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This document is part of a series of outputs that can be read in conjunction with each other or as standalone documents, this is document 7 of the series.
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Note: This section is common to all documents produced for the S2A Sport project.
**A. THE S2A SPORT PROJECT**

The S2A Sport project focussed on the skills needed by sport administrators working in paid and volunteer roles in the delivery of sport.

The project aimed to reduce the gap between the existing competences of sport administrators and the competences needed to fulfil current and future realities and expectations of this position.

Further aims of the project were to enhance and modernise existing training programmes, to equip those working or volunteering in sport administration with the right skills and, as a result, to contribute to building the capacity and effectiveness of sport organisations across Europe.

The S2A Sport project took place between September 2015 and February 2018 and was funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme (Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnership for Vocational Education and Training).

The S2A Sport consortium that delivered the project gathered partners from various parts of the sport sector in Europe. Led by the European Observatoire of Sport and Employment (EOSE), it brought together eight national organisations and four pan-European associations from ten different European countries.

Further information about the project can be found at [www.s2a-sport.eu](http://www.s2a-sport.eu)

**B. SPORT ADMINISTRATION**

Sport Administration includes the processes and activities of running an organisation operating within the sport sector at local, regional, national and/or European levels. It includes skills and competences that enable individuals to coordinate, manage, market, organise and deliver sport in line with the governance and direction of the organisation.

Within the S2A Sport project the working definition of sport administration was:

“Sport administration embraces the processes and/or activities of running an organisation operating within the sport sector at all levels; it includes a variety of tasks across a wide range of functions in accordance with the purpose and direction of the organisation.

More specifically, Sport Administration functions are implemented by all those individuals, both paid and unpaid (volunteers) who work to ensure the effective running of a sports organisation.”

This definition was supported by a large majority of the sample of people working in sport organisations who were consulted as part of the project.
The S2A Sport project implemented the innovative Lifelong Learning Strategy for Sport, known as the “7 Step Model”\(^1\). This model, devised by EOSE, provides a framework for a strategic approach to ensure that appropriate education, training and qualifications exist to support the development of the workforce. It was developed in response to the main education and employment challenges in the sector and aligns with the main EU policies and tools in the fields of sport and vocational education and training.

The model aims to bring together the education and employment stakeholders in a collaborative approach to ensure that education and training provision is fit for purpose and in line with the needs of the workforce.

The model begins with the collection of labour market intelligence to conduct desk or primary research into employment in the sector.

The next step in the model is to produce an occupational map which further expands on the key characteristics of the workforce.

The model goes on to describe the key jobs in the sector and facilitates the development of detailed occupational standards to describe skills and knowledge required for competent performance at work.

After detailing all aspects of the workforce and skills requirements, the model finally provides information and advice on qualifications, learning outcomes and quality assurance to support education providers in developing and delivering courses to meet the needs of the labour market.

INTRODUCTION TO QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS
STEP 7 OF THE EOSE 7 STEP MODEL
When seeking to develop the workforce in a sector, it is essential there is trust and confidence from all stakeholders in the education and skills development system. This trust is achieved through quality assurance. Education providers issuing certificates need to be subject to a quality assurance process that can be trusted to ensure consistency and achievement of sector objectives.

Quality assurance can be defined as "a process through which accredited status is granted to a programme of education or training, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards" (Cedefop, 2008).

This process can be considered as crucial in order to ensure the efficient implementation of education and training systems. It is directly related to the “verification” and “accreditation” of qualifications being delivered by education and training providers. The monitoring of Quality Assurance is concerned with promoting confidence amongst employers, professionals, providers and the public that a programme of learning has met agreed criteria. It is particularly important that it can be proven, via a system of third party verification, that providers and their qualifications are meeting the expectations of the sector as defined in the occupational standards.

Quality assurance systems are being developed throughout Europe at the national level. This is often in conjunction with national qualification framework developments and is the responsibility of national qualifications agencies.

Quality assurance is the seventh and final step of the EOSE 7 Step Model with the aim to ensure that there is confidence and trust that the other steps within the model are delivered in a consistent and quality way to produce a competent and qualified workforce.
THE GUIDE TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY
It can be seen that quality assurance processes are vital to the development of the sector; quality assurance is used to validate the certificates from providers. A focus on sustainability enhances the continuity and implementation of the final outputs after the completion of all the steps of the EOSE 7 Step Model.

Quality assurance and sustainability processes are important to ensure the efficient implementation of the occupational standards developed through the S2A Sport project.

The aim of this guide will not be to implement a new quality assurance process for the sport sector but to explore relevant quality assurance principles and strategies that might be considered.

This report will present a number of desk research findings. The section on defining quality assurance will present the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) and the quality assurance methodology proposed by this Framework.

The concepts of accreditation and endorsement and the case for each will be explored in the next sections. Vital sustainability strategies will then be discussed which are crucial to on-going impact of the S2A Sport project.

Finally strategies to ensuring an effective workforce and ensuring quality organisations and clubs will briefly be discussed.

This report should be read as a source of information and guidance based on an extensive desk research carried out through different sectors in Europe.
IV DEFINING QUALITY ASSURANCE
INTRODUCTION TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance is a mechanism which attempts to ensure that education and training meet the requirements for quality that are expected by all the stakeholders in a given sector. Quality assurance includes several processes and procedures that ensure that qualifications, assessment, and training programmes meet certain agreed criteria.

In relation to the S2A Sport project covering sport administration, the objective of the quality assurance process is to guarantee the link between the worlds of education and employment in the setting of occupational standards, and ensure the development of fit for purpose qualifications and training aligned with the expectations of the labour market.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET)

Quality assurance in VET has emerged as a key priority at EU level. Quality assurance forms the backbone on which mutual trust and recognition across sectors and across different EU Member States can be established and fostered.

Agreed quality assurance criteria provides the tools through which increased transparency of VET policy developments between EU Member States can be achieved, supporting the mobility of workers and learners, and lifelong learning within a European dimension.

Effective quality assurance can ensure that:

- The link between education and employment opportunities is maintained
- There is increased employability of graduates
- Clear, transparent learning and career pathways which would then lead to improved participation rates are proposed
- Internal and external mobility is promoted
- There are fit for purpose qualifications which adhere to common agreed standards
- There is the development of a workforce with the right skills expected by the labour market
- Quality assurance can also ensure that the agreed criteria cover all of the following areas:
  - Validation of qualification and standards
  - Accreditation or audit of education and training providers
  - Quality assurance of the assessment leading to the award of the qualifications

Quality assurance in VET is normally the responsibility of an agency at the national level known as a National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

In Bulgaria, to give an example, the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) is responsible for observing the vocational education and training. It is a body directly under the control of the Council of Ministers of Bulgaria. It monitors the Training providers to work according to developed national programs for VET in each profession of the National Register of Professions and Occupations in Bulgaria and their required educational level. The NAVET issues and revokes licenses for VET and provides control of the training provided.

Quality assurance is not about identifying and punishing those who are not performing. It is intended in a positive inclusive way where all those providing education and training in VET ensure that they are providing training which is of quality, matches labour market needs, and has adequate mechanisms for identifying areas where it needs to improve and to take action upon it.

EUROPEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE REFERENCE FRAMEWORK (EQARF)

A Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18th of June 2009 referred to the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF) for Vocational Education and Training. EQARF was developed by the Member States in cooperation with the European Commission.

Quality assurance needs to be present at all levels:

- At the VET-system
- At VET-provider
- At qualification-awarding level

EQARF promotes self-regulation through systematic self-assessment. It includes a combination of internal and external assessment processes that are developed at national level but which implement the common European framework EQARF within the national VET context.

EQARF identifies the process to be adopted for the quality cycle for VET systems and VET providers and is accompanied by a set of 10 indicators to identify the different dimensions of quality assurance which needs to be implemented across Europe.

### EQARF Ten Quality Indicators:

1. Relevance of quality assurance systems for VET providers
2. Investment in training of teachers and trainers
3. Participation rate in VET programmes
4. Completion rate in VET programmes
5. Placement rate in VET programmes
6. Utilisation of acquired skills at the workplace
7. Unemployment rate according to individual criteria
8. Prevalence of vulnerable groups
9. Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market
10. Schemes used to promote better access to VET

The expected impacts of EQARF thus include:

- Increase in transparency and mobility
- Attractiveness and accessibility of VET
- Bridge between what education provides and the expectations from the labour market

It can be seen that EQARF is highly relevant at sector level, those with an interest in linking education to the labour market, such as the S2A Sport partnership, can fully support indicators which relate to skills in the workplace, placements, and identifying training needs in the labour market. Indeed the stated impacts of EQARF fully align with the objectives of the S2A Sport project in the area of sport administration to increase access to education and provide a link between education and employment in the sector.

For more information see: https://www.eqavet.eu/What-We-Do/European-Quality-Assurance-Reference-Framework

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3 For more information see: https://www.eqavet.eu/What-We-Do/European-Quality-Assurance-Reference-Framework
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

Quality assurance is a core element of higher education across the European Union. Universities and other higher education institutions have a key role in providing internal quality assurance through their own systems and processes. External quality assurance is also a key component in the system of HE quality assurance. Most countries in Europe have a quality assurance agency for higher education which oversees the higher education quality system nationally.

An example of a national agency in this area is the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency in Bulgaria, which is a statutory body for evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of the quality in higher education institutions and scientific organisations aiming at the enhancement of their teaching and research. This Agency monitors the ability of institutions to provide appropriate quality of education and scientific research through an internal quality assurance system.

At the European Level, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is an umbrella organisation which represents quality assurance organisations from the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) member states. ENQA promotes European co-operation in the field of quality assurance in higher education and disseminates information and expertise among its members and towards stakeholders in order to develop and share good practice and to foster the European dimension of quality assurance.

ENQA produces standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the higher education area. A key goal of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG4) is to contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders. The Standards relate to internal quality assurance, external quality assurance and national quality assurance agencies. It should be noted these are quality assurance standards and not occupational standards defined elsewhere.

Some of the standards and guidelines promoted as such at the European level, and which are relevant to a sector-based drive to enhance workforce development such as that promoted through the S2A Sport project in sport administration, are:

- Programmes should be designed using external expertise and reference points
- Programmes should include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate
- On graduation students should receive documentation explaining the qualification, learning outcomes, context, level and contents of the studies which were successfully completed
- Institutions should ensure the competence of their teachers
- Institutions should collect data on career paths of students
- Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to respond to needs of students and society

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SETTINGS

To some extent the European and national guidelines for quality assurance in both the VET and HE sectors relate to formal qualifications, often where assessment of learning outcomes takes place. The focus is on trust and confidence in the learning and also the assessment process.

It has been shown in the S2A Sport project that not all learning will result in a formal qualification certificate and a programme of learning may not have assessment. This can often relate to learning in a continuing education or continuing professional development (CPD) setting.

Many quality criteria and indicators can apply to CDP learning programmes, specific processes that can be relevant to quality assurance in this setting include:

- Production of learning outcomes
- Explicit linking of learning outcomes to occupational standards
- Peer review of teaching material and delivery
- Participant evaluation
- Feedback from participants’ employer

Quality assurance is linked to the concept of accreditation which will be explored in the next section.
ACCREDITATION PROCESSES
INTRODUCTION TO ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is the result of an external assessment of the quality of education providers, used to make sure that the whole organisation or a particular training programme adheres to certain predefined criteria and standards.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) defines accreditation of an education or training provider as “the process of quality assurance through which accredited status is granted to an education or training provider, showing it has been approved by the relevant legislative or professional authorities by having met predetermined standards”.

This section will discuss the role of qualifications authorities and frameworks in accreditation and the basis for accreditation in qualifications from both vocational and higher education sectors, before looking at the benefits and disadvantages of accreditation, and concluding with a concrete example in sport administration.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS

National qualifications frameworks (NQFs) help to make qualifications easier to understand and compare. They can also encourage countries to rethink and reform national policy and practice on education, training and lifelong learning.

NQFs classify qualifications by level, based on learning outcomes. This classification reflects the content and profile of qualifications – that is, what the holder of a certificate or diploma is expected to know, understand, and be able to do. The learning outcomes approach also ensures that education and training sub-systems are open to one another. Thus, it allows people to move more easily between education and training institutions and sectors.

The main catalyst for the development of comprehensive national qualification frameworks in Europe has been the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). All countries committed to the EQF are developing or implementing national frameworks mostly covering all levels and types of qualifications, normally through an organisation known as a national qualifications authority.

The main purposes of a qualifications framework can be summarised as follows:

- Bring coherence to sub-systems of qualifications, e.g. higher education, adult learning, school awards, and in particular VET qualifications, by creating an overarching framework for them
- Support life-long learning
- Facilitate the involvement of political actors and stakeholders
- Better match qualifications with knowledge, skills and competences and to better relate qualifications to occupational and labour markets needs
A qualifications framework will thus lead to the following benefits:

- Contribute to a coherent, transparent and more integrated qualification system
- Increase and target access to qualifications also for certain disadvantaged groups, e.g. disabled, ethnic minority
- Open up progression routes (both to higher and broader skills)
- Introduce flexibility for learners, providers and users
- Promote recognition and validation of all qualifications (including non-formal/informal learning)
- Promote VET and adult learning (in its own right and through opening access to higher education)
- Make qualifications more relevant to societal and labour market needs
- Promote investment and participation in skill development in the workplace

National qualifications frameworks relate to accredited qualifications based on learning outcomes, accredited qualifications are normally approved through national qualifications authorities and appear on national qualifications frameworks.

### ACCREDITATION IN VET

According to Cedefop, there are quite different meanings of accreditation in the VET systems among the EU Member States, but there is at least one core element in relation to quality and accreditation which is generally accepted⁵. This is the **need for external assessment of the quality of training provision**. Given this element as a starting point, there must be two different parties involved in this process: the VET provider and an external body which is recognised to perform the external assessment and to award accreditation as a result of (positive) evaluation.

It is accepted that whenever an external assessment or evaluation takes place, some criteria and standards must be applied to arrive at a positive or negative decision. As one of its first tasks, the accreditation body has to elaborate the criteria and standards that have to be met by the VET provider to achieve positive external assessment.

Within the context of the S2A Sport project for sport administration, the important aspect here is the requirement within VET accreditation for an external body who will apply quality assurance and verification processes to the training organisation, the learning process and the assessment. Indeed, within an accredited programme there would normally be a requirement for some form of formal assessment against the programme learning outcomes. Accreditation will often result in a qualification and a formal certificate for the learner from an external body.

### ACCREDITATION IN HE

Higher education programmes that carry academic credit, such as degree courses, are subject to rigorous accreditation requirements. In higher education, sometimes this process is referred to as validation. Higher education institutions have in place their own internal accreditation and quality assurance requirements and this would be complemented by an external element. Accreditation procedures will normally meet the requirements of the national quality assurance agency with responsibility for quality assurance in HE and they will link at the European level to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) described in the previous section.

For the purposes of the S2A Sport project, it is suffice to state that formal programmes relating to sport administration in the higher education sector will have undergone a stringent regime of quality assurance which can give stakeholders confidence in the learning programme. This is especially the case where employers have a role in the accreditation, validation or verification of the programme.

⁵ For more discussion of accreditation in VET see Cedefop (2009), Accreditation and quality assurance in vocational education and training http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4089
WEIGHING UP THE CASE FOR ACCREDITATION

Providers of sport administration education, particularly if it is being delivered in the context of continuing professional development (CPD), should weigh up the “pros and cons” of accreditation when designing their learning programme.

Accreditation increases visibility and transferability. Through being recognised by a national authority and being subject to external verification, the programme could gain increased recognition particularly from outside the sport sector. Participants like to gain a formal certificate for their learning achievements. Furthermore, the process of accreditation and the application of external standards and guidelines can bring added value and improvements to a programme of learning.

So it can be seen there are benefits to accreditation, but there are also other aspects to be considered. Accreditation normally requires assessment to be included as part of a learning programme. Assessment may not best meet the aims of the programme if the purpose is professional development of participants with a focus on teaching and interactive exchange.

Accreditation also brings a certain amount of bureaucracy which can be a burden in terms of time allocated to verification tasks; this is necessary for qualifications but may not be desirable in a CPD context. Finally, accreditation through an external body can bring added costs as each organisation in the process requires to be paid for their time.

To summarise this section, accreditation and the resulting quality assurance regime is a desirable and necessary part of qualifications, whether at VET or HE level. In the realm of continuing education and CPD courses, the benefits and drawbacks of accreditation have to be considered before deciding whether accreditation matches the aims and rationale of the learning experience and will have a positive impact on the education and participants.

CONCRETE EXAMPLE IN SPORT ADMINISTRATION

CPD Award in Sport Administration – Malta

In 2015, EOSE managed the development and delivery of an innovative Continuing Professional Development (CPD) award for sport administrators in Malta in partnership with Sport Malta. The training course was developed in response to an identified need in the Maltese sport industry, and a total of 75 full or part-time employees of Sport Malta were chosen to take part in the course.

The course was written to enhance the skills and competence of the current Sport Malta workforce so that the structure and environment in which sport is created, delivered and maintained in Malta could be improved.

The titles of the four modules in the programme were:

- Module 1: Understanding and Developing Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity
- Module 2: Leadership in Sport and Physical Activity
- Module 3: Developing Effective Sport Systems and Good Governance
- Module 4: Managing Successful Events from Grassroots to Elite Sport
International higher education lecturers from six different countries were brought in by EOSE to deliver the modules. Lectures were interactive and were supplemented by group activities and supported by learning materials such as book chapters and journal articles provided by the university lecturers.

At the request of Sport Malta, the course was formally accredited as a CPD Award Level 5 by the Malta College of Science, Arts and Technology (MCAST) who provided external verification and ensured the course was on the national qualifications framework and thus linked to the EQF. External verification included approval of the programme handbook and learning outcomes, attending lectures and sampling marking of module tests and assignments.

The Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) has eight qualification levels. The MQF has been influenced by the eight-level classification of the EQF but it responds directly to the long-standing Maltese qualifications system. The MQF level descriptors are more detailed than those of the EQF and contextualised to the national culture and social, economic and political priorities.

Each module was formally assessed with a short-answer test administered under exam conditions at the end of each module. Assessment also included a 1000-word (minimum) action plan which was designed for the participant to address ways in which to increase sport and physical activity participation in Malta.

This qualification was an example of where accreditation can be used to enhance a learning programme to deliver a quality outcome for an employer and sport sector professionals.
THE VALUE OF ENDORSEMENT
INTRODUCTION TO ENDORSEMENT

Endorsement can be similar to accreditation in that it can involve external checking or monitoring against criteria or standards. However, endorsement is a less formal form of approval, and does not need to be linked to official qualifications authorities. An organisation from the sport sector such as a federation or a professional body could endorse training and give its logo and stamp of approval based on some element of review or quality assurance.

Endorsement can take the form of a quality mark for courses and training material, particularly those that fall outside the scope of established accreditation schemes.

Courses bearing the logo of sport organisations are normally deemed to offer an appropriate level of educational quality and relevance to the development of people to work in the sector. Endorsement can relate to more than just full courses with assessment and can relate to short courses without assessment and even seminars, workshops and conferences.

Often, a sector based endorsement scheme can offer:

- **Independent assessment**: Recognition can demonstrate that the training company's products reach an objectively defined and independently evaluated quality standard.

- **Industry recognition**: Sector endorsement from leading national or international organisations can be widely recognised and respected.

- **Route to market**: By listing endorsed courses the endorsing organisation can bring an effective route to market for the training provider.

- **The endorsement logo**: Often an endorsement logo is made available only to those training organisations whose courses have been endorsed.

- **Simplicity**: Endorsement can often offer an effective process for checking key training quality and delivery criteria.

ENDORSEMENT EXAMPLE FROM THE SPORT OF GOLF

The PGAs of Europe works to raise standards and opportunities in the education and employment of golf professionals. The aim of a PGA education programme is to assist trainees in the development of the skills and competencies necessary to successfully progress their career in professional golf.

The PGAs of Europe have implemented various mechanisms which continually monitor the various aspects of education and training provision. The PGAs of Europe operate an endorsement and recognition scheme where the process is managed in a positive inclusive way where all those providing education and training for golf professionals ensure that they are providing training which is of quality, matches labour market needs, and has adequate mechanisms for identifying areas where it needs to improve and to take action upon it.

A national PGA that wishes to achieve recognition of its education programme should apply to the PGAs of Europe’s Education Committee and work through a three stage process.
Throughout the recognition process an applicant country will receive regular feedback highlighting green, yellow and red points and advise on the development of an appropriate action plan.

- Green – Items which are considered to reach the required standard
- Yellow – Items that with minor adjustment should reach the required standards
- Red – Items that need significant change to reach the required standard

Once a country’s educational programme has met the European Education Standards and the process of Recognition has been approved the Education Committee will continue to monitor the on-going development of the programme.

Elements examined in the evaluation process include:

- The quality of content and materials used
- The teaching process including the knowledge and delivery of tutors
- The assessment / examination process

ENDORSEMENT EXAMPLE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The Executive Masters in Sport Organisations Management (MEMOS) is organised by the Olympic Solidarity with a number of European, American and Australian universities. The degree is awarded by the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium).

MEMOS is endorsed by:

- International Olympic Committee
- Olympic Solidarity

Subjects covered include Strategic Management and Governance; Performance and Risk Management; Project and Event Management; Financial Management; Human Resources Management; Leadership and Change Management.

MEMOS is especially addressed to professionals working in national or international sport bodies and is scheduled over twelve months and consists of three nine-day residential modules, each dedicated to two main subjects, and a three day final module devoted to the defence and presenting of participants’ personal project.

DISCUSSION OF ENDORSEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF SPORT ADMINISTRATION

Endorsement can bring an element of external support for a programme of learning which can increase the standing and recognition of the programme. While a form of submission and review is often found in endorsement processes, it can be less stringent and bureaucratic than the quality assurance practices applied by a formal accrediting organisation. Endorsement can also apply to more types of learning including courses without assessment.

Providers of education in sport administration should look carefully at the options for accreditation or endorsement, where a full qualification is being developed for delivery accreditation through a national authority could be the best option. However where the focus is continuing professional development, endorsement from a relevant sector based organisation could be more appropriate, if it is available. The choice will depend on the type of educational programme and aims and rationale of the programme.

Endorsement often involves a process of mapping to standards and meeting criteria, in other cases endorsement can be granted following a more informal review of material by an organisation which also benefits from linking their name with the programme. However in all cases careful consideration should be given to the most appropriate organisations to seek endorsement and providers should ensure that the link with the brand of the endorsing organisation will have a positive impact on the recognition and promotion of the learning products.

The S2A Sport partnership would support endorsement schemes where they promote transferability of competences and mobility of workers, and where they support employability and expect mapping to occupational standards and meeting the needs of the sport labour market.
THE MEANING OF SUSTAINABILITY
INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability in the context of a project such as S2A Sport refers to the continuation of a project's goals and principles to achieve desired outcomes. Ensuring sustainability means making sure that the goals of the project continue to be met through activities that are consistent with the conditions and resources that are available after the official funding period ends. Only through the sustainability of the project aims and outputs can the desired long term impacts of the project be achieved.

In relation to the S2A Sport project, sustainability of project outputs can help to achieve the desired benefits to education and workforce development in sport administration in the long term.

DISSEMINATION DURING THE S2A SPORT PROJECT

Significant dissemination activities took place during the S2A Sport project at the European, national and level through all project partners and their respective networks.

The main objectives of the dissemination activities carried out during the S2A Sport project were:

- To promote the initiative and raise awareness of the research outcomes, the European occupational standards and training handbook for sport administrators
- To exploit the power and range of the partnership and their networks to disseminate across a large mix of stakeholders
- To use the widest possible range of means and channels available to ensure that the sport sector as a whole and the wider audience, including end users, are made aware of the project, its outputs and value to the sector.

The project website www.s2a-sport.eu was a main form of dissemination and the website will remain live after the end of the project. Indeed, the website will hold the main repository of the final outputs available to all stakeholders in to the future. The logo and branding for S2A Sport also contributed to the successful dissemination of the project. The final conference organised at the end of the project was important for dissemination and consultation but perhaps more important was the events and meetings held by partners at the national level to discuss and spread the message about the project. Articles in print and online also contributed to dissemination activities at the European and national level.

PROMOTION OF THE FINAL OUTPUTS

The professional design and printing of the intellectual outputs of the S2A Sport project will contribute to sustainability and achievement of long term outcomes. Professional design and layout for the final intellectual outputs of the project aligned with the Graphic Charter and consistent for all outcomes has been achieved. Outputs are also available online (downloadable) as well as in printed format.

The series of outputs produced from the S2A Sport project and available to the sport sector, in line with the steps of the EOSE 7 Step Model are:

- OUTPUT 1 (O1) - Research Report: Labour market situation, trends and perspectives for sport administration in Europe
- OUTPUT 2 (O2) - Occupational map for sport administration
- OUTPUT 3 (O3) - Occupational descriptors for sport administration
- OUTPUT 4 (O4) - Functional map for sport administration
- OUTPUT 5 (O5) - Occupational standards for sport administration
Finally, professional translation of some of the outputs in to French will aid on-going awareness and take-up.

It is expected that even after the funded project the partners will continue to disseminate and promote the project outputs in their networks and spheres of influence. As within the project itself, this will be done through events, meetings, articles, websites, training sessions, etc.

### DEFINING THE AUDIENCE

The long term aims of the S2A Sport project can only be realised with a range of stakeholders from different spheres all acting together, it is therefore vital that the audience for the project outputs is varied and an adapted strategy is formulated to reach different stakeholders.

It is relevant to target and reach a range of actors at the European, National, Regional and local levels. Firstly these can be listed under core target groups:

- Policy and decision makers - *e.g. European Commission, governments, sports councils, international sports bodies*
- Employers from the sport sector and those who engage sport administrators at any levels - *e.g. public, private and not-for-profit sport organisations – Sport Federations, leagues, Sport Clubs, National Olympic Committees, Grassroots/Sport For All Organisations, National Sport Associations, etc.*
- Education and training Providers - *e.g. private training providers, colleges, universities*
- Individuals/employees and people active as volunteers within the sport sector with an administration or management role

Secondly a wider group of stakeholders can be reached through ongoing promotional activities relating to the project outputs:

- Media
- Private companies
- Foundations/Patrons
- General Public/Citizens/Students
### USES OF THE PRODUCTS

The following table outlines some of the uses of the outputs of the project:

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<th>DETAIL</th>
<th>RELEVANT OUTPUTS</th>
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</table>
| PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT                            | - Link business objectives to team and individual objectives  
- Monitor the outcomes of people’s performance  
- Review and reward performance  
- Give structured and constructive feedback to people on their performance                                                                 | 01 - 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 |
| ASSURANCE OF PRODUCT AND SERVICE DELIVERY         | - Specify work processes and outcomes  
- Monitoring work processes                                                                                                                      | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 07 |
| ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT                          | - Specify and audit the competence needs of an organisation  
- Link training and development policy and strategy to business objectives                                                                       | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 06 |
| RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION                         | - Identify the performance requirement of a role/job  
- Prepare job advertisements  
- Specify induction and initial training                                                                                                           | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 |
| JOB DESIGN AND EVALUATION                         | - Develop job specifications  
- Criteria for job evaluation                                                                                                                     | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 |
| LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS & PLANNING                 | - Identify trends in skill requirements  
- Highlight links and routes between current and emerging jobs/occupations                                                                            | 01 - 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 |
| IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS                        | - Develop a strategic view of future learning requirements  
- Identify individual learning needs  
- A format for planning individual learning and development                                                                 | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 06 |
| STRUCTURING LEARNING PROGRAMMES                   | - Increase the relevance and credibility of training/learning programmes  
- Identify learning opportunities in the work environment  
- Develop specific learning objectives  
- Develop knowledge content  
- Specify learning processes to meet needs                                                                | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 06 - 07 |
| DELIVERING AND EVALUATING LEARNING PROGRAMMES      | - Evaluate and select learning resources against organisational requirements  
- Integrate different kinds of training and development  
- Provide clear goals for learners  
- Evaluate individual/group training programmes                                                                                                  | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 06 - 07 |
| ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT                             | - Identify assessment opportunities  
- Specify assessment methods and processes                                                                                                            | 06 - 07 |
| REGULATION                                         | - Assess compliance with regulators’ competence requirements  
- Assess the relevance of qualifications to regulators’ requirements                                                                              | 04 - 05 - 07 |
| CAREERS GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING                   | - A basis for information/advice for people entering a first career/job  
- A basis for information and advice for people changing to new careers/jobs  
- Identify common and potentially transferable skills in different careers/occupations  
- A framework for career planning and review                                                                                                      | 01 - 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 |
| REGULATING PROFESSIONAL & OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS | - Profile the membership requirements of a professional body  
- Mutual recognition of vocational qualifications  
- Assess the relevance of professional qualifications to the demands of industry standards                                                                 | 02 - 03 - 04 - 05 - 06 - 07 |
### BENEFITS TO THE SECTOR

The main benefits to the sport sector can be shown as follows under the different types of audience identified above:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| POLICY MAKERS                 | - Initiate and increase the mobility of labour  
- Reduce the rate of unemployment and increase productivity  
- Improve quality and transparency of education and training  
- Facilitate the access to education and training systems  
- Link the worlds of education and employment                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| EMPLOYERS                     | - Develop a highly trained and effective workforce and improve company performance  
- Identify the skills need in the workforce and improve the current/future workforce  
- Assess the skills of the current workforce and implement effective systems for, recruitment, assessment, and training  
- Reduce turnover and recruitment costs by retaining highly skilled individuals  
- Support the development of in-house training plans and courses                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS | - Identify gaps and underline provisions for qualifications and courses  
- Develop qualifications and courses in line with expectations from employers  
- Establish links with employers and labour market  
- Increase investment in skills and qualifications                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| INDIVIDUALS/EMPLOYEES         | - Identify clear learning and career pathways  
- Find employment and a wider range of career possibilities  
- Assess personal skills levels, set professional objectives and increase job satisfaction  
- Motivate individuals to learn and develop new skills and knowledge  
- Increased access to education and support professional development  
- Identify skills gaps and open up a range of opportunities for a change in career                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### GATHERING FEEDBACK

EOSE, as coordinator of the S2A Sport project, and a leading European network organisation in the fields of sport, employment and education will ensure the ongoing availability, distribution and presentation of the S2A Sport outputs; the website will be maintained and EOSE will carry out and promote actions towards sustainability.

Despite the effective dissemination during the project, many stakeholders will discover the outputs for the first time after the project when they are published in a designed and presentational style.

EOSE will welcome comments and feedback from all stakeholders, this will be collated and shared with the S2A Sport partnership, who have agreed to maintain connections after the project.

At the appropriate point in the future, EOSE would explore the possibility to seek funding to update and revise the content in light of feedback and labour market changes to further refine the products for the sport sector.
EQUIP THOSE WORKING OR VOLUNTEERING IN SPORT ADMINISTRATION WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.
ENSURING EFFECTIVE PEOPLE
Building on the Training Programme Handbook and Curriculum produced as Output 6 for the S2A Sport project, this guide has discussed quality assurance strategies in relation to education and training products – whether they are degrees in higher education, vocational qualifications or CPD.

However, the outputs of the project can also be used in other forms of quality assurance in the sport sector. One of these is the use of outputs to quality assure people working in the sector. This could be through the membership of a federation or professional body, or within a professional registration scheme.

Many quality schemes for professionals are based on common occupational descriptors and occupational standards, both of these were produced for sport administration in the S2A Sport project (Outputs 3, 4 and 5). Recognition of individuals can then be organised around a system of approved qualifications or training routes. Finally, strategies for continuing professional development can ensure individuals retain their skills and learn new skills to meet changing industry requirements.

The following are typical aspects of a professional recognition scheme for individuals, with a link to the outputs of the S2A Sport project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROLE DESCRIPTORS</th>
<th>Occupational descriptors (O3) can help define the roles / positions to be included in the membership structure.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STANDARDS</td>
<td>The comprehensive suite of occupational standards (O4&amp;5) can be used or tailored to meet the requirements of the membership organisation, using the standards which link to its aims and objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS</td>
<td>The guide to quality assurance and sustainability (O7) can be used to recognise existing qualifications or manage a scheme to endorse qualifications that meet the standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)</td>
<td>The occupational standards (O5) and training programme handbook and curriculum (O6) can be used to inform a comprehensive CPD system for the membership body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example of a professional recognition scheme for individuals can be looked at to provide an illustrative example. This example is taken from the fitness industry in the United Kingdom.

The Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) is an independent public register which recognises the qualifications and expertise of health-enhancing exercise instructors in the UK. REPs provides a system of regulation for instructors and trainers to ensure that they meet the health and fitness industry’s agreed Occupational Standards. REPs provides assurance and confidence to the public and employers that all professionals on the Register are appropriately qualified and have the knowledge, competence and skills to perform their role effectively.

REPs has a system of levels and categories based on occupational descriptors for major fitness roles in the UK. The REPs is then entirely based on the UK national occupational standards for fitness; it recognises people who have a qualification that maps to the standards. Finally REPs has a system of CPD where all members have to keep their skills up to date or learn new skills and knowledge.

REPs in the UK uses quality assurance strategies to recognise individual trainers and provide a guarantee that they are competent and qualified against the national occupational standards. For more information see: https://www.exerciseregister.org/

In the field of sport administration, national associations or national/European federations may wish to have membership schemes for individuals. The innovative outputs of the S2A Sport project now give them the tools to build a membership system based on European agreed role descriptors and occupational standards. The training programme handbook and this guide to quality assurance can help to ensure quality education is at the heart of a membership scheme if they choose to use the scheme for recognition of competence and qualifications in sport administration.
ENSURING QUALITY ORGANISATIONS AND CLUBS
A final domain which can be subject to quality assurance arrangements is sport organisations and sport clubs. Sports councils, national sport federations and other national and regional sport organisations have an interest in making sure sport clubs are run as effectively as possible. This ensures a safe and secure environment for sport to take place in, and contributes to good governance in sport and ultimately increasing participation.

Many of the outputs from the S2A Sport project can be used to support the development of sport organisations and clubs. The occupational descriptor in particularly can provide a guide to the role of the sport administrator. One of the occupational standards in particular relates to the role of supporting the development of sport clubs:

**D.1.5 Support the development of sport clubs:** Sport clubs are fundamental to participation and progression in sport. Regional or national sport organisations often have a responsibility to ensure that they have an effective structure of clubs and networks and that these organisations are effectively run and developed for the benefit of sport. This standard covers the skills and knowledge for people working in sport organisations to support the formation and development of sport clubs by local representatives.

Sometimes a national or regional sport organisation will put in place an accreditation scheme and criteria for well managed clubs, including the roles of key individuals – this will cover the role of the sport administrator in clubs.

Sports councils, national federations or other sport associations can use quality assurance processes to support the development and on-going good governance of sport clubs. Sometimes the aim will not be accreditation and the focus will be on informal support and helping clubs to perform to a quality standard without pressures of accreditation or submission against a criteria.

The outputs of the S2A Sport project in particular focus on the people element of well managed clubs, and contribute to workforce development. The development and recognition of paid staff and volunteers has been a key part of the project. Accreditation schemes and criteria for quality sport organisations and clubs can use the outputs, particularly the occupational standards, to create a benchmark for competent performance in sport administration.
The S2A Sport project was based on the development of European industry-led occupational standards and relevant training material for sport administration with the end targeted goal to contribute to building the capacity and effectiveness of sport organisations across Europe. The desired impacts of the project include a pool of sport administrators trained through fit for purpose education and an impact on the quality of the running of sport organisations.

Quality assurance and sustainability processes can be considered crucial in order to ensure the efficient implementation of the occupational standards developed through the S2A Sport project.

This guide has discussed quality assurance in several aspects of education including higher education vocational education and training and continuing professional development. The concepts of accreditation and endorsement have been presented with the key considerations when deciding on their appropriateness and use in sport administration.

Sustainability is the key to any project such as S2A Sport and this guide has explored sustainability strategies including target audience, and uses and benefits of the outputs.

Finally, this guide has touched on the use of the S2A Sport outputs to put in place a quality system for the recognition of people or organisations/clubs in sport administration.

The S2A Partnership hopes this guide can support and enable stakeholders in the European sport sector to use the occupational standards and other outputs in the most appropriate and high quality manner in line with best practice guidelines and EU policy.

The S2A Sport project focussed on sport administration which sits at the centre of the future growth and development of sport and can therefore have real impact on the world of sport and the potential of sport in European society.
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