



Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds

Practical Guidance on Developing Sport and Physical Activity Projects under the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

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1. Introduction

People take up sport and physical activity for a variety of reasons, including for the sheer enjoyment of it, to improve fitness and health and to generate a sense of well-being. Promoting sport in order to help people achieve these aims is important in itself but there are other reasons to promote sport and physical activity beyond the immediate personal benefits.

In a modern economy, sport makes a direct contribution to economic activity, it can be used as a vehicle for generating an even wider range of business and social actions and it has huge strengths as a means of motivating a wide range of individuals and groups. In short, sport and physical activity can have very important economic and social impacts, especially at a local or regional level.

There are a number of sources of information on assistance available at a European level for the development of sport interventions. These publications, which also have a lot of sound advice, tend to cover the whole range of support available. They include:

'Funding for Sports in the European Union' published by the European Olympic Committees' EU Office

'The Guide to EU Funding for the Tourism Sector' available in English and French, that obviously relates to tourism, but also has a lot of information that is relevant for sport.

There is also useful advice available at a national level. For example the French Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sport has recently published a guide to funding sources for sport, which covers both the ESIF and Erasmus +. Its title is:

Guide des financements européens pour le sport

The German Olympic Committee (DOSB) has also published information on support for sport from the Structural Funds in the previous period that is still of interest:

'Sportstättenförderung durch die EU'

In addition, there general guidance provided by the Commission: **'Guidance for Beneficiaries of European Structural and Investment Funds and related EU instruments'**

This particular Practical Guidance document, however, concentrates on obtaining support for projects based on sport and physical activity that aim to generate economic and social impacts through the European Structural and Investment Funds.

It therefore focuses on sport projects supported by:

- the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),
- the European Social Fund (ESF)
- the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARDF),
- the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

1.1 Who can use this guide

The Guidance is designed for individuals or more usually organisations that have an interest in developing sport activities that they think can have a beneficial impact on their community, city or region or even on the country as a whole. This might include sport organisations or federations or sport businesses and clubs and public authorities at national, regional or local level, but it might also be relevant for voluntary organisations, training organisations or those with a professional interest in economic development.

Initially the guidance will refer to projects for the current programming period – 2014–2020. Longer-term considerations are introduced in the final chapter.

1.2 How to use this guide

Anyone wishing to develop a project under the European Structural and Investment Funds has to expect that the process will be a little complicated, especially if the project is to be as successful as everyone would hope.

In order to avoid getting users of the guidance lost in the detail, then, the first part of the document will set out an overview of the main elements of the process of developing a project, leaving until later some of the necessary detail. There will therefore be two iterations before a relatively complete picture emerges. The first will establish an outline of the 10 main steps that have to be taken to mount a successful project in the current period. The second will refer mainly to the more detailed considerations that have to be taken into account and the sources of information on the detail that has to be mastered.

A final chapter will consider how to address the issue of obtaining a greater prominence for sport-based action over the longer term - in future programming periods.

2. 10 Steps to Developing a Successful Project

2.1 Step 1: Believing that Sport can make a difference

The first step is to be convinced that sport can make a real difference and that it has special characteristics that make it a useful instrument for delivering real economic and social development.

The main report of this study sets out lots of evidence on how sport can make a difference, but in general terms it is as well to remember the following:

- Sport generates business activity directly, ranging from huge football enterprises to local sport clubs and gyms.
- Sport activity requires human input and therefore is relatively good at generating employment locally, not only in the activity itself, but also in the construction and maintenance of facilities. In short, sport has a high employment multiplier.
- As a major element in the Experience Economy, sport is good at attracting talent and encouraging new and innovative forms of experience, from new kinds of sport to new ways of measuring performance and monitoring activity.
- Sport is an important contributor of content for ICT developments and, especially through performance monitoring systems, is increasingly important in ICT applications.
- Sport events and activities can have strong direct impacts on local economies, but also provide powerful occasions for marketing and promotion – from specific products to inward investment.
- Sport has lots of links with other economic activities, notably tourism, and can be a significant element in a broader development strategy.
- Sport and physical activity can improve mental agility as well as physical fitness and both of these can have direct effects on productivity and employability thereby contributing to active and healthy ageing.
- Sport is good at motivating people and at promoting well-being and social cohesion.
- Sport is especially good at helping to engage with excluded social groups and developing basic but transferable skills and enhancing employability.
- Increased physical activity can lead to a reduction in the use of carbon-based transport and other beneficial environmental effects.

Sport organisations especially, but also sport businesses, can become advocates for a greater economic and social role for sport, even if they do not intend to develop specific projects under ESIF.

2.1.1 Issues to consider:

- Which aspects of your own organisation generates economic and social impacts?
- Which of the list of sport characteristics above ring true for your own organisation?

2.2 Step 2: Review the strengths and potential of your organisation

It is as well to follow up an initial consideration of your own organisation's potential contribution through sport and physical activity with a more detailed examination of what might be possible.

Remember that there are many levels of involvement.

- Some Operational Programme programmes offer grants to businesses and other organisations to undertake research or improve their use of ICT or their environmental performance. These involve relatively simple procedures and sport businesses and clubs can benefit from them.
- Likewise, sport or voluntary organisations can often apply for relatively small grants to develop projects under the ESF Operational Programmes.
- Other support can be indirect, for example through advice services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Yet again, there may be opportunities to become involved in relevant clusters or other larger scale projects that are seeking input from businesses and organisations on the ground.

However, there is a tendency in the current period for the availability of individual grants to be reduced and for support to be directed to projects with a bigger impact. Consider therefore if your organisation could contribute to a more ambitious project.

In particular, consider if working with other organisations, such as local authorities or voluntary organisations would help you achieve this bigger impact. This type of co-operation is looked upon favourably.

2.2.1 Issues to consider:

- What level of involvement in ESIF projects would be appropriate for your organisation?
- How would developing an ESIF project fit in with the strategic objectives of your organisation?
- Does your organisation have the resources and commitment to develop a project?
- Would your organisation be able to develop and deliver a proposal and subsequently manage the project? Do you need external assistance with this?
- Is your organisation prepared to work with partners locally, or perhaps from across Europe, in developing a project?

2.3 Step 3: Formulate a project idea

Taking into account the overall orientation of the ESIF, the relative strengths of your organisation and the direction in which it aims to progress, it is useful to develop some initial ideas that might form the basis for a project.

These ideas should perhaps take into account **the General Objectives of Sport-based Initiatives and the Categorisation of Sport Interventions** that this study has developed (for more detail see chapter 3). The latter in particular sets out the types of impact that sport and physical activity projects can generate. This can not only help formulate the central aim of the potential project, but also suggest additional dimensions, where interventions can generate several beneficial effects simultaneously.

The good practice cases set out in the main study and the wider set of projects could provide inspiration.

Once the general conception for a project has been articulated, it is already useful to start to formulate it in terms of more specific objectives, to think about how these objectives might be achieved, who would need to be involved in the project and how it would be managed, over what time period and how would it be monitored. Finally, it is important to be clear about anticipated outputs and the nature of the results and impacts to be achieved.

2.3.1 Issues to consider:

- What do the strengths of your organisation suggest would be the most feasible project to launch?
- Are these aims in line with the general orientation of the ESIF in the current period?
- Review the Categorisation of [Sport](#) Interventions in order to clarify ideas or add extra dimensions.
- Consider if the aims of the project could be more effectively achieved by partnering with other organisations
- Ask yourself, what your ideas mean in more concrete terms – what are the objectives, how would the project be implemented over what time period, who would need to be involved, what would you expect to achieve?

2.4 Step 4: Establish what the situation is, where you are located

Project ideas need to be checked against the objectives of the relevant funding sources and probably changed. Remember the precise form of much of the ESIF is determined at a national or regional level.

First, the range of possibilities need to be considered. What sort of project do you have in mind? Is it a regional development project or related to employment and social issues? Or would the EARDF or EMFF be appropriate, if you are located in rural or coastal areas?

Remember that there are some overlaps between the funding sources, so there is some flexibility in the system.

Then you will probably need to look at the relevant Operational Programmes (OPs).

Which OPs are relevant will depend on which country you are located in and whether you operate at a national or regional level.

The next chapter will provide information about how to establish which OPs are relevant.

However, once you have established which OPs are relevant, it is a very good idea to read the appropriate documents. These will tell you what the authorities are trying to achieve in your area, which of the EU priorities figure most prominently, how the Programme is going to be implemented and there will be lots of information on the local context.

Reading the OP will tell you whether your idea could be of interest, the extent to which it will need to be adapted or whether you need to go back to the drawing board.

Alternatively European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, such as INTERREG, that are co-ordinated by the Commission, but which also often operate in particular areas might be appropriate. Again it will be necessary to get on top of the detail.

2.4.1 Issues to consider:

- Do your project ideas relate more to regional development or the social fund, or are you located in a rural or perhaps a coastal area?
- Or would the frameworks for European Territorial Cooperation programmes, co-ordinated directly by the Commission, be appropriate?
- At this stage, it is as well to look at a number of possibilities.
- Establish which are the documents that are relevant for you situation (see next chapter).

2.5 Step 5: Establish where we are in the programming cycle

Remember that there is a programming cycle and that the main opportunities present themselves at different points in this cycle.

The current programming period is from 2014 to 2020. At this stage in 2016, the main frameworks at national and regional levels have generally been agreed and some Managing Authorities have already started to issue calls for proposals.

Some calls remain open and there will often be further calls for proposals with deadlines later in the cycle.

However, it is important to establish when it is possible to make proposals

2.5.1 Issues to consider:

- What is the stage of development in the programmes that are relevant to you?
- What are the critical dates for the publication of calls and their response deadlines?
- What opportunities will arise later in the cycle?

2.6 Step 6: Speak to those who can advise you about developing the project

There is plenty of advice available at different levels (indicated in the next chapter) and it is hoped that there will be an active Sport Action Network available to support the development of sport-based proposals.

However, it will be important, if possible, to speak to those who are managing the Operational Programme or other programme under which you will want to make a proposal. They will be able to tell you if the ideas you have are the sort of thing that can be supported or they may be able to suggest alternative approaches or elements that you need to take into consideration.

Many Managing Authorities are happy to discuss ideas or provide advice at the early stages in the development of a proposal, although clearly there are restrictions once a call for proposals has been published.

However, also remember that the management of Operational Programmes is often delegated to other organisations. The relevant Operational Programme document will tell you how the Programme is being managed and which organisations are involved. You may need to speak to these other organisations rather than the Managing Authority directly.

In addition, it is frequently useful to talk to other organisations locally and nationally who may be involved in the area that you are considering. Regional development or city authorities can often be helpful in this context or business support organisations, such as Chambers of Commerce. They may also be potential partners, especially given the context established by smart specialisation and urban development and other critical strategies.

2.6.1 Issues to consider:

- Establish which organisations are the most relevant to discuss your project ideas.
- Within these organisations, identify the relevant officials and arrange to (meet and) speak to them.
- Consider which other organisations it may be necessary or beneficial to work with and discuss your ideas with them.

2.7 Step 7: Start developing a proposal

Once you have an indication of the possibilities with the project you have in mind and can see a viable way forward, start considering how you will put together a proposal. Preferably, do not wait until the call for proposals is published.

Sections 3.7 and 3.8 below suggest some issues you might want to take on board and sources of information in relation to them.

Establish a team with responsibility for writing the proposal within your organisation. Make contact with potential partners with a clear proposition on how you would propose to work together.

Try and obtain copies of other, earlier calls and proposals, so that you can see what is involved.

Seek advice and assistance from others with experience of making proposals, for instance from a local university.

2.7.1 Issues to consider:

- Who will be responsible for writing a proposal?
- Who are the partners you are proposing to work with?
- Develop an understanding of what is involved in writing a proposal – what needs to be said, how it is to be structured etc.- possibly from looking at earlier calls and proposals.
- How much help are you going to need and where is this to come from?

2.8 Step 8: Write and submit a proposal

Once the call for proposals is published, read it carefully, taking detailed notes on what the call is asking for.

Make sure all the key requirements of the call are covered. In particular, note what the call is aiming to achieve and ensure that the proposed project would contribute to realising these objectives.

Leave enough time to get the proposal written, with some space for review and polishing the detail.

Plan the delivery of the proposal, so that the format and deadline conditions are observed. For instance make sure that all the legal representatives of the organisation are able to sign the necessary documents.

2.8.1 Issues to consider:

- Writing a proposal needs to be a planned and disciplined process, with internal deadlines and sufficient time to get the proposal formally delivered before the call deadline.
- Does the proposal meets the requirements of the call as directly as possible?

2.9 Step 9: Implement the project

If your proposal is successful, it will probably have some important implications for your organisation. These should be addressed as soon as you know your proposal has been successful.

Depending on what you have proposed, the project will be more or less complex, but in all cases keeping an eye on the central objectives and monitoring progress will be important.

There are certain rules that have to be applied during the course of a project, notably about eligible costs and reporting requirements. It is important to observe these rules.

You are likely to find that as the project progresses, new perspectives on the contribution of sport to economic and social development will open up.

2.9.1 Issues to consider:

- Making the necessary adjustments to the responsibilities of your organisation's team, if you are successful with your proposal, often requires some thought and planning.
- Make sure that you become acquainted with the formal rules governing the contract's implementation.
- Keep an eye on the central objectives of the project, but also be open to new ideas and approaches.

2.10 Step 10: Assess and report on the project

As the project progresses, it is important to think about its legacy.

On the one hand, this is about ensuring that the progress achieved has been fairly assessed and, where possible, measured against the appropriate indicators. Formal evaluations can help in this process.

On the other, there is a huge advantage in ensuring continuity in the project's interventions and in making those with an interest in sport and regional development more aware of what is being achieved.

Partially this is a matter of entering into the spirit of reporting processes. It is also about raising the profile of projects and their achievements in other less formal ways and contributing to the developing knowledge and experience of both the sport and regional development communities.

So, draw attention to what you have done.

2.10.1 Issues to consider:

- How do you achieve a profile for what you have done, both in your own national or regional community and in the sport community?
- Can you make your new knowledge and experience available to others?

3. Mastering the Detail

It is hoped that the 10 steps set out in the previous chapter will have assisted those interested in developing ESIF projects based on sport and physical activity in gaining an overview of the processes and developing an understanding of what has to be done.

However, the previous chapter deliberately skated over some of the detail. This chapter is intended to remedy that fault by providing guidance on how to access the detailed information that it is necessary to have in order to develop successful projects. The chapter is divided into several sections, so that it is possible to obtain a rapid overview of what it is necessary to ascertain, as well as being directed to the key sources.

It should be pointed out, however, that it is not necessary to access all the information referred to. Much of it can be regarded as background information that can be useful for gaining an improved understanding of the different aspects of EU funding, once the basics have been mastered.

The sections that are likely to be most immediately useful are 3.1, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.9.

3.1 Useful Guides

It is again worth pointing to the following:

'Funding for Sports in the European Union' published by the European Olympic Committees' EU Office

'The Guide to EU Funding for the Tourism Sector' available in English and French, that clearly relates to tourism, but also has a lot of information that is relevant for sport.

There is also useful advice available at a national level. For example the French Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sport has recently published a guide to funding sources for sport, which covers both the ESIF and Erasmus +. Its title is:

Guide des financements européens pour le sport

The German Olympic Committee (DOSB) has also published information on support for sport from the Structural Funds in the previous period that is still of interest:

'Sportstättenförderung durch die EU'

There is also general guidance issued by the Commission: **'Guidance for Beneficiaries of European Structural and Investment Funds and related EU instruments'**

3.2 The EU Policy Background

3.2.1 Sport Policy

An overview of recent developments in EU Sport Policy and reference to the work of some of the Expert Groups established by the EU Work Plan for Sport (2014–2017) is to be found in the main report of the Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds.

The European Commission's web site on sport, which provides both information on policy developments and recent actions is accessed at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/sport/>

and http://ec.europa.eu/sport/policy/index_en.htm

Insights into discussion of recent developments can be obtained from the web site presenting the results of the European Sport Forum 2016:

http://ec.europa.eu/sport/forum/index_en.htm

A Guide to EU Sport Policy in English French and German is also available from the web site of the EU Office of the European Olympic Committee:

<http://www.euoffice.euolympic.org/eu-sport-policy>

3.2.2 The European Structural and Investment Funds

Reference to recent developments in the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) is made in the main report of the study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds.

An overview of how the component parts of the ESIF have been developed, with references to the negotiations with the Member States, the legislative acts establishing the various funds for the current period and lots of references to other useful background information is to be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/funds_en.htm

3.3 The Main Sources of Funds

The basic data on the funds available and how they are allocated are available from:

<https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>

A major resource covering many aspects of ESIF and the regional funds in particular is the site to be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/investment-policy/

This site is probably the single most useful site in the area and various sub-sections of it will be referred to below.

The European Social Fund equivalent is:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

These two sites are available in all the main languages of the EU.

Initial information on the general orientation of the EARDF in the current period is to be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020/index_en.htm

However, more detailed information about following up ideas on possible proposals can be found at The Rural Development Gateway 2014-2020:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-in-action/cap-towards-2020/rdp-programming-2014-2020>

For maritime areas, Information on how EMFF funding is managed and Member State contacts is to be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/contracts_and_funding/index_en.htm

Information on INTERREG, which promotes European Territorial Cooperation and facilitates joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/

Again, this site provides access to a range of very useful information, some of which will be referred to subsequently.

The 'EU Funds Checklist' is an online tool designed to help narrow down sources of EU Funds for specific objectives (relating to the overall Thematic Objectives):

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/checklist/

3.4 Sport and its Economic and Social Impacts

The Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds has uncovered many examples of where sport and physical activity have had a significant impact on economic and social development at a regional level. The study has also pointed to ways in which sport is particularly effective, notably because of its ability to engage with a wide range of social groups and its role within the developing Experience Economy. However, the study has gone on to analyse the different types of impact generated by sport and related activities and to provide examples of good practice relating to these different types. Chapter 3, in particular, sets out this analysis and refers to 33 good practice cases that are presented separately in an annex. Together this evidence shows that sport is able to make a contribution to addressing all of the Thematic Objectives that provide the basis for the design of the ESIF.

Furthermore when it comes to considering how sport can play its part in addressing the issues that are central to the ESIF in the current programming period, chapter 4 of the study shows how sport is already integrated into a number of smart specialisation strategies and has great potential for contributing to urban development processes, while at the same time being open to integrated actions across several related sectors, especially those related to tourism.

Underlying this analysis has been an impressive body of work commissioned by DG EAC in the European Commission or pursued by the Expert Groups, established under the sport Work Plans over a number of years. This analysis can be accessed at:

http://ec.europa.eu/sport/library/index_en.htm

The work with Eurostat in developing the statistical base for sport in the economy is particularly significant. The results of this work can be accessed at:

http://ec.europa.eu/sport/policy/economic_dimension/sport_statistics_en.htm

All in all, the analysis of the economic and social impacts of sport-based initiatives provide impressive support for those who wish to carry forward new projects and initiatives based on the sector.

3.5 Establishing the Relevant Programmes for your Area

It is necessary to establish which programmes are relevant for you. This will mainly be a matter of determining which Operational Programmes (OPs) are relevant to the area where you live. Remember some OPs can be national, whereas others are for specific regions.

An overview of how the individual Member States proposed to implement ESIF programmes at the beginning of the programming period is provided in the following document:

http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/pdf/esif/invest-progr-details-each-ms_en.pdf

Access to information on the specific ERDF Operational Programmes of your country can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/programmes/?search=1&keywords=&countryCode=ALL®ionId=ALL&themeId=ALL&programType=ALL&objectiveId=ALL&periodId=3

This sub-section of the site referred to above provides a list of all the Operational Programmes for each country and then summary descriptions of each OP, including thematic priorities and budget. Access to the text of the Operational Programme, however, is not provided. These can frequently be found online by a general search.

European Social Fund Operational Programmes can be identified through the 'Support in Your Country' section of the ESF site:

<http://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=45&langId=en>

An overview of the implementation of the ESF in each country is provided and also access to a list of Operational Programmes and national contacts, and in this case there is also access to the text of the relevant OP documents.

Similar information for the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/atlas/programmes?search=1&keywords=&periodId=3&countryCode=ALL®ionId=ALL&objectiveId=13&tObjectiveId=ALL

3.6 Finding out about the Relevant Programmes for your Area

Once it has been established which Operational Programmes or INTERREG programmes are relevant, it is necessary to do some homework on how the programmes are being implemented.

The sites mentioned in the previous section provide information on **the Managing Authorities** for programmes in your country, and in this context, you may find the following site useful:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/atlas/managing-authorities/

However, the responsibility for detailed implementation can be devolved to other agencies. The full document setting out the relevant OP will explain the situation in each case. The authorities responsible for implementation of specific OPs can be approached to discuss project ideas and frequently have advice services.

The sites also provide access to information about **beneficiaries** of EU funding, which can help indicate the sort of projects that are supported locally.

Importantly these sites also have links to **national sites**, which vary in content, but which can often provide very useful information, not least on further sources of **advice and assistance** and information about **calls for proposals and their deadlines**. In addition, national sites will also give information about national and regional organisations active in economic and social development and thus provide indications of **potential partners**.

It is necessary to establish what opportunities are coming up under a targeted OP. Managing Authorities or their agencies publish calls for proposals and usually provide information about the calls that are anticipated. Similar information is available for INTERREG programmes. This information is obviously important for effective planning.

Some of the sources of advice and assistance on all these matters are referred to in section 3.9 below.

In addition, especially if the project under development relates to innovation in a sport context or a contribution to urban development, it will be necessary to take into account the region's decisions in relation to a smart specialisation strategy or its thinking on urban development in the ESIF context.

The Smart Specialisation Platform provides information on the strategies developed by the regions for the current period, together with a wide range of information, data and resources. The site is really directed at regional authorities and economic development policy makers and can be a little daunting to those approaching the subject for the first time.

Nonetheless, a selective use of the information provided can give an overview of the priorities decided for your region and the relevant contacts at a regional level, if you want pursue your ideas further in this context. The site is to be found at:

<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home>

Participation in this project is voluntary for the regions of Europe and some have chosen not to do so. The information coverage is therefore not complete.

Similarly, the context of urban development by city authorities under ESIF is provided by the Urban Development Network site:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/network/

However, the URBACT site can give a more detailed explanation of the actions that are going on in the urban development area across Europe. URBACT is an INTERREG programme:

<http://urbact.eu/urbact-glance>

URBACT too can appear a little overwhelming at first sight and is mainly something that relates to sport involvement in urban development projects. For those moving in that direction, however, it can be an important indication of what is possible.

3.7 Designing a Project

In developing ideas for a project, attention needs to be paid to the objectives and priorities of the programme(s) identified as relevant for your circumstances. The key thing in any proposal is to say how your project can achieve the defined objectives.

It is hoped that the study Report can provide **inspiration** for a series of further initiatives. It points out that a useful starting point is the general objectives of sport-based initiatives and the **good practice cases** set out in an annex to the Report provide some detail on how sport and physical activity has been used in the past to achieve Structural Fund objectives. It will be seen that they relate to different general policy objectives and are organised under the following headings:

- Direct impacts on employment
- Innovation
- Sport Infrastructure & Regional Strategy
- Sport & Regional Strategy – General
- Sport & Urban Regeneration & Development
- Sport & Rural Development
- Integration with Tourism Strategy
- Integration with Cultural & Creative Industries
- Training of Sport Staff – Direct Skills Development
- Employability & Transversal Skills

- Contributions to Health Improvements
- Contributions to the Environment
- Social Cohesion & Reconciliation

The broader set of projects listed under each Member State provides some examples of initiatives that have been supported in your own country.

The analysis of these examples and the good practice identified led in the Report to the development of a **Categorisation of Sport Interventions**, which attempts to distinguish the different impacts that projects based on sport and physical activity can generate.

The following categories of intervention were listed:

Table 3.1 Categories of Sport Intervention

1. Direct support to sport SMEs	10. Encouraging developments in sport technology and other innovation
2. Improvement of the physical environment	11. Systematic development of a broader sport-based strategy
3. Promoting sustainable transport	12. Linking sport actions with the development of tourism or CCIs
4. Other measures reducing environmental impact	13. Improving sport skills & competences
5. Promotion & encouraging inward investment	14. Using sport to develop broader skills for employment
6. Creating employment in sport and physical activity	15. Social engagement
7. Impacts on related employment	16. Improving governance and administrative capacity
8. Indirect impacts on employment	17. Addressing health and other societal challenges and contributing to happiness & well-being
9. Business growth & other economic impacts	

Note that any actual project may attempt to achieve several of these impacts at the same time. However, the different categories can serve to help sharpen the analytical distinctions made within a proposal and indeed to suggest extra dimensions to the proposal, thus helping to articulate the full impact of the intervention proposed. The Categorisation of Sport Interventions is set out and discussed in section 5.2 of the Final Report.

Making imaginative use of the ideas provided in the study will help to articulate a convincing proposal, but of course the precise requirements will not be known until the call for proposals is published. **It should be emphasised that all proposals must respond to the specifications set out in the call document.** These specifications should be studied carefully once the call for proposals has been published and particular note made of the submission deadlines. Nonetheless, it is possible to prepare for calls before they are published.

Preparatory action should include reading the relevant Operational Programme in order to understand what the authorities are trying to achieve and the problems they are seeking to address.

Thought should also be given to the main objectives, the partners in the project and other inputs, the way that the project is to be managed, the system for monitoring progress and reporting, including the nature of the indicators that will be proposed. All these will have to be adapted in response to the actual specifications in the call, but they are all likely to feature one way or another. The next section provides some ideas on where you might find some indications of the sort of thing that will make a good proposal.

3.8 Other Proposals and Reports

It may be possible to find examples of earlier proposals. These or summaries used for assessment purposes can sometimes be found online or they may be available locally from organisations that are prepared to share documents of this kind. Remember, however, that proposals relating to the previous programming period may not take on board elements that relate to the new features of the current programming period.

There are many evaluation reports covering previous and sometimes on-going activities under the Structural Funds. These sometimes relate to specific projects but more generally cover programmes or aspects of them at regional, national and European levels.

At a European level, a range of evaluation reports on the previous programming period are available from the following sites:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/ec/2007-2013/
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=701>
<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/evaluation>

There are also a series of INTERREG evaluations, accessible through the regional policy evaluation site.

Some of the sites above can also provide access to evaluations at a national level either directly or by indicating national evaluation web sites. All projects have to report on their activities and some of these reports are available on project sites.

3.9 Help and Support

As a legacy of the project a Sport Action Network is being created made up of individuals and organisations with an interest in forwarding the development of sport-based projects supported by ESIF. Essentially it will be a mutual self-help group assisting its members and sport organisations to resolve problems encountered in developing proposals and projects. The contributions of members will vary, but among them will be members who are prepared to work actively to support proposal development, usually as a partner in the project.

At the time of writing this document, discussions are still progressing with organisations with an interest in hosting this network. Further news on these developments will be posted on the CSES project web site:

<http://www.cses.co.uk/sport-and-regional-development/spn-1/>

In addition to this dedicated network, there are plenty of organisations that can help in the development of proposals.

The Enterprise Europe Network has offices all over the EU providing advice and assistance to enterprises and others seeking to make effective use of European opportunities. These offices are usually hosted in significant regional organisations, so the staff are well aware of the regional dimension to development efforts.

To locate your local Enterprise Europe Network member go to:

<http://een.ec.europa.eu/>

As previously mentioned, the national ERDF and ESF web sites will frequently direct you to organisations that can assist at a national or regional level, including the advice services of managing authorities.

Interreg Europe has offices at a national level that can help with all INTERREG programmes:

<http://www.interregeurope.eu/in-my-country/>

It may be helpful to know that there are a number of consultants who work with organisations to develop proposals.

4. Over the Long Term

Currently, until 2020, the aims, the priorities and the implementation procedures of the ESIF are largely determined, both at a European and at a national and regional level. The decisions have been made on what the priorities are for investment and, in broad terms, which types of action are to be privileged. Furthermore calls for proposals have been published, projects have been approved and are under way and significant parts of the budget have already been allocated.

Currently too, evaluations of the previous programming period are being completed and the Commission has already started the process of debating the shape of the ESIF for the next programming period. As this develops there will be consultation processes at both a European and national levels.

Some thought ought to be given, therefore, to the involvement of sport and physical activity in the ESIF after 2020 and the opportunity to influence their shape and content in a way that is not currently possible.

It seems fairly likely that an appreciation of the increasing role of sport in economic and social development will itself grow, as sport and related areas have become more evidently present in the modern Experience Economy and as evidence accumulates of the effectiveness of sport and physical activity as an instrument in addressing economic and social challenges. Nonetheless the case has to be argued and at various levels.

The Study on the Contribution of Sport to Regional Development through the Structural Funds was intended to provide the evidence for a greater role for sport under the ESIF, but the results and analysis in the study need to be taken up and used to explain the case for sport. The good practice cases in particular can be useful ammunition, in that they represent clear and concrete examples of what can be achieved.

A similar situation was evident in relation to cultural and creative activities several years ago when the national ministries of culture were important in making the case for their sector with their colleagues in finance and economics ministries at a national level. A similar effort by the ministries responsible for sport could be an important development, especially if national sport organisations are also mobilised.

It is also necessary to make the case at a regional level, arguing for a more prominent place for sport in regional Operational Programmes, but also feeding into discussions about smart specialisation and strategies evolving from this. This might be done in conjunction with discussions about the scope for sport-based projects.

The Sport Action Network is intended to support moves to increase the profile of sport at the regional level, as well as contributing to the development of specific project proposals.

At the same time, it has to be appreciated that making the case might often be more effective if it were done in alliance with parallel areas, such as tourism and the Cultural and Creative Industries. While the good practice cases illustrate that it is perfectly possible to build substantial regional development on sport alone, more often local circumstances mean that it makes more sense to locate sport developments within a broader tourism strategy or one related to the Experience Economy.