

# THE IMPACT OF ROCK CLIMBING IN NORTH MACEDONIA



THE  
CLIMBING  
INITIATIVE



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### HISTORY

North Macedonia counts approximately 1,300 sport climbing and bouldering routes, but locals estimate that 90 percent of potential climbing areas remain undiscovered. The country's rich history of mountaineering acts as a foundation for the growth of sport climbing and bouldering in the modern era.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT

North Macedonia possesses breathtaking natural resources, and the government is enthusiastic about promoting outdoor tourism. Some areas, such as Prilep and Demir Kapija, experience a steady flow of climbing tourists, but others have yet to capitalize on the rocks in their backyard.

### SOCIAL IMPACT

Many Macedonian climbers believe that the sport can serve as a tool for unifying ex-Yugoslavian countries and members of different ethnic groups in their country. Additionally, climbing is credited with helping Macedonians to improve their mental health, develop a sense of community, and build self-confidence.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Trash and environmental degradation are serious issues in North Macedonia, and some hope that outdoor sports like climbing will inspire Macedonians to develop a more intimate relationship with nature.



## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

### Lack of public interest in climbing

Despite the sport climbing federation's push to develop more crags and open new gyms, the climbing community in North Macedonia has not grown beyond 200 climbers.

### Public confusion about the categorization of mountain sports

Many government officials at the highest level of sport management in North Macedonia do not know the difference between sport climbing, alpinism, and mountaineering.

### Collective "mindset" among climbers

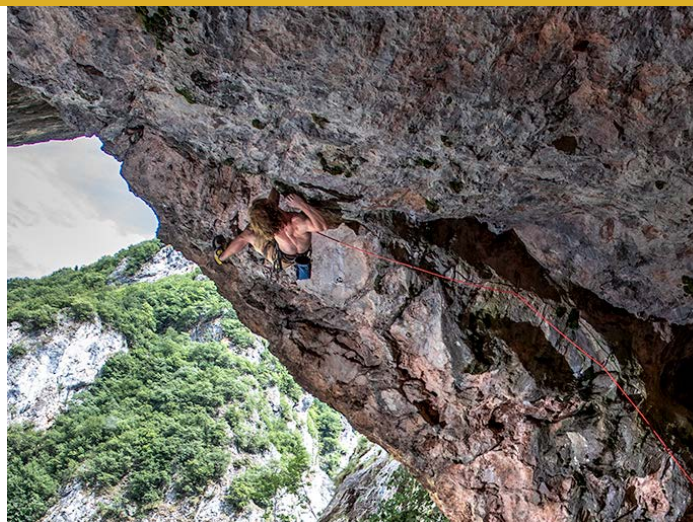
Many Macedonian climbers cite a lack of motivation to push one's limits and invest in the sport as factors which hold the community back.

### Lack of financial and institutional support

Greater collaboration between local municipalities, businesses, schools, and government agencies is needed to promote the sport's growth.

### Friction between the federations

Greater collaboration between the sport climbing, mountaineering, and alpinism federations would create new opportunities to protect and expand mountain sports in North Macedonia.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Promote **local understanding** of climbing
- ◆ Decentralize **climbing funding**
- ◆ Gather **more data** on climbing
- ◆ Develop a comprehensive **guidebook**
- ◆ Publicize climbing **achievements**
- ◆ Make climbing **more accessible** for beginners
- ◆ **Encourage cooperation** between the mountaineering, alpinism, and sport climbing federations
- ◆ Use mountain sports as a catalyst for better **treatment of the environment**



Read the full case study at  
[climbinginitiative.org/northmacedonia](https://climbinginitiative.org/northmacedonia)