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A LIFELONG LEARNING
STRATEGY FOR THE SPORT
AND ACTIVE LEISURE SECTOR

VSPORT 
STRATEGY FOR A COMPETENT WORKFORCE

1 | THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The Sport and Active Leisure sector has the potential to make a huge impact on the economy, the health of a nation and social cohesion.

This potential is being increasingly recognised by government at national and European level. Their expectations challenge the traditional models of delivery of sport and are bringing new business opportunities into a sector that has been dominated by voluntary and public sector led provision.

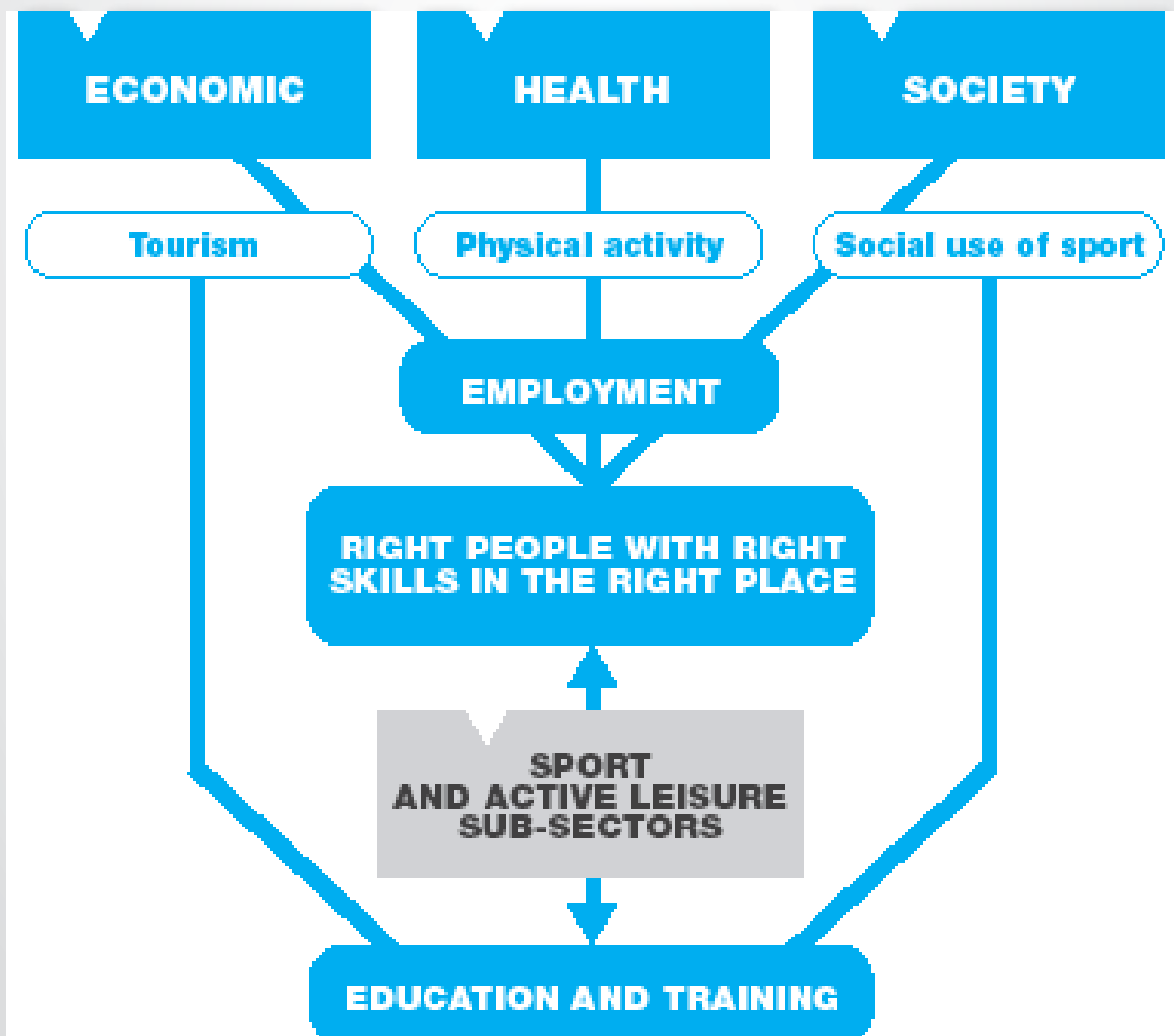
If the sector is to capitalise on these opportunities and meet these challenges, it has to continue to change and evolve. A key component is the workforce (paid and unpaid). It is a people facing sector and to deliver new and different opportunities for

everyone to participate in sport and physical activity then the sector must have a workforce with the right skills to lead and deliver to a new and expanding market.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy for Sport and Active Leisure provides a framework for the development of a strategic approach to ensure that vocational education, training and qualifications (VET system) exist to support the development of this workforce.

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

THE SPORT AND ACTIVE LEISURE SECTOR AND ITS POTENTIAL (EOSE)



2 | MAIN EDUCATION AND TRAINING CHALLENGES IN THE SPORT AND ACTIVE LEISURE SECTOR



To respond to these changes, there are a number of key issues in the field of education and employment which need to be considered if the sector is to achieve its potential and positively impact on individuals and communities:

- ✓ Employers need well trained employees able to match the requirements of more demanding customers and participants
- ✓ Courses and qualifications are often not regarded as appropriate by employers and sport federations
- ✓ The sector lacks a clear career structure showing how to enter and progress a career through the sector. This is needed in order to attract the best people and particularly to give graduates the opportunity to find employment in the sector
- ✓ There is poor communication and co-operation between the different stakeholders because of the fragmentation of the sector and the lack of organised contact between employers and the VET providers
- ✓ Sport training often sits outside the national qualification structure in many countries

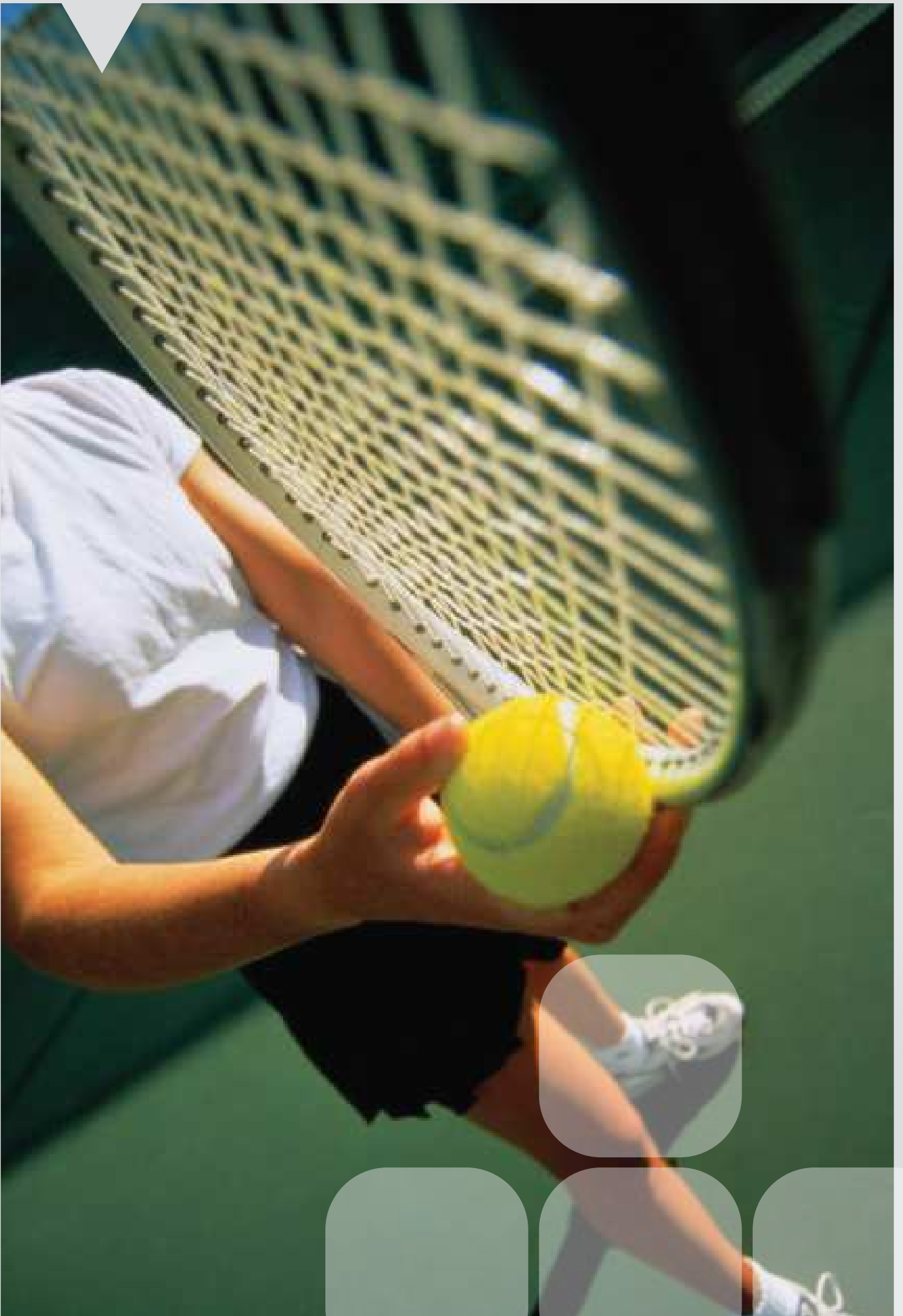
Consequently the sector is not delivering its potential as an economic and social driver.

3 | A RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING CHALLENGES : INTRODUCING THE LLL SPORT STRATEGY

EOSE has developed a co-ordinated response to education and training entitled the Lifelong Learning Strategy for the Sport and Active Leisure sector (LLL Sport Strategy).

The LLL Sport Strategy has been mainly produced in order to:

- ✓ Understand and anticipate realities, changes and future skills needs of the labour market
- ✓ Organise the sector in support of the European policies and strategic initiatives especially the European Qualification Framework (EQF), the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET)
- ✓ Promote a transparent and flexible education and training system with clear learning and career pathways
- ✓ Engage main stakeholders from the sector
- ✓ Facilitate the link between the worlds of education and employment
- ✓ Match education and training to the needs of the labour market
- ✓ Equip the workforce with the right skills and competences through fit for purpose qualifications and courses
- ✓ Facilitate the economic growth and social impact of the sector
Improve the recognition of competences and qualifications
- ✓ Support mobility, transparency and mutual trust of qualifications



4 | INTRODUCING EACH STEP OF THE LLL SPORT STRATEGY

This section provides practical guide to each of the 7 steps of the LLL Sport Strategy.

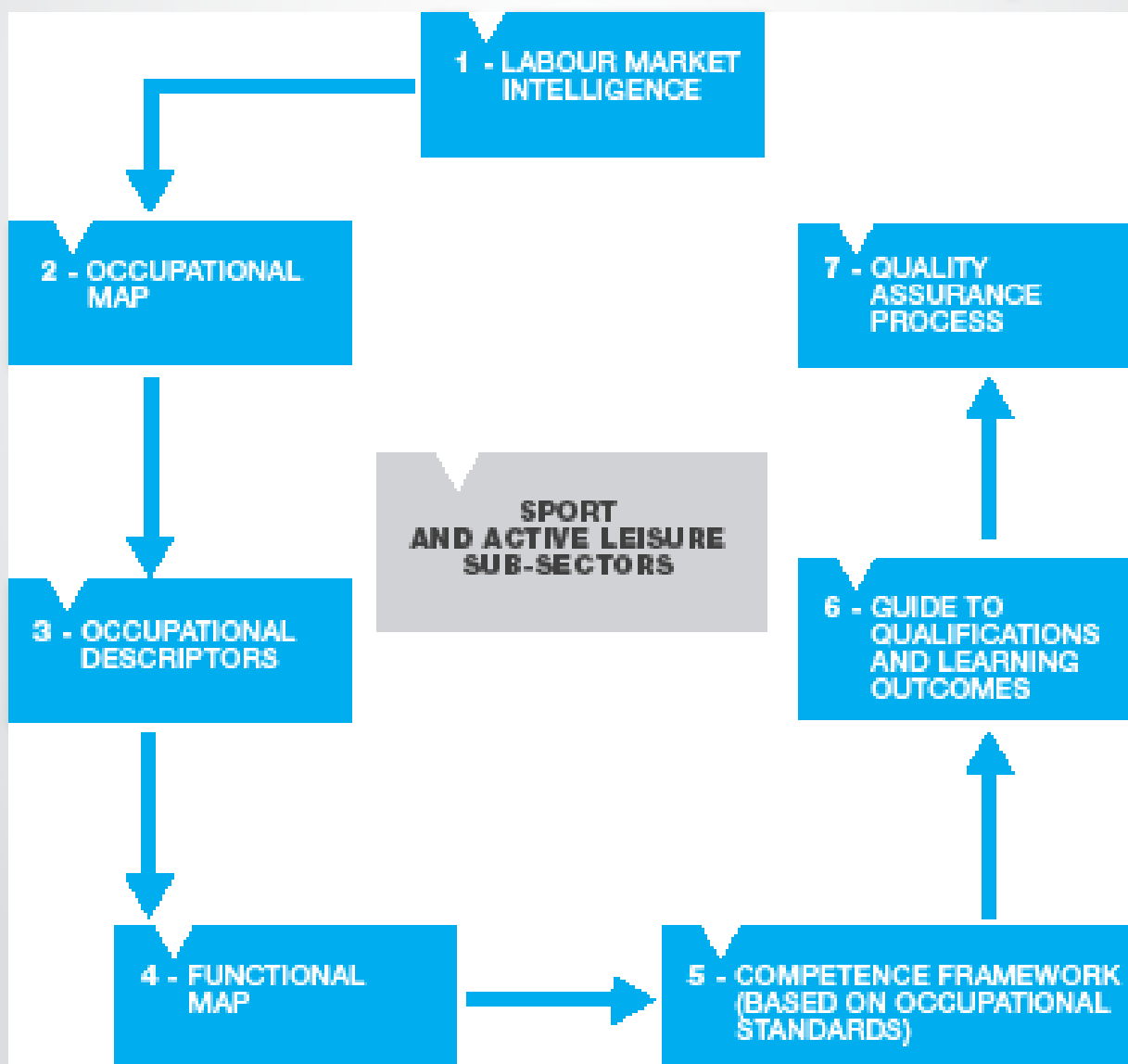
The LLL Sport Strategy has been designed to be flexible so that it can be used by a wide range of stakeholders and to achieve a variety of education or employment objectives in the sector.

The strategy offers a common and consistent approach but its implementation will be different depending on the national systems and the roles and needs of the stakeholders in each country.

It is important to note that the 7 steps model can be applied to the Sport and Active Leisure sector as a whole, to a sub-sector such as fitness or the outdoors, or to an individual sport such as Golf or Basketball etc. Also, the work can be carried out at the regional, national, European or International level.

By providing a common and consistent methodology, work conducted on a national or sub-sector basis can easily be compared across nations and sectors.

THE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY FOR THE SPORT AND ACTIVE LEISURE SECTOR (EOSE)



STEP 1 : LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE

The first step consists of conducting Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to collect data from various sources using a range of techniques to be able to understand the characteristics of the sector and its current labour market (paid and unpaid), to assess the potential for growth and change and to identify the priorities areas which:

- ✓ Have an impact on the economic growth and impact of the sector
- ✓ Relate to the government expectations and strategies (e.g. health, education, sport, economy)
- ✓ Correspond to the strongest needs of employers and the labour market
- ✓ Represent a significant percentage of the workforce
- ✓ Require new or increased skills

There are major components on which Labour Market Intelligence can focus:

✓ Where are people employed and who employs them? Economic and labour market information (e.g. numbers in employment, number of volunteers, size and type of employers, contribution to economic growth, key drivers, emerging markets, workforce characteristics such as type of contracts, satisfaction level etc)

✓ What are the key occupational roles in the sector? Occupational information (e.g. classifications of occupations that exist, career opportunities and pathways, identification of priorities such as skills gaps and shortages, etc)

✓ Employment demographics (e.g. age, gender, qualification, location of general population in relation to employment etc)

✓ Analysis of participation in sport and physical activity (e.g. who, how, where, frequency and trends)

This work can be carried out through secondary research e.g. through analysis of government statistics and/or through primary research e.g. industry questionnaires and focus groups.

The main use of this information is to describe the relationship between employers and occupations and to assess how well the labour market is functioning, the existing and emerging skill shortages and training requirements, the appropriateness of the existing VET system, and the prediction of current and future skills priorities.

This can be considered as the starting point for the development of occupational standards and qualifications or training programmes aimed at developing the priority occupations in the workforce.



LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE

- Understand the characteristics of the workforce
- Assess the current skill strengths and skills gaps in the labour market
- Identify the potential for growth



+ OCCUPATIONAL MAP

- Provides a concise and comprehensive overview of the sector
- Identify the key occupations and job roles
- Track the economic contribution of the sector, and impact on wider social agendas

STEP 2 : OCCUPATIONAL MAP

Step 2 is a natural progression from Step1 and all data collected about the labour market can be used to inform the Occupational Map. Both Steps can be combined to provide a comprehensive and concise overview of the sector, the employment related issues and the common job roles and key occupational areas.

An occupational map can be a report about an industry/sector, a sub-sector or an individual sport and could provide the following information :

- ✓ Background, history and purpose of the sector/sub-sector/sport
- ✓ Assessment of Government policy and interventions
- ✓ Level of participation and the make up of the participants

Contribution of the sector to economic growth and to wider agendas such as health, social inclusion, community development, regeneration and education

- ✓ Organisation of the sector : e.g. the organisational structure of the sector including number, range, type, size of employers and key stakeholders, and their roles and responsibilities.

- ✓ Types of occupations and job roles in the sector : e.g. details of the types of occupational activity, associated job roles and the main occupational groupings. Key characteristics of employment in the sector.

- ✓ People working in the sector : e.g. statistics on the size and characteristics of the workforce, including key demographics and geographical distribution. Employment patterns in the

sector – for example seasonality variations in employment, the prevalent modes of employment (full time, part time or casual), the extent of the volunteer workforce, the workforce profile including gender balance and typical age etc

- ✓ Trends and challenges affecting the workforce : an overview of the key drivers of change that have an influence on the workforce.

- ✓ Education and qualifications : a summary of the key qualifications pertinent to the workforce, both for entry to the profession and continued development.

- ✓ Opportunities for career progression : details of the main progression routes and career pathways.

The Occupational Map contributes to the context and background for the development of Occupational Standards and Education and Training strategies for a sector, a sub-sector or an occupation.



STEP 3 : OCCUPATIONAL DESCRIPTORS

Step 3 of the LLL Sport Strategy consists of developing occupational descriptors for the main occupations and job roles in the sector/sub-sector or individual sport identified within the Occupational Map. Organisations often use different job titles for roles that are essentially similar. The aim of this step is to identify this commonality.

The approach of the Sport and Active Leisure Sector is to develop, using various working methodologies (e.g. focus group), a simple document which looks similar to sample job description and typically includes:

- ▼ Occupation title
- ▼ Occupation description
- ▼ Occupation responsibilities
- ▼ Skills and Knowledge required
- ▼ Attitudes and personal requirements
- ▼ Qualifications and experience
- ▼ Continuous Professional Development
- ▼ Career progression

Occupational descriptors identify key tasks, skills and attributes which relate to a specific occupation as well as knowledge, qualifications and career routes, and therefore become a useful reference point for the development of occupational standards and qualifications and identifying career routes.

STEP 4 : FUNCTIONAL MAP

The Functional Map is a graphic representation that describes the work activities taking place across an occupational sector or a specific sport.

Indeed, Functional Maps may be developed with different initial levels:

- An occupational sector (e.g. Outdoors, Health and Fitness)
- A specific sport (e.g. Golf, Basketball, Tennis)
- A specific occupation (e.g. Coaches, Referees)

In other words, the Functional Map provides a complete breakdown of all functions or work activities that need to be carried out by individual members of staff.

The Functional Map begins by defining a "Key Purpose" for a particular sector or occupation and would normally expand through "Key Areas", "Key Roles" and "Key Functions", each level in more detail than the last – these are developed by asking what functions need to be performed in order for the previous function to be achieved.

These components can be described as follows :

- ✓ Key Purpose – summarising the overall 'mission' of the industry;
- ✓ Key Areas – describing large areas of work, often undertaken by whole groups of staff;
- ✓ Key Roles – describing major functions carried out by teams or individuals;
- ✓ Key Functions – describing the functions carried out by individuals.

Therefore, the more detailed part of the Functional Map lists the "key functions" of work that are carried out by individuals. It is these elements that provide the starting point for developing Occupational Standards and for identifying gaps in existing standards.

Functional maps set out a framework from which occupational standards can be drawn and developed but they are not the occupational standards themselves.

Example from the Functional Map for the Golf sector

KEY PURPOSE : To provide services that enhance the golf experience and enrich quality of life		
KEY AREA A : Develop the sport of golf and participant performance	KEY ROLE A1 : Contribute to the development of golf	KEY FUNCTION A11: Develop and maintain opportunities for participation and progression in golf



+ FUNCTIONAL MAP

- Visual representation of the work activities across the sector
- Implemented throughout the sector, from a sub sector, to an individual sport, to a specific occupation
- Includes a complete breakdown of all functions carried out by individuals
- Provides a starting point for the formulation of Occupational Standards



STEP 5 : COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK (BASED ON OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS)

The Competence Framework is made up of Occupational Standards which are units of competence which describe the skills and knowledge necessary to work in a sector.

The Occupational Standards are an extension of the Functional Map where each "key function" is simply broken down further to a level which describes what individuals in any occupation should be able to do, the standard they should achieve and the knowledge and understanding they need.

Occupational standards describe what needs to be achieved in the workplace and they are specifically related to employment whether this is in a paid or voluntary capacity.

The standards outline the minimum core competences, skills and knowledge required to carry out specific roles and should be flexible enough to allow individual European countries and training organisations to interpret and apply the model to their own National systems.

Occupational standards usually have a title then are divided in to performance criteria and knowledge and understanding. The following is an example of a standard title plus an example of a single performance criterion and knowledge statement:

Example of part of an Occupational Standard from the Golf sector

A21 Plan golf coaching sessions

Performance Criteria

1. Collect relevant information using appropriate methods of initial assessment

Knowledge and understanding

K1. Types of information which can be collected from participants to include experience, stage of development, impairments, medical conditions, aims of the overall programme, learning styles, evaluations and action plans of previous sessions, and golf facilities needed for the sessions

The primary purpose of the Competence Framework is to set a benchmark of competence, skills and knowledge by which Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers can measure their qualifications and training courses to demonstrate that they are producing individuals with the correct minimum competence to enter the labour market.

The Competence Framework can also be used to :

- ✓ Define job roles of the workforce
- ✓ Develop and amend job descriptions
- ✓ Assess the skills of the staff
- ✓ Identify training and development needs
- ✓ Design and develop training programmes and training materials
- ✓ Assess effectiveness of the training
- ✓ Define fit for purpose qualifications
- ✓ Develop training programmes

Standards can also be used to shape employment practices and to underpin industry structures such as registers of professionals.

COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

- Made up of Occupational Standards units of competence
- These units describe the skills necessary to complete any given job role
- Occupational Standards outline the minimum level of core competences, knowledge and skills required
- Sets a benchmark by which training organisations can measure their qualifications and training courses
- Ensures training providers provide individuals with Labour Market relevant skills and competences

STEP 6 : GUIDE TO QUALIFICATIONS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Step 6 is the point in the strategy where there is cross over from the area of employment to the area of education. The guide to Qualifications and Learning Outcomes describes the guidance from the sector to education and training providers and national qualifications authorities concerning the development of learning programmes which help people reach the competence required for employment in the sector (matching the requirements in the occupational standards).

Learning outcomes can be defined as “the set of competence, skills and knowledge an individual acquires and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process” (CEDEFOP, 2003).

In addition to guidance on the development of learning outcomes in line with EQF and ECVET principles the learning outcomes framework should also provide guidance on teaching, credit and assessment strategies.

In order to meet the requirements of this strategy, education providers should develop units of learning outcomes, teaching and assessment strategies in line with the occupational standards. The standards do not provide a rigid structure for the design of learning programmes as this is the responsibility of the provider. However the standards provide a reference point

which can be matched to ensure a link to the labour market and aid employability of students.

The guide to Qualifications and Learning Outcomes should not only focus on qualifications within the VET system, there should also be an emphasis on guidance for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which is a vital part of the learning portfolio in a sector, often aimed at individuals already in work. Learning outcomes and qualifications which support the sport sector can be from the vocational or higher education area.

If education and training, through appropriate learning outcomes match the occupational standards and needs of the sector then the sector will achieve a competent and qualified workforce enabling the sector to achieve its potential at the heart of European society.

STEP 7 : QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

When looking at a sector as a whole, it is essential that there is trust and confidence from all stakeholders in the education and skills development system.

This trust is achieved through quality assurance. The first stage in quality assurance is the issuing of a certificate to an individual who has completed a training/education programme and has been assessed to ensure that they have achieved the learning outcomes to the defined standards. Providers issuing certificates need to be subject to a quality assurance process that can be trusted to ensure consistency.

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).

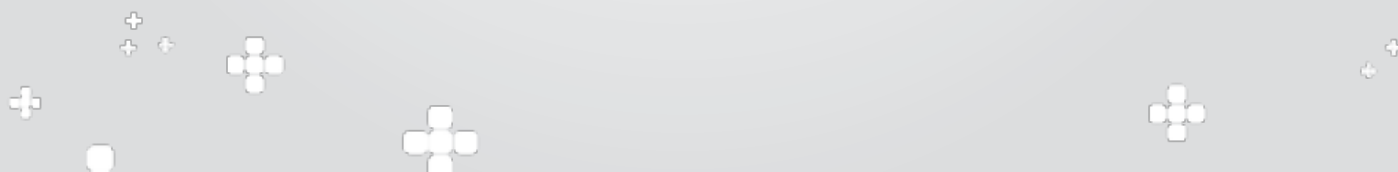
This process can be considered as crucial in order to ensure the efficient implementation of VET systems. It is directly related to the “verification” and “accreditation” of qualifications being delivered by training or education providers. The monitoring of Quality Assurance is concerned with promoting confidence amongst employers, professionals, providers and the public that a programme of learning has met an agreed standard. It is particularly important that it can be proven, via a system of 3rd party verification, that providers and their qualifications

are meeting the standards and expectations of the sector as defined in the occupational standards.

At the European level, the Member States and the European Commission are establishing a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQAVET) to promote and monitor continuous improvement of national systems of vocational education and training (VET).

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. It is also possible and desirable to put in place quality assurance and accreditation systems within the sport and active leisure sector itself at the national or European level.

Quality assurance is the final step of the LLL Sport Strategy and ensures 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.





GUIDE TO QUALIFICATIONS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Guidance from the sector to education and training providers
- Provides a reference point between to ensure there is a link between education and employment
- Allows training providers to create units of learning in line with Occupational Standards
- Provides a guide to teaching, credit and assessment strategies



The list of activities below is not exhaustive and might need to be adapted depending of the realities and main challenges facing the stakeholder. It is only a sample of possible activities that might be implemented through some of the Steps of the LLL Sport Strategy.

✓ CONDUCT LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH

Data on the size of the workforce, number of paid and volunteer positions, skills gaps etc

✓ DESCRIBE MAIN OCCUPATIONS

Benchmark for describing main jobs such as coach, official, administrator etc

✓ PROVIDE GUIDELINES ON CAREER PATHWAYS

Information advising people how to access and progress in paid and voluntary position

✓ DEVELOP OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

Competences, skills and knowledge needed and expected by employers to perform in a particular job

✓ DESIGN FIT FOR PURPOSE QUALIFICATIONS AND COURSES

Connecting the education and training to the content of the occupational standards

✓ MAKE LINKS TO THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (EQF)

Qualifications and courses to be linked to EQF to support mobility and transparency

✓ IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

Adapted processes to determine whether a training programme or qualification delivers competent individuals as identified in the occupational standards



EUROPEAN LEVEL

EUROPEAN UNION

- ✓ Initiate and increase the mobility of labour in line with EU policy
- ✓ Reduce the rate of unemployment and increase the productivity of the workforce
- ✓ Improve quality and transparency of education and training
- ✓ Facilitate the access to education and training systems
- ✓ Link the worlds of education and employment
- ✓ Promote active citizenship

EUROPEAN SPORT FEDERATIONS

- ✓ Be seen as an exemplar Sport Federation in Europe
- ✓ Understand characteristics of the labour market
- ✓ Provide a qualified and competent workforce with the right skills
- ✓ Ensure flexible education system with fit for purpose qualifications
- ✓ Deliver lifelong learning opportunities (CPD)
- ✓ Provide clear information on access and career pathways
- ✓ Make possible the mobility of labour
- ✓ Attract more people taking part and having good experience

NATIONAL LEVEL

Each country in Europe has a particular system in place with various stakeholders but without being exhaustive we can underline that the implementation of the LLL Sport Strategy will have the following expected benefits on each of them.

GOVERNMENTS

- ✓ Initiate and increase the mobility of labour
- ✓ Reduce the rate of unemployment and increase the productivity of the workforce
- ✓ Improve quality and transparency of education and training
- ✓ Facilitate the access to education and training systems
- ✓ Link the worlds of education and employment
- ✓ Promote active citizenship
- ✓ Opportunity to ensure public investment can be made in a fit for purpose qualifications that lead to employment and sport economic development

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITIES

- ✓ Ensure the development of qualifications and training programmes based on learning outcomes, level, and credit in line with NQF and EQF principles
- ✓ Support a Sector led Qualifications Framework
- ✓ Develop employer's specific training programmes

NATIONAL SPORT MOVEMENT

- ✓ Gain enhanced recognition as a significant sector/sport
- ✓ Provide support for large and small federations
- ✓ Ensure dialogue between organisations and speak with one voice at government level
- ✓ Organise education across sports and develop training pathways

EMPLOYERS

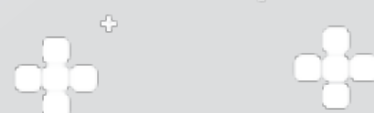
- ✓ Develop a highly trained and effective workforce and improve company performance
- ✓ Ensure the workforce (paid/unpaid) is professional and competent to carry out responsibilities
- ✓ Identify the skills need in the workforce and improve the current/future workforce
- ✓ Assess the skills of the current workforce and implement effective systems for, recruitment, assessment, and training
- ✓ Reduce turnover and recruitment costs by retaining highly skilled individuals
- ✓ Develop occupational descriptors identifying key skills for a particular job
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Ensure international portability of qualifications
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Improve career advancement prospects and develop personal training plans
- ✓ 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



7 | WHY ENGAGE WITH THE LLL SPORT STRATEGY?

The success of the LLL Sport Strategy strongly depends on the involvement of the main stakeholders in the sector's national and European education and employment process. The different categories of stakeholders listed will have a key role to play in addressing the challenges that the Sport and Active Leisure sector is facing.

EOSE members and ambassadors are positioned to encourage and support the development of that partnership at the European and national level.

The approach can have a positive impact on the sector as a whole and the key stakeholders within it.

The VSPORT+ team would be pleased to work with Governments, National Qualification Authorities, Sport federations, Olympic Committees, employers, education and training providers and employees to provide further information about the LLL Sport Strategy and support its transfer and implementation to provide changes at the European and/or national level.



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