OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTOR

FOR SPORT ADMINISTRATION
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTORS</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTOR FOR SPORT ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Occupation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Occupation description</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Occupation responsibilities</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Skills and knowledge required</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Attitudes and personal requirements</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Employer organisations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Examples of job titles</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Qualifications and experience</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Continuous professional development</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. Career progression</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Note: This section is common to all documents produced by 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

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.
C. THE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY FOR SPORT – “THE 7 STEP MODEL”

The S2A Sport project implemented the innovative Lifelong Learning Strategy for Sport, known as the “7 Step Model”. 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 OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTORS

STEP 3 OF THE EOSE 7 STEP MODEL
This occupational descriptor was produced for the S2A Sport project, described in the introduction, which was designed to improve the skills of sport administrators working in paid or voluntary roles in the delivery of sport.

An occupational descriptor identifies key tasks, skills and attributes which relate to an occupation as well as applicable knowledge, qualifications and career routes. It also serves as a useful reference point for the development of occupational standards, qualifications and in identifying career pathways.

The approach of EOSE in the sport sector is to develop, using various working methodologies, a simple document which looks similar to a sample job description and typically includes:

- Occupation title
- Occupation description and tasks
- Occupation responsibilities
- Skills and knowledge required
- Attitudes and personal requirements
- Qualifications and experience
- Continuous professional development
- Career progression

This occupational descriptor uses information from Step 1 labour market intelligence and Step 2 occupational map. It will also inform the functional map and occupational standards (Steps 4 and 5), and the education, training and quality assurance strategies developed in Steps 6 and 7.

The S2A Sport project consortium took the decision to make this occupational descriptor for the generic job role of “sport administrator”.

An alternative approach could have been to choose specific job titles and develop several descriptors but this approach was rejected due to the diverse range of job titles in sport administration, and the lack of agreed common roles. Similar job titles in two different countries or contexts may have very different content in terms of occupational tasks and responsibility.

It was therefore believed to be the best approach to look at the broader picture of the role of the sport administrator, which can incorporate many different job titles, although containing a core set of skills, competencies and attributes.
OCCUPATION: SPORT ADMINISTRATOR

As mentioned earlier, the S2A Sport consortium debated and decided to focus their work on the generic job role of “sport administrator” to look at the broader picture of the role, which can incorporate many different job titles, although containing a core set of skills, competencies and attributes.

OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION (MAIN TASKS)

Sport Administration is defined in the S2A Sport project as follows:

“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.”

Through the S2A Sport project, some main occupational tasks and activities applicable to sport administrators were developed and discussed in consultations with sector professionals.

These tasks may be shared among different numbers of sport administrators in different contexts and many of the activities may not apply to every sport administration organisation.

These main occupational tasks and activities can be listed as follows with a further level of detail:

---

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

**Support strategic development**
- Work with others to define long term direction and objectives
- Develop and communicate an organisational vision, purpose and set of values
- Motivate people inside and outside the organisation to achieve their shared objectives

**Work with the Board of your organisation**
- Provide information to the Board
- Facilitate the development of an effective Board
- Ensure Board decisions are implemented

**Facilitate and implement principles of good governance**
- Identify organisational governance responsibilities and make sure these are understood by relevant people in the organisation
- Provide information and advice to support decision-making
- Record and communicate decisions made by the organisational governance body
- Make sure the organisation’s governance and decisions conform to legal, regulatory, organisational, environmental and ethical requirements

**Ensure compliance with regulations and requirements**
- Monitor relevant regulatory, ethical and social requirements
- Develop policies and procedures to promote compliance
- Communicate policies and procedures

---

S2A Sport - Occupational Descriptor for Sport Administration

10
### PEOPLE

**Contribute to a human resources plan for your organisation**
- Identify the human resource requirements for your organisation
- Review current human resources in your organisation against requirements
- Plan how human resource requirements will be met and communicate plans to relevant individuals

**Manage human resources in your area**
- Manage recruitment and selection
- Manage welfare and retention
- Manage performance
- Plan for and support career progression

**Support the involvement of volunteers in sport**
- Promote volunteering to potential volunteers
- Involve and motivate volunteers in your organisation
- Encourage volunteers to extend their volunteer roles

**Provide leadership to your team**
- Provide direction to members of your team
- Support your team to achieve objectives
- Develop your leadership style and abilities

**Manage yourself and your professional development**
- Assess own career goals and personal development
- Set personal work objectives and produce a personal development plan
- Undertake continuing professional development activity

**Support professional development of your team**
- Identify the professional development needs of colleagues in your area of responsibility
- Understand how to develop a learning environment in your own area of responsibility
- Support colleagues with their professional development

### RESOURCES

**Manage finance in your area of responsibility**
- Gather financial information and objectives
- Develop a budget
- Implement budget and review performance against it

**Apply for external funding for your organisation**
- Identify sources of funding for sport
- Prepare bids and tenders
- Negotiate and agree funding

**Manage physical resources**
- Identify and obtain required resources for own area of responsibility
- Understand the importance of sustainability when using physical resources
- Monitor and review the quality and usage of resources in own area of responsibility

**Oversee maintenance of equipment and facilities**
- Carry out inspections of facilities and equipment
- Develop and apply maintenance schedules
- Organise repairs and improvements to facilities and equipment
# OPERATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Develop, implement and review operational plans</th>
<th>Develop and co-ordinate a project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Align objectives of your area of responsibility with those of your organisation as a whole  
• Develop operational plans  
• Implement, monitor and evaluate operational plans | • Understand the principles, processes, tools and techniques of project management  
• Agree the scope and objectives of a project and identify the budget  
• Develop and implement a project plan and manage a project to its conclusion. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan and organise meetings and conferences</th>
<th>Implement effective club management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Identify requirements for a meeting or conference  
• Organise run a meeting or conference  
• Evaluate a meeting or conference and make recommendations | • Set objectives for your club  
• Identify resource requirements for your club  
• Develop communication systems for your club |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support the development of sport clubs</th>
<th>Plan marketing activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Plan and monitor the development of clubs  
• Support the development of clubs plan for continuous improvement of clubs | • Identify and prioritise marketing objectives  
• Develop and implement a marketing plan  
• Monitor and evaluate the marketing plan |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve customer service in your organisation</th>
<th>Communicate with stakeholders and customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Establish and communicate measurable customer service standards for own area of responsibility  
• Support staff in meeting customer service standards  
• Monitor and evaluate customer service performance, systems and processes | • Develop plans for effective internal and external communication  
• Analyse, evaluate and revise communication plans  
• Use effective communication techniques |
SPORT PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES

Develop, maintain and implement policies for inclusion in sport
- Help your organisation develop itself in relation to equality in sport
- Help your organisation develop its services in relation to equality in sport
- Evaluate and improve your organisation and its services in relation to equality in sport

Support the development and implementation of ethics, regulations, policies and requirements for sport
- Help to develop ethics, regulations and requirements for sport
- Investigate possible infringements of the ethics, regulations and requirements for sport
- Manage performance
- Make decisions on the evidence of possible infringements of ethics, regulations and requirements

Influence sport policy and decisions
- Identify policy issues relevant to your sport
- Develop a strategy to influence policy development and decision making
- Implement and evaluate your strategy to influence policies

Develop, organise and evaluate sport events
- Scope, plan and prepare for the event
- Obtain and organise the resources and support you need for the event
- Develop a programme for the event and secure the involvement of participants
- Manage the running of the event
- Evaluate the event

Develop, organise and evaluate sport competitions
- Develop a programme of sports competitions
- Organise a programme of sports competitions
- Evaluate a programme of sports competitions

Develop and sustain your sport organisation’s membership
- Develop a strategy for recruitment and retention
- Promote the benefits of being involved in your sport
- Establish and monitor membership systems

Deliver opportunities to increase participation in sport
- Identify target groups for increasing participation in sport
- Ensure your plan reaches the identified target groups
- Gather feedback and evaluate plans

The allocation of work activities and whether these activities are carried out by one person, a team of people or a wide array of people across the organisation will depend on the size of the organisation, the division of full/part-time work and full time/volunteer positions, and the national and local context.

OCCUPATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Sport administrators in different countries and contexts and at various stages of their career will have different levels of responsibility.

Some at the more junior level will report to a more senior administrator or manager, while senior sport administrators will have a number of staff or volunteers working for them while they themselves report to the board of the organisation.

The staff structure of sport administration organisations will vary on the mission, context and size of the organisation.
## SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED FOR SPORT ADMINISTRATORS

In support of the development of occupational standards some main generic skills and sport sector related knowledge can be identified within this descriptor.

### GENERIC SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Skill</th>
<th>Generic Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acting assertively</td>
<td>Negotiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activating</td>
<td>Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysing</td>
<td>Obtaining feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing</td>
<td>Out-of-the-box thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing competing interests</td>
<td>Persuading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>Presenting information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency planning</td>
<td>Prioritising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-making</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegating</td>
<td>Providing feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Questioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathising</td>
<td>Reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forecasting</td>
<td>Researching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td>Reviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing</td>
<td>Risk management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information management</td>
<td>Setting objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovating</td>
<td>Stress management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving others</td>
<td>Self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of foreign language</td>
<td>Supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Thinking strategically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
<td>Thinking with a focus on customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Thinking systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating</td>
<td>Valuing and supporting others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S2A Sport - Occupational Descriptor for Sport Administration
SPORT SECTOR RELATED KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge 1 - Structure of sport at the European, national and local levels

- The structure and function of government departments and their relationship/role in sport
- The roles, functions and interrelationships of different types of provision (including public, private and voluntary)
- The role of the education sector in providing sport opportunities
- Current EU and national government sport strategies, policies and guidance in sport
- How government can influence policies to encourage participation and elite sport
- The complex nature of key agencies in sport and their relationship with each other
- Funding for sport and how it is administered
- The structure and functions of sport federations
- The connection between international, national and regional/sub-regional infrastructure
- The local provision of sport facilities and activities through local authorities, sports clubs and other community providers.
- The local infrastructure and partnerships in sport and how they connect

Knowledge 2 - Background and major issues in provision of sport

- Key interventions that impacted on the development of sport and physical activity provision at EU and national levels
- The impact of major sporting events in terms of securing a sustainable sporting legacy
- The ways in which society affects sport and sport affects society
- The full range of benefits that sport offers society including, improved individual and community health, social cohesion, community development and economic benefit
- The significance of sport in addressing such issues as religious and cultural differences, anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, economic poverty and long term unemployment
Knowledge 3 - External policy impacting on the management of sport

- The social and situational circumstances that affect participation, e.g. income, age, life stage, social class, social climate, and perceived opportunity
- International, national and local political ideology and policy that influences sport policy and processes
- Equality issues, e.g. age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, social class and sporting ability
- Health, safety and welfare concerns in sport provision

Knowledge 4 - Sport facilities

- Different types of sport facilities and their uses
- The range of different types of competitions and events that take place in facilities
- Environmental conditions and equipment set-up appropriate to different types of events and competitions
- Different models for managing facilities

Knowledge 5 - Workforce development

- The role and importance of workforce development in sport
- The importance of continuing professional development for all members of staff to ensure the needs of different user groups are met
- Workforce development planning methods
- The use of occupational standards to support the professional development of people
- The issues relevant to the employment and deployment of volunteers, coaches and officials

ATTITUDES AND PERSONAL REQUIREMENTS

A sport administrator should display the following attitudes and behaviours:

- Take personal responsibility for making things happen
- Work towards a clearly defined vision of the future
- Show respect for the views and actions of others
- Seek to understand people’s needs and motivations
- Communicate clearly the value and benefits of a proposed course of action
- Work with people and organisations that can provide support for your work
- Recognise stakeholders’ needs and interests and manage these effectively
- Seek opportunities to improve performance
- Work to develop an atmosphere of professionalism and mutual support
● Develop knowledge, understanding, skills and performance in a systematic way
● Demonstrate awareness of your own values, motivations and emotions
● Seize opportunities presented by diversity in the sport industry
● Show cultural awareness and sensitivity
● Encourage others to take decisions autonomously, when appropriate

EMPLOYER ORGANISATIONS

Through the labour market intelligence activities for Step 1 of the 7 Step Model implemented in the S2A Sport project, the following types of organisations who employ sport administrators have been identified:

● Ministry responsible for sport
● European/international federation European/international network (umbrella organisation)
● National sport federation (national governing body)
● National sport body (e.g. Sports Council, National Olympic Committee, Paralympic Committee, Sport Confederation, Social Partner)
● Sport for all/grassroots organisation
● National, regional and local government
● Local or regional infrastructure for sport
● Sport club
EXAMPLES OF JOB TITLES

Very few people have the actual job title of “sport administrator”. Instead, it can be seen as a generic term to cover a wide range of occupations that take place in organisations responsible for the running of sport.

Some of the common job titles and positions within sport administration organisations, identified from the S2A Sport project research (see Doc 1 of the S2A Sport series “Research Report”), are:

- Administrative coordinator
- Administrative officer
- Administrative director
- Administrator
- Board member
- Chairman
- Chief executive
- Chief operating officer
- Coach education manager
- Coaching and development manager
- Competition manager
- Coordinator for EU funds and programs
- Deputy director
- Director
- Director of daily operations
- Director of development
- Director of education
- Director of finance
- Director of international relations
- European projects and legal affairs officer
- Executive assistant, PR and communications
- Executive director
- Federation development coordinator
- Fundraising manager
- General manager
- General secretary
- Head of administration
- Head of coaching
- Head of community sport
- Head of education
- Head of health and wellbeing
- Head of international affairs
- Head of marketing
- Head of research
- Head of sport and leisure
- Human resources manager
- In-house legal counsel
- International public policy advisor
- Manager
- Marketing manager
- Membership affairs manager
- National coach
- National development manager
- National team manager
- National technical director
- National technical officer
- Policy/strategy advisor
- President
- Project manager
- Public affairs officer
- Referee supervisor
- Research manager
Secretary General
Sport, health and inclusion manager
Sports development manager
Sports director
Strategic lead for policy
Technical director

Technical secretary
Tournament director
Venue manager
Vice chairman
Vice president
Workforce project manager
QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Jobs in sport administration are sought after positions and competition is high. The majority of workers in the sector have at least a Bachelor's degree, with many having a Master's degree or PhD.

There are not many specific qualifications in sport administration, so a good degree in subjects such as sport management or sport science would be the normal entry qualification.

Many sports administrators will have a background in sport in some capacity, as a player or coach, management experience in any sector will also be beneficial.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuous professional development (CPD) is important for people working as sport administrators. With changes in demands from governments, society and participants, it is vital for sport administrators to constantly update their skills and competencies. Often a needs analysis can be undertaken to identify on-going training opportunities for staff.

The S2A Sport project has shown that often sports administrators find it hard to identify relevant CPD courses, they also report that new training courses are required to improve in this fast changing and increasingly professional sector. CPD can take many forms from qualifications and short courses to online learning and more informal approaches. Learning or employment mobility also offers an excellent form of CPD where an employee can learn new skills through training or work experience abroad.

As part of the S2A Sport project, a pilot CPD training programme was developed and delivered to sport administrators from across Europe. It is hoped this will stimulate both the supply and demand for new CPD offerings for sport administrators.

CAREER PROGRESSION

Opportunities for promotion depend on the size and nature of the employing organisation. From junior roles, there may be opportunities to progress to a higher level sports administrator role, then potentially to a managerial position. Progress may include becoming a manager of a team, a development officer or manager, or progress to director level. Sometimes progress can include being recognised as an expert in the sector.

Staff with experience and a specialist background may find it easier to get recruited and to advance more quickly.

It may be possible to find career development opportunities through voluntary work or your own leisure time activities, where you can develop additional relevant skills and gain necessary practical experience.

In some cases, it may be necessary for career progression to move to another organisation in the sector, or even outside the sport sector as a career development pathway.

Some sport administrators work in a voluntary capacity, and their progression and advancement may take different forms that require the recognition of informal and non-formal learning.

Working as a sport administrator enables workers to gain good all-round knowledge about the sector and related fields and to build solid contacts. Some people use their experience as an entry point for future careers in other aspects of the sport industry or into other sectors.
IV

CONCLUSION
The occupational descriptor for sport administration developed through the S2A Sport project focuses on the generic job role of sport administrator and identifies the main occupational tasks, activities and responsibilities, as well as the required generic skills and sport sector related knowledge needed to perform in this role. It also provides information about continuous professional development, opportunities for promotion and career progression.

The descriptor has been developed using information collated through the labour market intelligence survey (1 - Research report) and from the analysis made within the occupational map (2 - Occupational Map for Sport Administration).

The content of this occupational descriptor has been used to inform the next steps of the process as the following documents in the S2A Sport series continue to look at workforce characteristics and competences (4&5 - Functional Map and Occupational Standards).

In addition, the occupational descriptor was used to build up the education and training strategies for sport administration, developed through documents 6 - Training Programme Handbook and Curriculum, and 7 - Guide to Quality Assurance and Sustainability.
BELGIUM
Université Catholique de Louvain

BULGARIA
National Sport Academy “Vassil Levski”

DENMARK
International Sport and Culture Association

FINLAND
Sport Institute of Finland

FRANCE
European Federation for Company Sport

ITALY
Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale

LITHUANIA
Mykolas Romeris University

SWITZERLAND
Tennis Europe

THE NETHERLANDS
Werkgeversorganisatie in de Sport

UK
EOSE Services Ltd

UK
University of Chester