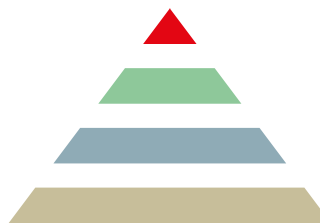




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# PEAK

Policy, Evidence and Knowledge in Coaching

# European Sport Coaching Policy Framework

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## About the PEAK project

PEAK – Policy, Evidence And Knowledge in coaching is an Erasmus+ project that was conducted from 2019–2021, involving a consortium of 8 expert partners: International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE), International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), the German Sport University Cologne, European Elite Athletes Association (EEAA), Finnish Olympic Committee, Sport Ireland Coaching, Swiss Federal Institute of Sport, and the Foundation of Sport Education and Information, Estonia.

The primary objective of the PEAK project was to promote and support good governance in sport by delivering a set of coaching policy recommendations for use by national and European sport federations, coaching bodies and governments.

Six guiding questions formulate the foundation of this objective, and give shape and focus to the project:

1. What roles, responsibilities, and statuses does coaching currently hold in the overall sport strategies of national governments within the European Union?
2. What policies, programmes and decision-making processes currently exist in European countries to develop and enhance coaching systems; what regulates coaching to improve its quality and ensure the safety of all participants in sport, especially children?
3. Do European and National Sport Federations have policies and programmes that aim to regulate or stimulate coach development?
4. What are the best practices currently available for the inclusion of coach development in an organization's strategic plan based on which criteria?
5. What evidence-based strategies and practices are available to increase opportunities for women in coaching?
6. What evidence-based strategies and practices are needed to enhance the effectiveness of good governance measures in the practice of sport coaching?

*Current policies are lacking a guiding framework. The regulations of coaching, although increasing amongst EU countries, is very heterogeneous. The goal of the following European Sport Coaching Policy Framework is to provide guidance to sport federations, coaching bodies, and governments in the establishment of a strong foundation of policies to promote and enhance effective coaching.*



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# Chapter 1: Introduction

by Karen Petry and Louis Moustakas

There has been significant policy work conducted in sport coaching policy in recent years, but these policies lack a guiding framework. With sport's tradition of autonomous management and self-governance, formal sport policy processes became established later than most other sectors (Geeraert, Alm, & Groll, 2014). The area of coaching is no exception, and investigations of sports coaching policy or good governance have historically been limited (Pierre, 2013).

Most notably, the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) has worked on mapping out different layers and components of the sport coaching system through its European Sport Coaching Framework. Here, the coaching system is a complex network of processes and mechanisms, including the recruitment, education, development, deployment, employment, and recognition of coaches. In short, the sport coaching system is defined as „the people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context“ (Lara-Bercial, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017, p. 17). Yet, knowledge of the system and its policies in Europe and how to enhance or develop them remains limited. This lack of knowledge, however, does not signify a lack of importance.

European sport coaches have immense responsibilities in terms of sporting and societal development. Sport coaching is a vast sector that directly touches millions of children, youth, and adults throughout Europe. Estimates suggest that there are between 5 and 9 million coaches across the EU (Lara-Bercial, North, Hämäläinen et al., 2017). For comparison, in 2013, there were about 3.2 million primary education teachers in Europe (Eurostat, 2016). Furthermore, these coaches support sport participation and performance and are increasingly called upon to play roles supporting non-formal education and social cohesion. Given the number and reach of sport coaches, as well as their role in shaping and educating youth and adults on the continent, it is imperative to better understand the overall policy landscape in which coaches operate.



Photograph: Courtesy of Monkey Business Images

Against this background, the PEAK project is an essential step in strengthening the policy foundations of sports coaching in Europe. The project recognises that due to the different sport systems in Europe, standardised and universal policy recommendations cannot always be developed. Nonetheless, using rigorous theoretical grounding and evidence, the project maps current policies and puts forth a selection of good practice recommendations and indicators for coaching policy in Europe.

Before delving into recommendations for the sector, it is crucial to understand what policy is, how it is created and how we generated the recommendations. In the next chapter, policy and policymaking will be explored in more depth.

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## Chapter 2: The policy making process

by Karen Petry and Louis Moustakas

Despite the omnipresence of the term, *policy*, there is no universal definition for *policy* in academic or governmental literature (European Commission, 2017). Despite the absence of a widely adopted definition, from the outset, we can nonetheless distinguish between two distinct but related concepts: policymaking and policy.

Policymaking is the process whereby a vision is translated into concrete programmes and actions to deliver specified outcomes. Policymaking, then, establishes what needs to be done and works through how to do so. More broadly, the policymaking process includes how challenges are identified and conceptualised, how they are brought to the relevant governing body for solutions, how alternatives are formulated, how policies are selected and implemented, evaluated and revised (Sabatier, 2019).

The policymaking process can be theoretically conceptualised as a cycle involving many stages. Generally, the cycle includes the emergence and definition of a challenge, the appraisal of potential response options, the selection of options and formulation of policy, the implementation of policy, and finally, the monitoring and adjustment of that policy, as displayed in figure 1 (European Commission, 2017; Griffiths & Leach, 2018).

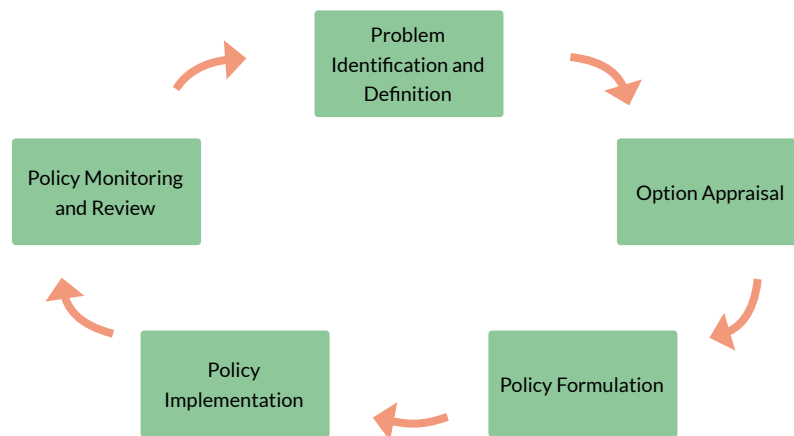


Figure 1. Overview of Policy-Making Cycle (European Commission, 2017; Griffiths & Leach, 2018)

Realistically, however, the policymaking process is rarely as streamlined and straightforward as displayed in the cycle. Each element in the cycle encounters numerous challenges and barriers. It can be challenging to define the problem precisely, and different interest groups may seek to define it in different ways (Griffiths & Leach, 2018). Time or methodological constraints may limit option appraisal, whereas formulating and implementing a policy depends on the buy-in of several stakeholders and the availability of resources (Griffiths & Leach, 2018). Policy implementation can be further affected by how individuals or organisations interpret a given policy, and analysis often reveals that a policy can „mean more than one thing“.

Policy, therefore, is the result of this process. It is the specific course of action chosen by an organisation or government to facilitate the achievement of a specific objective (Friedrich, 1963; Rose, 1969). Nabukneya (2005) summarises and combines several existing definitions and proposes that policy can be viewed as „a purposive course of action followed by a set of actor(s) to guide and determine present and future decisions, with an aim of realising goals“ (p. 55). Regardless of the specific definition used, policy includes a combination of laws, regulations, funding, and other actions followed to achieve a specific set of goals.

If properly defining policy is difficult, defining and identifying good policy is even more complex. As Scartascini, Stein and Tommasi (2008) note, a universal set of „right“ policies does not exist, and „what might work at one point in time in a given country might not work in a different place or the same place at another time“.

Using current literature from the broader (sport) policy field along with extensive coaching-specific data, the basics of good coaching policy in Europe can be established. Indeed, there is growing recognition of the need to provide tools for sport policymakers to benchmark policies against a set of good practices. For example, the Sports Governance Observer and the Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) provide guidance for good governance and elite sport, respectively.

Specifically, an extensive literature review focusing on a number of relevant sub-topics was conducted. Twenty-six European country experts mapped out their national sport coaching systems. Based on this, a set of recommendations and associated indicators were developed. Following the development of the draft recommendations and indicators, an extensive consultation process with relevant experts was undertaken. First, several topical experts were engaged in one-on-one interviews to source their feedback and experience related to the wording and relevance of the recommendations and indicators. With this feedback, recommendations were once again revised for completeness and consistency. These revised recommendations formed the basis of an online expert survey. The expert survey assessed the value of each recommendation, indicator, and source for further open feedback. Finally, the retained indicators were then revised and, in view of the anticipated design of the self-assessment tool, edited as needed to ensure consistency.

This approach was taken not only for its rigour but also because it allowed the PEAK project investigators to actively consult with a broad range of stakeholders from the European sport sector. This consultation helped PEAK gain crucial insights and feedback that actively secured the buy-in of key individuals across the sector by integrating their voices and input into the final product.

It is clear that the coaching sector can benefit from the kind of policy model developed through the PEAK project. Coaching is an essential part of the overall sport system, and coaches directly touch the lives of millions of individuals each year. The policy around such a crucial sector should not simply be left to chance. Ultimately, recommendations put forth by the PEAK project can help organisations involved in coaching analyse, reflect, and improve the components of their coaching policies.

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## Chapter 3: The PEAK Coaching Policy Recommendations

by Louis Moustakas and John Bales

The Coaching Policy Framework is focused upon two types of organizations:

1. the national agency responsible for sport development in a country, which may be a government department, a sport confederation, or a National Olympic Committee (NOC). These organizations are responsible for establishing broad national sport policies and funding.
2. sport federations responsible for development of specific sport disciplines, including the establishment of the federation's policies and programs.

The governmental department or sport confederation/NOC provides national leadership to the sport system and, from a policy-setting perspective, sets top-down direction intended to meet national goals. These central organizations look for public support in creating new policies, and key partners to implement their policies – often as a condition of funding – so, sport federations with close links to clubs, athletes and coaches, are important contributors in the success of policy.

### Goal: a policy foundation for a highly evolved coaching system

The goal of building a policy foundation for coaching is that countries and federations have highly evolved coaching systems that foster the development of coaching leadership at all stages of the athlete pathway.

Figure 1 represents an idealized model of the evolution of a country's or sport federation's coaching system, from an unstructured and undeveloped starting point to a highly evolved system that promotes and supports effective and ethical coaching.

In an unstructured situation, coaching development is not addressed in an organized or systematic manner with very limited programs or support for coaches. At the emerging level, programs have been initiated, while at the mature level there are well-established national programs in place. The highly evolved system features multi-faceted coaching programs and specific coaching policies designed to meet the needs of athletes, coaches, clubs, and federations.

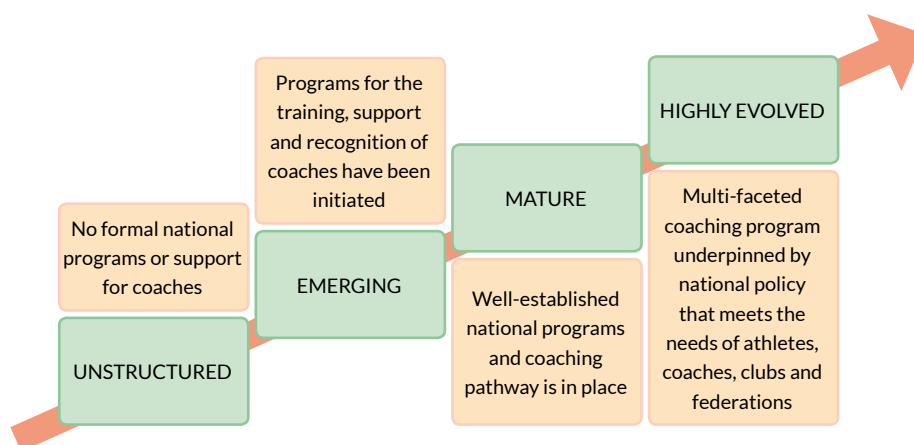


Figure 1. Coaching system maturity, adapted from Penny Crisfield, ICCE

## PEAK Recommendations

Based on research and consultation undertaken within the PEAK project, the following nine recommendations present a foundation for the development of a comprehensive coaching system by a country or national sport federation.

- 1. Definition of Coaching:** Implement a formal or legal, nationally-recognised definition of coaching, specifying the exact sub-sectors to which the definition applies.
- 2. Responsible Organization(s):** Clearly define an organisation (or group of organisations) responsible for developing, promoting and managing coaching in the country.
- 3. Coach Registry and Research:** Implement a national register or database of coaches in your country and ensure ongoing research into coaching.
- 4. Coach Education and NQF Alignment:** Ensure quality of coach education programmes in your country that align with your National Qualification Framework.
- 5. Safe sport (applied to coaching):** Implement safeguarding policies and programs to prevent harm and help ensure everyone in sport has a positive sport experience.
- 6. Coach licensing:** Implement a national, multi-sport licensing system for coaches that actively supports coach development in your country.
- 7. Support for coaches:** Implement mechanisms in your country to support volunteer and paid coaches.
- 8. Women-in-Coaching:** Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support women in coaching.
- 9. Diversity in Coaching:** Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support under-represented groups in coaching (e.g., sex, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, religious beliefs, etc).

### Assessing the status and gaps in coaching development policies: the self-assessment scorecard

The following chapters provide information and good practice examples for each of the nine recommendation areas. These can be used to support and inspire the development of your national coaching system.

A self-assessment scorecard is offered, based on a list of indicators related to each recommendation, that can help with the identification of potential strengths and weaknesses within your coaching system, and to make plans for future improvement and development.

Based on the total score, you can place your national coaching system on the coaching system maturity continuum presented above. For simplicity, each recommendation is given an equal weight that can be converted to a score of 100, allowing for a maximum total of 900 points. First, each recommendation receives a simple score based on initial answers. Then, those scores are converted into a score out of 100. These weighted scores are added together to reflect the status of the overall system. The complete scoring breakdown is below.

Answer	Yes	Partially/In Progresss	No
Points	2	1	0

Recommendation	Maximum Points (National)	Weighted Points (National)	Maximum Points (Federation)	Weighted Points (Federation)
1. Definition of Coaching	10	(Your points/10) * 100	4	(Your points/4) * 100
2. Responsible Organisations	8	(Your points/8) * 100	10	(Your points/10) * 100
3. Registry and Research	8	(Your points/8) * 100	18	(Your points/18) * 100
4. Education and Alignment	24	(Your points/24) * 100	28	(Your points/28) * 100
5. Safe Sport	12	(Your points/12) * 100	22	(Your points/22) * 100
6. Licensing	14	(Your points/14) * 100	8	(Your points/8) * 100
7. Support for coaches	10	(Your points/10) * 100	18	(Your points/18) * 100
8. Women in coaching	20	(Your points/20) * 100	14	(Your points/14) * 100
9. Diversity in coaching	18	(Your points/18) * 100	16	(Your points/16) * 100
Total	124	900		900

Level	Unstructured	Emerging	Mature	Highly Evolved
Score	0–225 pts	226–450 pts	451–675 pts	676+ pts

# Chapter 4: The First Step – a working Definition of Coaching

by John Bales and Ladislav Petrovic

## PEAK Recommendation #1: Definition of Coaching

**“Implement a formal or legal, nationally-recognised definition of coaching, specifying the exact sub-sectors to which the definition applies.”**

Description: Countries should develop a clear definition of coaching, including the exact sub-sectors to which the definition applies (e.g., competitive sport, recreation sport, fitness, outdoors) as well as a description of the characteristics of a coach that differentiates coaching from related occupations (physical educator, instructor, etc.). The definition should be recognised within the country’s sport system, for example, by the appropriate government agency, sport confederation or Olympic committee.

### 1. Introduction

The starting point for building a policy framework for the enhancement of coaching practice is a working definition of coaching. This chapter provides examples of current definitions that are in use, and challenges organizations to go beyond a basic definition to address the need for clarity of the body of knowledge and scope of practice as is common in other professions.

### 2. Current status

The PEAK Mapping and Good Practice Analysis (McGeehin and Harrison 2020 pg 3) describes the status related to European countries defining coaching:

“While no country has the same definition as another, a strong theme is that coaches are experts/specialists in their field of progressing sport in a range of environments and with a variety of people. Six countries did not have a definition of coaching but of those that did, two thirds had a requirement that the coaches be qualified to coach whether they were working in a paid or unpaid capacity.”

Examples:

- **Ireland** – Coaching is a process that provides guidance, feedback, and direction to empower participants or performers to achieve their goals in their chosen sport/physical activity.
- **Germany** – A coach (trainer) is the person who is planning, offering, and leading sports-specific coaching in a club and supervises the athletes in competition. An instructor offers multiple sport activities. With regards to the skill level, both the coach and the instructor are recognized equally, and both acquire the same qualification levels, except the A-level and graduate study diploma, which can only be acquired by coaches.
- **Portugal** – The activity of coaching sports for the purposes of this law comprises the training and competitive orientation of sports practitioners, as well as the technical direction of a sporting activity, exercised: a) as an exclusive or principal profession, linked to remuneration; or b) on a regular basis, seasonal or occasional, irrespective of whether the coach receives remuneration or not”. Law 40/2012
- **Croatia** – A coach is a person who plans and prepares athletes for competitions, organises recreational activities and gives sports lessons.
- **Bulgaria** – According to the Physical Education and Sports Act, coach/instructor is a person who performs



teaching and training in sports or who provides coaching services in the field of sport and is entered in the register of coaching staff.

The International Sport Coaching Framework (ICCE, 2013) defines coaching as: ‘a process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development’.

This definition grew out of the European AEHESIS project (Petry 2006) that reviewed the European qualification systems for coaches, and proposed that under the professional area of sport coaching (coaching a sport) there are two standard occupations:

- i) Coaches of participation-oriented sportspersons, that includes coaches of beginners (child, junior, adult), and of participation/non-competitive sportspersons (child, junior, adult).
- ii) Coaches of competition-oriented athletes, that includes coaches of talent-identified/competitive athletes (child, junior, adult) and of full-time/high performance athletes.

The European Sport Coaching Framework (Lara-Bercial, et al, 2017) reaffirms the International Sport Coaching Framework definition and notes that it “emphasizes coaches’ ongoing nurturing and educational support of participants and the notable signs of progress expected as a result of that experience.”

The EU Expert Group on skills and human resources development in sport also accepts the following definition: “Coaches are the persons who plan and deliver sports training, by applying demonstrable skills and knowledge for performance, recreation or health goals in a safe manner” (Council of the European Union, 2017).



Photograph: Courtesy of Benjamin Eagle

### **3. Lessons from other professions: Bodies of knowledge and standards of practice**

The definition of coaching used by a country or federation is the first step in establishing boundaries for the position, in identifying the unique territory for which the coach is responsible. In a highly evolved system, the definition is supported by a body of knowledge for coaching, which details the knowledge and skills needed to practice as a coach, and/or the scope and standards of practice. This section describes these types of documents and can be of interest to those organizations seeking progress towards the professional recognition of coaching. Such documents have multiple uses, not only clearly delineating the limits of coaching, but also providing a basis for coach education, certification, quality assurance and performance appraisal systems.

The body of knowledge is core to the definition of a profession:

- “A unique body of knowledge is a foundation for attaining the respect, recognition, and power granted by society to a fully developed profession and scientific discipline” (Butcher 2006, p. 116).
- “A profession’s BOK is its common intellectual ground—it is shared by everyone in the profession regardless of employment or engineering discipline. The Engineering BOK, as used in this report, is defined as the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to enter practice as a professional engineer in responsible charge of engineering activities that potentially impact public health, safety, and welfare.” (National Society of Professional Engineers 2013)

The American Nurses Association provides an example of a profession’s definition and standards of practice. It defines nursing as “the protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities, prevention of illness and injury, facilitation of healing, alleviation of suffering through the diagnosis and treatment of human response, and advocacy in the care of individuals, families, groups, communities, and populations.” (ANA 2015. P7) and divides its standards of practice into nursing process and professional performance components (shown below). See [www.lindsey.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/Nursing/img/ANA-2015-Scope-Standards.pdf](http://www.lindsey.edu/academics/majors-and-programs/Nursing/img/ANA-2015-Scope-Standards.pdf) for full details.

### The Standards of Practice

These standards describe a *competent level of nursing practice* demonstrated by the critical thinking model known as the **nursing process**; its six components correspond to these standards.

Standard	Nursing Process Component
Standard 1	Assessment
Standard 2	Diagnosis
Standard 3	Outcomes Identification
Standard 4	Planning
Standard 5	Implementation
Standard 6	Evaluation

### The Standards of Professional Performance

These standards describe a *competent level of behavior in the professional role* appropriate to their education and position.

Standard	Professional Performance
Standard 7	Ethics
Standard 8	Culturally Congruent Practice
Standard 9	Communication
Standard 10	Collaboration
Standard 11	Leadership
Standard 12	Education
Standard 13	Evidence-based Practice and Research
Standard 14	Quality of Practice
Standard 15	Professional Practice Evaluation
Standard 16	Resource Utilization
Standard 17	Environmental Health

- Application to Coaching

Is there a unique body of knowledge for coaching that defines the area that can be used to establish standards and curricula? Some university degree programs that are labeled as coaching degrees are really sport science programs, covering the standard sport and exercise sciences without dealing with unique knowledge and skills required to be an effective coach. SHAPE America in the United States has developed *National Standards for Sports Coaches* that identifies 42 standards across 7 core responsibilities. (SHAPE America 2019 and Gano-Overway, et al., 2020)

These core responsibilities are:

- 1. Set Vision, Goals and Standards for Sport Program**

Coaches develop a clearly defined philosophy and vision.

- 2. Engage in and Support Ethical Practices**

Coaches model and teach ethical behavior.

- 3. Build Relationships**

Coaches build skills to communicate, collaborate, educate and support all stakeholders in a program.

- 4. Develop a Safe Sport Environment**

Coaches create an emotionally and physically safe sport environment.

- 5. Create a Positive and Inclusive Sport Environment**

Coaches promote physical, psychological and social benefits for athletes and encourage sport participation.

- 6. Conduct Practices and Prepare for Competition**

Coaches plan, teach, assess and adapt in order to conduct quality sport practices and prepare for competition.

- 7. Strive for Continuous Improvement**

Coaches continually improve through self-reflection, mentorship, professional development, evaluation, and self-care.

Below are examples of the standards within core responsibility #4, “Develop a Safe Sport Environment”. There is also additional documentation describing the resources and research that support each standard.

**Standard 12: Create a respectful and safe environment which is free from harassment and abuse.**

Sport coaches treat athletes and all program personnel with respect. They also use their personal and official power in a responsible manner to reduce the potential for and report abuse and/or sexual harassment. Sport coaches are proactive in preventing bullying and/or hazing behaviour on the part of the athletes, staff, or spectators.

**Standard 13: Collaborate with program directors to fulfil all legal responsibilities and risk management procedures associated with coaching.**

Sport coaches understand the legal responsibilities of their position. Sport coaches identify and minimize potential risks based on sound risk management practices.

**Standard 14: Identify and mitigate physical, psychological, and sociocultural conditions that predispose athletes to injuries.**

Sport coaches are aware of how health status, body structure, physical conditions, and periods of growth can predispose athletes to common injuries specific to the sport. Sport coaches are aware that an athlete’s lack of sleep, fatigue, poor nutrition, and/or emotional state could warrant a change in practice plans to avoid injury.

**Standard 15: Monitor environmental conditions and modify participation as needed to ensure the health and safety of participants.**

Sport coaches follow standards set forth by national safety organizations and/or local/state laws with regard to monitoring environmental conditions (i.e., facilitation of hydration) to modify or stop play. Sport coaches work with qualified sport medicine professionals to monitor environmental conditions such as heat, cold or lightening.

**Standard 16: Reduce potential injuries by instituting safe and proper training principles and procedures.**

Sport coaches implement safe training procedures. They ensure safe facilities and equipment, institute safe practice procedures, and supervise athletes during practice. Sport coaches recognize the biomechanical factors that underlie the causes of acute and chronic injuries relative to their sport and follow proper physiological training principles to avoid overtraining or injury.

**Standard 17: Develop awareness of common injuries in sport and provide immediate and appropriate care within scope of practice.**

Sport coaches are trained in CPR/first aid and concussion awareness and prevention. In response to an injury, sport coaches activate the emergency action plan. They also respond to the injury and/or refer the athlete to proper healthcare professionals.

**Standard 18: Support the decisions of sports medicine professionals to help athletes have a healthy return to participation following an injury.**

Sport coaches work with sports medicine professionals to ensure a successful return to full participation following injury. Sport coaches will provide a supportive environment that helps the injured athlete maintain social interactions during rehabilitation and address psychological issues with return to participation (e.g., self-confidence, motivation, fear of injury, etc.).

**Standard 19: Model and encourage nutritional practices that ensure the health and safety of athletes.**

Sport coaches use sound nutritional practices (i.e., research-based, proven safe and effective) with their athletes and in their own lives to promote a healthy lifestyle. They will promote dietary habits that fuel the athlete in a safe and healthy manner and encourage a healthy body image. Sport coaches are proactive in identifying potential eating disorders and referring athletes for appropriate professional assistance.

**Standard 20: Provide accurate information about drugs and supplements to athletes and advocate for drug-free sport participation.**

Sport coaches are reliable sources of information about specific supplements/drugs by obtaining current, research-based information related to supplements/drugs and their potential impact on performance and health. Sport coaches will intervene and/or refer athletes to appropriate experts when significant changes in body composition, physical appearance, personality and uncharacteristic behaviours that may be drug-related are observed.

## **4. Conclusion**

In moving towards a professional approach to coaching, the concepts described in this chapter of a clear definition, a body of knowledge, and standards provide an important foundation to bring clarity and precision to the practice of coaching. As several European countries have not yet developed these core documents, this will be an important step in enhancing coaching systems across Europe.

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## Chapter 5: Organizations Responsible for Coaching

by John Bales, Mark Wolf and Paulina Tomczyk

### PEAK Recommendation #2: Organizations Responsible for Coaching

**Clearly define the organisations responsible for developing, promoting, and managing coaching in the country.**

Description: An organisation, or group of organisations, should be clearly responsible for the coaching sector, and their responsibilities should be clearly articulated. Amongst other things, these organisations should have exact roles in the regulation and support of coaching, including the development of qualification requirements, the definition of a national licensing system, and overall tracking of coaches. Depending upon the country, Government Ministries, Olympic Committees, national sport organisations, or coaching-specific organisations could take on these responsibilities. Parallel to this, the national federations should have identified their strategy and assigned responsibility for coaching development within their sport.

#### 1. Introduction

What coaching structures and organizations are needed to best serve athletes, coaches and other stakeholders including sport clubs, regional and national sport federations and agencies?

This chapter outlines factors to consider and examples of different organizations responsible for coaching in European countries. At a minimum, clear responsibility for coaching needs to be articulated; in a professional context, there is a division of responsibility between a regulatory body that establishes professional regulations, standards of practice and codes of ethics, and a professional association to advance the interests of the profession and its members.

#### 2. Coaching Structures

The classic expression from architecture that “form follows function” has been widely applied to the determination of optimal organizational structures. Three core functions that are important to the development of an optimal coaching system are coach education, coach licensing, and coach representation.

Often the first stage in building a coaching system is to develop a coach education program. To establish a common national coaching standard across different sports, a specific coaching organization or a coaching department within a sport confederation may be created to develop and deliver a national curriculum and guide the sport federations in the sport specific aspects. In most professions, education is delivered through higher education degree programs. In many countries, where coaching may not be recognized as a profession and coach education has been initiated by sport federations, a dual system of vocational education through sport federations and coaching degree programs has evolved, often resulting in duplication for the coaches who may need to qualify in both systems – hence the need to address the structures and responsibilities and create processes for mutual recognition of qualifications.

The second core function is coach licensing – a fundamental decision in the development of the coaching system is whether to establish formal standards and regulations on who is eligible to coach. Chapter 10 of this framework deals specifically with aspects of coach licensing. This chapter will outline considerations for the appropriate structures to regulate coaching.



Coach representation and the voice of the coach in critical decisions of an organization is also an important element of the coaching system. This view is strongly supported in the words of a senior sport official:

“Coaches need to get their voices heard at the decision-making tables of sport. There seems to be a growing perception that the coaches are technicians, responsible for the technical or tactical development of the athletes, and a diminishing recognition of the importance of the coach as the closest link to the athlete, the person most responsible for the athlete’s overall development, and the leader of sport delivery. Too often we have discussions involving athletes and league organizers with no voice from the coaches’ perspective.”

Examples of existing structures that support these three key functions in different European countries are shown below.

### 3. Examples of current practice

Several countries have organizations specifically responsible for the education of coaches, for example:

**Belgium (Flanders)** – Vlaamse Trainersschool [Flemish School for Coach Education]

**Romania** – National Center for Education and Training of Coaches, a unit of the Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sport. <http://www.cnfpa-sna.ro>

**Luxembourg** – The Ecole Nationale de l’Education Physique et des Sports is responsible for Coach Education.

There are numerous examples of coaches’ associations in both multi-sport and sport specific contexts that are independent organizations, driven by their coaching membership, and represent a voice for coaches in the sport system.

**Coaching Portugal** (Treinadores Portugal) is a confederation of 26 sport specific Coaches Associations and was founded in 1996. Its focus is on improving the social recognition of coaches and works on all matters relating to the Coach’s career and education, and acts as a voice of the coach with national and international organisations such as the Portuguese Institute of Sport, the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, the National Sports Council, the International Council for Coaching Excellence, UNI Europe and the European Commission.

**The Professional Association of Trainers in German Sport** (Berufsverband der Trainerinnen und Trainer im deutschen Sport e.V. – BVTDS) was founded in 2012. Its members are full or part time coaches in German sport with a professional qualification e.g. those with a coaching diploma or physical education degree or with an A- or B-License (DOSB). It works towards social recognition and future security of professional coaches, improved employment contracts and salaries comparable to the public service, regulations regarding working time, occupational safety, retirement provision and equality of male and female coaches regarding salary and career.

**The “Hellenic Federation of Sports Coaches and Trainers” (POPA)**, was founded in 2010 to organize and coordinate the activities of coaches of all sports, Olympic and non-Olympic, on the basis of their common problems. Members are Coaches Associations from thirteen sports. POPA believes it is imperative for coaches to participate in decision-making in sport, and strives to establish a strong legal foundation and improved working conditions for coaches. [villiotis-popa.pdf \(icce.ws\)](#)

**The Panhellenic Canoe-Kayak Trainers Association** (Greece) was founded in 1996 and membership is open to all canoe-kayak coaches. Its mission is the safeguarding and promotion of the labor, economic, insurance, social and trade union interests of its members; the scientific and technical training of its members; and the promotion, development and dissemination of all disciplines of canoe and kayak. It is an active member of POPA, the umbrella organization representing coaches across sports.

**Professional Coaches of Finland – SAVAL** (Suomen Ammattivalmentajat) was founded in 2002 to represent full- and part-time paid coaches in Finland. It engages in vital collective bargaining and lobbying work on be-

half of the profession, manages an unemployment fund and benefits for its members and is affiliated to a large private-sector union, the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland (Akava).

**The Finnish Coaches Association** (Suomen Valmentajat), founded in 1975, is the home-base for all coaches (paid and volunteer) and is the umbrella organization for sports-specific Coaches Associations. These two organizations work closely together to strengthen coaching and support all coaches in Finland.

These examples illustrate different approaches that have been taken in different countries. In Portugal and Greece, coaches' associations are confederations of sport specific coaches' associations, and take advantage of the primary loyalty and commitment of the coaches to their own sport. In Germany and Finland, the coaches' association is based on individual memberships from coaches in all sports, with SAVAL in Finland being part of a major trade union.

Some countries have clearly delineated the separation of responsibilities among different organizations, so the coaches' associations listed above are matched with a regulatory agency:

**Germany** – The Germany Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) is in charge of coaching and licensing, while the Professional Association of Trainers in German Sport (Berufsverband der Trainerinnen und Trainer im deutschen Sport e.V. – BVTDS) advocates for social recognition of German coaches and improvements in their working conditions.

**Portugal** – The Confederation of Coaches (Treinadores Portugal) is the spokesperson for Portuguese coaches, working on all aspects of coach careers, education and social recognition. The Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth (Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude – IPDJ) operates the coaching licensing scheme.

**Finland** – The Finnish Olympic Committee oversees coaching development, aided by two multi-sport coaching associations: the Finnish Coaches Association (Suomen Valmentajat Ry) is the umbrella organisation of coaches and coach networks for different sports in Finland, is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1975; and Professional Coaches of Finland (SAVAL) is a services and lobbying trade union for Finnish coaches, formed in 2002. The two coaches' associations work closely together to enhance respect and recognition for coaches, deal with ethical matters, and meet regularly to coordinate strategies and activities.

## 4. A professional context for coaching

In systems that include career coaches who make their livelihood from coaching, issues related to professional practice, the regulation of coaching, and the voice of coaches in the decisions of the sport system become central.

A profession usually requires government legislation to establish a regulatory body and license to practice. Such a body will normally establish standards, grant the use of a protected title, accredit education programs, and be empowered to remove the license to practice as the ultimate disciplinary process for someone who breaks the code of conduct.

The argument for regulating an occupation is based on “protection of the public”, that the occupation needs to be regulated because a poor quality of service represents a danger to a segment of society. In the case of coaching, this argument is based on both the very strong influence coaches have on their athletes, especially young athletes, and on the impact of unethical coaching – with too many very distressing examples of different forms of abuse and bullying in multiple countries. This has spawned creation of codes of ethics for coaching and athlete or child protection legislation, but enforcement is very difficult without some form of regulation that determines who is competent to coach.

Another significant motivation for regulating coaching, either formally through government legislation or less formally through the policies of federations and clubs, is risk management. The licensing process includes both

a quality measure related to the education standards, and a behavioural measure related to adherence to the code of conduct.

A professional association is a membership-based organization, independent of government that advocates and is the voice for the members and the profession and provides services like legal services, assistance with contracts, professional development, etc. In the “pure” professions (i. e., those strictly regulated professions like medicine, law, and education) being a member in good standing is a requirement to practice.

The division of responsibilities between these two types of organizations – the regulatory body and membership association – is intended to avoid the conflict of interest of having the same organization both advocate for and discipline the members. For example, this would arise if a coaches’ association was in the position of both representing a coach accused of breaking the code of ethics and regulating and defending coaching against unethical practice. Other professions have, therefore, divided these responsibilities between a college to regulate and discipline those in the profession, and a professional association to advocate and represent the interests of the members.

In sport, ideally there is a multi-sport quasi-government agency that establishes the standards and conducts the disciplinary process, and a separate membership body. Alternatively, within a sport the federation could serve as the licensing agency, and an independent, sport specific coaches association advocate for the coaches. This still leaves a conflict of interest as the sport may be reluctant to discipline a coach because of the impact on its reputation and performance.

In the absence of government legislation regulating coaching, partner commitments to coaching standards can accomplish some of the same objectives. The key is for the employers of coaches to require a coaching license – if the federation sets a policy that all coaches must be licensed to coach in a sanctioned competition, or the clubs (possibly for insurance reasons) only allows licensed coaches to conduct practice sessions or coach at competitions, then these licensing requirements would effectively regulate who can coach and provide a mechanism to enforce disciplinary measures.

5. The role of coaches’ associations

Two Erasmus+ projects – CoachNet (2010–2013) and CoachForce21 (2018–2021) – have focused specifically on coach representation and the current situation and functions of coaches’ associations. Table 1 shows the main issues facing coaches identified in the Coach Net project.

Table 1: Indicative issues facing coaches (Duffy et al. 2013)

Indicative issues facing coaches		
(with variation according to role; status category; sport; country; working context)		
<b>Employment</b> Precarious contracts Absence of standard conditions and contracts Working hours Professional responsibilities Code of conduct Background checks	<b>Education</b> Qualifications Professional development Dual careers Latest developments in the sport and coaching	<b>Welfare and recognition</b> Health and medical care Relationship management Retirement and pensions Licensing Role of agents

The CoachForce 21 report “European Coaches’ Association Map 2020 – Presence and Impact” describes the main functions being fulfilled by coaches’ associations as advocacy, representation and education, and provides the examples that BVTDS (Germany) “fights for the social recognition of coaches and for an improvement in their work situation”, Treinadores Portugal’s mission is to “represent and defend the interests of coaches in front of public and private organisations” and SAVAL (Finland) “guides in matter of employment and engages in lobbying work on behalf of the profession”. (Lara-Bercial et al 2020, P 19).

Coaches’ Associations face many challenges in fulfilling these functions, including the lack of recognition and public appreciation for the important role coaches play in the community, developing positive working relationships between the coaches’ associations and the national sport federations, and attracting and retaining members to ensure a sustainable financial model. For example, in Switzerland, the Union of Swiss Football Coaches and the Swiss Professional Tennis Association emphasize the importance of being independent organizations, while at the same time forging close links with their national federations. These sport-specific coaching organizations are legal entities with democratically elected boards, based on the Swiss law of associations, and maintain a very intensive exchange with their sport federation. Their core tasks include education and further training, and support on legal issues related to the job market, such as insurance, legal protection, consultations, career planning, and salary/compensation. The organizations are financed by membership and sponsor contributions.

The Union of Swiss Football Coaches identified three questions to be answered in creating a coaches’ association:

1. What does this association offer that does not already exist? (Reason for existence)
2. How does this association distinguish itself from existing organizations? (Differentiation)
3. What is the connection to the existing system/organizations? (Cooperation)

## **6. The Athlete Perspective: Lessons from the emergence of athlete associations**

The involvement of key stakeholders in governance and decision-making processes is recognized as an important requirement in good governance in sport<sup>1</sup> and is linked to the principle of democracy. Stakeholder consultation and inclusion and working together to develop a strategic partnership for sport, encourages the use of the expert knowledge and important on-the-field perspective that actors such as athletes and coaches bring. It is also common to set up minimum standards for stakeholders as a condition of their involvement, particularly related to representation, legitimacy, and democracy. From this perspective, coaches’ associations, as a collective, democratic representation of coaches’ rights and interest, would be best placed to represent them.

It is important to keep in mind that, just as in the case of athletes, coaches have the same fundamental rights as other people, citizens, and workers, and these cannot be unilaterally restricted or redefined by sport organisations<sup>2 3</sup>. Particularly, coaches have a right to form a union or association to represent their interest, or to negotiate the terms of their involvement in sport.

A factor that has been essential to allow the athlete association movement to develop as an effective athlete representation has been the involvement of athletes themselves. Athlete associations are created by athletes and for athletes, aiming to exclusively represent the collective rights and interest of athletes in a given sport and/or country. This allows them to keep a legitimacy as the athletes’ voice and a special relationship with their members.

Athlete associations are typically funded through different revenue streams. First, in order to become a member of an association each athlete needs to pay a membership fee. The amount of the fee would often be established taking into account status and income of an athlete (e.g., different fees for men and women, first and lower divisions,

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1 Ref PtG indicators and Eu GG principles

2 [https://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites/default/files/files/news/official\\_udpr.pdf](https://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites/default/files/files/news/official_udpr.pdf)

3 [https://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites/default/files/files/news/official\\_udpr.pdf](https://www.uniglobalunion.org/sites/default/files/files/news/official_udpr.pdf)

retired athletes). Many associations also receive specific grants (e.g., for projects or specific activities) from public institutions or sport organisations or engage in commercial activity such as events or partnerships with sponsors.

Professionalisation of athlete associations is linked to their commercial growth and independence, as well as hiring professional staff to provide different types of services to their members. Many of the athlete associations focus their action around 1) representing the athletes 2) education and personal development 3) partnerships, activism, and community<sup>4</sup>.

Further information and guidance on setting up an athlete association that could be useful for those interested in starting a coaches' association can be found in Players Guide to Social Dialogue<sup>5</sup>, Improving player association's support for women athletes<sup>6</sup> booklet or other publications related to social dialogue<sup>7</sup>.

## 7. Conclusion

The structures to best develop coaching in a country or organization will depend on strategies, functions and history within the country. This chapter outlines different issues to consider in determining the optimal structure and describes the structures typical of other professions. Examples of the structures and functions of different European organizations are provided. In a highly evolved system, independent coaches' associations provide important voices and services for coaches, with a separate structure regulating and licensing coaches.

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4 See the example of Rugby Players Ireland: Represent, Develop, Engage. <https://www.rugbyplayersireland.ie/>

5 <https://euathletes.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2010-EU-Athletes-Players-Guide-EN.pdf>

6 <https://euathletes.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2017%20-%20SWAFE%20-%20Improving%20player%20associations%27%20support%20for%20women%20athletes.pdf>

7 <https://euathletes.org/resources/essdc/>

# Chapter 6: Coach Registry and Research

by John Bales and Priit Vene

## PEAK Recommendation #3: Coach Registry and Research:

**“Implement a national register or database of coaches in your country and ensure ongoing research into coaching.”**

Description: Policy-making literature regularly underlines the need for data and evidence to support not only the formulation of policy but also to assess the quality of implementation and to evaluate if a policy is achieving its objectives. Despite this widely recognised importance, proper registration and data gathering in sports coaching is a weakness in many European countries. Countries must, therefore, be able to collect and track reliable data related to the sport coaching workforce in their countries. Data tracked should include specific coaching (e. g., activity status, working status, sport, coaching level) and demographic (e. g., gender, age, background) information that can help inform policy. Research should also complement this data collection, providing insights on the implementation, success and challenges associated with coaching policy and its goals.

### 1. Introduction

“It is no longer negotiable – we need an evidence base to secure government funding or to establish government policy.” Kerry Harrison, Victorian State Government, Australia. (Swinburne 2021)

The availability of accurate, reliable data on which to base decisions and monitor progress has been identified as a significant weakness in coaching systems around Europe. (Moustakas 2020). This chapter provides two examples where effective data management systems, including the key information on the active or inactive status of the coach, have been put in place.

### 2. Examples of Coach Registration Systems

#### **The Estonian Coaches Register (Vene, 2021)**

The beginning of the Estonian Coaches Register dates back to 2004 when the official coaches’ qualification system was approved and the qualification awarding process was launched. At first, records were kept in excel spreadsheets but soon the volume and complexity of data demanded a more specific solution and in 2007 a web-based database was designed and put in practice. As the register was focused primarily on recording the qualifications, the dataset consisted of personal data (ID code, contact data, formal education) and the qualifications awarded.

At this point the Estonian Coaches Register was valuable as a record of qualified coaches but did not give the picture about all people who are actually coaching. To solve this and other questions concerning the need to provide data for Estonian sports administration, the Estonian Sports Organisations Register (ESOR) was established in 2008. From the very beginning the process was performed in cooperation with Statistics Estonia, the main data competence centre and an official institution responsible for data governance in the country. The specific data set about sports collected previously by Statistics Estonia was included into ESOR with the aim that ESOR could later take over the role of the data collector. In 2009 Statistics Estonia and ESOR both collected data in parallel and since 2010 ESOR took full responsibility for data collection, becoming the official data provider for Statistics Estonia. As a result, sports clubs and schools are required to submit ESOR data about the number of trainees by disciplines and age groups, coaches’ ID codes, names, either volunteer or em-



ployed and if employed to specify the kind of legal agreement (under Employment Contracts Act or Law of Obligations Act). Sport organisations are obliged to update the data at least once a year with deadline October 31.

In 2010 the Estonian Sports Facilities Register was implemented, and all three registers were brought together under the name the Estonian Sports Register (ESR). The ESR obtained the status of state register.

Jointly under the umbrella of Estonian Sports Register (ESR), the databases contribute to the design of a wide variety of sports policies and act as a tool for putting these policies into practice. ESR has provided valuable data for creating the Estonian state development plan for sports “The Fundamentals of the Estonian Sports Policy until 2030” (adopted by the Estonian Parliament on 18.2.2015) and its annual progress monitoring. Based on ESR the state salary support scheme for coaches was designed and put in practice in 2015. During the COVID crisis the ESR has proven priceless in developing and managing the state support measures for sports.

## **Flanders (Belgium)**

Another example of a highly evolved Coach Registry system is the Flemish Interactive Coaching Monitoring System (FICOMS), developed by Sport Flanders. Three important elements of their approach include:

1. A process to collect data on who is actively coaching.

Many countries record the completion of coach education courses, but without linking this to whether the person is actively coaching it isn't possible to determine the reach of the program in the clubs or correlate coach qualifications with measures like athlete and coach retention and dropout.

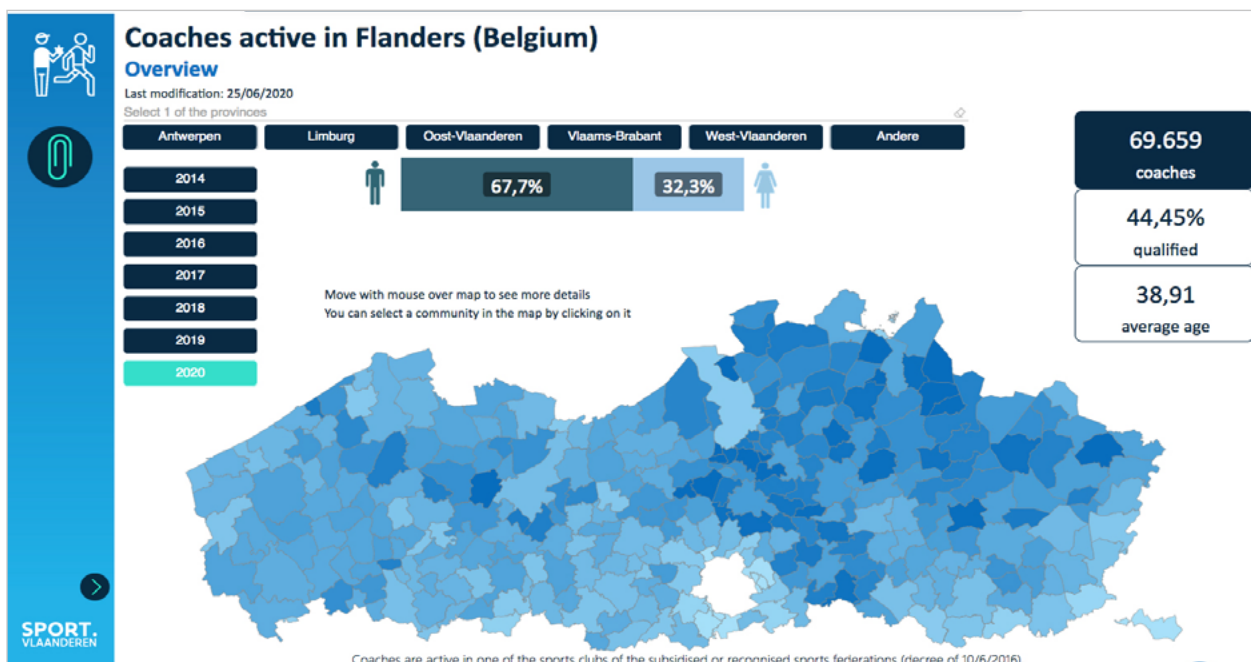
Sport Flanders started the process of determining who is actively coaching with questionnaires to sport clubs but realized more precise data was needed and in 2013 a law was passed making it “mandatory for all subsidized sports federations to give a full digital data set of all active coaches and sports participants to Sport Vlaanderen once a year at a specific date.” (Ponnet et al 2021). Establishment of standards for the quality of data and rewards for federations who do this effectively have resulted in a highly accurate, annual snapshot of active coaches that provides valuable information to decision-makers at regional and national levels.

2. A “data warehouse” that collects and stores comprehensive information on sport in Flanders. This includes:
  - i) a sport database recording information on over 28,000 sport clubs and federations; ii) a sport facilities database that contains information on 22,500 sport infrastructures; iii) the active coach database that records who is actively coaching each year; and iv) the coach education database that tracks coach qualifications both within the Sport Flanders coach education program and PE degrees in higher education. Each of these databases has the appropriate protections and privacy regulations, while providing an exceptional evidence-base for making decisions on gaps and needs for program delivery.

3. A process to use and communicate data.

Sets of dashboards allow users to see the reality in their region or sport. In the example below, the dashboard provides information on active coaches in Flanders: how many coaches were active in each of the last seven years, with information on their average age, gender and whether they were qualified. The dashboard is interactive, meaning that specific information on a district can be seen by clicking on the map. The example shows the total number of coaches, the percent qualified and gender breakdown for the district of Zemst. It also shows the number of coaches and qualified coaches per thousand population to facilitate comparison.

Similar dashboards are available for each sport so a federation can analyze the situation in their sport across the country.



[www.sport.vlaanderen/kennisplatform/thema-trainers/db-coaches-active-in-flanders-belgium/](http://www.sport.vlaanderen/kennisplatform/thema-trainers/db-coaches-active-in-flanders-belgium/)

The FICOM system provides the evidence for effective monitoring of coaching development in Flanders. It tracks the inputs, the characteristics of who is entering the system and their qualification pathways; the throughputs, or characteristics of the programs they are undertaking; and the outputs related to the active coaches in the Flemish sport system. Such a wealth of information allows the sport authorities to make adaptations to their coaching programs based on changing realities.

## Ficoms

Input	Throughput	Output
Coaches entering coach education programs	Coaches obtaining a qualification through coach education	Active coaches in the sports clubs
<p>Coaches starting a coach education program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Background               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport</li> <li>Sport club</li> <li>Sports federation</li> <li>Age</li> <li>Gender</li> <li>Residence</li> <li>Previous qualifications</li> <li>PE background (or not)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Which pathways for coach education (Vangrunderbeek &amp; Ponnet, 2020)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular course</li> <li>Recognition of prior learning</li> <li>During university studies</li> <li>Assimilation of foreign qualification</li> <li>(Former) elite athlete</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristics of coach education program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modules, item, hours</li> <li>Benchmarking with other sports, with other countries</li> <li>Success ratios of coach education programmes</li> </ul> </li> <li>Characteristics of coach developers</li> <li>Holistic quality control               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses</li> <li>Coach developers</li> <li>Exams</li> </ul> </li> <li>Obtained qualifications               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many?</li> <li>Trends/differences in age, gender, regions, sports</li> <li>Trends over time</li> <li>Trends in pathways</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristics               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many? Is there a lack?</li> <li>Qualified vs. nonqualified</li> <li>Trends/Differences in age, gender, regions, sports, sports federations</li> <li>PE qualification of coaches</li> </ul> </li> <li>Trends over time               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trend in number of qualified coaches (+ qualification %)</li> <li>Trend in number of sports clubs with &gt;1 qualified coach</li> <li>Trend in new coaches (after obtaining qualification)</li> <li>Trend in drop-out of active coaches</li> </ul> </li> <li>Correlation studies               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drop-out coaches vs. qualification level</li> <li>Drop-out coaches vs. size of sports club/sports federation</li> <li>Drop-out coaches vs. drop-out of sports participants</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 3. Research into Coaching

In addition to such data monitoring systems, more research is needed into coaching to develop a deeper understanding of coaching practice and the many issues faced by coaches, for example: what differentiates effective and less effective coaches? What educational interventions have the most impact on coaching behaviours? Why are women so under-represented in coaching?

The ICCE Research Committee and Global Coach Conference have fostered a network of coaching researchers whose focus of attention is the coach, and there are now several refereed journals that are targeted specifically at coaching research.

National agencies and sport federations need to include this line of sport research in order to build and expand a credible knowledge base for coaching.

### 4. Conclusions

The PEAK project investigations showed this area of coach registration and research, ie of having a strong evidence base for program and policy development, is an area requiring improvement in many countries. Recording coaching data on the completion of coach education qualifications is a starting point, but in a highly evolved coaching system it's crucial to know who is actively coaching, in order to assess the reach of the coach education programs, to identify needs and gaps in program delivery, and as a base for further research into such things as longevity and dropout.

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# Chapter 7: Coach Education and NQF Alignment

by Penny Crisfield and John Bales

## PEAK Recommendation #4 – Coach Education and NQF Alignment:

**“Ensure quality of coach education programmes in your country that align with your National Qualification Framework.”**

Description: Given the known impact coaches have across a wide range of societal groups, as well as the role they play in promoting a healthy, active lifestyle, it is essential to develop programmes that ensure a minimum standard of coaching education in coaching, and that these programs align with National Qualification Frameworks to maximize the possibility for coach mobility across different jurisdictions.

### 1. Introduction

The premise behind this chapter of the Coaching Policy Framework is that to create the best possible sporting environment in your organisation or country, you need the best coaches and this, in turn, requires the establishment of a quality coach education programme and system that aligns to national standards where these exist. While the programme and system need to be tailored to the unique context, culture and environment of the country or organisation, various ideas, examples and recommendations are provided. A self-assessment of the status of an organisation’s coach education programme can be used to identify key areas and gaps that should be considered in building or improving the system and programme for national authorities and sports federations.

### 2. Background: the importance of coach education and issues to consider

Coaches have a major impact on sport participation and performance that stretches across a wide range of societal groups; they also play a role in promoting a healthy, active lifestyle. For these reasons, it is essential to develop a coach education system and programmes that not only ensure a minimum standard of coaching education but also raises the quality of sports participation and performance. Aligning these with a National Qualification Framework (where these exist), also helps to raise standards, promote professionalism, and maximize the possibility for coach mobility across different jurisdictions.

To be effective, coaches need much more than knowledge of the technical, tactical, and regulatory requirements of the sport:

- Good coaches coach people (not the sport) and so need a range of ‘people skills’ as well as high levels of self-awareness (emotional intelligence) to enable them to build and maintain appropriate relationships with their participants.
- Sportspeople seek coaching to enable them to develop their sporting abilities. Coaches need pedagogical skills and knowledge: how to build skills, observe and analyse movement, provide feedback, create and run safe and effective practices, provide demonstrations, and design training programmes.
- Coaches also need to apply a range of sport science concepts and principles: to develop their athletes’ physiological potential (sports physiology), mental skills (sports psychology) and technical proficiency (biomechanics). Coaching is also fundamentally about problem solving and decision making, so coaches need to acquire these skills as well. Knowledge does not stand still. Coaches need to go on increasing their knowledge and honing their coaching skills.

- Finally, the demands of coaching can lead to stress and burnout. Coach education programs also need to prepare coaches for the challenges inherent in the role and the importance of self-care.

The diagram below from the International Sport Coaching Framework depicts the breadth of knowledge required by coaches, highlighting the technical and sport science professional knowledge, the interpersonal knowledge related to working with others, and the self-awareness and reflection skills within intrapersonal knowledge, all underpinned by a strong values foundation. In the words of ethicist John Dalla Costa, “Coaching at its core is an exercise in trust. Athletes depend on coaches for knowledge, guidance, inspiration, and motivation. They rely on coaches to navigate through the ethical quandaries from the overriding pressure to win.” (Robertson, S., 2007)



A comprehensive coach education programme needs to cover all these areas in a way that enables coaches to apply and integrate this into their practice. The educational pathway should include:

- both formal (e. g., face-to-face workshops) and informal learning (e. g., field-based observation and review, mentoring) opportunities,
- streams that acknowledge the differences in coaching contexts, between recreation and competitive, and youth, developmental and high performance,
- mutual recognition of both sport federation and higher education programmes,
- the possibility to earn qualification that are recognised by the country/organisation’s qualification system,
- extensive ongoing personal and professional development opportunities to encourage lifelong learning.

How these programmes and pathways are created will depend upon several factors such as the size of the organisation, number of coaches, geographical area, and culture and maturity of the coaching system. An organisation with only a small number of coaches may find it difficult or cost-prohibitive to offer face-to-face formal courses, and may find it more effective to rely on a mentorship/apprenticeship model to train their coaches. This may also apply to an organization responsible for a big geographic area where there are relatively few coaches from a discipline in any one location, or to a language or cultural group where the training is delivered specifically to that group.

Alignment of the coach education system to national and European Qualification systems is an important consideration. For example, Sport Ireland Coaching aligns its Coach and Coach Developer awards with the

Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) which enables alignment with the European Qualifications Framework, and hence comparison of coach awards and greater mobility across European countries.

This also raises the profile of coaches and coach education in Ireland, and ensures that the Quality Assurance system of the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland is in line with best practice, is operating to high standards and is subject to continuous improvement.

Highly evolved coach education systems have also developed a well-trained Coach Developer workforce. Coach developers are not simply experienced coaches or subject matter experts. They are experts in learning, and more specifically in coach learning. They are “trained to develop, support and challenge coaches to go on honing and improving their knowledge and skills to provide positive and effective sport experiences for all participants” (ICCE 2014). While being effective facilitators of learning, they are also skilled at supporting coaches in the sport environment through observation and feedback, mentoring and reflective practice.

## 4. Conclusion

Coach education is the foundation of the coaching system. Over the past 30 years coach education programs have evolved to feature a mix of education experiences, led by qualified coach developers and emphasizing application in the field and lifelong learning.

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## Chapter 8: Safe sport

by Louis Moustakas

### PEAK Recommendation #5 – Safe Sport

**“Implement safeguarding policies and programs to prevent harm and help ensure everyone in sport has a positive sport experience.”**

Description: Given the central role of coaches in creating and maintaining a safe sporting environment, it is essential to take a holistic, multi-pronged approach. This means not only carefully screening coaches and implementing appropriate codes of conduct but also giving coaches the education and tools to foster a safe environment, manage problems and report incidents.

In addition to youth protection, creating a safe sport environment for coaches it's also about fostering well-being and helping coaches manage the many challenges and pressures of leading sport programs.

#### 1. Introduction

While many benefits of sport have been recognised, it is important also to identify and prevent situations that can lead to unsafe or abusive sporting environments. There is increasing consensus that all forms of abuse or violence in sports threaten athlete safety and trust in sport as a moral and ethical institution. Nonetheless, data suggest that the problem remains prevalent, with one review estimating that one in seven athletes are subjected to unwanted sexual attention. Though popular depictions often portray coaches as the main perpetrators, researchers suggest that peer-athletes might be even more significant drivers of abuse. Historically, however, coaches have had access to children without the support of safeguarding practices or policies.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon national sport coaching authorities and individual federations to ensure that their coaches are not themselves a threat to their athletes. Coaches must be provided with the tools to ensure safe sporting environments and skills to manage incidents.

#### 2. The Irish Code of Conduct<sup>8</sup>

Several high-profile cases of child sexual abuse in Ireland in the 1990s made clear that abuse occurs in the sporting context. Consequently, in 1996, an expert committee of representatives from sport, child protection, and government departments launched the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport. This Code was subsequently updated and revised in 1998, 2000, 2003 and 2006. It is based on principles that relate to the importance of childhood, the needs of the child, integrity and fair play, and relationships and safety in children's sport and is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

It contains a series of principles, policy, and practice guidelines for everyone in children's sport. These are categorised into five areas, referred to as the '5Ps': 1) Principles, 2) People, 3) Policy and Procedures, 4) Practice, and 5) Protection. Notably, an appendix includes a flow chart of procedures for managing incidents in and beyond the organisation plus template policies, a template job application form, and an incident reporting form. There are now online e-learning resources and tools to support organisations. While organisations are not required to use these templates or tools, providing them in the Code's appendix makes it easy for organisations with limited knowledge and experience to adopt policies and procedures for managing and preventing harm to

<sup>8</sup> Adapted from <https://rm.coe.int/pss-description-practice-northern-ireland-the-code-of-ethics-and-good-/1680770fdf>

children in Irish sport. Furthermore, although implementing the Code is voluntary, sports organisations must demonstrate adherence to it to receive government funding.

### 3. The Resources of the Council of Europe

For more than two decades, the Council of Europe (CoE) has played an active role in promoting and supporting child safeguarding policy, both in sport and beyond. For instance, in May 2000, European ministers responsible for sport assembled in Bratislava and adopted a resolution on the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse of women, young people and children in sport. And, more recently, the CoE engaged in increasing project-based work, launching the Pro Safe Sport (PSS), Start to Talk (STT), and Child Safeguarding in Sport (CSiS) projects. These projects focus on various components of safe sport, including awareness-raising, benchmarking, and educational resources. The combined efforts of these projects have led to the collection of numerous best practices (see <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/resource-centre>) and educational materials (see <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/training-kit>) that can support the development of safe sport within the sport coaching context.

### 4. Athlete and Coach Well-being

Creating a safe sport environment needs to go beyond protection from abuse to include paying attention to the well-being and mental health of all sport participants. Specific to coaches, pressures of highly competitive sport environments can lead to stress and burn-out brought about by such factors as workload, irregular work hours, travel demands, interference in home life and the micro-politics of sport (Olusoga et al., 2020).

Clubs and federations need to pro-actively address these issues within their education programs to prepare young coaches for the demands of the role, and through their employment policies, ensuring reasonable workloads, adequate vacations, and support of mentors and management to identify and address issues as they arise.

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## Chapter 9: Coach Licensing

by Guillermo Calvo, John Bales and Ladislav Petrovic

### PEAK Recommendation #6: Coach licensing

**“Implement a national, multi-sport licensing system for coaches that actively supports coach development in your country.”**

Description: Countries should have some form of national licensing system, and that system should define clear pathways, establish thresholds for licensing and provide guidance on continuous professional development. Ideally, this licensing system applies nationally across all sports and offers the opportunity to obtain advanced professional qualifications. Without such a licensing system, it can be unclear who exactly has a right to coach and can lead to “fragmented career structures”. The *EU Guidelines regarding the minimum requirements in skills and competencies for coaches* (EU, 2020) is a good starting point in designing such a system.

#### 1. Introduction

Establishing a coach licensing scheme is a foundation element of a highly evolved coaching system, where clear standards, of both education and ethical behaviour, are established and can be enforced. It clarifies the requirements for someone to be able to coach and is supported by the appropriate disciplinary policies that establish the process to remove the license.

#### 2. Case Studies

Outlined below are three case studies, providing examples of coach licensing approaches by a national agency, by a continental sport confederation, and by a national sport federation:

##### The Portuguese national coaching license

Sport coaching in Portugal has been in the political discussion ever since the 1974 revolution when the fascist dictatorship was overthrown. However, it was not until the last decade of the 20th century when significant progress was made. Sport federations were responsible for coach education from 1991 until 2008, but the diverse education models utilized did not meet the needs of the growing labor market for sport coaches in Portugal (Resende et al., 2016).

The current model of regulation started in 2007 with the approval of the Foundational Law for Physical Activity and Sport (Law 5/2007). This gave way in 2012 to the Law for the Access to the Activities of the Profession of Sport Coaching (Law 40/2012) which, among other things, regulates licensing. More recently, the 2012 law has been amended in Law 106/2019.

This process was a joint effort initiated in 1999 with the creation of two expert committees tasked with producing proposals for coaching and coach education. The contents of the new law were subject to the opinion of the Sport Supreme Council with inputs from the Coaches' Confederation (Coaching Portugal), coaches' associations, and the sport federations (Resende et al., 2016).

The 2012 law sought to improve the quality of sport by improving coach education. Developing a more robust system based on directives from the European Union, it was a key aspect to the provision of higher quality education for coaches. Likewise, the law dignified the job, equating it to more traditional professions, and increasing the social status of sport coaches in relation to societal importance.

Following the 2012 law, an evaluation was made with more than 100 stakeholders and significant individuals. The ensuing (confidential) report offered valuable information to help shape the 2019 law (106/2019) that looked to improve the current situation by adding two new points:

- 1) Dual careers – top athletes can begin coach education when they are still athletes and without deadlines. When they finish their active sport career, they can complete the internship requirements for level 1 and/or level 2;
- 2) Top athletes with 8 years high performance experience can apply directly to level 2 at the end of their careers.

For purposes of these laws, the occupation of sport coaching comprises the training and guidance of sport practitioners carried out as an exclusive, remunerated job or on a regular, seasonal, or occasional basis, regardless of remuneration. Thus, this affects both paid and volunteer coaches in participation (initiation), performance or elite sport.

The occupation of sport coaching can only be carried out by sport coaches in the context of federations or sport associations who are in possession of a valid professional title (license). This license is issued by the Portuguese government, through its Institute of Sport and Youth (IPDJ), to coaches who either have a higher degree in Sport or Physical Education or to those who have obtained the proper qualifications in sports training, either through the NQF or through skills acquired and developed throughout life.

Qualifications within the NQF are taught by certified educational entities as per the 2012 law and are defined by the IPDJ and the National Agency of Qualification and Professional Education. Higher Education Institutions can have their undergraduate and graduate degrees recognized by the IPDJ as a Level 1, 2 or 3 qualification in certain sports depending on their curriculum.

The most common path for coach education is through the federations since not all sports and not all undergraduate/graduate degrees are recognized at the High Education level. It is the IPDJ who determines the standards with the opinion of the federation of the specific sport.

The coaching licenses expire if coaches do not pursue Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within three years. CPD courses can be taught by sports federations holding the status of public utility in sports or by a certified training entity. Again, the certification of these entities is granted by the IPDJ.

The biggest impact of coaching licenses is that clubs must employ coaches with a valid license and with a completed and updated educational pathway. Prior to licenses, clubs found cheaper alternatives to hire coaches, such as having athletes or unqualified coaches, which resulted in less costs for the clubs.

This impact can have a negative aspect in some cases because clubs have less candidates to choose from. In regions with low population, some federations do not offer coach education. There might also be some regions with very few licensed coaches, which makes it very hard to develop a sport in that particular area.

## **The UEFA coaching license**

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), is the governing authority for football in Europe and has operated a coach licensing programme since 1997. All coaches in clubs operating under UEFA rules and regulations must hold a relevant coaching licence.

The licensing programme is part of the UEFA Coaching Convention (latest edition – 2015). The convention has a variety of objectives, two of which are (1) to establish football coaching as a recognised, regulated profession and (2) to ensure the availability of well-educated professional and amateur coaches, on- and off-the-field.

A UEFA coaching licence gives its holder the right to be employed to train a representative team of a UEFA member association or a specific team of a football club affiliated to a UEFA member association.

There are 6 licences available, the initial one being Licence B, moving up through Licence A, UEFA A Elite Youth and UEFA Pro Licence. The remaining two licences relate to the coaching of Goalkeeping and Futsal.

A UEFA coaching licence is valid for three calendar years.

Typically, Licence B and Licence A are run within the country in which coaches reside. The Elite Youth A Licence & the Pro Licence may be run within the country where the coaches reside but depending upon numbers in a particular country at any one time, these courses may be run centrally by UEFA (for the contact part of the course).

The validity of a UEFA coaching licence is subject to the licence holder adhering to statutes, regulations, directives and decisions of UEFA and the convention party that issued the licence in question.

### The Basketball Ireland coach licensing system

The Basketball Ireland coach licensing program was set up to ensure the quality of coaching could be tracked, improved and sustained in Ireland, and is linked to the completion of accredited coach education programmes. It is valid for three, four or five years depending on the level of the qualifications held.

A coach gains a licence on completion of their first coach education course. They must also meet the following two legal requirements:

- 1) They have been vetted and cleared to work with children and vulnerable people (<https://vetting.garda.ie/>)
- 2) They have completed a safeguarding course (<https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/ethics-test>)

Coaches are assigned a licence number and all future coach education courses, workshops, work with Coach Developers etc., that are accredited by Basketball Ireland and have approved CPD credits, are added to the coaches' digital profile which is linked to their licence.

CPD (Continuous Professional Development) points must be accrued during the period of the license (according to the qualification held) for renewal to take place.

From the start of the 2019/20 season, no coach is able to take part in any Basketball Ireland competitions without holding a Coaching Licence, and all clubs registered with Basketball Ireland are required to employ licenced coaches only.

The licensing program is run entirely within and by Basketball Ireland with a dedicated member of staff to administer and quality assure the program. Neither FIBA (Federation of International Basketball Associations) nor Sport Ireland (the government agency for sport in Ireland) operate a coach licensing scheme, so the Basketball Ireland scheme is not required to comply with any other organisation's criteria for compliance.

Basketball Ireland introduced their licensing system in 2018 with a 12-month lead-in period for all clubs to ensure their qualified coaches became licenced coaches. It has taken over three years from inception to launch, and as the programme is new, there is currently no evidence to show that the licensing program has achieved its aims (to ensure the quality of coaching can be tracked, improved and sustained), or how many coaches will renew their licences.

## 3. Conclusion

For those countries or federations endeavouring to professionalize coaching, coach licensing is a significant step towards establishing clear standards and regulating who is entitled to coach. Three case studies are provided, showing examples in the national agency, continental, and national federation contexts.

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## Chapter 10: Support for Coaches

by Penny Crisfield, Louis Moustakas, Mark Wolf and John Bales

### PEAK Recommendation #7: Support for Coaches

**“Implement mechanisms in your country to support volunteer and paid coaches.”**

Description: It goes almost without saying that volunteer and paid coaches play a crucial role in developing and delivering sport across the continent. Yet, despite their unquestioned importance, many stakeholders report that their coaches feel undervalued and under-supported. It is essential to adequately value these contributions of both volunteer and paid coaches to improve the quality of coaching provision and reduce coaching turnover. In particular, employment standards, support resources, and other incentives should be put in place to increase the support and public value placed on coaching.

#### 1. Introduction

In many European countries coaching is a hybrid occupation that relies on a strong mix of volunteer and paid coaches. Over 80 % of European sport clubs report relying on volunteers for service delivery but numerous volunteers report being undervalued or under-supported. Similarly, a recent EOSE report of 3500 employers indicated that 61 % employed coaches as paid staff, 47 % engaged volunteer coaches. Given this, it is important to implement mechanisms that support and value coaches in both paid and unpaid roles. In turn, this support will help enhance the recognition of the coaching profession and ensure greater retention of coaches in the field.

#### 2. Examples of providing support for coaches

Coaches are the lifeblood of sport and the contribution of coaches at all levels from local clubs, national governing bodies, even the Olympic Games is at the heart of sport throughout the world. Led by an effective coach, sport is a vehicle for positive development, personal growth, and the fulfilment of potential physically, socially, and emotionally. Coaches promote active lifestyles, inclusion, and engagement in physical activity. Coaching can, however, be very stressful and the job is cursed with high rates of coach burn-out, personal divorce and broken families. Many volunteer and paid coaches do not have contracts, reasonable working conditions, management support or training opportunities.

In many countries, without volunteer coaches, a high proportion of sporting activities would be unable to take place. Changing attitudes toward volunteerism and increasingly professionalized approaches to running sport frequently place volunteer cultures at risk. Support for these volunteer coaches is essential if coaches are to feel valued and motivated.

Paid coaches may be employed by clubs, federations, training centres, or universities. They may also be self-employed. In many countries coaching is still a young and evolving career, without well-established employment practices.

Examples of the types of support provided to coaches from different organizations range from public recognition to specific programs to assist coaches in the management of their coaching responsibilities:

##### Global Coaches' Day (ICCE)

Since 2019, ICCE has promoted 25 September as a day to celebrate the contribution of coaches to individual sport participants, sport and society, with member organizations delivering campaigns to thank their coaches and bring attention to the important role coaches play.



## Look after your coach (Australia)

The #lookafteryourcoach campaign encourages Australians who play sport at all levels to reflect on the coaches who make their sport possible, consider the sacrifices they make, and use this Facebook page to say thanks. It is a simple but important initiative to remind athletes, parents, administrators and officials to acknowledge the people who take care of so many others.

## National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (Australia)

While this initiative covers all aspects of volunteering, it contains benchmarks specifically designed to help organisations attract, manage, recognise, and retain volunteers to improve the volunteer experience. It includes a comprehensive list of volunteer rights that includes guidelines for health and safety, insurance cover, equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation, reimbursement of expenses, a job description and agreed hours, orientation to the organisation, and a training and career pathway.

## Finnish Ice Hockey Federation

Volunteer coaches, on agreeing to coach in a club, sign an agreement, whereby the club agrees to support their development – this is mandatory for clubs taking on volunteer coaches. The Finnish Ice Hockey Federation employs nine full-time, qualified Coach Developers whose job it is to support these coaches in the clubs in their region.

## Swiss Youth and Sport

Jugend+Sport (Y+S) is the most important federal sports promotion organization in Switzerland for children and young people aged 5–20. It designs and promotes youth-oriented sport, enables children and young people to experience and participate in sport in a holistic way, and supports the development and growth of young people from an educational, social and health point of view.

The Confederation supports the organisers of sport courses and camps with financial support as well as the training of volunteer coaches. Various requirements must be met for this: training as a leader, regular training operation with corresponding guidelines, obligation for further training, and compliance with ethical principles. The Confederation is responsible for the program and works together with cantons and sport federations.

## Professional Coaches of Finland (SAVAL)

SAVAL provides individual assistance to member coaches relative to employment ; provides an unemployment fund that includes legal aid insurance; promotes coaching as a possible profession; is involved in vocational Coach Education development work; provides employment education (CV clinics, job seeking, people skills, employment skills); and lobbies to enhance the prestige of coaches and to improve conditions for their work in society. A number of these programs recognize not only the importance of the coaching role, but also the challenges of working in a highly stressful environment. Coach burnout and mental health are attracting significant attention from researchers (Olusoga, P., 2020), and the importance of club and federation employers providing support for coaches to ensure effective management of demands of the job, workload, irregular hours, and stress of travel on homelife are increasingly recognized.

## 3. Differentiating paid and volunteer coaches: the French code du sport

The French system generally emphasises trained, paid coaches, but volunteers do also play a role within the overall coaching environment. Unlike recognised sport educators or sport trainers, volunteers cannot receive

payment for their services. French law distinguishes between two types of volunteering: *bénévoles* and *volontaire*. *Bénévoles* can generally be defined as volunteers who devote part of their time, unpaid, to the activities of a sport association or club (Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la jeunesse, 2018a). This type of volunteer represents the majority of those who volunteer (GHK, 2010). A *volontaire*, on the other hand, is engaged via formal contract for a set period, and a set assignment receives a monetary stipend and is subject to the stipulations of French labour regulations (Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la jeunesse, 2018b). Often, *volontaires* are engaged via numerous national and cross-national cooperation programmes, such as the national civic service or the Franco-German volunteering scheme (Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la jeunesse, 2018b). Since the adoption of a law involving volunteering (*volontariat*) in associations in 2006, sport associations can recruit *volontaires*, provided they obtain the necessary authorisation and meet the above criteria (GHK, 2010).

To receive payment for their work, coaches must be qualified and fill a declaration of activity every five years. This declaration, which is to be accompanied by a medical certificate and a declaration of morality (i. e., a declaration of absence of criminal activity), then leads to the issuance of a professional card by the state that entitles coaches to work for remuneration.

The more professionalised nature of coaching has also given rise to employment support services in the country. The national federation of sport professionals (*Fédération nationale des professionnels sport et loisirs*, FNPSL) supports qualified sporting professionals to allow them to exercise their vocation in secure, sustainable settings, while also working with clubs and associations to create jobs and long-term quality services (*Fédération nationale des professions sport et loisirs*, n.d.). A mix between employment intermediary and employee support, the FNPSL supports „associations in their professionalisation, in particular by facilitating access to employment for sports educators“ (*Fédération nationale des professions sport et loisirs*, n.d.). The FNPSL also offers legal advice resources to sport professionals, namely through its website and regional centres. Given its strong links to many federations and the services provided by some of its local branches – for example, assisting associations and clubs with payroll-related matters – the FNPSL is not a union or representative body for coaches in France, but does provide a number of important services for coaches.

## 4. Conclusion

It is important to recognize and value the critical service that coaches provide to athletes, clubs and sport federations, and to provide the conditions that enable coaches to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Examples of the types of services provided to both volunteer and paid coaches are provided.

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# Chapter 11: Building a Policy Foundation for Women-in-Coaching

by John Bales, Pauline Harrison and Uri Schaefer

## PEAK Recommendation #8: Women-in-Coaching

**“Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy and programmes to support women in coaching.”**

Description: Evidence from Europe shows that women are significantly underrepresented within coaching at all levels, from grassroots to elite. National-level policies and programmes need to be developed and implemented to help counteract this underrepresentation. It is important to not only develop national policies and programmes to support women in coaching but to ensure that those policies and programmes are evidence-based, relevant and truly address the issues present in each country.

### 1. Introduction: Why enhance women-in-coaching policies?

There is global recognition that gender equality is important in all human endeavours, as evidenced by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. “Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.”

In sport, although significant progress has been made in increasing access and opportunities for women and girls to participate in sport, barriers to women in leadership positions remain. At the 2012 London and 2016 Rio Olympic Games, 11 % of the accredited coaches were women. Although gender equity has essentially been attained in participation on the playing field (46 % of the athletes were women), coaching lags far behind and did not change from the 11% in London to Rio four years later. (Norman 2016). Initial figures from the Tokyo Olympics indicate slight improvements – to 13% – this reflects how challenging it is to bring about permanent change in this area.

<https://olympics.com/ioc/news/a-positive-trend-at-tokyo-2020-for-female-coaches-and-officials>

The *IOC Gender Equality Review Report* recommends (# 6) “Balanced gender representation for coaches selected to participate at the games” and states “the working group recommends the IOC coordinates the development of an action plan in collaboration with Olympic Movement stakeholders for more women to be eligible and selected to participate at Olympic Games level.” (IOC, 2018)

The lack of opportunities for women coaches is true not only at the Olympic level but is also an issue at all levels of sport development (Banwell 2019). The ICCE Women-in-Coaching program has identified a vision of the future with:

- Balanced and diverse coaching workforce;
- Providing athletes with greater choice; and
- Creating a larger and richer talent pool of coaches

Research in business is showing improved corporate performance with diverse leadership. Expanding the talent pool to both men and women can provide athletes with greater choice and raise the level of coaching across the system.

### The gender gap (Schaefer 2021)

The European Parliament briefing “Gender Equality in Sport – getting closer every day” (Katsorovo 2019) describes the wide gender discrepancies that still exist in areas such as decision-making positions in EU sport federations, salary differences, media representation, and coaching, where only 20–30% of all European coaches are women with very few at the elite level.

An important issue faced by women coaches is the gap in pay. In the USA, women earn 84 % of what men earn over the past 15 years. Coaches of all NCAA Division I men's sports increased to \$267,007 from 2003 to 2010, while pay for all women's team coaches increased to \$98,106. Men's team coaches enjoyed a 67 % increase in their pay, while women's team coaches rose only 16 percent. (Barroso and Brown 2021).

Additional research on this issue is needed, but it is clear the road to achieving true equality between women and men in the workplace in general and in sports in particular is still a long way off. In many countries gender discrimination is prohibited by law, and it is essential that governments take action to guarantee gender equality for women in sport, making sure that the rights of women coaches are protected, respected, and promoted.

## 2. Examples of national women in coaching initiatives

Although several countries have taken initiatives to enhance the situation for women coaches, a more comprehensive approach to deal with the issue is needed. Below are some examples of current initiatives in Europe.

**Ireland** – The Sport Ireland Women in Sport Policy (2019) identified 'Coaching' as one of the it's priority areas, with the objective to: 'Broaden the coaching base to include more women from grassroots to high performance'.

**Spain** – The Law of Equality (Law 3/2007) is all-inclusive so is applicable in sports and would cover women in coaching.

**Belgium (Flanders)** – Videos with female coaches were produced for international women's day to stimulate women to enter the coach education programs; the gender of the program candidates and active coaches are monitored; attention is paid to the use of gender-neutral words, to female coaches in advertising; and to gender balance in the recruitment of coach developers.

**Germany** – Within the DOSB, a working group has the task of promoting the standing of female instructors/coaches and referees in Germany, and there is a special fund for females in sport. There is a gender quota requiring 30 % of positions must be filled by women.

(McGeehin and Harrison 2020)

The Commonwealth Games Federation has been very proactive in gender equity in one of the largest multi-sport games, as illustrated by the page from their website below.



commonwealth sport

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### Gender Equality

- Gender parity in the number of medal events at Gold Coast 2018 between women and men for first time ever: 133 Women's events; 133 Men's events; 9 Mixed/Open events
- Basketball, Hockey and Swimming to feature over 50% female Technical Officials: a first in international sport
- Launch of first Women's Coaching Internship Programme will build women's coaching capacity across Commonwealth

### **3. Policies and tools to enhance gender equity in coaching.**

Outlined below are seven steps that organizations can take to build effective women in coaching programs, attract more women into coaching, and improve conditions for women coaches.

#### **Step 1: A commitment to gender equity**

The first step that signals an organization recognizes the importance and need to improve opportunities for women in sport leadership positions is a gender equity policy. Such a policy establishes a clear goal to provide equal opportunities to men and women, to ensure fairness and address inequalities that have traditionally existed, and to provide support that enables women to fully participate in all elements of sport. In a highly evolved system, a specific women-in-coaching policy has been created that establishes specific targets for the achievement of gender balance in coaching, including targets for the number of women coaches at the national level.

#### **Step 2: Communications and recognition**

Communications need to be reviewed to ensure gender neutral language is used and that male and female coaches are featured in materials and awards programs.

#### **Step 3: Role models**

Promoting women coach role models encourages girls to consider coaching as a future career and contributes to boys and men respecting women as equal colleagues (LaVoi 2016).

#### **Step 4: Support programs**

A system moves to the mature stage when the intentions expressed in the emerging stage are put into action by providing specific support for women coaches. The sophistication of the system has also evolved to the point where it is backed up with research and evidence-based monitoring of the status of women coaches.

Specific programs are needed to provide women with the training and experience they need to succeed in the workplace. This includes education programs, placements in programs they aspire to lead, and mentorships with men and women who can guide them through the challenges inherent in coaching. It also provides support for women coaches to access child support for training camps and competitions – frequently a limiting factor for women with families.

#### **Step 5: Hiring procedures**

Hiring procedures are also critical. Policies are needed to overcome the unconscious discrimination and bias of what are often male-dominated hiring committees. For example, require shortlists and interviews with women candidates, establish gender-balanced hiring committees and provide education on gender equity to its members, and privilege minority candidates in cases of equal qualifications.

#### **Step 6: Quotas and gender requirements for coaching appointments**

Quotas and gender requirements are important tools to address historical inequities. An example from Canada is the requirement at the multi-sport Canada Games for provincial teams with both male and female competitors to have both male and female coaches. This policy has resulted in the provincial sport authorities increasing training access and opportunities in addition to recruitment strategies for women coaches.



Photograph: Courtesy of Higwaystarz

### Step 7: Ensuring the work environment and organizational culture support women coaches.

Helping women improve their qualifications and experience is not sufficient to change the inherent bias in the existing systems (Wynn 2019) – the workplace environment must also change and adapt.

Although not dealing specifically with gender inequalities, an example from corporate leadership training is instructive as it recognizes the need to address both individual skill development and the creation of a positive work environment. “Developing future leaders isn’t just about putting them through programs. New research points to the critical importance of supporting them with the right organizational context—a workplace environment that encourages knowledge-sharing, risk-taking, and growth.” Derler, A. (2020)

This dimension of creating a supportive work environment for women coaches is essential, as too often promising women coaches are forced out of coaching by a toxic work environment. For women-in-coaching programs to have the desired impact, attention needs to be paid not only to ensuring that women coaches have the required skills for the job, but that a supportive work environment for women coaches is created. Ultimately, the workplace culture needs to support women coaches, and this is a responsibility of senior management. This includes supporting women in coaching by proper pay and working conditions, protection from discrimination and abuse, and having employment policies in place related to pregnancy and childcare.

## 4. Conclusion

Despite the efforts of organizations to improve opportunities for women coaches, there has not been significant progress in many jurisdictions, and a concerted effort underpinned by a strong policy foundation is recommended. A seven-step approach of policy and program development and delivery is recommended.

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## Chapter 12: Diversity in Coaching

by Penny Crisfield, John Bales and Ladislav Petrovic

### **PEAK Recommendation #9: Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support diversity in coaching.**

Description: There are important benefits for organizations – in sport or other fields – that integrate different ideas, insights, values, and perspectives through hiring qualified individuals from ethnic minorities (Doherty, Fink, Inglis, & Pastore, 2010). Studies also suggest that ethnically diverse role models, such as coaches, can allow ethnically diverse people to communicate and observe successful people of similar backgrounds and “provide a significant key for encouraging behavioural change”, including improved sport participation (Payne, Reynolds, Brown, & Fleming, 2003). Therefore, national-level policies and programmes need to be developed and implemented to help foster this diversity. Sport organisations and governments also need to be aware of the “dominant networks, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies that have become the unquestioned norms and standards from which ‘other’ racial and ethnic groups are judged” (Rankin-Wright, Hylton, & Norman, 2016). Given the unique contexts of different European countries, and the unique ethnic mix within those countries, it is important to not only develop national policies and programmes to support diversity in coaching, but to ensure that those policies and programmes are evidence-based, relevant and reflect the realities of the targeted groups.

### **Introduction**

Diversity and inclusion are included as values of modern sport. As articulated by the ICCE iCoachKids movement, “in a truly inclusive world differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education and religion are appreciated, valued, respected and supported. Inclusive sport ensures that everyone is treated equally and fairly and that everyone has access to sport in a manner that is relevant and appropriate to them.” Researchers have begun to show that diversity can improve performance in organizations, that having a broad range of experiences and perspectives can enhance decision-making.

From a coaching perspective, there is a need to focus on both helping coaches to encourage inclusion and diversity within their teams and clubs, and to recruit people from diverse backgrounds into coaching.



Photograph: Courtesy of William Bunce



Photograph: Courtesy of Ka Ersong, Imagechina

## Actions to enhance diversity and inclusion

1. An important starting point is to clearly understand government legislation on equity, diversity, inclusion, and discrimination to ensure compliance, and to conduct an audit to capture diversity data from board members, senior leadership personnel, coach developers and coaches. This will help identify any shortcomings and build awareness for any changes needed in organizational culture and to overtly tackle equity, diversity, and inclusion issues in the sport.
2. Develop a federation policy on equity, diversity, and inclusion, with periodic policy review. This should include targets to address diversity and inclusion issues in employed staff, including professional coaches, volunteers and participants, and a specific code of conduct that respects and values human diversity.
3. Determine and enact rule changes or adapted forms of the sport to ensure that people of different race, religion, gender, age, ability/disability, or sexual orientation can participate (e. g., adaptations for different ability groups, rule changes to allow different dress codes). Coach education can be devised to develop and deliver these adapted forms of the sport.
4. Implement a communication strategy that articulates the organization's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity, and features inclusive imagery and language.
5. Provide equality training for board and committee members, staff, coaches, and officials that includes legal and moral issues and unconscious bias training to embed inclusive practices and behaviours into an organization's culture. Such training can also be included in coach education and licensing requirements.
6. Target people from diverse backgrounds when recruiting for different positions and follow up with support in the workplace through mentoring programs.
7. Publish annual data on workforce diversity and inclusion, compared to target figures.

## Conclusion

Diversity in coaching reflects an organizational culture that values equity and inclusion. Coaches are central to developing such a culture and providing sport opportunities for all.

## Chapter 13: The PEAK Self-Assessment Tool

by Louis Moustakas

The PEAK Coaching Policy Self-Assessment Tool enables organizations to assess the status and gaps in their coaching development policies.

Two versions have been developed, one for national agencies, and one for national federations. The tool for national sport coaching authorities is targeted towards organisations such as ministries, national olympic committees, or national sport confederations. The tool for national federations is meant instead for organisations responsible for a sport or group of sports in a specific country.

Both allow the respective organisations to assess the current status of their coaching system and related policies, and to identify areas for improvement. The self-assessment items are listed below and the tool can also be completed online at LINK (e.g. [www.icce.ws/PEAKselfassessment](http://www.icce.ws/PEAKselfassessment))

### Self-Assessment Tool for National Agencies

Please tell us to what extent the following statements apply to your national organisation and national coaching system.

Yes	Partially	No
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#### Recommendation 1 – Definition of Coaching

Implement a definition of coaching, specifying the exact sub-sectors to which the definition applies.

- There is a formal definition of coaching in your country.
- The definition clearly establishes the exact sub-sectors (e.g., fitness, outdoors, recreational sport, etc.) to which it applies.
- The definition is recognised by the appropriate government agency, sport confederation or Olympic committee.
- The definition describes characteristics of a coach that differentiates coaching from related occupations.
- There is a description of the specific body of knowledge and skills of a coach.

#### Recommendation 2 – Responsible Organization(s)

Clearly define an organisation (or group of organisations, or department in your federation) responsible for developing, promoting, and managing coaching.

- Coaching has been identified as a priority within the national sport strategy.
- Responsibility and funding for coaching development has been assigned to an organization or organizations.

- The roles and responsibilities of the organisation(s) are clearly defined (e.g. via law, regulation, strategic documents, policy documents) and publicly communicated.
- To avoid the conflict of interest of the same organization advocating for and licensing coaches, responsibility is divided with different organizations responsible for licensing and disciplining coaches, and for representing and advocating for coaches.

### **Recommendation 3 – Coach Registry and Research:**

**Implement a national register or database of coaches in your country and ensure ongoing research into coaching.**

- A national multi-sport coach registry focusing on coach education is maintained.
- Each sport federation is required to maintain a database recording completion of formal coach education programs
- The national registry adheres to current European and national data protection laws (e.g., GDPR).
- Research on coaching (where the subject of the research is the coach, including the effectiveness and impact of coaching programs, gender differences, current status, and needs of coaches) is identified as an area for national sport research funding.

### **Recommendation 4 – Coach Education and NQF Alignment**

**Ensure quality of coach education programmes in your country that align with your National Qualification Framework (and support/is supported by the work of Coach Developers)**

- Sport authorities have approved a policy that identifies coaching and coach education as important components within its national sport policy.
- Coaches have access to international programs (e.g., Olympic Solidarity, IFs, WADA, ICCE).
- A Coach Education policy identifies an educational pathway for coaches to progress and earn qualifications.
- Guidelines have been approved that recognize coach qualifications and standards across different sports that aligns with the National Qualification Framework (if one exists).
- Coach education programs are offered in many sports in the country that conform with national coach education policy and standards.
- Qualification standards for coaches at different levels have been approved and implemented.
- Coach education provision is evaluated regularly, improvements identified, and progress monitored.
- The coach education pathway is context specific (e.g., community recreation, youth/developmental sport, high performance).
- Coaching qualifications are formally included within the country's National Qualification Framework (NQF).

- There is mutual recognition of coach education programs offered within the sport sector (e.g., by sport federations) and within degree or diploma programs in higher education.
- A policy outlining the responsibilities and training requirements for the Coach Developer workforce has been implemented.
- Coach Developer programs are in place to select, train and evaluate the Coach Developer workforce.

### Recommendation 5 – Safe sport (applied to coaching)

**Implement safeguarding policies and programs to prevent harm and help ensure everyone in sport has a positive sport experience.**

- The National Authority has established a safe sport policy that includes its own code of conduct and requires all national organizations to have a code approved by its Board.
- Organizations are required to approve and implement an Abuse and Harassment Policy that applies to all members (athletes, coaches, administrators, volunteers).
- Organizations are required to approve and implement a coaching code of conduct.
- Coaches must undergo screening mechanisms (e.g., background checks) before working with certain populations (e.g., children and youth, those with cognitive impairments).
- Prevention mechanisms including a communication strategy and mandatory education programmes are implemented.
- Organizations are required to have in place investigative and disciplinary processes to remove those who transgress the Abuse and Harassment Policy or the coach's code of ethics/conduct.

### Recommendation 6 – Coach Licensing

**Implement a licensing system for coaches that actively supports coach development in your country/federation.**

- A policy requiring all federations and their member clubs to establish minimum qualification and conduct standards for their coaches is approved.
- A policy requiring coaches to be licensed to practice is approved.
- The coaching license must be renewed on a periodic basis.
- The national licensing system includes a requirement to be actively coaching, and complies with minimum education standards/qualifications, continuous professional development, minimum age requirements, codes of conduct/safeguarding/welfare/equality, public liability, and personal accident insurance.
- A disciplinary process is established to deal with coaches who transgress the code of conduct, and can result in the removal of the coaching license

- Responsibility for regulation of coaching is assigned to an organization (e.g., a government department, regulatory college, or similar structure).
- Only licensed coaches can coach at nationally recognized competitions

## Recommendation 7 – Support for coaches

**Implement mechanisms to support volunteer and paid coaches.**

- Guidelines for minimum employment conditions and employment contracts are in place.
- All paid coaches have comprehensive employment contracts which cover (as a minimum) payment, hours, holiday allowance, duties, pension rights, insurance cover, probationary period, termination/ discipline and grievance procedures, privacy, and data protection policies.
- There are online resources (e.g., coaching tips, training plans, forums, research) to support coaches.
- There is legal/formal definition/standard of volunteering, including a clear distinction between volunteering and employment.
- There are awards, events or incentives designed to recognise the contributions of coaches at all levels.

## Recommendation 8 – Women-in-Coaching

**Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support women in coaching.**

- The national authority has established a policy to address gender equity, including guidelines for gender neutral language.
- Programs have been initiated to support women in sport leadership positions, including coaching.
- Communications and coach recognition policies require gender balance in coach recognition and promotion programs (e.g., website coverage, coach of the year, etc).
- Programs and support provide additional training opportunities for women coaches.
- Women coach role models are featured in publications.
- Research policies support coaching research with women subjects.
- The national authority has established a specific women-in-coaching policy.
- The national authority has established an adaptive women-in-coaching policy based on multi-stakeholder consultation with periodic policy reviews.
- Coach hiring policies designate a gender mix on coach selection committees and on interview short-lists.
- Women coaches can access child support for training camps and competitions.

## Recommendation 9 – Diversity in Coaching

Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support under-represented groups in coaching (e.g., race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, religious beliefs, disability).

- The national authority has approved strategies to improve diversity and inclusion.
- The national authority has a policy on diversity and inclusion in place.
- The national authority has strategies in place to fulfil diversity and inclusion policy.
- Positive action taken to identify role models from under-represented demographic groups and use these in marketing, promotion, and training.
- The national authority monitors diversity and inclusion of under-represented groups in coaching.
- The national authority has approved a policy that recognizes under-represented groups in coaching.
- All national associations are required to comply with government policy on diversity and inclusion
- Targets are identified and monitored to address diversity and increase the number of people from under-represented groups entering coaching and progressing up the coaching pathway.
- There is public recognition for organisations that make positive steps towards improving the diversity of their workforce.

## Self-Assessment Tool for National Federations

Please tell us to what extent the following statements apply to your national organisation and national coaching system.

Yes	Partially	No
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## Recommendation 1 – Definition of Coaching

Implement a definition of coaching, specifying the exact sub-sectors to which the definition applies.

- There is a formal definition of coaching for your federation.
- There is a description of the specific body of knowledge and skills of a coach in your sport.

## Recommendation 2 – Responsible Department(s)

Clearly define a department in your federation responsible for developing, promoting, and managing coaching.

- The federation has identified coaching within its strategy.
- A policy statement related to coaching has been documented and approved by the federation.
- The federation has approved an implementation strategy and specific objectives for coaching development and assigned responsibility to a coaching or technical committee and to a staff member (or volunteer if an organization without professional staff).



- The federation employs a coaching manager responsible for coaching development and support, and a series of people, departments or committees support the implementation of the federation's coaching plan.
- The impact of the implementation strategy is reviewed and renewed on a regular basis.

### Recommendation 3 – Coach Registry and Research:

**Implement a national register or database of coaches in your federation and ensure ongoing research into coaching.**

- The federation establishes, maintains and updates a database recording completion of formal coach education programs.
- Coach developers are trained in the data collection processes.
- The federation registry adheres to current European and national data protection laws (e.g. GDPR).
- The federation adheres to the policies of the national multi-sport coaching registry, if it exists, submitting its coach education records for inclusion.
- The database is kept up-to-date and extended to include coach demographics (age, gender, employment status etc.) for inclusion in the national coaching registry.
- The federation maintains and updates on an annual basis information on whether a coach is actively coaching.
- The federation identifies coaching as an area of interest in its sport research program.
- The database is kept up-to-date and extended to include coach demographics (age, gender, employment status etc.) for inclusion in the national coaching registry.
- The federation publishes an annual report, identifying strengths and gaps in the national coaching system.

### Recommendation 4 – Coach Education and NQF Alignment

**Ensure quality of coach education programmes in your country that align with your National Qualification Framework (and support/is supported by the work of Coach Developers)**

- The federation has approved a policy that includes coaching and coach education as essential components within its national strategy.
- An implementation strategy related to the coach education policy has been approved.
- The federation's Coach Education policy identifies an educational pathway for coaches to progress and earn qualifications.
- The policy aligns with national guidelines for coach qualifications and standards (where these exist).
- The federation uses programs provided by international organizations (e.g. IOC, International Federations, WADA, ICCE, etc.) to support its coach education provision.

- The federation supplements education provision by external organisations to ensure coaches have access to a curriculum of progressive coaching knowledge and skills.
- The federation has a defined coaching pathway and delivers a systematic and progressive coach education program that conforms with the national coach education policy and standards, and that meets the demand from coaches and clubs.
- The federation's coaching policy includes education pathways for coaches operating in different contexts e.g. community recreation, youth/developmental sport, high performance.
- The federation's coach and coach developer qualifications are formally included within the country's National Qualification Framework (NQF).
- The coach education program differentiates and provides appropriate, varied, formal and informal learning opportunities for coaches working in different athlete contexts.
- The federation implements quality assurance and program evaluation measures in all coaching and coach developer contexts.
- The federation recognizes coaches and coach developers within its qualification framework that are trained within degree or diploma programs in higher education.
- The federation's policy defines the selection and evaluation criteria, training requirements and support provision for the Coach Developer workforce.
- The federation supports its Coach Developer workforce to operate in both formal workshops and informal one-to-one field support (e.g. observation/review, mentoring etc).

### Recommendation 5 – Safe sport (applied to coaching)

**Implement safeguarding policies and programs to prevent harm and help ensure everyone in sport has a positive sport experience.**

- The federation has approved a safe sport policy and implementation strategy that includes a coaches' code of conduct.
- All coaches engaged in federation activities are required to sign the coaches' code of conduct.
- The federation has an Abuse and Harassment Policy that applies to all (athletes, coaches, administrators, volunteers, coach developers).
- The safe sport strategy (that includes education on coaching ethics and athlete safety) has been implemented.
- Screening mechanisms are in place for all coaches working with vulnerable populations (e.g. children and youth, those with cognitive impairments).
- The federation's Disciplinary Policy establishes effective mechanisms to discipline (and remove from practice if necessary) coaches and others who transgress the Abuse and Harassment Policy.
- The policy and implementation strategy are regularly reviewed and updated.

- The identity of coaches who are disciplined for transgressing the code of conduct are made publicly available to ensure coordination with other jurisdictions (other countries or federations).
- Safe sport officers are trained and appointed and are liable, secure, confidential and impartial reporting system (including hot-line, managing complaints and record-keeping) is in place.
- Investigative procedures are established to ensure fair application of the disciplinary policy.
- Prevention mechanisms including a communication strategy and mandatory education programmes for all personnel (administrators, coaches, officials and athletes; including all with special needs) are implemented.

## Recommendation 6 – Coach Licensing

**Implement a licensing system for coaches that actively supports coach development in your federation.**

- A policy requiring coaches to meet minimum education and conduct standards in order to coach at federation-sanctioned competitions or participate on federation-recognized teams is approved.
- A coach licensing system that includes a requirement to be actively coaching, and complies with minimum education, conduct and legal standards (e.g. qualifications, insurance, safeguarding, etc.) is in place.
- Coaches can only participate in federation-sanctioned activities if they hold a current and valid coaching license.
- A disciplinary process is established to deal with coaches who transgress the code of conduct. This can result in the removal of the coaching license and loss of eligibility to participate in federation activities.

## Recommendation 7 – Support for coaches

**Implement mechanisms to support volunteer and paid coaches.**

- The federation has a policy and strategy around the deployment, recruitment and support of volunteer coaches.
- There are formal guidelines and procedures for the recruitment and selection of volunteer coaches, particularly those involved with children and adolescents.
- Federations openly acknowledge the importance of volunteer coaches, volunteer commitment and satisfaction is monitored, awards, events or incentives are used to recognise and value the contributions and status of volunteer coaches.
- Volunteer coaches are provided with a well-designed orientation programme and career pathway advice.
- Volunteer coaches are managed (responsibilities, roles, workloads and rights at work (including risk assessment, health and safety, grievance procedures).
- A comprehensive job description and person specification (including minimum recognised coaching qualifications and ages (where appropriate) are required to ensure appropriate recruitment and selection.

- Coaches have well-designed orientation program which cover legislation (e.g. risk, data protection), compliance with ethics/conduct/equality contracts and mandatory sport programs
- Every paid coach is line-managed with regular meetings, training needs analysis and personal development planning.
- There is a strong culture of professional development with a range of accessible industry-recognised learning and development opportunities which are supported financially as well as in time allowance by the federation.

## Recommendation 8 – Women-in-Coaching

**Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support women in coaching.**

- The federation has established a policy to address gender equity, including guidelines for gender neutral language.
- The federation has initiated programs to support women in sport leadership positions, including coaching.
- Coach hiring policies designate a gender mix on coach selection committees and interview short-lists.
- Communications and coach recognition policies require gender balance in coach recognition and promotion programs (e.g. website coverage, coach of the year, etc.).
- The federation features women coach role models in publications.
- Male advocates from within the federation serve as mentors to women coaches working for clubs, training centres and the federation.
- Responsibility for planning and monitoring efforts to improve the workplace culture for women coaches is assigned to a senior staff member.

## Recommendation 9 – Diversity in Coaching

**Implement relevant, evidence-based national-level policy or programmes to support under-represented groups in coaching (e.g., race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, ability status, age, religious beliefs, disability).**

- The federation is compliant with government legislation on diversity and inclusion.
- Under-represented groups are specifically targeted for coaching and coach developer courses, including courses specifically for minority groups where appropriate.
- The federation's code of ethics promotes the respect and value of human diversity and is signed by all members.
- The federation conducts an audit to capture diversity data from board members, senior leadership personnel, coach developers and coaches.
- The federation initiates the development of a policy to increase the number of people involved in coaching in under-represented groups.

- Mandatory diversity/inclusion training for all board and committee members, employed staff, coach developers, coaches, officials to embed inclusive practices and behaviours into their culture.
- The federation has a specific equity, diversity and inclusion policy with clear positive actions, diversity recruitment targets and education programs, with periodic policy review.
- The federation's commitment to diversity/inclusion and a striving to increase numbers from under-represented groups is communicated internally and externally; positive action schemes incorporated into all policies, diversity data published annually, compared with targets.

## Chapter 14: Conclusion

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A policy foundation for an effective coaching system includes clarity on **who the policies are for** (the definition of coaching and the organizations responsible), **how the results of the policy will be measured** (the coach registry and research), **the education, regulation, and support of the workforce** (coach education, safe sport, licensing, and support for coaches), and **addressing the inclusion of under-represented groups** (diversity in coaching).

This framework provides guidance to national sport agencies and sport federations to assist them with the development of a highly evolved coaching system that can provide quality coaching leadership to enhance the sport experience of participants at all stages on the athlete pathway.

## Partners

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European Elite Athletes Association (EU Athletes):

<https://euathletes.org/>

Finnish Olympic Committee:

<https://www.olympiakomitea.fi/>

Foundation of Sport Education and Information:

<https://www.spordiinfo.ee/Tutvustus-2>

German Sport University Cologne (GSU):

<https://www.dshs-koeln.de/en/institute-of-european-sport-development-and-leisure-studies/>

International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE):

<https://www.icce.ws/>

International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE):

<https://www.icsspe.org/>

Sport Ireland Coaching:

<https://www.sportireland.ie/coaching>

Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen (SFISM):

<https://www.ehsm.admin.ch/en/home.html>