the Hisar center follows a structured, merit-based selection process conducted through formal trials organized by the center. In response to athlete attrition and to ensure continuity in the talent pipeline, the frequency of trials has increased from once a year to twice annually, enabling the center to address drop-outs and sustain cohort strength. The center functions primarily as a feeder and development hub, with an emphasis on building technical fundamentals, physical conditioning, and sport-specific foundations. The program prioritizes long-term athlete development over short-term medal outcomes, particularly given the early and developmental stage of many athletes entering the system.

The High-Performance Manager and coaching staff highlighted a deliberate effort to counsel both athletes and parents to focus on the process of training, discipline, and foundational skill development, rather than immediate competitive success. Coaches emphasized that medals and performance outcomes are expected to follow organically once athletes' basics are strengthened, making progress more sustainable over time.

Basis discussions with stakeholders, it was noted that a significant proportion of athletes, approximately 60- 70%, come from economically impoverished households, particularly in combat sports. Coaches shared that it is common for athletes to come from families where caregivers are engaged in informal or low-income occupations such as auto-driving, daily wage labor, or small-scale livelihoods.

One coach recounted the case of an athlete who had to work five to six days under the MGNREGA scheme simply to afford the travel and basic expenses required to attend trials at the center. Following selection and training at IIS, the athlete later qualified for recruitment into the armed forces, enabling a pathway to economic stability and long-term livelihood security. Such examples illustrate how the center also functions as a critical social mobility platform for athletes from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many athletes view sport as a means to support their families and improve household conditions, reinforcing their motivation and commitment to training.

Case Study

"I faced a lot of resistance as my parents did not want me to pursue boxing. My elder sibling had tried and but could not make it in sports. Fearing another disappointment, everyone suggested me to not follow that path. My father is a vegetable vendor and our family struggles financially.

Somehow, I kept going and competed at state-level before joining the center. The support here at the center has really strengthened me as a player. I now play at national level and even got to participate in an international training camp.

Seeing this change, parents are now accepting my path, and I am training every day to become a professional athlete."

- 15-year-old Boy, Boxing, Trained in 2024-2025

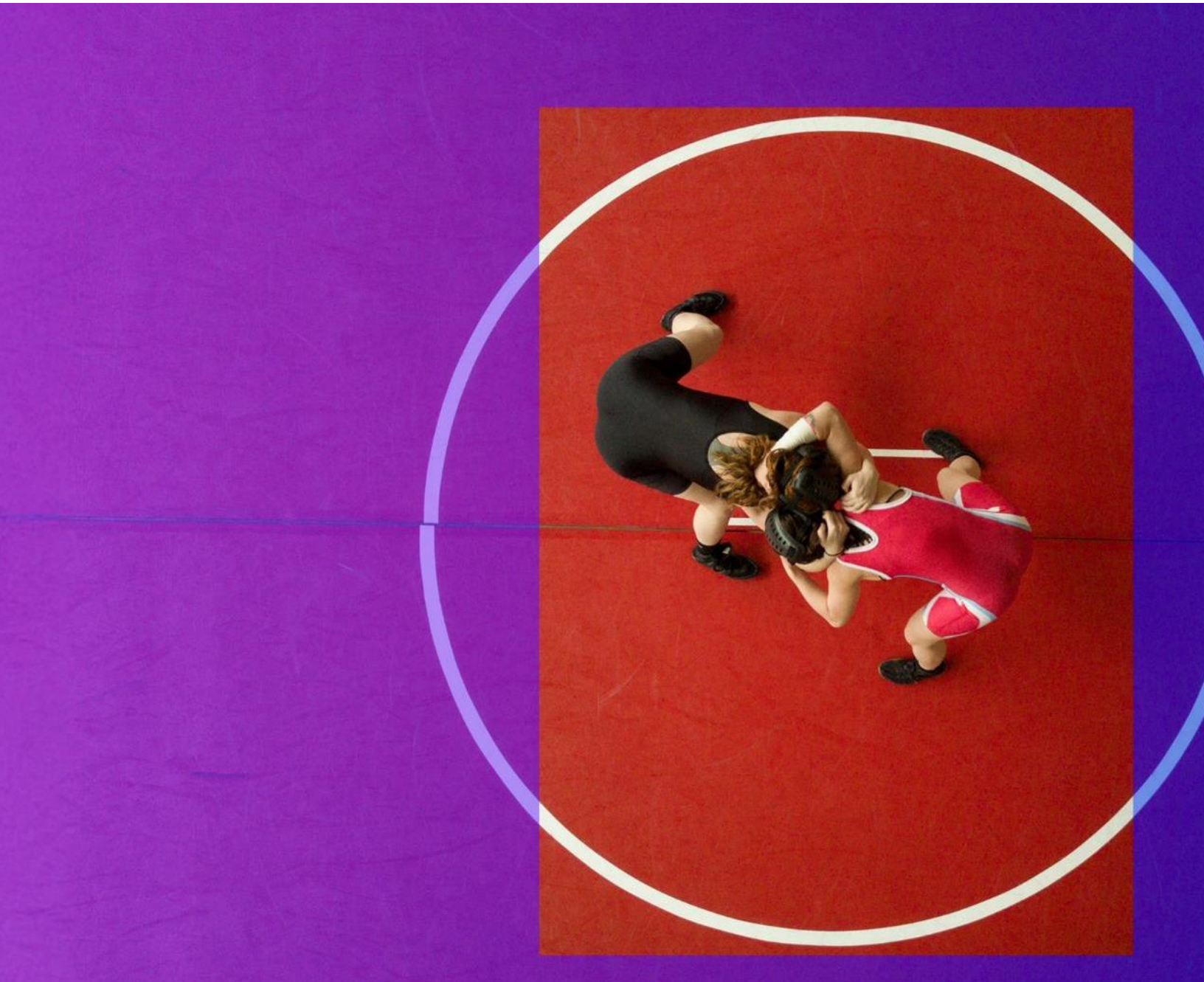
Sustainability

A measure of the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

Around 74% of respondents expressed a clear intention to pursue a professional career in sport, indicating sustained motivation and long-term engagement beyond the duration of programme support. While athletes are currently dependent on the center for infrastructure, coaching, and institutional support, the core benefits of the intervention extend beyond physical access to facilities. The programme has strengthened technical mastery, discipline, and psychological resilience, which are transferable and durable skills likely to remain with athletes throughout their professional journeys.

Importantly, these capabilities are not limited to competitive careers alone. The competencies developed, such as performance self-management, resilience under pressure, and evidence-based training practices, also support future transitions into roles such as coaching, mentoring, or support staff, enhancing the long-term value of the intervention within the sporting ecosystem. Overall, the intervention is likely to generate lasting benefits at the individual level, with skills and aspirations that extend well beyond programme completion, supporting sustained athletic development and post-competitive career pathways.

CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

The impact assessment finds that Jindal Stainless Limited's CSR support to the HAU Giri Centre, implemented in partnership with the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), has made a substantial contribution to strengthening athlete development pathways for rural and underserved youth. The programme has successfully addressed critical gaps in access to structured coaching, sports science, physiotherapy, and competitive exposure that typically constrain grassroots athletes in non-metro regions.

Evidence from athlete self-reports and stakeholder consultations indicates significant improvements in technical skills, sport-specific physical conditioning, confidence, and psychological resilience across athletics, boxing, and wrestling. Athletes demonstrated clear progression in competitive levels, enhanced ability to perform under pressure, and greater awareness of training load management, recovery, and injury prevention.

These outcomes highlight the effectiveness of the integrated high-performance development model adopted at the center. The program also plays an important equity-enhancing role, enabling participation of athletes from economically disadvantaged households, many of whom view sport as a pathway to long-term livelihood security and social mobility. The center's emphasis on foundational skill-building, discipline, and long-term development supports a more sustainable athlete pipeline.

Impact Assessment Report of Urban Green Projects at Hisar by Jindal Stainless Foundation

April, 2026

Harmony Inc.

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

S. No.	***Abbreviation***	***Full Form***
1.	CRD	Cold Rolling Division
2.	CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
3.	ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
4.	EVP	Employee Volunteering Programme
5.	FGD	Focus Group Discussion
6.	HRD	Hot Rolling Division
7.	JSF	Jindal Stainless Foundation
8.	JSL	Jindal Stainless Limited
9.	MCA	Ministry of Corporate Affairs
10.	MCH	Municipal Corporation of Hisar
11.	SSI	Semi Structured Interview

Executive Summary

Harmony Inc.

Executive Summary

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative implemented by Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF) represents a significant effort towards enhancing environmental sustainability and improving public spaces across Hisar. Implemented across multiple sites, including O.P. Jindal Marg, Triangular Park, Industry Park, Railway Line Green Belt, and the Underbridge Area, the initiative seeks to strengthen urban green cover, improve environmental conditions, promote biodiversity, and create more accessible and aesthetically appealing public environments for communities.

The impact assessment was undertaken to understand the outcomes and experiences associated with these interventions from the perspective of multiple stakeholders. The study adopted a qualitative approach combining site observations, stakeholder consultations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. Both external and internal stakeholders were consulted. These include: Community members, truck drivers, merchants, floating users, maintenance vendors, horticulture personnel, representatives from the Municipal Corporation of Hisar (MCH), CSR and ESG teams, and senior leadership from Jindal Stainless Limited.

The assessment findings indicate that the interventions have generated visible improvements in the environmental quality and appearance of the intervention sites. Across locations, stakeholders consistently acknowledged the role of enhanced green cover in improving the visual landscape, reducing dust exposure, and creating cleaner and more pleasant surroundings. Maintained plantations, landscaped stretches, and public green spaces were widely perceived as contributing positively to the urban environment.

Community members highlighted the importance of these spaces in supporting daily recreational activities, social interaction, and relaxation. Parks and green spaces have increasingly become part of the everyday routines of local residents, particularly senior citizens and regular users. At Industry Park, truck drivers, workshop-linked merchants, and other floating users reported utilising the space during breaks and waiting periods, emphasising the value of shaded and maintained environments within an otherwise industrial setting.

Institutional stakeholders viewed the initiative through a broader sustainability lens. Discussions with the ESG team highlighted the importance of biodiversity conservation, green cover enhancement, environmental stewardship, and climate-sensitive planning as integral components of responsible business conduct. The initiative was seen as contributing directly to JSL's environmental commitments while supporting wider sustainability objectives. Similarly, interactions with senior leadership reinforced the view that environmental responsibility begins within the organisation's immediate ecosystem and extends to the communities and spaces surrounding its operations.

The assessment also underscored the significant effort invested in maintaining these interventions. Vendors and horticulture personnel highlighted the extensive maintenance systems required to sustain green infrastructure, including watering, pruning, cleaning, plantation management, and infrastructure upkeep. While maintenance quality was generally found to be strong, stakeholders recognised the need for resource-efficient approaches that can support long-term sustainability.

Several opportunities for strengthening future interventions emerged through stakeholder consultations. These included enhancing accessibility and inclusivity within public spaces, increasing community ownership, engaging youth and local residents more actively, strengthening monitoring mechanisms, promoting employee volunteering initiatives, and exploring resource-efficient maintenance practices. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of continued collaboration among community members, municipal authorities, maintenance teams, and institutional stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of outcomes.

Overall, the assessment finds that the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative has contributed positively to environmental improvement, public space enhancement, and stakeholder well-being across multiple locations in Hisar. Beyond the creation of physical green assets, the initiative has strengthened environmental awareness, supported community use of public spaces, and reinforced JSL's commitment to sustainability and responsible environmental stewardship. The findings suggest that future impact can be further enhanced through deeper community engagement, strengthened ownership mechanisms, and continued focus on long-term ecological sustainability.

Background
&
Strategic Context

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1. Background and Strategic Context

1.1 Need for Green Infrastructure

Urbanisation and industrial growth have transformed Indian cities, generating new economic opportunities while simultaneously intensifying environmental pressures. Rising temperatures, declining green cover, deteriorating air quality, and shrinking public spaces have increasingly affected the quality of urban life, particularly in rapidly growing industrial centres. In this context, urban green infrastructure has emerged as a critical component of sustainable urban development, contributing not only to ecological restoration but also to public health, community well-being, and climate resilience.

Hisar represents this intersection of industrial growth and environmental vulnerability. Characterised by semi-arid climatic conditions, high summer temperatures, dust exposure, and limited natural green cover, the city faces growing challenges related to environmental quality and access to public green spaces. Recognising these concerns, Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF), the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL), has undertaken a series of urban greening interventions aimed at strengthening ecological sustainability while creating accessible and usable public spaces for communities.

The Foundation's engagement in community development and environmental stewardship predates the formalisation of Corporate Social Responsibility in India. Over the years, its efforts have spanned education, healthcare, livelihoods, skill development, and environmental sustainability, guided by a long-term commitment to the well-being of communities in and around its operational areas. The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative in Hisar represents a continuation of this commitment, focusing on the creation, restoration, and maintenance of green spaces that contribute to both environmental and social outcomes.

The initiative encompasses a diverse set of sites across the city, including O.P. Jindal Marg, Triangular Park, Industry Park, the Railway Line Green Belt, and the Underbridge Area. While each site serves a distinct function within the urban landscape, together they form a connected network of interventions designed to enhance green cover, improve environmental conditions, restore underutilised spaces, and create safer and more accessible public environments. Activities

undertaken across these sites include plantation and landscaping, park renovation, grass development, regular maintenance, watering, pruning, cleaning, and ecological enhancement measures.

Beyond the physical transformation of spaces, the initiative seeks to generate broader environmental, community, and institutional outcomes. These include improving environmental comfort, reducing dust exposure, enhancing biodiversity, strengthening the aesthetic quality of public spaces, encouraging community use of green infrastructure, and demonstrating responsible environmental stewardship within an industrially influenced landscape. The interventions also reflect JSL's broader sustainability vision, where the expansion of green cover, biodiversity conservation, and long-term ecological resilience are viewed as integral components of responsible business conduct.

1.2 Scope of the Assessment

This narrative report documents the journey of these interventions and the changes they have enabled across different stakeholder groups. It captures the experiences and perspectives of community members, workers, merchants, government representatives, horticulture personnel, vendors, and JSL stakeholders who interact with these spaces in different ways. Through these narratives, the report seeks to understand not only what has been created, but also how these interventions are experienced, maintained, valued, and sustained over time.

By documenting stakeholder experiences, observed outcomes, and emerging lessons, the report aims to provide a holistic account of the initiative's contribution to environmental improvement, community well-being, and institutional collaboration. It also offers insights that can inform the future strengthening, sustainability, and scalability of urban greening initiatives in industrial and urban contexts.

Jindal Stainless Ltd
&
its CSR Initiatives

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2. Jindal Stainless Limited and its CSR Initiatives

2.1 CSR in the Indian Context

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India was institutionalised through Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, which came into effect in April 2014 and mandates eligible companies to allocate a prescribed portion of their profits towards social and environmental development initiatives. Through Schedule VII, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) outlines key thematic areas for CSR engagement, including education, healthcare, livelihood enhancement, skill development, community welfare, environmental sustainability, ecological conservation, and protection of natural resources. The legislation marked a shift from voluntary philanthropy towards a more strategic, accountable, and development-oriented approach that aligns corporate resources with national social and environmental priorities.

However it is important to note that, CSR philosophy of Jindal Stainless Limited (JSL) predates the formalisation of CSR under Indian legislation. Long before CSR became a statutory requirement, the organisation had been undertaking initiatives focused on education, healthcare, livelihoods, skill development, environmental sustainability, and community welfare. This legacy reflects a broader understanding that industrial growth and community development are interconnected, and that businesses have an important role to play in contributing to the social and environmental well-being of the regions in which they operate.

2.2 Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF)

Today, these efforts are channelled through the Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF), which serves as the principal vehicle for planning and implementing the company's social development initiatives. The Foundation's work spans multiple thematic areas and seeks to address locally relevant needs through structured, sustained, and impact-oriented interventions. Rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach, the Foundation emphasises context-specific programming that responds to the unique challenges and opportunities present within local communities.

Environmental sustainability has emerged as a particularly significant area of focus within this broader development agenda. Growing awareness of climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, and urban ecological stress has reinforced the need for

interventions that contribute to environmental resilience while simultaneously improving community well-being. Within this context, urban greening initiatives have assumed increasing importance as a means of addressing environmental concerns in a manner that also generates visible and tangible benefits for residents.

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative in Hisar is rooted in this understanding. The initiative seeks to create and maintain green spaces that serve multiple functions within the urban environment. These spaces contribute to ecological enhancement through increased vegetation and biodiversity, while also improving environmental comfort, aesthetic quality, and public usability. By transforming underutilised and degraded spaces into maintained green areas, the initiative aims to generate outcomes that extend beyond environmental improvement alone.

2.3 Alignment with ESG Commitments

The Foundation's environmental interventions are also closely aligned with JSL's broader sustainability and ESG commitments. Discussions with organisational stakeholders highlighted that biodiversity conservation, expansion of green cover, and environmental stewardship are viewed as integral components of responsible business conduct. The preservation and enhancement of ecological assets in and around operational areas are considered important not only from an environmental perspective but also in relation to long-term sustainability and stakeholder well-being.

As articulated by the ESG team during the assessment, preserving biodiversity and enhancing green cover in and around operational areas forms a key component of the organisation's sustainability strategy. A healthy and diverse ecological environment contributes to maintaining environmental balance, protecting natural resources, and strengthening resilience against emerging environmental challenges. Green spaces are therefore viewed not merely as landscaped assets but as important ecological interventions that support broader sustainability objectives.

The organisation's environmental commitment is also informed by recognition of the challenges associated with industrial operations and urbanisation. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of maintaining strong environmental management systems to address concerns related to air quality, emissions, resource use, and ecological sustainability. Within this broader framework,

urban greening initiatives represent one component of a larger effort to improve environmental conditions and strengthen positive environmental outcomes in areas surrounding industrial operations.

2.4 JSL's Commitment to Environmental Stewardship and Leadership Support

A recurring theme emerging from stakeholder interactions was the belief that environmental responsibility must begin within the immediate ecosystem in which an organisation operates. This perspective was particularly evident during discussions with senior leadership at Hisar plant, who described the philosophy guiding many of the greening interventions as one where environmental stewardship starts with improving the spaces that communities and employees interact with on a daily basis. The emphasis, therefore, is **not only on compliance or environmental reporting, but also on creating tangible environmental improvements that are experienced by people living and working in the surrounding area.**

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative reflects this philosophy in practice. Through interventions across parks, roadside corridors, underbridge stretches, and green belts, the initiative contributes to cleaner surroundings, enhanced green cover, improved public spaces, and greater environmental awareness. It also demonstrates the importance of collaboration among municipal authorities, horticulture experts, vendors, employees, and community members in sustaining these outcomes. The present assessment, therefore, examines not only the physical interventions undertaken by Jindal Stainless Foundation but also the stakeholder experiences and institutional processes that underpin their impact, highlighting how environmental initiatives can support sustainable urban development while strengthening connections between industry, communities, and the natural environment.

Goals
&
Objectives

3. Goals and Objectives

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative was conceived in response to the environmental and social challenges associated with urbanisation and industrial growth in Hisar. Recognising that green spaces serve not only aesthetic purposes but also function as vital environmental and social infrastructure, the initiative sought to enhance ecological quality, strengthen environmental resilience, and improve community well-being.

The project identified that several urban spaces lacked adequate green cover or remained underutilised due to poor maintenance, limited accessibility, and inadequate infrastructure. As a result, these areas were unable to realise their potential environmental and social benefits. The initiative therefore focused on revitalising and strengthening such spaces through plantation, landscaping, infrastructure improvements, and sustained maintenance measures, transforming them into functional and community-friendly green assets.

At its core, the project sought **to expand and strengthen urban green cover across strategically identified locations within Hisar.**

The objective however extended beyond increasing the number of trees or landscaped areas; it focused on creating environmentally sustainable spaces capable of contributing to improved ecological conditions over time. This included enhancing biodiversity, improving environmental quality, reducing dust exposure, and strengthening the overall ecological character of the urban landscape.

A **second objective of the initiative was to improve the usability and accessibility of public spaces**. Green spaces achieve meaningful impact only when they become integrated into everyday life and are actively used by communities. The project, therefore, aimed to enhance existing public spaces by strengthening their environmental quality, functionality, and overall user experience, enabling them to better support recreation, relaxation, social interaction, and routine community engagement. Through improvements in landscaping, maintenance, and physical infrastructure, the initiative sought to create spaces that were cleaner, safer, and more welcoming for diverse user groups.

The project also sought to **contribute to environmental comfort within an industrially influenced setting**. Hisar experiences high temperatures, dust exposure, and climatic conditions that can affect everyday quality of life. By increasing vegetation density and strengthening green infrastructure, the initiative aimed to improve environmental conditions experienced by residents, workers, commuters, and visitors across different parts of the city.

Another important objective was to **demonstrate responsible environmental stewardship beyond the operational boundaries of the plant**. Through investments in public green infrastructure, Jindal Stainless Foundation sought to contribute to the broader environmental well-being of the city while reinforcing its commitment to sustainable development. The interventions were designed to reflect the organisation's larger environmental and ESG commitments, particularly in relation to biodiversity conservation, enhancement of green cover, and long-term ecological sustainability.

The project additionally **recognised the importance of partnerships and collaborative action in achieving sustainable outcomes**. Urban environmental interventions rarely succeed through the efforts of a single institution alone. Accordingly, the initiative aimed to foster collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including municipal authorities, horticulture teams, maintenance vendors, community members, and organisational stakeholders. Such partnerships were viewed as essential for ensuring effective implementation, maintenance, continuity, and long-term sustainability.

From an assessment perspective, the study was guided by a complementary set of objectives intended to understand the effectiveness and outcomes of these interventions. These objectives included examining the relevance of the initiative in addressing local environmental and community needs, understanding stakeholder experiences and perceptions, assessing environmental and social outcomes, evaluating maintenance and sustainability systems, and identifying opportunities for strengthening future interventions.

The assessment also sought to document stories of change emerging from different stakeholder groups. While physical improvements remain important indicators of progress, the true value of urban green infrastructure is often reflected in how people experience these spaces, how they

influence daily routines, and how they contribute to broader environmental and social well-being. Capturing these experiences was therefore a central objective of the study.

Ultimately, the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative represents an effort to demonstrate how environmental improvement, community well-being, and institutional responsibility can intersect within a shared urban landscape. The goals of the project extend beyond the creation of green spaces themselves and encompass the larger vision of building healthier, more sustainable, and more liveable urban environments for present and future generations.

Methodology

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4. Methodology

4.1 Assessment Approach

A meaningful assessment of urban green infrastructure extends beyond documenting physical improvements. While visible changes such as plantation, landscaping, and infrastructure development are important, they represent only one dimension of impact. Equally important are the experiences of individuals who use these spaces, the perceptions of stakeholders involved in their implementation and maintenance, and the institutional systems that sustain them over time. Recognising this, the assessment adopted a qualitative and stakeholder-centred approach designed to capture both observable outcomes and lived experiences associated with the intervention.

The study was conducted as an independent assessment of the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative implemented by Jindal Stainless Foundation across multiple locations in Hisar. The objective was not merely to evaluate completed activities but to understand how different stakeholders perceived the interventions, how the spaces were being used, and what factors contributed to their effectiveness and sustainability.

The assessment, therefore, focused on Environmental, Community, and Institutional dimensions of impact.

4.2 Research Design

The research tools were defined and developed post stakeholder mapping exercise with the implementation team.

Given the exploratory nature of the assessment, a qualitative research design was considered most appropriate. Qualitative methods enabled the study team to move beyond quantitative indicators and understand stakeholder perceptions, behavioural changes, usage patterns, operational realities, and contextual factors influencing project outcomes. The approach prioritised depth of understanding and contextual insight while retaining sufficient flexibility to capture emerging themes during fieldwork. **Field visits formed a central component of the assessment process.**

Site observations were undertaken across all intervention locations to understand their physical condition, environmental characteristics, maintenance status, accessibility, and patterns of usage. **Observation guidelines/protocol** prepared by the assessment team allowed directly to examine the condition of plantations, cleanliness levels, infrastructure availability, maintenance activities, and interactions between users and the spaces. This helped validate and contextualise information shared during stakeholder consultations.

The study covered **five intervention sites** that collectively represent the diversity of the initiative. These included the Underbridge Area, Triangular Park, Industry Park, O.P. Jindal Marg, and the Railway Line Green Belt. Each site serves a distinct function within the broader urban landscape and interacts with different stakeholder groups. Together, these sites provided an opportunity to examine how urban greening interventions operate across varying spatial, social, and institutional contexts.

The assessment also incorporated **extensive stakeholder consultations using a combination of Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**. These tools enabled the collection of diverse perspectives while allowing sufficient flexibility for stakeholders to discuss issues most relevant to their experiences.

Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs) were conducted with institutional stakeholders who play important roles in planning, implementing, maintaining, or overseeing the intervention. These included representatives from the CSR team, the ESG team, the Municipal Corporation of Hisar (MCH), horticultural personnel, maintenance vendors, and organisational leadership. The semi-structured format ensured consistency across discussions while allowing stakeholders to elaborate on site-specific experiences, operational realities, challenges, and future priorities.

Interactions with CSR representatives focused on understanding the rationale behind the intervention, implementation processes, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and sustainability considerations. Discussions explored how environmental stewardship is integrated into broader CSR programming and how the initiative aligns with organisational priorities.

Interviews with **horticulture personnel** provided technical insights into plantation planning, species selection, maintenance systems, ecological considerations, and operational challenges.

These discussions were particularly valuable in understanding the environmental logic underlying the interventions and the processes required to sustain green spaces over time.

Engagements with the ESG team offered a broader perspective on sustainability. Discussions focused on biodiversity conservation, environmental stewardship, green cover enhancement, ecological resilience, and the role of urban greening within JSL's wider ESG commitments. These interactions helped situate the initiative within the organisation's long-term sustainability framework.

The assessment also included consultations with **senior organisational leadership**. These interactions provided insights into the strategic vision guiding environmental interventions and broader perspectives on sustainability, community engagement, and environmental responsibility within industrial settings.

In addition to institutional stakeholders, the assessment prioritised engagement with stakeholders who directly experience the interventions in their daily lives. Community perspectives were captured through **Focus Group Discussions and informal interactions** across multiple sites. These discussions enabled participants to collectively reflect on site usage, environmental changes, perceived benefits, challenges, and suggestions for improvement.

At Triangular Park, community members representing different age groups shared their experiences of using the space for walking, recreation, social interaction, and relaxation. Discussions highlighted how the park has become integrated into everyday community life and provided valuable insights into patterns of usage and community expectations.

At Industry Park, interactions were conducted with truck drivers, workshop-linked merchants, and other floating users associated with the surrounding industrial ecosystem. These stakeholders provided perspectives on how the space functions within their daily routines and how environmental improvements have influenced usability and comfort.

The assessment also included discussions with local merchants and vendors operating near intervention sites. These stakeholders offered unique perspectives on environmental improvements, public movement patterns, safety perceptions, and the relationship between green infrastructure and everyday commercial activity.

Maintenance vendors constituted another important stakeholder group within the assessment. Their direct involvement in day-to-day upkeep provided practical insights into operational challenges, maintenance requirements, infrastructure concerns, and site-level realities that may not always be visible through observation alone.

The study further recognised the importance of stakeholder diversity in understanding impact. Different stakeholder groups interact with the intervention in different ways. Community members experience the spaces as users, vendors experience them as workplaces, horticulture teams engage with them as ecological assets, CSR teams view them through a development lens, while organisational leadership considers them within broader sustainability and stewardship frameworks. Capturing these multiple perspectives was essential for developing a holistic understanding of the initiative.

Data collected through interviews, discussions, and observations were subsequently analysed using a thematic approach. Recurring patterns, common experiences, shared concerns, and stakeholder-specific perspectives were identified and organised around key themes related to environmental outcomes, community experiences, institutional processes, maintenance systems, sustainability, and future opportunities. Observational findings were triangulated with stakeholder narratives to strengthen the credibility of conclusions.

The methodology was therefore designed not simply to assess physical outputs but to understand the broader story of the intervention. By combining site observations with stakeholder experiences and institutional perspectives, the assessment sought to capture how urban green infrastructure is created, experienced, maintained, and sustained within a complex urban-industrial environment. This approach forms the foundation for the stakeholder narratives and findings presented in the subsequent sections of the report.

Stakeholder Feedback

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5. Stakeholders - Key Findings and Site Stories

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative has created impacts that extend beyond the visible presence of plantations, landscaped areas, and maintained public spaces. Across stakeholder groups, the intervention was consistently associated with improvements in environmental quality, public usability, visual appearance, and overall perceptions of the surrounding environment. At the same time, stakeholders highlighted important considerations relating to maintenance, sustainability, ownership, and long-term continuity.

The assessment revealed that the significance of the intervention varies according to the position occupied by different stakeholders. While community members often viewed the spaces through the lens of everyday usage and quality of life, institutional stakeholders focused on sustainability, maintenance systems, environmental outcomes, and long-term stewardship. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's contribution and future potential.

5.1 Community Perspective: Experiencing Environmental Change in Everyday Life

Across sites, community members consistently described visible improvements in the condition and usability of public spaces. While many participants did not necessarily discuss environmental outcomes using technical language, their experiences reflected changes that directly relate to environmental quality and public well-being.

Several stakeholders reflected that these public spaces have undergone a visible transformation, evolving from areas with relatively modest green cover and limited recreational use into more vibrant and actively utilised community spaces. Areas that now serve as parks, resting spaces, or green corridors were often described as barren, unattractive, or associated with limited public activity. The transformation of these spaces, therefore, represented not merely a physical improvement but a visible change in the everyday environment.

Users of Triangular Park particularly emphasised the role of the space in their daily routines. Elderly residents described using the park regularly for walking and social interaction, while younger users frequently accessed the space for informal recreational activities. The park

appeared to function as an important neighbourhood asset that supports routine interaction among residents.

Several participants highlighted that maintained greenery contributes to a cleaner and more comfortable environment. Community members frequently referred to reduced dust, improved visual quality, and a more pleasant atmosphere. Although these observations were subjective, they were repeatedly mentioned across interactions and reflected a shared perception of environmental improvement.

At the same time, users identified opportunities to strengthen the functionality of these spaces. Requests for additional seating, drinking water facilities, recreational infrastructure, and enhanced accessibility emerged repeatedly during discussions. These suggestions indicate that while the spaces are valued by users, there remains potential to further improve their inclusivity and utility.

5.2 Floating Users and Industrial Community Perspective

The Industry Park presented a distinct user profile compared to Triangular Park. Here, the primary users were not residents but truck drivers, workshop-linked merchants, transport workers, and floating users associated with the surrounding industrial ecosystem.

For these stakeholders, the significance of the intervention was closely linked to comfort and functionality. Users commonly accessed the space during lunch breaks, waiting periods, or short intervals between work activities. The presence of greenery and shaded areas was viewed as particularly valuable in reducing exposure to heat and providing opportunities for rest within an otherwise industrial environment.

The owner of Ganesh Roadlines Pvt Ltd. described significant improvements in the condition and perception of the area. Discussions suggested that the space had previously been underutilised and was associated with undesirable activities. According to participants, regular maintenance and sustained upkeep contributed to increased movement, improved safety perceptions, and greater public usage.

Truck drivers and workshop-linked users similarly highlighted the practical value of the intervention. While their engagement with the space was temporary and movement-oriented, the maintained environment contributed to a more comfortable experience during breaks and waiting periods. These perspectives demonstrate that even limited-duration interactions with green spaces can generate meaningful benefits for users.

Nevertheless, stakeholders also identified concerns related to maintenance and infrastructure. During interactions, users pointed to a non-functional light and highlighted the importance of continued upkeep to maintain safety and usability. Such observations underline the need for responsive maintenance systems capable of addressing operational issues promptly.

5.3 Local Business' Perspective

Interactions with merchants and vendors revealed another dimension of impact. For business owners operating near intervention sites, environmental improvements were often evaluated in relation to everyday commercial activity.

Merchants located near the Underbridge Area acknowledged improvements in environmental conditions and cleanliness. Several stakeholders referred to reduced dust levels and a more organised appearance of the surrounding area. These changes were generally perceived positively and were associated with improved working conditions.

A local sugarcane vendor, who regularly interacts with employees from both HRD and CRD, noted that greenery and shaded spaces contribute to greater comfort during long working hours, particularly during periods of extreme heat. Such observations illustrate how environmental interventions can influence the daily experiences of individuals who spend extended periods outdoors.

At the same time, certain merchants expressed visibility concerns. Some stakeholders perceived that plantation patterns in specific stretches could affect the visibility of nearby establishments. While such concerns were not widespread, they point towards the importance of balancing environmental objectives with local commercial realities during future planning.

5.4 Vendor Perspective: Sustaining the Intervention on Ground

Maintenance vendors occupy a unique position within the intervention ecosystem. Unlike many stakeholders who experience the outcomes of the intervention, vendors are directly involved in ensuring that these outcomes are sustained.

Interactions with maintenance personnel highlighted the operational realities associated with maintaining large-scale urban greening interventions. Daily responsibilities include watering, pruning, cleaning, lighting maintenance, and general upkeep of plantation areas and associated infrastructure.

Discussions suggested that maintenance systems operate through clearly defined processes and timelines. Vendors play a critical role in ensuring continuity, particularly in sites where public perceptions are closely linked to visible cleanliness and upkeep.

The assessment also highlighted the substantial effort required to maintain these spaces horticover time. Plantation survival, infrastructure maintenance, and cleanliness standards all require continuous attention. The experiences of vendors, therefore, reinforce the importance of long-term maintenance planning as a central component of urban greening initiatives.

5.5 Horticulture Perspective: Environmental Planning and Ecological Sustainability

Interactions with horticulture personnel provided insight into the technical considerations underpinning the intervention.

Stakeholders emphasised that plantation planning extends beyond aesthetic considerations and incorporates factors such as climatic suitability, survivability, dust tolerance, water requirements, and long-term maintenance feasibility. Species selection was therefore informed by local environmental conditions and operational realities.

Horticulture stakeholders consistently highlighted the importance of environmental resilience. Plantation strategies sought to balance ecological outcomes with practical considerations related to maintenance and survival. Discussions revealed a strong emphasis on sustaining green cover over the long term rather than pursuing short-term plantation targets alone.

Maintenance personnel also described the substantial resources required to sustain interventions, particularly along larger stretches such as O.P. Jindal Marg. Watering operations, pruning activities, and routine upkeep require continuous investment of labour, equipment, and water resources. These realities underscore the importance of developing increasingly resource-efficient maintenance systems in the future.

5.6 Institutional Perspective: Sustainability Beyond Plantation

Perhaps the most significant finding emerging from institutional stakeholders was the recognition that the long-term success of urban greening depends on systems rather than plantations alone.

CSR representatives consistently highlighted the challenge of balancing expansion with sustainability. While opportunities exist to create additional green spaces, stakeholders acknowledged that maintaining existing sites requires significant resources and long-term commitment.

Discussions repeatedly emphasised the importance of ownership, continuity, and stakeholder participation. Institutional stakeholders recognised that environmental interventions cannot rely indefinitely on a single organisation and that stronger partnerships and shared stewardship models may be required over time.

Senior leadership articulated a broader vision of environmental responsibility, emphasising that environmental stewardship begins within one's immediate ecosystem. This perspective positioned urban greening not simply as a CSR activity but as a reflection of a larger commitment towards sustainable development and responsible citizenship.

Similarly, interactions with the ESG team situated the intervention within JSL's broader sustainability framework. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of biodiversity conservation, green cover enhancement, ecological resilience, emission reduction, and environmental responsibility. Green infrastructure was viewed as an important mechanism through which these commitments are translated into visible and tangible outcomes.

Collectively, stakeholder experiences suggest that the initiative has generated value across environmental, community, and institutional dimensions. The findings indicate that the interventions have contributed to environmental improvement, enhanced public usability, strengthened stakeholder engagement, and reinforced organisational commitments towards sustainability. At the same time, they highlight important opportunities for strengthening ownership, inclusivity, maintenance sustainability, and community participation to ensure that these outcomes continue to endure in the future.

5.7 Municipal Corporation of Hisar (MCH): Perspective on Urban Green Infrastructure, Public Space Management and Collaborative Governance

Interactions with representatives of the Municipal Corporation of Hisar (MCH) provided important insights into how the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative is perceived from the standpoint of city administration, public infrastructure management, and long-term urban development. As the institution responsible for managing a significant proportion of the city's public spaces, parks, and civic infrastructure, MCH occupies a critical position in understanding both the opportunities and challenges associated with sustaining urban green assets at scale.

Stakeholders highlighted that urban greening has become an increasingly important component of city-level planning and environmental management. With rapid urban expansion, increasing pressure on public infrastructure, and growing concerns regarding environmental degradation, green spaces are no longer viewed merely as aesthetic additions but as essential elements of a functional and liveable urban environment. Parks, green belts, roadside plantations, and landscaped public spaces contribute to improving the visual character of the city while simultaneously generating environmental and social benefits for residents.

During discussions, MCH representatives noted that Hisar currently has approximately 262 public parks under municipal jurisdiction. Managing and maintaining such a large network of public spaces presents considerable operational and financial challenges. Maintenance quality often varies across locations depending on resource availability, staffing, infrastructure requirements, and site-specific conditions. In this context, stakeholders acknowledged that partnerships with external institutions can play an important role in strengthening the quality and sustainability of urban environmental infrastructure.

Representatives specifically highlighted that approximately 12–15 parks and green spaces within the city have received support through JSL's interventions. While this represents only a fraction of the overall public green infrastructure managed by the municipality, stakeholders observed that these sites demonstrate visibly stronger maintenance outcomes and environmental quality compared to many other public spaces. The intervention was therefore viewed as making a meaningful contribution within the broader urban landscape.

A recurring theme emerging from discussions was the distinction between plantation and maintenance. Stakeholders emphasised that plantation activities are relatively common across government programmes, public campaigns, and environmental initiatives. However, long-term survival and sustainability often remain significant challenges. In many cases, plantations may be undertaken successfully, but inadequate follow-up maintenance limits their long-term effectiveness and environmental value.

Against this backdrop, MCH representatives viewed the JSL-supported interventions as particularly significant because they extend beyond plantation and focus on sustained maintenance and upkeep. Stakeholders repeatedly noted that the success of the intervention lies not only in the creation of green assets but in the systems established to maintain them over time. Regular watering, pruning, cleaning, landscaping, monitoring, and horticultural management were recognised as essential contributors to the visible improvements observed across intervention sites.

The quality of maintenance emerged as one of the most frequently cited strengths of the initiative. Representatives pointed to several green belts and landscaped stretches that have demonstrated consistent upkeep over an extended period. The emphasis on maintenance was perceived as addressing one of the most common gaps in urban greening initiatives, namely the absence of sustained post-plantation support. In this regard, the intervention was viewed not simply as a greening exercise but as a model of long-term environmental asset management.

Stakeholders also discussed the environmental value generated through these interventions. While city-level environmental indicators are influenced by numerous factors, representatives observed that the increase in green cover across intervention sites contributes positively to environmental conditions at the local level. Green belts and plantation corridors were perceived

as helping improve ambient environmental quality, particularly along major roadways and transportation corridors.

Another important dimension emerging from discussions was the social value associated with these interventions. Stakeholders consistently emphasised that the benefits of public green spaces extend beyond environmental outcomes and contribute significantly to community well-being. Green spaces create opportunities for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction while improving the quality of everyday urban experiences.

Representatives noted that the intervention has been particularly beneficial for nearby populations, including lower-income and working-class communities that may have limited access to quality recreational infrastructure. Public parks and maintained green spaces provide accessible environments that can be used without financial barriers, thereby increasing the inclusiveness of urban amenities.

They also observed that increased public usage has been one of the most visible outcomes across the intervention sites. According to them, improvements in landscaping, regular maintenance, and environmental quality have made these public spaces more functional and inviting, resulting in greater community use for recreation, walking, and everyday activities. They noted that the enhanced utilisation reflects the value of sustained maintenance in improving the usability and relevance of urban public spaces.

MCH representatives also highlighted the relationship between environmental improvement and public safety. According to stakeholders, increased usage and regular maintenance can have important secondary benefits for public spaces. Areas that were previously vulnerable to encroachment and anti-social activities showed noticeable improvement following greening interventions and increased public utilisation.

The intervention was therefore seen as contributing not only to en in vironmental enhancement but also to the activation of public spaces. The transformation of underused areas into cleaner, greener, and more frequented environments was viewed as an important outcome from both a governance and community development perspective. Stakeholders noted that well-maintained spaces tend to foster greater public ownership and encourage more positive patterns of usage.

From an institutional standpoint, the initiative was widely regarded as a strong example of collaborative governance and public-private partnership. Representatives acknowledged that municipal institutions frequently face competing priorities and resource constraints while managing large networks of public infrastructure. In such circumstances, partnerships with responsible corporate actors can help strengthen environmental outcomes and improve the quality of public assets.

The intervention was viewed as demonstrating how corporate participation can complement municipal capacities without replacing public responsibilities. Stakeholders emphasised that the success of such models lies in alignment between institutional objectives, shared commitment towards public value creation, and long-term investment in maintenance systems.

Discussions further underscored the importance of shared responsibility in sustaining urban environmental assets. Green infrastructure requires continuous attention, monitoring, and adaptive management. Stakeholders highlighted that long-term success depends not only on initial investments but also on the ability of institutions, communities, and implementation partners to work collaboratively over time.

Overall, representatives from the Municipal Corporation of Hisar regarded the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative as a high-impact intervention that delivers value across multiple dimensions. The initiative was seen as contributing to environmental improvement, public space enhancement, community well-being, and institutional collaboration. More importantly, it reinforced an important lesson frequently highlighted during discussions: the success of urban greening initiatives is determined not by plantation alone but by the systems of maintenance, stewardship, and collaboration that sustain environmental assets over the long term. As such, the intervention offers a practical and replicable model for strengthening urban green infrastructure through collaborative approaches that combine municipal priorities with corporate commitment and long-term environmental stewardship.

5.8 ESG Team: Sustainability Strategy and Environmental Stewardship

Interactions with the ESG team and senior sustainability officials provided important insights into how sustainability is being integrated within Jindal Stainless Limited's broader business

strategy and operational framework. Stakeholders highlighted that ESG has evolved into a dedicated strategic function within the organisation, reflecting a shift from fragmented environmental initiatives towards a more structured and integrated sustainability approach. Rather than being viewed solely through the lens of compliance, ESG is increasingly positioned as a mechanism for aligning environmental performance, operational resilience, and long-term business sustainability.

A key theme emerging from discussions was the organisation's commitment to decarbonisation and climate action. JSL has established a long-term target of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2050, supported by intermediate emission reduction goals and a structured transition pathway. FY 2021–22 serves as the baseline year for tracking progress, and stakeholders noted that the organisation has already achieved measurable reductions in Scope 1 emissions while strengthening carbon accounting and environmental monitoring systems. These efforts reflect a growing emphasis on data-driven sustainability management and performance measurement.

The ESG team highlighted that decarbonisation efforts are being pursued through multiple pathways, including the deployment of renewable energy and exploration of cleaner technologies. Initiatives such as the installation of solar energy capacity and the adoption of green hydrogen demonstrate the organisation's commitment to reducing dependence on conventional energy sources and transitioning towards lower-carbon operations. These measures form part of a broader strategy aimed at integrating sustainability considerations into core business processes.

Discussions also emphasised the importance of resource efficiency, environmental management, and circularity. The ESG function works closely with Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) teams to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements while strengthening environmental performance across operations. Focus areas include water conservation, environmental monitoring, plantation tracking, and resource optimisation. Stakeholders also highlighted the significance of stainless steel as a fully recyclable material, reinforcing the organisation's alignment with circular economy principles and sustainable resource use.

Within this broader sustainability framework, biodiversity conservation and enhancement of green cover were identified as important environmental priorities. Stakeholders emphasised that

preserving biodiversity and strengthening ecological assets in and around operational areas contribute to maintaining ecological balance, protecting natural resources, and enhancing environmental resilience. Urban greening initiatives are therefore viewed not merely as landscaping activities but as environmental interventions that support long-term sustainability objectives.

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative was cited as an example of how larger ESG commitments can be translated into visible action at the local level. By enhancing green cover, supporting biodiversity, improving environmental conditions, and creating ecological value within surrounding communities, the initiative contributes directly to the environmental pillar of JSL's ESG strategy. Overall, the ESG perspective reflects an effort to institutionalise sustainability within organisational functioning through a combination of regulatory compliance, technological transition, environmental stewardship, and long-term sustainability planning.

Alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030

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6. Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030

The CSR initiative of Jindal Stainless Foundation on funding the urban green infrastructure in Hisar aligns with various Sustainable Development Goals given by the United Nations. By strengthening environmental resilience, enhancing urban ecosystems, and improving the quality of life for local communities, the initiative supports both local development objectives and global sustainability commitments. The SDG alignment presented below highlights the key pathways through which the initiative contributes to sustainable and inclusive urban development .

SDG	***Relevance to the Initiative***	***Contribution of the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative***
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	Promotes healthier living environments and improved well-being.	Green spaces provide cleaner surroundings, opportunities for recreation, improved mental well-being, and enhanced environmental comfort for residents.
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Supports sustainable management of urban ecological resources.	Increased vegetation and green cover can improve rainwater absorption, reduce surface runoff, and contribute to healthier urban ecosystems.
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Directly aligned with creating inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable urban spaces.	The initiative transforms underutilised and degraded areas into accessible and aesthetically improved public spaces, enhancing urban liveability.
SDG 13: Climate Action	Contributes to climate resilience and adaptation efforts.	Expansion of urban green cover supports carbon sequestration, reduces urban heat effects, and strengthens resilience to environmental stresses.

SDG 15: Life on Land	Supports biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration.	Plantation activities and habitat enhancement measures contribute to biodiversity preservation and ecological balance within urban landscapes.
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Recognises the importance of collaborative implementation.	The initiative is implemented through partnerships involving municipal authorities, technical experts, vendors, employees, and community stakeholders, enabling long-term sustainability of outcomes.

Alignment with MCA CSR Guidelines
&
Government Priorities

7. Alignment with MCA CSR Guidelines and Government Priorities

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative implemented by the Jindal Stainless Foundation (JSF) aligns closely with the provisions of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 and Schedule VII, which recognise environmental sustainability, ecological balance, conservation of natural resources, and protection of flora and fauna as eligible areas for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investment. Through the development and maintenance of parks, green belts, roadside plantations, and other urban green spaces, the initiative contributes directly to these objectives while creating tangible environmental and social benefits for local communities.

The initiative reflects the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA) emphasis on creating sustainable and long-term impact through CSR interventions. Rather than focusing solely on one-time plantation activities, the programme adopts a systematic approach that includes planning, implementation, maintenance, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the sustainability of outcomes. By enhancing urban green cover and improving public spaces, the initiative contributes to environmental stewardship while strengthening community well-being and urban liveability.

The programme also embodies key CSR principles promoted by the MCA, **including community participation, local relevance, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.** Its implementation involves coordination among municipal authorities, horticulture experts, vendors, employees, and community members, ensuring that interventions respond to local needs and remain sustainable over time. Such collaborative approaches help strengthen ownership and maximise the long-term value of environmental assets created through CSR investments.

At the national level, the initiative supports **India's broader environmental and sustainability agenda.** Increasing green cover, conserving biodiversity, improving urban environmental quality, and building climate resilience are recognised priorities in national policy frameworks. Urban green infrastructure is increasingly viewed as an important mechanism for addressing challenges such as air pollution, urban heat stress, and ecological degradation. Through the creation and enhancement of green spaces, the initiative contributes

to these wider environmental goals while promoting healthier and more resilient urban ecosystems.

The initiative also demonstrates **strong alignment with the development priorities of the Government of Haryana. The state has consistently promoted afforestation, environmental conservation, urban beautification, and enhancement of public spaces through various programmes and plantation campaigns.** By expanding green cover and revitalising underutilised urban spaces, the initiative complements these efforts and contributes to the creation of cleaner, greener, and more liveable cities.

Additionally, the programme supports the objectives of key national initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT). While implemented as a CSR intervention, its outcomes contribute to broader goals related to urban improvement, environmental enhancement, public amenities, and citizen well-being. The initiative's focus on maintaining aesthetically appealing and environmentally beneficial public spaces reinforces these national priorities.

The programme is also consistent with climate resilience objectives reflected in the National Action Plan on Climate Change and related state-level environmental strategies. Urban green spaces help moderate local temperatures, improve environmental quality, support biodiversity, and strengthen ecological resilience. These functions are increasingly recognised as essential components of sustainable urban development and climate adaptation.

Overall, the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative represents a **CSR model that is strongly aligned with MCA guidelines, Haryana's environmental priorities, and national sustainability objectives.** By integrating environmental conservation, biodiversity enhancement, public space improvement, and stakeholder collaboration, the initiative demonstrates how corporate CSR investments can complement government efforts and contribute meaningfully to sustainable urban development and community well-being.

Recommendations

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8. Recommendations

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative has generated visible environmental and social benefits by improving green cover, enhancing public spaces, and creating more usable urban environments. To sustain and deepen these outcomes, the following recommendations are proposed:

8.1 Sustainability and Ecological Resilience

Future interventions may prioritise long-term ecological sustainability by promoting native and climate-resilient species that require lower maintenance inputs and contribute to biodiversity enhancement. Resource-efficient practices such as water-efficient irrigation systems and climate-sensitive plantation planning may further reduce operational burden while strengthening environmental outcomes.

8.2 Community Utilisation and Ownership

Strengthen community ownership by adopting an inclusive engagement approach that actively involves both local residents and migrant workers who regularly use these spaces. Community-led activities, environmental awareness programmes, and stewardship initiatives can foster a greater sense of belonging, encourage shared responsibility for maintenance, and strengthen social cohesion, ensuring that the parks continue to function as sustainable and well-utilised community assets.

8.3 Maintenance and Accessibility

Future efforts may focus on improving maintenance efficiency while enhancing inclusivity through accessible pathways, ramps, adequate seating, and age-friendly infrastructure to maximise the usability and public value of these spaces.

8.4 Stakeholder Engagement and Monitoring

Strengthening institutional coordination and monitoring mechanisms will be critical for sustaining long-term outcomes. Periodic stakeholder consultations, user feedback systems, and routine site assessments can support adaptive management and evidence-based decision-making. Continued collaboration among JSL, municipal authorities, horticulture teams, vendors, and communities will remain essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of interventions.

8.5 Strategic Way Forward

The assessment suggests that future interventions may benefit from adopting a **"fewer but more sustainable"** approach that prioritises maintenance quality, ecological resilience, community ownership, and multi-stakeholder collaboration over the expansion of physical assets alone. The long-term success of the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative will depend less on increasing the number of green spaces and more on ensuring their sustainability, usability, and stewardship. Strengthening these dimensions can enable the initiative to evolve into a long-term model of sustainable urban environmental management and shared community value creation.

Conclusion

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9. Conclusion

The Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative undertaken by Jindal Stainless Foundation demonstrates how environmental interventions can create value that extends well beyond physical landscaping and plantation activities. Through the development and maintenance of parks, green belts, landscaped corridors, and public spaces across Hisar, the initiative has contributed to improving environmental quality, enhancing the visual character of urban spaces, and creating environments that are increasingly accessible and beneficial to diverse stakeholder groups.

The assessment revealed that the impact of the intervention is reflected not only in visible improvements to the urban landscape but also in the experiences of those who interact with these spaces on a daily basis. Community members, workers, merchants, truck drivers, floating users, vendors, government representatives, and institutional stakeholders consistently acknowledged the positive changes brought about through the interventions. Improved greenery, cleaner surroundings, enhanced environmental comfort, and better-maintained public spaces emerged as common themes across stakeholder interactions.

At the same time, the assessment highlights that the long-term success of urban green infrastructure depends not merely on the creation of green assets but on the systems that sustain them. Effective maintenance, institutional commitment, stakeholder collaboration, community participation, and continuous monitoring play a critical role in ensuring that environmental gains are preserved and strengthened over time. The findings underscore the importance of moving beyond infrastructure creation towards fostering greater ownership, participation, and shared responsibility among stakeholders.

The initiative also reflects JSL's broader commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible business conduct. By investing in biodiversity enhancement, expansion of green cover, and the creation of environmentally sustainable public spaces, the organisation has contributed to objectives that align closely with its sustainability and ESG commitments. The interventions demonstrate how corporate engagement can complement public efforts in

addressing urban environmental challenges while generating tangible benefits for local communities.

Looking ahead, opportunities exist to further strengthen the impact and sustainability of the initiative through enhanced community engagement, greater inclusivity, resource-efficient maintenance systems, employee volunteering initiatives, and stronger stakeholder feedback mechanisms. Such measures can help deepen community ownership and ensure that the spaces continue to remain relevant, functional, and environmentally valuable.

Ultimately, the Urban Green Infrastructure Initiative illustrates that urban greening is not simply an environmental intervention but a long-term investment in the quality, resilience, and sustainability of urban life. The journey documented through this assessment highlights the potential of collaborative action to create greener, healthier, and more liveable cities while fostering a shared commitment towards environmental responsibility and sustainable development.