ATHLETES4SOCIETY TOOLKIT

HOW TO BUILD A SOCIETAL IMPACT PROGRAMME?

Conducted as part of the Erasmus+ Athletes 4 Society Project: Empowering the public value of sport through athletes as role models

Colophon

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1 Creating a toolkit

1.1 Why this toolkit?

This toolkit is developed as part of the **Athletes4Society research project.** We, the developers of this toolkit, hope that it inspires you, the organisation, to increase the societal impact of elite sport.

Elite sport can be inspiring to the public. For example, the public's positive associations with elite sport include increased sports participation, public health, sense of community, and inclusion. Although elite sport has the potential to have a positive impact on society, this does not happen automatically. First, our research reveals that not everyone is convinced of the positive societal impact of sport. Aggression among sport fans, gambling, discrimination, and excessive spending of tax money on elite sport are examples of the 'dark side' of elite sport (Krieger & Wassong, 2019), that are often underestimated or disregarded (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019; McCartney et al., 2010; Weed et al., 2015). Second, sports organisations must make significant effort to yield positive societal outcomes. Potential positive societal effects do not just 'trickle down' (de Bosscher et al., 2013; Grix & Carmichael, 2012). They must be carefully strategized, managed, and financed.

To do so, research reveals the added value of getting athletes on board in your societal value campaign. Using athletes as role models is a powerful way to increase societal impact (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2021). This toolkit will provide information on when and how athletes are perceived as role models and how to utilize them for a societal impact programme.

This toolkit aims to empower sport organisations and athletes with information that helps to set up a successful programme to increase the societal value of elite sport. Concretely, the toolkit will provide information on when and how athletes are perceived as role models and how organisations, together with athletes, can produce value for society.

The **toolkit** contains the following parts:

- A practical set of guidelines, recommendations and a programme logic which identifies the key components and mechanisms of athlete role model programme to increase the capacity of sport federations and organisations to develop their own athlete role model programme.
- Concrete innovative tools for creative marketing to design a successful athlete role model programme or campaign.
- Concrete examples of inspirational practices

1.2 Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is developed for sport organisations and (former) athletes that want to increase their societal impact. Whether you are exploring ways to increase your societal value as an organisation or seeking practical guidelines to take your campaign to the next level, this toolkit is for you.

Sport organisations may include national and international sport federations, national and international Olympic committees, grass roots sports clubs and organisations or policy makers dealing with sports policy at national, regional, and local level. Also, existing athlete foundations may find this toolkit helpful.

Please note that the Athletes4Society project is a partnership between institutions from various European countries. Consequently, this toolkit, is based on the data collected from a European

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sample. In general, European countries can benefit from its use, but of course the context remains important to consider. Thus, sport organisations and athletes from other countries may benefit from this toolkit as well.

The **toolkit** is for you if:

- You want to know how to increase your societal impact as a sports organisation
- You are an athlete (or retired athlete) that wants to work towards a sustainable future
- You are exploring what societal outcomes to target
- You want to know what societal benefits, but also which problems and challenges the public associates with elite sport
- You are about to design a programme for increasing societal impact
- You want to know how to get added value from the role model function of the athlete
- You are looking for inspirational examples of successful athlete role model programmes

1.3 How to use this toolkit?

This toolkit forms a comprehensive overview of the entire process of creating a societal value programme involving elite athletes as role models. In chapter 3, we explain each step of how to build and run such a programme in chronological order. Assignments, theory, tips and examples are alternated. Dependant on the phase of building a programme that you currently are, you can:

- Read and complete the whole toolkit from start to finish
- Select a certain section from the table of contents to learn more on a specific aspect of building a societal value programme
- Get inspired by current practices in the blue and orange text boxes.

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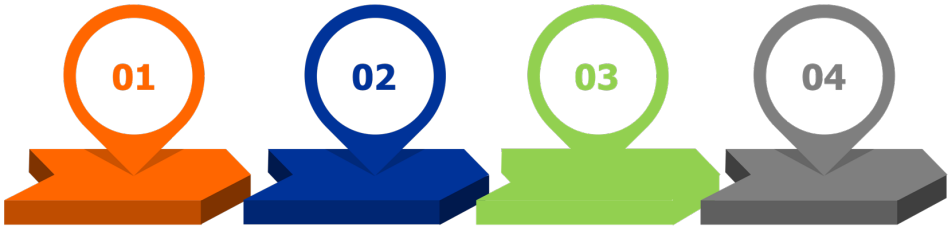
2 The Athletes4Society project

2.1 Summary

The Athletes4Society project aims to inspire, support, and stimulate sports organisations to increase the public value of (elite) sport. More specifically, the objective is to develop and implement recommendations and tools to develop and optimize policies, campaigns or programmes that successfully put athletes to good use towards positive societal impact. In order to reach its aim, the project consists of different parts ('work packages' (WP)):



Situation

Insights on the perceived positive and negative societal impact generated by (high performance) sport and athletes via surveys with the population, athletes and federations (WP2)

Inspiration

Detect, investigate and share inspirational practices across Europe that actively leverage athletes as role models for societal value (WP3)

Support

Build capacity amongst sport organisations by developing and testing an innovative inspirational toolkit & bootcamp (WP4)

Stimulation

Stimulate sports organisations to develop a programme with societal impact by launching the 'European Athletes 4 Society Challenge' (WP5)

Application

As a result of this project, sport organisations are empowered and have the opportunity to apply their gained capacity to generate positive societal value through athlete role model programmes

2.2 Project partners

In order to ensure an optimal expertise in relation to the topic of the public value of sport, the Athletes4Society project brings together experts with specific and complementary expertise, responsibilities and tasks, from seven EU Member States. The consortium – coordinated by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel – includes:

Academic sport partners

- Vrije Universiteit Brussel – coordinator (Belgium; Veerle De Bosscher, Sofie Smismans, Lynn Praet, Inge Derom)
- Research Institute for Olympic Sports (Finland; Jarmo Mäkinen, Jari Lämsä, Kaisu Mononen)
- Utrecht University (The Netherlands; Maarten Van Bottenburg, Jan-Willem van der Roest)
- Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen (The Netherlands; Herman Ijzerman, Cees Vervoorn)

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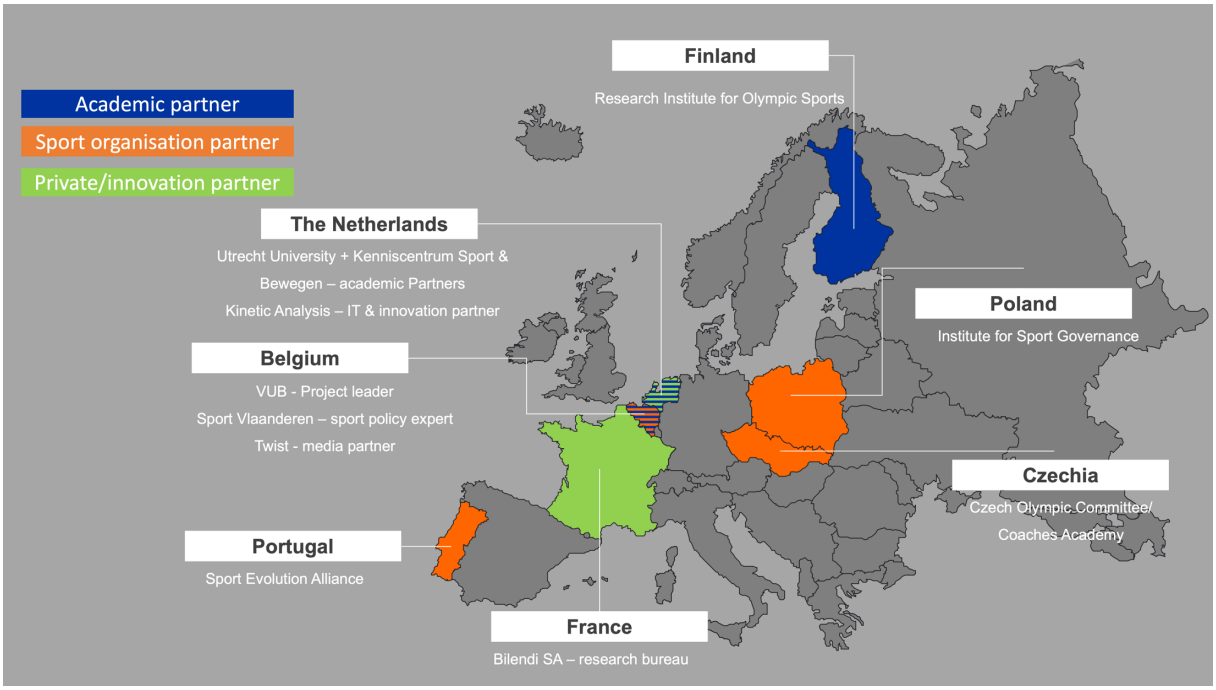
Innovative private partners with experience in the sports sector

- Bilendi SA – research bureau (France; Roel Vercammen, Hans Verhoeven, Gunther Ackermans)
- Kinetic Analysis – IT & innovation (The Netherlands; Maarten Gijssel, Ingrid van de Port, Melvin Franken)
- Twist – media (Belgium)

Public sport associations/organisations

- Sport Vlaanderen – Sport policy (Belgium)
- Sport Evolution Alliance (Portugal; Pedro Dias, Filipa Cavalleri)
- Czech Olympic Committee, Coaches Academy (Czechia; Michal Barda, Michel Jezdik)
- Institute for Sport Governance (Poland; Grzegorz Botwina, Pawel Zembura, Piotr Poplawski)



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3 A framework for societal impact programmes using athletes as role models

3.1 The Athletes4Society framework

The Athletes4Society framework can help athletes and sport organisations to contribute to society. In the Athletes4Society framework (see Figure 1), sport organisations and elite athletes are encouraged to think of their societal project as being **a public value proposition**, paying attention to three perspectives: public value perspective, operational capacity perspective, and legitimacy and support perspective. According to Van der Roest and Dijk (2021) these perspectives can be seen as 'tests' that any societal project should pass.

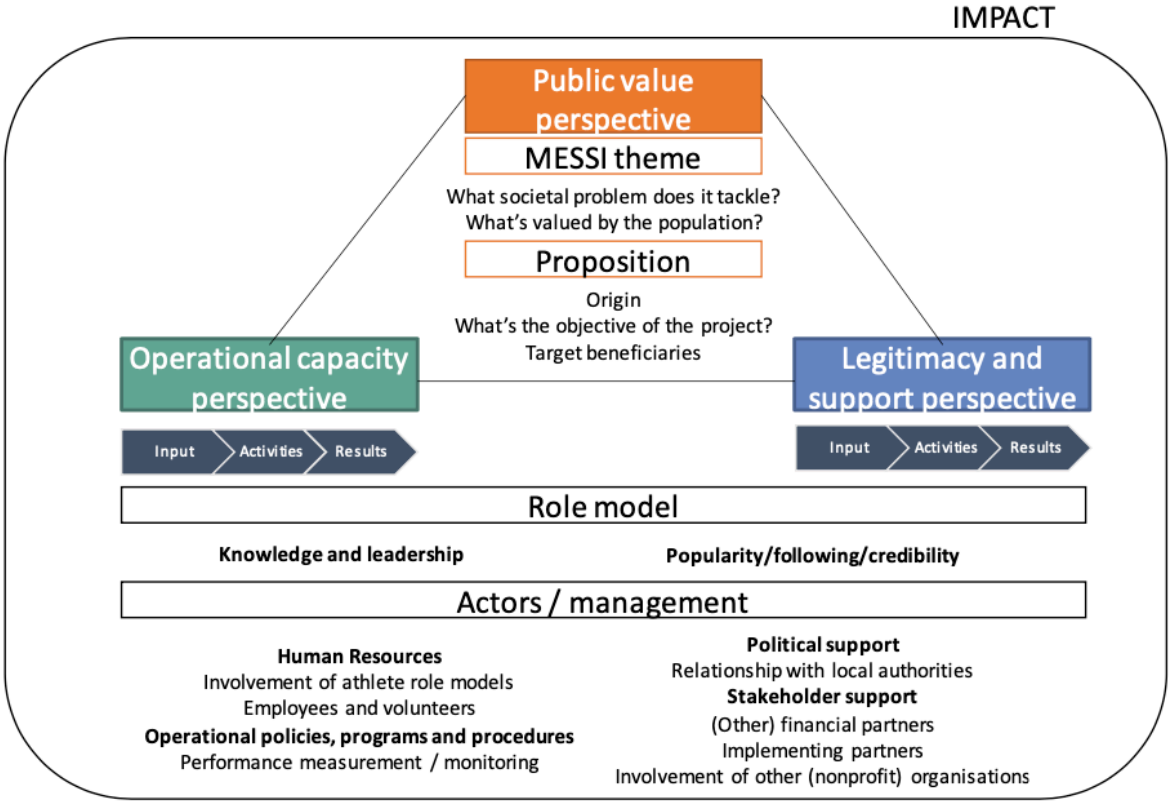

Figure 1 The Athletes4Society framework

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3.1.1 Public value

First, an organisation should focus on something **substantively valuable**. The MESSI framework (De Rycke et al., 2019; De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019; 2020; Figure 2) can assist organisations in determining what contribution to society the project should make. When the societal problem is determined and the theme for the societal project has been chosen, the proposition can be developed. The proposition can be compared to the development of a business case for public purposes (see chapter 3.2.2: Writing a good proposition).

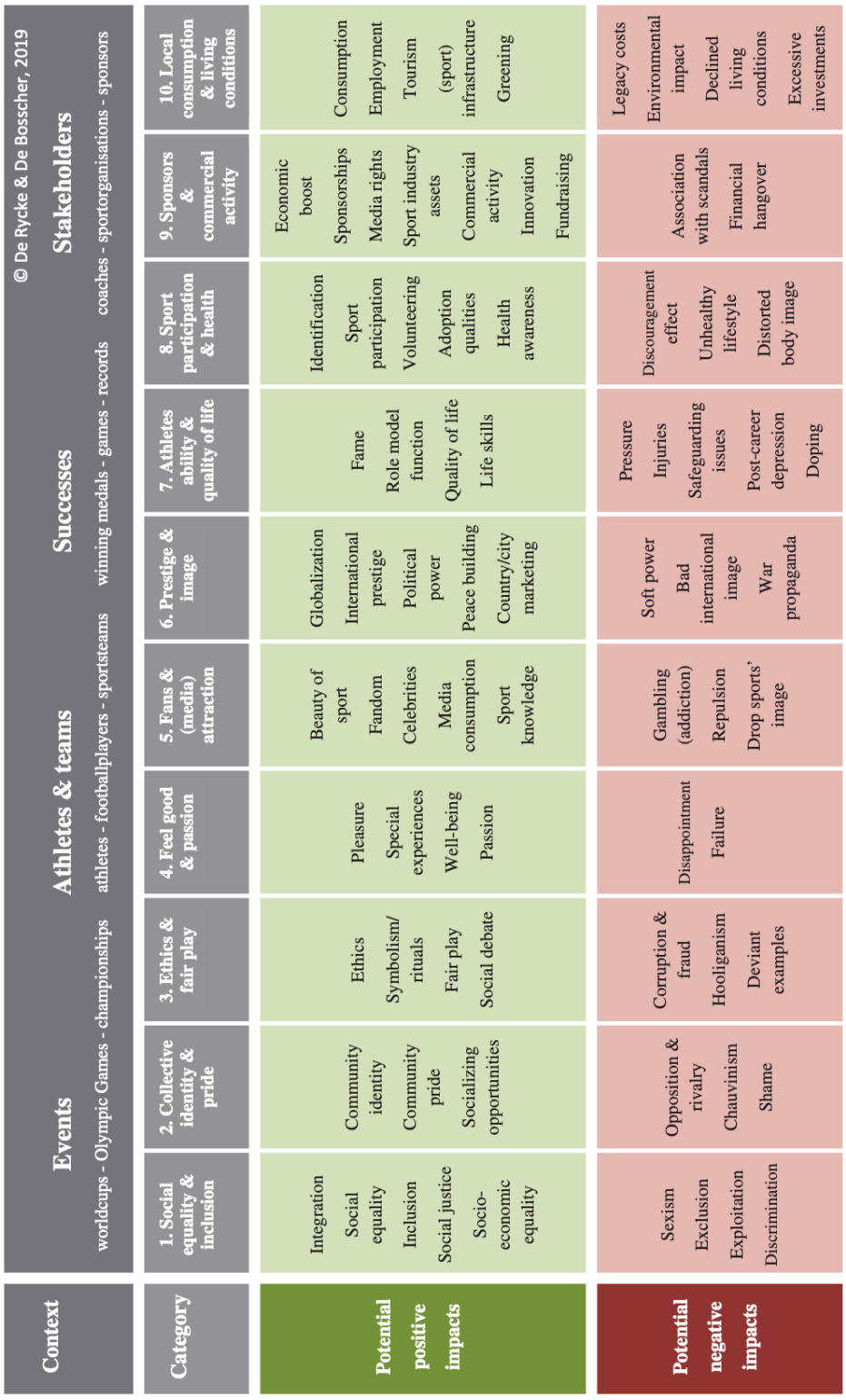

Figure 3 The MESSI framework

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3.1.2 Operational capacity

Second, sport organisations should make sure that their **operational capacity** is sufficiently equipped for creating public value. Operational capacity refers to what you can produce or deliver in a certain amount of time. First, organisations need to control enough resources to deliver the value. This can either be accomplished by making use of the organisation's own resources or by cooperating with public and private partners. The sports sector has a lengthy history of cooperation between these sectors (Van der Roest & Dijk, 2021).

Within the Athletes4Society framework, **human resources** play a pivotal role. Sports organisations must ensure sufficient knowledge about the societal challenge they want to tackle, and vision on how to tackle it. Second, the organisation should ensure that the (human) resources are deployed thoughtfully. Ideally, the organisation's operating principles and procedures, as well as the special programs that support their goals, are clearly described and correspond to the organisation's strategic goals. Next, the operations and results of the organisation are reviewed and evaluated, and operations are adapted based on the evaluations. Finally, the operations of the organization are transparent inside and outside the organization.

This can help organisations in strengthening their legitimacy and support.

3.1.3 Legitimacy and support

The third corner of the framework is **'legitimacy and support'**. Important, legitimacy and support are not guaranteed when organisations have an appealing idea to create public value (Moore, 1995; 2013). Instead, organisations should actively seek authorisation and support for their proposition (Van der Roest & Dijk, 2021). It is therefore of great importance that the athlete or athletes within the societal project are credible in their role. Yet, it is of equal importance that the organisation ensures the support of political stakeholders and other stakeholders. It goes without saying that athletes can play an important role in finding stakeholder support as well.

The distinction between input, activities and results in the legitimacy & support perspective might not be as clear as it is in the operational capacity perspective. Yet, it seems sensible to come up with a plan for ensuring legitimacy and support: who does the organisation deploy to convince political and financial stakeholders of its good cause (input)? What activities are needed to manage the support of different kinds of stakeholders? And what are the intended results of these efforts? Again, organisations that are to develop a public value proposition and want to create public value using the power of elite sport need to plan, document, and evaluate their work.

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3.2 How to build a societal impact programme? A step-by-step guide

3.2.1 Step 1 – What societal problem do you want to tackle?

1) Identifying societal need: The Athletes4Society population survey

Throughout the Athletes4Society project, a European-wide (Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal) population survey was conducted among 10 400 citizens. The results of this survey can help you to identify which MESSI themes are perceived as important by the European population and consequently help you to identify which societal problem to address. Survey results can guide the sport organisation to what values are seen as important in their specific country. For example, if concerns about doping use by elite athletes have been raised among the population, societal projects on this theme can become relevant. If survey results show the potential impact of economic growth by elite sports (for example organizing large events), this could also be a consideration.

If your country is not included in our survey, you may wish to conduct your own survey on your population's perceptions about the societal impact of elite sport. Contact the VUB for tips on how to collect the necessary data.

2) Map the potential societal value you want to bring: The MESSI framework

The MESSI-framework (Figure 2) summarizes and maps 10 categories in which elite sport can foster potential positive and negative impact:

- Social equality and inclusion
  - \+ Bridge different cultures, promoting harmony, socio-economic equality
  - \- Discrimination, limit minority involvement
- Collective identity and pride
  - \+ National values, pride, collective unity, identity, nationalism
  - \- Rivalry and aggressive behaviour
- Ethics and fair play
  - \+ Social debate
  - \- Corruption and fraud
- Feel good and passion
  - \+ Excitement, happiness, satisfaction, escape from daily life
  - \- Anger, disappointment, frustration, hostility
- Fans and (media) attraction
  - \+ Attractive power of athletes and sport events, boost the popularity of elite sport, brand equity
  - \- Cheating, conflicts, decadence, controversies
- International prestige and image

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+ International recognition and prestige, policy tool

- Athletes' ability and quality of life

  + Development of life skills, pride of being an elite athlete
  - Psychological challenges

- Sport participation and health

  + Inspiration, motivational direction and meaning for people to develop an active lifestyle
  - Increasing body image issues, discouragement from participating in sport due to a perceived competence gap with successful athletes

- Sponsors and commercial activity

  + Financial returns
  - Financial hangovers

- Local consumption and living conditions

  + Increased tourism, consumption, and employment, enhanced living conditions
  - Excessive temporal and lasting costs, limited noticeable positive impacts for the community

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Describe which societal problem you want to address with your programme.

In which MESSI-theme does this problem belong?

Examples:

- The Polish Antidoping Organisation (POLADA), started a programme in which elite athletes educate recreational athletes about the risks involved with using performance enhancing drugs. The societal problem that this programme aims to tackle is **the increasing number of recreational athletes that use performance enhancing drugs**. This falls within **MESSI theme 7: athlete's ability and quality of life; doping**.

- The Johan Cruyff Foundation aims to increase physical activity and play in children with physical or mental disabilities and children from deprived areas. The societal problem that this foundation addresses is the **lack of physical activity in children with disabilities, children from families with low socio-economic status, and children from deprived areas**. This problem falls within two MESSI themes: **theme 1: social equality and inclusion; and theme 8: sports participation and health**.

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3) Unique selling points

It is crucial to understand the possible **unique selling points** that the sport organisation can deliver. Unique selling points are positive qualities that set your organisation or programme apart from others. For example, a national athletics federation has different values to offer than a foundation that was initiated by a professional basketball player. Again, survey results can assist sport organisations in the potential meaning that their sport or athlete has for the population. Based on this, the organisation can describe what they have to **offer** to society.

The following questions can guide you into determining your unique selling points:

- How is your organisation different from other organisations?
- What services can you offer that others cannot?
- In what way are you more effective in solving a societal problem than other organisations?
- What physical needs do you meet?
- What emotional needs do you meet?
- Can you meet physical and emotional needs in a special way?
- What specific/timely events do you address?
- What demographic group (age, gender, geographical radius, income level, etc.) do you serve that others do not?
- What special skills do you have to offer?
- What unique experience or story will enhance your services?
- Why would people or other organisations donate to your organisation?
- Does your organisation have a long, successful track record?
- If you are new, did you gain success in a short time?
- Why are others enthusiastic about your organisation?

Describe your organisation's unique selling points. Make sure your selling points are concrete and defensible.

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Inspirational practice: Mentelity Foundation
Initiative: Bibian Mentel
Country: the Netherlands
Aim: to encourage children and young adults with disabilities to play sports.
Inspirational aspect: This foundation was started by paralympic athlete Bibian Mentel, who sadly passed away in 2021. Bibian's story and legacy is a **unique selling point** of the Mentelity Foundation. Despite her declining health, she continued her sports career and won multiple paralympic medals. Who could better inspire youngsters with physical disabilities to play sports than Bibian Mentel?

3.2.2 Step 2 – Public value: The proposition

1) Writing a good proposition

The proposition should describe how the project fulfils the needs of (specific target beneficiaries in) society, and in what way the sport organisation aims to do this. All previous steps should be considered when the proposition is defined. Completing the following tasks, you will gather all the elements for a good proposition.

Describe the **goal/objective** of your programme. How does your programme assess the societal need? Make your goal SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

Example:

- With a campaign among elementary schools, we aim to increase the number of youth membership in sports clubs in our region by 20% by 2025.

Describe the **societal need** of your programme.

Example:

- Children are currently not getting enough physical activity; they need to get more active.

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Describe the **way your project answers to that societal need.**

Example:

- By getting children into sports clubs, they will become more physically active.

Describe the **target beneficiaries** that are intended to benefit from the project**.**

Example:

- Children aged 6-12 in region X.

Describe the ways in which these target beneficiaries will **benefit** from the project**.**

Example:

- The children who will become member of a sports club, will exercise more, and become healthier, and make new friends.

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Describe the **success factors and possible constraints** of your programme**.** Use the following questions to guide your answer:

Success factors:

- What resources do we have?
- How do we perform better than other organisations?
- What past programmes/activities performed well?
- What new knowledge or technology can we use?
- How can we expand in the future?

Possible constraints:

- Where can we improve in the future?
- What past programmes/activities did not perform as intended?
- What resources are we currently lacking?
- Are there competitors with the same objectives?
- If we want to expand in the future, what resources do we need?

Success factors	*Possible constraints*

2) Testing the proposition

After writing it, the proposition should be tested among different audiences. It should be noted that this is not to be done in a one-off brainstorm session, but it is rather a **reiterative process** in which the idea for a societal project should be tested among different audiences to see what suits them best. As Van der Roest & Dijk (2021) have shown the proposition can have different meanings and different value for different audiences. It is up to the sport organisation to present the proposition in such a way that it fits the needs of the respective audience. For example, in the article by Van der Roest and Dijk the sport organisation in question was able to fit the needs of the political audience by underlining possibilities broad personal development opportunities in the region, while they presented their offer to sport clubs as better opportunities for talent development. What can be taken from this example is that the proposition needs to be clear and recognizable, yet flexible.

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3) Direct impact or awareness creation?

According to our analysis of various athlete role model programmes, there are two different types of programmes, being programmes targeting direct impact and programmes targeting awareness creation. These programmes differ according to **origin** of the project, the **target beneficiaries**, the **athlete role models** involved in the programme, the **management** of the programme, and the **impact** of the programme. Based on your proposition, your type of programme might differ.

Some of the tools in this toolkit are different for both programme types. Choose what type suits your programme best using the table below. If your proposition targets **direct impact**, proceed using the **orange tools**. If your programme targets **awareness creation**, proceed using the **blue tools**.

	Direct impact	**Awareness creation**
Origin	- The project starts from an idea or interest of the athlete. - The project addresses a specific subject (at least at first).	- The project starts from an idea of an organisation. - The project addresses a larger societal problem/subject.
Role of the athlete	- The athlete is actively engaged in the implementation of the programme. - The athlete is actively engaged in the day-to-day management of the programme.	- The athlete's role is to spread a certain message, to be an ambassador. - The athlete is not a part of the day-to-day management of the programme.
Target beneficiaries	- Select group of people, often with specific characteristics.	- Large group of people, a segment of society.
Athlete role model	- Athlete has lots of knowledge of the subject/societal problem. - Athlete is a good leader.	- Athletes are chosen by the organisation to participate in the programme based upon their popularity and following.
Management	- High level of commitment from the athlete. - Activities/events are organized with specific goals. - Higher level of funding necessary (especially if the programme is intended to grow).	- Lower level of commitment from the athlete. - Lower level of funding possible.
Impact	- Impact on an individual level. - Impact will result out of activities/events.	- Impact on a societal level. - Impact will result out of (social) media messages or charisma of the athlete. - Effect is expected due to popularity of the athletes.
	Tools and inspirational practices that match this type of programme are indicated in blue	**Tools and inspirational practices that match this type of programme are indicated in orange**

Inspirational practice: Edwin van der Sar Foundation
Initiative: Edwin van der Sar
Country: Netherlands
Aim: to help people suffering from brain injury with rehabilitation, participation, and prevention.
MESSI theme: 8. Sport participation & health; health awareness
Inspirational aspect: This foundation is an example of a programme in which the athlete is **actively engaged**. Former football player Edwin van der Sar started this foundation after his wife was struck with brain injury. In the beginning, he and his wife were very actively involved in the foundation. This foundation targets a relatively small part of society: people with brain injury.

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Inspirational practice: Release the Tiger Within
Initiative: Estonian Olympic Committee
Country: Estonia
Aim: To inspire young athletes and to educate them on themes like how to share time between family, studying and training, or eating disorders.
MESSI theme: 7. Athletes ability and quality of life
Inspirational aspect: This is an example of a programme in which the athletes are passively engaged. Elite athletes give talks about the challenges they face to students but are not actively involved in the organisation.

4) Athletes as role models

Athletes are often perceived as role models. In fact, it is widely assumed that they have a duty to be a role model (Lynch et al., 2014). Indeed, our research confirms that athletes are often willing to be a role model and subsequently give back to the community. However, it is important to nuance that not all athletes are motivated to be role models. Sometimes, athletes are assigned the status of 'role model', without fully understanding, appreciating, or willing to be a role model (Jonson et al., 2013). According to Jonson and colleagues (2013) there are three types of athlete role models: (1) athletes who intrinsically choose to be a role model, (2) athletes who are imposed to be a role model (e.g., by their club or federation), and (3) athletes who are famous and therefore automatically become a role model.

Based on our survey results and literature (Johnson et al., 2013), we have listed some characteristics of athletes that make them good role models for a societal value programme.

General likeable characteristics

- Positive example to others
- Very good physical condition
- Shows fair play and respect to opponents and other players
- Is among the best in their sport
- Plays very exciting matches
- Demonstrates exemplary behaviour during and outside of competitions
- Maintains a healthy lifestyle
- Has a substantial following
- Responsible member of society

Likeable characteristics depending on your programme target

Direct impact	Awareness creation
Knowledge about the societal problem and the target beneficiaries at hand	Substantial following
Leadership skills	Active on social media
Management skills	Recognizable stories
Has time and energy available for active involvement in running the programme	

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If you are an athlete and initiator of the programme (direct impact),

Describe examples of how to show your likeable characteristics as a role model.

Describe which skills you currently lack and how you could improve.

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If you involve athletes as role models in your programme (awareness creation),

List the athletes that are involved or that you are planning to involve in your programme. Describe for each athlete:

- Concrete examples where the athlete shows positive characteristics for being a role model
- What is their following (social media followers, media appearance, etcetera)?

Tips for involving elite athletes in your programme:

- Convince the athlete of the **purpose of the programme** and their **function as a role model**. If the athlete understands the importance of the programme, it is easier for them to get involved.
- Make clear what is expected of the athlete. Record this in a signed agreement. However, do not always expect exemplary behaviour beyond their work for the programme or their sport.
- Athletes are motivated to be a role model because they want to **learn new things**, they want to **be proud of themselves**, and because they want to **inspire people**. Make sure they can do these three things in your programme.
- When asked why athletes do not want to be a role model, they indicate that they want to **focus on their sporting careers** and because they do **not want to share their life with fans**. Therefore, be careful that your programme does not interfere with the athlete's training and competitions and does not require them to share unnecessary information with fans.
- Schedule regular meetings with the athlete to discuss how the programme is going and if both parties are still happy with the agreement.

Inspirational practice: No to Racism
Initiative: UEFA
Country: European Union
Aim: To fight racism using a variety of activities, including video messages and speeches by elite football players.
Inspirational aspect: This campaign involved elite football players that recorded video messages with anti-racism statements. These video messages were played in stadiums all over the world. The athletes in this campaign are amongst the best in their sport, including Christiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. These players are very famous role models. Therefore, impact can already be expected because of their enormous following.

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An important factor in monitoring your athlete role model programme is having good cooperation and communication strategies with the elite athletes. Interpersonal communication between the team members is a necessary component for programme success, as it brings people together and ensures that everyone is on the same page. Effective communication allows the programme coordinator to share goals with their elite athletes and shareholders both inside and outside the organisation (Radovic Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018).

Tips for an effective communication with elite athletes

The following guidelines (i.e., support precise and accurate communication and manage communication errors) represent the most essential requirements for effective communication (Salas et al, 2008; Ishak, 2017; Radovic Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018)

Guideline 1: SUPPORT PRECISE AND ACCURATE COMMUNICATION

- ✓ Encourage an open information flow by creating a nonpunitive "speak-up" culture
- ✓ Respect the ideas and perceptions of the athlete and listen to them with a non-judgmental attitude
- ✓ Set clear expectations for the elite athletes
- ✓ Help elite athletes in achieving their personal goals and the goals of the project by giving them specific feedback and through verbally acknowledge their improvement
- ✓ Provide periodic situation updates
- ✓ Acknowledge and accept error through candid discussions in a safe forum

Guideline 2: MANAGE COMMUNICATION ERRORS

- ✓ Practice identifying communication errors as a learning exercise
- ✓ Give clear input to the elite athletes as to why their ideas, comments and/or observations are rejected
- ✓ Encourage the elite athletes to be self-critical, in order to learn from their mistakes, self-correct their behaviour and improve.
- ✓ Keep the conversation going until there is closure, i.e., all items must be discussed and even though the athlete did not agree, they were listening with a non-defensive attitude
- ✓ Be conscious of your non-verbal behavior

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Tips for an effective collaboration with elite athletes

Elite athletes play an important role in your programme, so it is important that they are fully motivated to engage in a fruitful cooperation. Keep following tips in the back of your mind while working with elite athletes.

Guideline 1: HAVE REGULARLY MEETINGS WITH THE ATHLETE

- ✓ Ask the athlete about their experiences with the programme
- ✓ Ask the athlete to point out (at least two) positive and negative points regarding the programme

Guideline 2: MAKE CLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH THE ATHLETE

- ✓ Point out what is the responsibility of the athlete
- ✓ Discuss in advance which tasks/activities the athlete should perform

Guideline 3: RESPECT THE BUSY SCHEDULE OF THE ATHLETE

- ✓ Make sure that appointments are scheduled in advance and avoid last-minute cancellations.
- ✓ Set clear deadlines in mutual agreement

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Evaluating elite athletes

During the implementation of your athlete role model programme, you should regularly evaluate the elite athlete(s) you work with. In fact, the hoped match between the programme and the elite athletes may not be what it should have been after all. Furthermore, it is possible that the athlete does not show the hoped-for exemplary behaviour. The tool below can help you to evaluate an elite athlete.

On the other hand, it may be that the elite athlete who was originally chosen for the programme or athletes who came to you with their own proposal choose to leave the programme.

These circumstances may lead to an early termination of the collaboration between the athlete and the programme. It is then necessary to recruit new elite athletes who will engage as quickly and efficiently as possible in the programme.

Tips for recruiting new athletes

- ✓ Remember the obstacles the first athlete struggled with
- ✓ Can the elite athlete sufficiently deal with additional (not elite sport-related) frustrations, obstacles and possible criticism from other stakeholders?
- ✓ Doublecheck if the values of the elite athlete match the values of the programme. When the elite athlete does not fully support (the values of) of the programme, they are more likely to drop out when they have a busy schedule.

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Evaluation of elite athletes

(adapted from Goldfinch, 1994; Lejk & Wyvill, 2001)

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Group participation		
Attends meetings regularly and on time		
Actively participates in group discussions		
Shares his relevant experience		
Time management & Responsibility		
Accepts and fulfils a fair share of work		
Deadlines are respected		
Adaptability		
Displays or tries to develop a wide range of skills in service of the project		
Readily accepts changed approach		
Handles constructive criticism		
Creativity & Originality		
Provides useful ideas		
Initiates team decisions		

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Communication skills		
Effective in discussions		
Good listening skills		
Applies professional language		
General team skills		
Has a positive attitude		
Participates in a constructive manner		
Encourages and motivates the team		
Helps resolve conflicts in group		
Helps the team reach consensus		
Scoring Score the partner, athlete, or stakeholder for each criteria.	**3** – good **2** – average **1** – can be better **0** – no help at all	

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3.2.3 Step 3 – Operational capacity

1) Logic model

A logic model is a planning tool that defines the inputs, activities, and outcomes of a programme. A logic model can be useful during different stages in the life of a programme. Early on, it can help to plan a deliberate flow from input to results. Later, it can help to keep track of programme activities, including both achievements and issues that arise during the life of the programme. A logic model can also be a tool to explain what the programme will achieve to funders and stakeholders

Operational capacity perspective

Input	Activities	Outcome
What do you **invest** in the programme? List all the resources needed to achieve your goals.	What **activities** are you planning for the **target beneficiaries?** List activities that help achieve programme goals. These can include services, events, products, etc. Then, review the input list to make sure it includes all resources needed for the activities.	What are the **results**? What is the programme going to change or achieve for the **target beneficiaries**? Think about short-term, mid-term and long-term goals.
Funding (own funds + partners): Personnel (employees, volunteers, athlete role models): Materials: Technology:		Short-term goals Mid-term goals Long-term goals

3.2.4 Step 4 – Legitimacy and support

To create public value, organisations must actively seek authorisation and support for their proposition. In the next logic model, you can describe how you are going to ensure the support of political and financial stakeholders.

1) Logic model

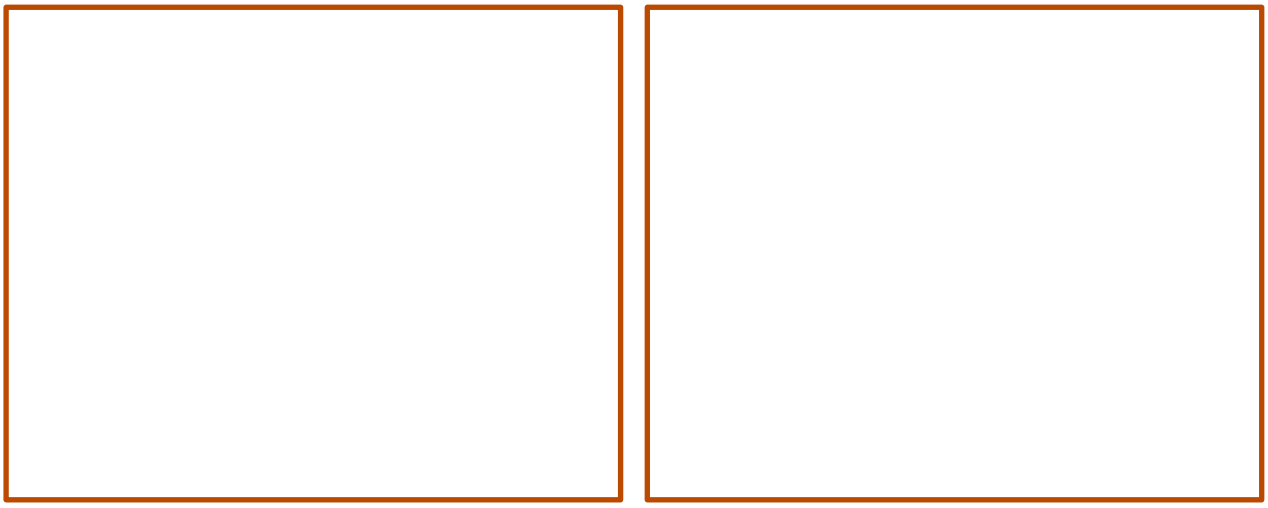
Legitimacy and support perspective

Input	Activities	Outcome
What **resources** (human, financial, and material) are needed to convince **political and financial stakeholders** of the good cause of the programme?	What **activities** are you planning for the **political and financial stakeholders?** How will you manage the support of different kinds of stakeholders? Review the input list to make sure it includes all resources needed for the activities.	What are the **results** of the activities? How is the political support and external funding for the programme ensured for the short, medium, and long term?
Funding (own funds + partners): Personnel (employees, volunteers, athlete role models): Materials: Technology:		Short-term goals Mid-term goals Long-term goals

Input

Think carefully about both the **internal and external stakeholders** you will be working with. Internal stakeholders are people working within your own organisation (e.g., direct colleagues, human resources management officer). External stakeholders are people from other organisations (e.g., university, hospital, sponsors). The goal is to bring together a consortium of stakeholders from different fields with their own specific input. The following questions can help you put together such a successful consortium.

Make a list of potential internal and external stakeholders**.**



Describe the relevant individual expertise of the potential stakeholder(s)**.**

It is important that your team consists of a unique and appropriate mix of stakeholders. Therefore, you need to identify what relevant and specific knowledge the stakeholders bring.

Describe the commitment you expect from the potential stakeholder(s).

Not every stakeholder you collaborate with will have to take on the same amount of work. Before choosing your stakeholders, you should consider what tasks/activities the stakeholders will have to perform and, consequently, how much time they will have to invest in the programme.

Describe the goals and values of potential stakeholder(s) and how these are in line with your project goals and values**.**

Activities: Managing the cooperation with stakeholders

In order to make your programme as successful as possible, maintaining a good professional relationship and continued support from stakeholders is necessary. We give you some general recommendation that could help you to facilitate and create better partnerships (Asthana, et al., 2002; Community Change, 2010; DHSSPS NI, 2012; Scottish Government,2002).

How to maintain the support of stakeholders?

- ✓ **Create a familiar and safe environment**

The development and maintenance of trust can be seen as a key component of successful partnerships. Encourage the stakeholder to speak up and be supportive when they share their ideas.

- ✓ **Identify bespoke solutions**

There is no single type of solution for a problem. Different problems require different solutions. Find a solution to the problem that is best suited for that specific situation.

- ✓ **Be flexible**

Be aware that not everything will always turn out the way you want it to. Therefore, be flexible and adapt to the issues or tasks.

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✓ Communication is key

Having regular network moments and meetings with your stakeholders is important so that the stakeholders receive relevant information and so that they can keep each other informed about the work they were doing.

✓ High on timing

Timing is crucial. Set concrete deadlines and communicate time expectations with all stakeholders within the project.

✓ Focus on outcomes

Define the purpose and added value of the stakeholders. After all, the value of the stakeholders lies in what they can add to the programme.

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Evaluation of internal and external stakeholders

(adapted from Goldfinch, 1994; Lejk & Wyvill, 2001)

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Group participation		
Attends meetings regularly and on time		
Actively participates in group discussions		
Shares his relevant experience		
Time management & Responsibility		
Accepts and fulfils a fair share of work		
Deadlines are respected		
Adaptability		
Displays or tries to develop a wide range of skills in service of the project		
Readily accepts changed approach		
Handles constructive criticism		
Creativity & Originality		
Provides useful ideas		
Initiates team decisions		

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Communication skills		
Effective in discussions		
Good listening skills		
Applies professional language		
General team skills		
Has a positive attitude		
Participates in a constructive manner		
Encourages and motivates the team		
Helps resolve conflicts in group		
Helps the team reach consensus		
Scoring Score the partner, athlete, or stakeholder for each criteria.	**3** – good **2** – average **1** – can be better **0** – no help at all	

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3.2.5 Step 5 – Manage, monitor, and evaluate your project

Congratulations! Your athlete role model programme is up and running. That means you must continuously monitor your activities and measure your results. Although the terms "monitoring" and "evaluation" are intimately linked, it is important to recognize that the terms differ (Crawford & Bryce, 2003). Monitoring refers to 'an ongoing process of data capture and analysis for the purpose of control', while evaluating 'is a periodic process of assessment for the purpose of learning' (Crawford & Bryce, 2003, p. 366).

1) Managing your project

Project management is the discipline of planning and applying your knowledge and skills to project activities in order to meet the requirements of the project goal (Schwalbe, 2015). Correctly managing your programme benefits your programme activities (Kerzner, 2015), and therefore ensures programme success (Badewi, 2016).

Benefits (Schwalbe, 2015, p. 4)

- ✓ Better control of financial, physical, and human resources
- ✓ Improved customer relations
- ✓ Shorter development times
- ✓ Lower costs
- ✓ Higher quality and increased reliability
- ✓ Improved productivity
- ✓ Better internal coordination

Tools that can help you monitor and manage your programme

Project management plan

A project management plan is a document that defines how a project will be implemented and how it will be coordinated. It provides, amongst others, an overview of the activities and their related status. The project management plan is created by the project coordinator who considers the input form the project team and key stakeholders.

There is a lot of project management software available online to help you to plan, execute and control your project (e.g., ProjectManager or Wrike).

Activity	Timeline	Status	Link
Kickoff meeting		Completed	https://www.
Dissemination plan		In progress	https://www.
Bootcamp		Not started	https://www.

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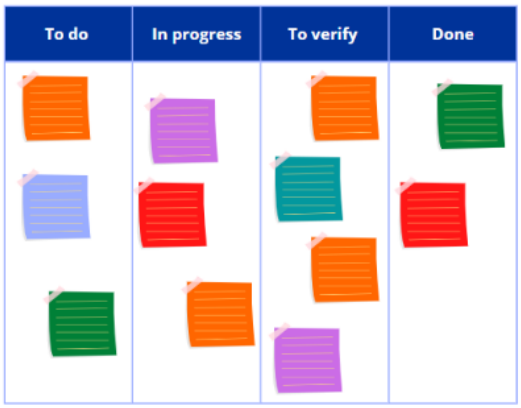
Task board

A task board is a tool to visually represent the work or activities and its path toward completion. This includes upcoming tasks, tasks that are in progress, tasks that need to be verified, but also finished tasks. Online tools (e.g., MIRO or Padlet) can help you in setting up a task board.



Gantt Charts

A Gantt chart is a visualization of your programme timeline. This tool is helpful in keeping track of your project schedule and it identifies delays. Another advantage to this tool is that it provides a display of the dependencies between your different activities. Online tools (e.g., gantt.com) can help you in setting up a Gantt chart for your athlete role model programme.

	2023				2024				2025			
Task	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**
Research the potential societal value												
Choose the societal problem												
Determine the aim of the project												

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Project management plan

Task	Priority	Time est.	Timeline	Lead	Status	Link
	High	15 min	Feb – March	#team	Completed	
	Medium	30 min			In progress	
	Low	45 min			Not started	
		1 hour				
		2-3 hours				

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Gantt Chart

	2023											
Task	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**
Research the potential societal value												
Choose the societal problem												
Determine the aim of the project												

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2) Monitor your project: Keep track of your activities

The goals you set are important for your athlete role model programme because they can serve as a guide to where the programme can lead. But just setting goals is not enough. It is important to keep track of the milestones to ensure the programme remains within its estimated scope. Therefore, you must **monitor the progress of your programme**. It can help you and your team to complete the programme within the expected budget and timeline, and consequently you can maximize the return on investment and deliver quality results. In addition, clear project results might ensure further support from stakeholders.

Use your **project management plan** as a guide to monitor your programme progress.

Furthermore, it is important to properly map out activities of your athlete role model programme and think about the **time frame** in which the activities should be carried out. For example, when you launch a new activity related to sport participation, it can be an advantage to do it during 'The European Week of Sport'. Timing the activities of the programme correctly, can potentially have a positive impact to achieve the desired results.

Questions associated with the monitoring process:

- Are we doing what we agreed?
- Are our activities of good quality?
- What can we learn from what we observe in order to enhance our quality of the future activities?
- How is the activity contributing to the desired change?
- What aspects of our activity did not lead to the desired results?
- What aspects of our activity did lead to the desired results?

Questions to consider	Project team response
Are we doing what we agreed?	
Are our activities of good quality?	
What can we learn from what we observe in order to enhance our quality of the future activities?	

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How is the activity contributing to the desired change?	
What aspects of the activity did not lead to the desired results?	
What aspects of the activity did lead to the desired results?	

Tools that can help you monitor and disseminate your activities

Another important part of the project monitoring is how the information/activities will be communicated to the public. There are several possibilities to keep the public informed about your programme:

- ✓ Yearly progress report

Inspirational practice: Johan Cruyff Foundation
Initiative: Johan Cruyff
Country: the Netherlands
Aim: To increase sport participation among children with a disability and children from deprived areas.
Inspirational aspect: The Johan Cruyff Foundation publishes yearly progress reports on their website. These include a summary of all the activities done in the previous year, impact statements from users, a financial report, a risk analysis, a report on the communications with stakeholders, and the budget for next year.

Inspirational practice: Scaled Mentorship
Initiative: Classroom Champions
Country: North America
Aim: Classroom Champions provides mentoring by elite athletes to children, to develop social, academical, and emotional skills.
Inspirational aspect: The results and impact of the programme are measured each year by conducting teacher and student surveys. The results are published on the website in the form of an 'impact report': https://www.classroomchampions.org/impact. By testing ratings of students and teachers at the beginning and at the end of the year, pre-post comparisons are possible. A comparison between enrolled and non-enrolled students is also made. This way, the impact of the programme is carefully monitored and easy to find for all stakeholders.

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- ✓ Annual calendar

Inspirational practice: Back on track Foundation
Initiative: Thomas Van Der Plaetsen
Country: Belgium
Aim:
Inspirational aspect: The Back on track Foundation has an up-to-date calendar on their website, listing all activities. This includes links on how to subscribe for an event.

- ✓ Interactive webpages

Inspirational practice: Jan Vertonghen Foundation
Initiative: Jan Vertonghen
Country: Belgium
Aim: To increase physical activity sports participation among children with disabilities or (chronic) illness.
Inspirational aspect: The Jan Vertonghen Foundation posts news articles and announcements about activities on their website. It is easy for clients, current stakeholders, and potential future stakeholders to see what the foundation does and how it benefits society.

- ✓ Videos

Inspirational practice: Johan Cruyff Foundation
Initiative: Johan Cruyff
Country: the Netherlands
Aim: To increase sport participation among children with a disability and children from deprived areas.
Inspirational aspect: A video is an attractive way to communicate your impact and results. The Johan Cruyff foundation has a video on their website, showing the results of their activities. For public and stakeholders, this is a quick and easy way to learn about the foundation's work.

- ✓ Infographics

Inspirational practice: Game on: Girls in Sport Leadership
Initiative: Canadian Women in Sports
Country: Canada
Aim: To increase participation of girls and women in sports.
Inspirational aspect: This organisation has put the results of one of their programmes in an infographic. With an infographic, you can communicate complex information in a quick and easy way. Therefore, this can be a useful tool to communicate your programme results to the public and stakeholders.

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3) Evaluate your project

As evaluations provide an opportunity to optimize your athlete role model programme, it can be helpful to regularly scrutinise your programme. While developing your programme, this toolkit aims at providing you concrete guidelines without losing the programme coordinator and stakeholders individual and creative input. Therefore, is it difficult to give unequivocal advice on which evaluation techniques are best suited to evaluate your programme and to optimise it in the process.

Six criteria to evaluate your athlete role model programme

1. **Relevance**
2. **Effectiveness**
3. **Efficiency**
4. **Impact**
5. **Sustainability**
6. **Coherence**

Instead, we provide the six criteria to determine the merit or worth of an intervention, in this case your athlete role model programme as outlined by the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet).

Following these criteria, evaluation questions can also be posed that provide more insight regarding the context, reasons for adaptation and emergence of activities and outcomes, different perspectives and interrelationships that influence the success, sustainability and transferability of the project:

- Is the programme delivering on outputs and outcomes as planned?
- Were the activities effective? Are there aspects that could have been done differently?
- Is the wider programme story being told? What range of outcomes (intended and unintended) has the project contributed to?
- How has the programme influenced the stakeholders, and what capacities has it built?
- Have the activities been delivered on budget? What aspects of the participatory elements of the programme could be done differently next time to cut costs while still delivering achievements?
- Has the programme a positive impact on the target audience?
- Is there evidence that the programme is likely to grow – scaling up and out – beyond the project life?
- To what extent did the initiative deliver against the needs of key stakeholders? Were the size, scale and approach taken for each need appropriate?

Data collection to address the above questions can be done by using pre- and post- activity questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, or mental logbook (for example, when the elite athlete is actively engaged).

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Programme measurement and evaluation

Programme context	Programme efficiency			Programme effectiveness		
Needs	Inputs	Activities - Outputs		Outcomes		
Current situation	What we invest	What we do	What we delivered	What happens because of these activities		
				Short term	Mid term	Long term

Evaluate your programme

Questions to consider	Project team response
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS **Is the programme delivering on outputs and outcomes as planned?**	
PROCESS EFFECTIVENESS **Were the activities effective? Are there aspects that could have been done differently?**	
IMPACT **Is the wider programme story being told? What range of outcomes (intended and unintended) has the project contributed to?**	
IMPACT **How has the programme influenced the stakeholders, and what capacities has it built?**	

EFFICIENCY **Have the activities being delivered on budget? What aspects of the participatory elements of the programme could be done differently next time to cut costs while still delivering achievements?**	
IMPACT **Has the programme a positive impact on the target audience?**	
SUSTAINABILITY **Is there evidence that the programme is likely to grow – scaling up and out – beyond the project life?**	
IMPACT & EFFICIENCY **To what extent did the initiative deliver against the needs of key stakeholders? Were the size, scale and approach taken for each need appropriate?**	

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4 Challenges and solutions

Building a successful societal value programme with elite athletes as role models is not an easy task. You will likely run into issues along the way. The Athletes4Society team has gathered the most common challenges and solutions from existing programmes below.

Challenge	**Solution**
Lack of financial resources	Many organisations started on a small scale with little financial resources. Using volunteers and free resources such as social media, it is possible to create societal value with no or little funds.
Lack of human resources	By getting volunteers aboard your organisation, you will need less paid staff.

5 Checklist

Use this checklist to see if you have completed all the tools and steps included in this toolkit.

- ☐ Describe which **societal problem** you want to address with your programme.
- ☐ This problem belongs to a **MESSI theme**.
- ☐ Describe your organisation's **unique selling points**.
- ☐ Describe the **goal/objective** of your programme.
- ☐ Describe the **societal need** of your programme.
- ☐ Describe the way your project **answers** to that societal need.
- ☐ Describe the **target beneficiaries** that are intented to benefit from the project.
- ☐ Describe the ways in which these target beneficiaries will **benefit** from the project**.**
- ☐ Describe the **success factors and possible constraints** of your programme.
- ☐ **Test** the proposition among different audiences.
- ☐ Choose **one of the two pathways**: direct impact or awareness creation.
- ☐ Complete the '**athlete as role model**' tool.
- ☐ Complete the **logic model** from an **operational capacity** perspective.
- ☐ Complete the **logic model** from a **legitimacy and support** perspective.
- ☐ List the potential **internal and external stakeholders.**
- ☐ Describe the **relevant individual expertise** of the potential stakeholder(s)**.**
- ☐ Describe the **commitment** you expect from the potential stakeholder(s).
- ☐ Describe the **goals and values of potential stakeholder(s)** and how these are in line with your project goals and values**.**
- ☐ **Evaluate** the internal and external stakeholders.
- ☐ Develop a **project management plan.**
- ☐ **Evaluate** your programme.

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