

**Guidelines**

# Promoting Dual Career in the EU

**March 2011**



**A2B**  
AthletesToBusiness



**Supported by the  
European Commission**

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## I. Introduction

High performance athletes develop unique backgrounds and experiences during their development years and during their peak competition years. Does this mean that they will be less capable to contribute to the labour market or have more experience to deliver success in the labour market? This is hard to determine if athletes are generalized as a single group. What can be said is that high performance athletes are different during their development years. They have unique demands during their educational years, and their life and work experiences are typically different which lead to CVs that look different. This unique history though is not necessarily a predictor of future capability because when looking closer on their sporting and life accomplishments, high performance athletes do reflect that they have the drive and have demonstrated that they can be the best in the world. They have what it requires to represent their countries on a global stage.

The AthletesToBusiness (A2B) project has analyzed obstacles, barriers, and opportunities that athletes face during their years when they must combine education, sporting life, and the beginning process of their career which is called "Dual Career". Central questions of the project were "How can athletes better reconcile top-level sporting achievement with education and a career to strengthen their transition from sport into the labour market into a job where athletes can leverage their strengths to further contribute to society" and "What can be done to support this objective by the national authorities, the sport organisations, business and the athletes themselves?".

This "Dual Career" project further addresses the support at various stages and of various organisations for the integrated development of an athlete. A2B focuses on dual career after secondary school and highlights the role of four different target groups that have an impact on an athlete's development which can play an essential role by providing an enabling environment/framework for dual career. After assessing the four groups at the various stages the findings to develop concise recommendations from each area will be consolidated and recommendations crossing the disciplines will be provided.

The high-performance sport engagement should not be a dead end. Looking back at his/her sport career, an athlete should be able to give it an overall positive evaluation. An essential criterion is the successful transition into an employment in line with the interests and abilities of the graduate.

The scope of the problem and the extent to which it affects high-performance athletes in the context of "dual careers" depend on various socio-demographic characteristics as well as system-related causes and effects in the EU Member States. Since recently, the demographic developments have been considered in the career management.



For social and economic reasons, early educational dropout and early termination of education without a certificate must be reduced, particularly among the youth. Strategies to improve the situation are generally required at national as well as at EU level (e.g. EU-benchmarks, European Social Fund).

An intensive social dialogue and the active involvement of key players such as parents, teachers/trainers and local actors are essential.

Graduates of higher degrees

- are better prepared for the labour market,
- are open to further education,
- are better prepared for a fulfilling life within the society: as a citizen, in the labour market, and in the family,
- contribute to the economic growth of the state.

In order to act in a goal-oriented and economically sensible way, co-operation and networking of the institutions dealing with dual career as well as their collaboration in relation to dropout prevention in the field of a combined educational- and high-performance sports career and further integration into the labour market are vital.

The A2B Guidelines for athletes identify concrete fields of action, where they can engage to proactively promote dual career. The guidelines shall provide guidance to businesses in order to be better able to promote dual career in their spheres of activities. Examples of good practices shall draw attention to successful strategies in the field of dual career.

More than 1,000 people dealing with dual career including representatives from each field of expertise contributed by completing a comprehensive survey while more than 100 people participated in workshops across Europe conducted by A2B.

## **I.1 Target Groups**

The A2B project reviewed and researched in particular the transition after secondary education and focused on the following target groups who represented the fields of expertise and how each of them can represent to promote dual career:

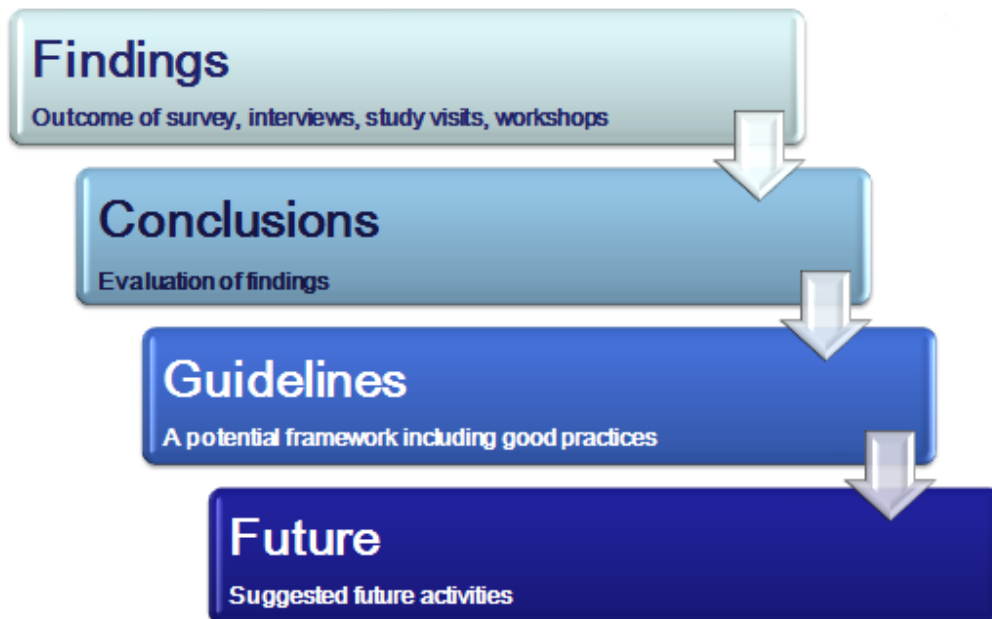
- Athletes
- Sport organisations
- Educational institutions
- Businesses

## I.2 Methodology

The project methodology included three distinct levels of contribution:

- 1) A project “core group” was formed, the A2B partner organisations which included participations from experts in each of the four segments.
- 2) A questionnaire was developed and distributed to representatives from the four fields providing relevant data in the field of dual career. The data collected has been processed to information feeding the results of the guidelines.
- 3) Workshops and study visits were conducted in two manners:
  - a. Four workshops on athletes, sport organisations and educational institutions and businesses elaborated further on the guidelines.
  - b. Five A2B study visits in Finland, Germany, Austria, the United Kingdom and Belgium collected in-depth information about how dual career is tackled and addressed in each of these regions/states.

### Table: Methodology





### **I.3 A2B Partner Organisations**

The EU Office of the European Olympic Committees (EOC EU Office) implemented the project in very close cooperation with ten organisations covering a diverse population of Europe representing experts in each of the areas of the project. The project ran from 1 January 2010 to 31 March 2011 and included members from:

#### Athletes

- German Athletes Commission
- Athletes Commission of the European Olympic Committee

#### Businesses

- Adecco (International human resources company)

#### Specialised organisations, educational institutions

- EAS - European Athlete as a Student Network
- INSEP - Institut National du Sport, Expertise et Performance (France)
- Olympic Training Center Berlin (Germany)
- Semmelweis University (Hungary)

#### Sport organisations

- European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation
- European Athletics
- National Olympic Committee of Finland

## II. Cross-sectoral Features Significant for an Enabling Environment/ Framework for Dual Career

Due to the unique life of high performance athletes, certain cross-sectoral features have been found crucial to promote dual career. These are themes that cross all four target groups and include:

- **Awareness and Information:** Each target group has to be made aware of and informed about dual career matters, obstacles and opportunities.
- **Commitment:** Each target group has to be committed to the issue of dual career in order to improve the existing situation.
- **Responsibility:** Each target group shall bear its responsibility to promote dual career.
- **Flexibility:** Each target group shall understand the special needs and gifts of athletes due to their unique demands and experience.
- **Networking:** To promote dual career in the best possible way, networks of the different stakeholders shall provide opportunities to exchange relevant information and know-how by pooling strengths, using synergies and learning from good practices.

**Table : Cross-sectoral features**



### **III. Priorities**

A2B recommends the following priorities which should be tackled in the short-term by the European Commission to ensure a lasting legacy. The grant of 2009 was a great start and to ensure the necessary support continues across Europe, to enhance the value for all stakeholders on the issue of dual career opportunities, and particularly to establish a real and tangible legacy to the A2B project, we propose consideration on the following:

#### **Priority 1: Put Dual Career on the EU Political Agenda**

- The guidelines on dual career which have been proposed by the Communication on Sport should take on board the issues of the A2B guidelines. A representative of A2B should be part of the group who is drafting these guidelines.
- Based on these guidelines, a Council recommendation shall propose actions for implementation.

#### **Priority 2: Support a Network on Dual Career**

- A European network should bring together stakeholders of dual career comprising athlete commissions, businesses, sport organisations, educational institutions, national authorities and potentially coaches.
- In this frame, a group of experts could be created to advice Member States and other relevant stakeholders with expert guidance on dual career.

#### **Priority 3: Provide Funding in the Framework of Pilot Projects and the Potential Future EU Sport Programme**

- The process which has been started by the A2B initiative bringing together athlete organisations, business, educational institutions, sport organisations and other specialized organisations has to be continued, complemented and further expanded with the monetary support of the EU to enable high performance athletes to successfully manage their lives post sports and make a positive contribution to society.



#### **IV. The Future of A2B**

- The A2B project successfully gathered different stakeholders in the field of dual career and provided a structure to exchange good practices and information. This role and function should be enhanced in the future. A working partnership should be established in a complicated environment to ensure success and simplify the process when developing the Dual Career. The EOC EU Office and its partners are ready to lead this process enriched by the support of the European Commission.
- A2B created a body of knowledge on dual career and a relevant network of organisations and experts. A2B could connect these with interested parties to give advice on dual career matters.
- The level of expertise and the quality of existing dual career schemes in the EU Member States are quite different. In this regard, the implementation of the dual career guidelines could contribute to enhance the quality of respective dual career activities in the EU Member States by using good practice examples. It will seek financial support of the EU for these activities.



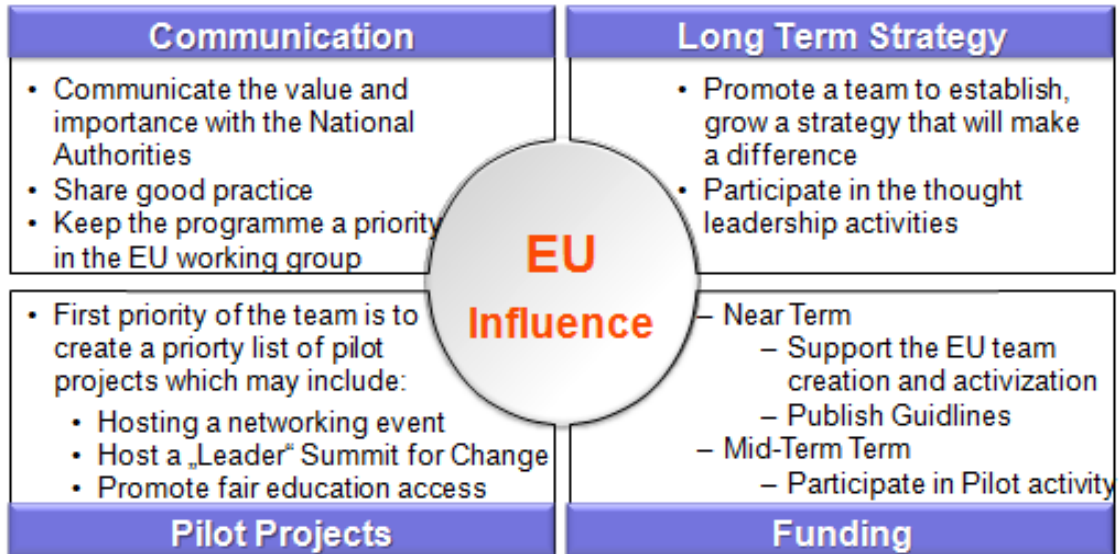
## **V. The Role of Public Authorities**

As a thought leader, public authorities play a key role in initiating discussions in this field. Therefore, public interest and support in dual career must continue politically and financially at both European and national level. By doing so, it can be comprehensively assured that dual career is seriously and permanently tackled by a broader group of stakeholders.

### **The Specific Role of the EU**

- The EU shall continue its support to the A2B network which brings together stakeholders from different sectors in the field of dual career and where cross-fertilization could be enhanced by exchanging information and sharing good practices.
- By adopting a Council recommendation on dual career, the EU ensures it remains a political priority.
- By putting dual career on the rolling agenda of the European Commission's working group on education and training in sport, the EU can better monitor and follow up on the relevant measures taken. The group could draft and disseminate pertinent documents and by doing so raise awareness and prompt actions in other EU circles.
- By defining dual career as a funding priority of the future EU sports programme or by the existing Lifelong Learning Programme, the EU can continue to promote and improve an enabling environment/ framework for dual career.

**Table: The possible role of the EU in the field of dual career**



### The Specific Role of National Authorities

- Central coordination by the ministry responsible for education/ universities through legislative or regulatory acts could provide efficient and effective solutions to dual career matters. (The Ministry of sport has to advocate the solution of central coordination within the government.)
- If central coordination fails, networks bringing together different stakeholders in the field of dual career should assume the central coordination of dual career on a less formal basis. Close cooperation with the sport movement has to be sought.
- National authorities should develop a cooperative financial funding scheme providing tax exemptions or incentives to companies hiring athletes similar to a retraining incentive and subsidize businesses offering a premium remuneration while providing flexible arrangements.
- National authorities should provide adequate funding schemes for dual career projects such as specialized programmes or scholarships.





Guidelines  
for  
Athletes  
to promote their Dual Career





## **General Project Findings**

### **Status Quo of Dual Career and Athletes**

A finding that was revealed in the A2B questionnaire which collected responses from more than 600 athletes where 219 were under the age of 21 reflected that it is easier to combine sport and secondary school than sport and tertiary education or a profession. As sportsmen mature and grow, problems and conflicts increase after secondary education as athletes engage in “dual career” and need to address increasing challenges. There are many factors that increase the focus for this group; however, it was found that the overwhelming driver is the increasing demand on TIME in both the sport and education. This is a result that has also been discovered by the EU’s study on the training of young sportsmen and sportswomen in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Understandably, 76% of the athletes responded “yes” to the question, if they are concerned about making the transition from sport to education or a professional career. The majority of athletes state that their school or university education suffers from the time constraints imposed by their sport training.

An interesting finding was also the influence of family and friends where most athletes indicate they received significant support on dual career matters. From the perspective of financing a dual career, the family often times was the main source of support. As we expand the scope from education to a career, the challenges increased and the vast majority of athletes considered full-time employment incompatible with a serious sports career commitment.

In comparison to “regular” job seekers, the majority of athletes feel a disadvantage when looking for a job because they have developed different experiences and skills while the “regular” job seekers appear more traditional. What many athletes cannot translate are the skills and attitudes that make them an elite champion into the language of business. It is translation that is difficult without a career coach. Without training and a coach it is hard to translate and transition which can leave many highly talented individuals behind, not based on ability, but because there was not a structure of support in place to assist them like there is in traditional business.

A second information point revealed in the questionnaire was that international athletes (Olympians) tend to be better able to combine sport and professional careers when compared to other high performance athletes (non-Olympians). By participating in international and national events athletes have the opportunity to establish international networks pertinent for their professional career goals. Also revealed in the survey, typically, Olympians have to face greater pressure and demands and have to be more ambitious and disciplined compared to non-

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European Commission, Study on the training of young sportsmen and sportswomen in Europe, June 2008.





Olympians. Therefore, they gain a wider array of valuable social skills important for the labour market which they can capitalize on if provided marginal assistance and support.

The immediate social environment and demographics of an athlete such as family, peers and coaches play an important role on the career path of an athlete.

### **Financial Situation**

High performance athletes and their families are often challenged financially throughout their lives beginning at an early age. The training and sports equipment require large investments, often provided totally or partially by parental support. An educational path demands further expenditures and if recognition is not provided the cost can escalate significantly introducing a barrier that does not allow athletes to compete for education on a fair field of play.

### **Dual Career Services**

Highlighted by the A2B questionnaire, a majority of athletes is not aware of A2B services (i.e. career counseling) that may be available to them. Only 10% of the athletes who participated in the A2B questionnaire indicated that they have been taking part in a career programme designed for athletes. This is because they might not be aware of existing initiatives or because there are simply no programmes available to them. Communication work has to be improved to increase the visibility of such programmes and motivate the value of expanding the programmes.

### **Self-Responsibility**

Athletes must also take on responsibility themselves to pursue their dual career path. As a dual career entails time and effort, athletes can quickly become overwhelmed and lack motivation to train and study at the same time. Often, the athlete becomes unable to re-visit education at a later point in life, however there must be available services to level the playing field and the athlete must maintain responsible to achieve success with a coach, just like in sport.

### **Recommendations**

Athletes dedicate themselves to representing their country and themselves on the global stage. They are dedicated to achieving results an elite few can ever imagine and during these pursuits demonstrate that they have an attitude and the capability not only to succeed, but to be the best. A2B believes they deserve access to a balanced life without obstacles because they have different backgrounds and demands. They should be provided a fair field to participate on as they make the transition from sport to the labour market. A fair field to participate on while they have conflicting priorities when deciding to compete in the Olympic Games or take the final examinations that might fall on the same week, the same day. High performance athletes are not "owed" anything, but they should not be excluded because of structures that do not recognize their contributions and proven abilities.



The athlete is one important link in the chain of responsibilities for a successful dual career. They must be made aware of the importance of planning for a life after sport and of the dual career (support) services available, so that they can proactively make use of them.

**Table: Challenges of athletes to pursue a dual career**

Financial Situation	Counseling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biggest sponsor is family</li> <li>• Large investments for equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available in some Member States</li> <li>• Different approaches due to different background</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 10% of athletes are involved</li> <li>• No awareness</li> <li>• No programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of motivation</li> <li>• Every person is self-responsible, even athletes</li> </ul>
Dual Career Services	Self-responsibility

**Athletes**  
- Core of the project -

## **Guidelines for Action**

### **Guideline 1: Be Committed, Proactive and Ask**

- Athletes share their responsibility in the pursuit of a dual career and shall be committed to it. Thus, they must have the obligation to proactively seek advice for themselves for their planning of a successful dual career.
- In order to be able to strike a responsible balance in view of a successful dual career, athletes have to be supported by sport organisations, educational institutions and other stakeholders accordingly rather than excluded.
- If athletes do not receive this support, they should organize and address the issue in Athlete Commissions or with other relevant stakeholders.

### **Guideline 2: Set Your Own Achievable Goals**

- The dual career project needs careful planning. Athletes should therefore seek counseling and set clear and achievable career goals while taking into consideration potential risks such as injuries they may have to face.

### **Guideline 3: Individual Guidance/ Career Counselling**

- Athletes should have access to expert career counseling for guidance. The younger an athlete has access, the more impact it will have on his dual career project. Therefore, the provision of such services is vital.

Examples of good practice:

- France: The Institut National de Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP) of France takes a holistic approach to care for its athletes providing excellent training opportunities combined with intensive career guidance.
- Finland: The educational system in Finland is highly individualized. Special career counselors being aware of the demands and needs of student athletes develop career plans which are regularly updated to match individual requirements.
- Germany: Spread throughout Germany there are about 35 professional career counselors who are based at the "Olympiastützpunkte" (Olympic



training centers). Every athlete receives free of charge support for his/her dual career project in these centers.

#### **Guideline 4: Athletes Commissions as the dual career ambassadors of the athletes**

- The role of Athletes' Commissions has to be strengthened in order to effectively promote dual career.
- Athlete Commissions may act as a direct link to individual athletes and thus can provide a very useful and powerful network to spread information on dual career services. They shall spread relevant information and ask for pertinent information seminars on a regular basis in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders. E.g. specifically designed courses organized on a regular basis could prepare and train athletes on post-sports career challenges.
- Athlete Commissions shall appoint dual career ambassadors who promote the issue nationally and internationally. Testimonials of athletes who successfully completed a dual career shall highlight the importance of this topic and promote it.
- A major task of Athlete Commissions is to represent the interests of athletes within sport organisations. They shall raise awareness of and advocate the importance of dual career to sport organisations and possibly to other stakeholders such as public authorities, businesses and coaches.

Examples of good practice:

- The IOC Athletes Career Programme in cooperation with Adecco promotes dual career with testimonials of famous athletes on the IOC ACP website – <http://www.olympic.org/elite-athletes>.
- France: As the issue of dual career has gained sports-political importance in France over the years, the French Olympic Sports Confederation has concluded an agreement with the Adecco Group in close cooperation with its Athletes Commission, the Ministry in charge of sport and the Institut National du Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP). Each athlete selected receives a personalized service designed to take stock of his/her skills. Together with the athletes, the career goals are identified and educational programmes planned in order to facilitate their integration into the labour market.
- Germany: The German Athletes Commission has adopted a position paper on dual career during its general assembly which has been forwarded to the steering committee of the German Olympic Sports Confederation. By doing so, the Athletes Commission raised awareness on perennial problems and central needs and actively pushed for improvement.

- During the German Presidency of the European Union a workshop was organised on „Dual career“ – Balancing top-level sport, education and occupational career producing valuable conclusions in connection with the European Athletes Forum in Stuttgart, Germany, 4-6 May 2007.

### **Guideline 5: Capitalise on Soft Skills Acquired through Sport**

- Athletes should take stock of their soft skills acquired throughout their sporting experience and try to promote themselves in the most effective way on the job market. Many times, without a career coach this could be difficult to recognize, however they should be addressed in a cooperative approach.

**Table: Possible future activities of athletes**







Guidelines  
for  
Businesses  
to promote Dual Career





## **General Project Findings**

### **Status Quo on Dual Career and Employment**

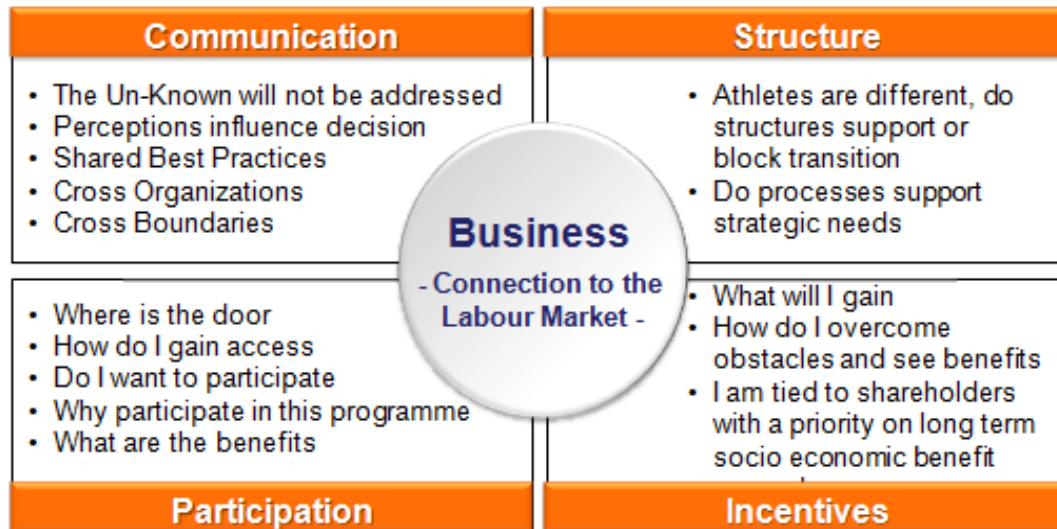
The first Athletes Forum of the International Olympic Committee Athletes Commission (IOC AC) held in 2002 was one of the early events to identify the challenges faced by the elite athlete's transition from sport to the labour market and the associated challenges. To date, this transition still remains a major focus and continues to receive increasing awareness. This is not only because of the challenges of a well managed "dual career", but for the opportunities as well. These points were recognized on a European scale as evidenced throughout various A2B study visits.

From a business perspective reasons for not engaging with athletes are of various nature: Enterprises may perceive it difficult to adapt to the changing employment needs that athletes have at different stages of their careers, they may not have the awareness on how to participate, they may have a process that has been designed which unintentionally excludes those with unique backgrounds such as athletes. One traditional process that companies practice is hiring based on known, past experience, experience that is articulated in a CV. When this past experience is different, it can exclude an athlete just because of a practiced process. Therefore, many companies can miss the "career potential" of an athlete only because they have a unique background and a process that can exclude this and most companies do not have the time to research and learn the advantages that offset the perceived challenges.

On a national basis, a limited number of initiatives are presently conducted (e.g. by Adecco globally and in the EU, by the Deutsche Bank in Germany or RATP in France) and many European National Olympic Committees that participate in a programme launched by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in cooperation with Adecco (IOC Athlete Career Programme) as well as a similar programme launched by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in cooperation with Adecco (The IPC Athlete Career Programme).

These programmes and activities are a solid start; however they are only a start in the overall support and need of high performance athletes to face "Dual Career" with success. There remains a considerable need for a systematic, integrated approach, in particular fostering the links with the education and the labour market to provide athletes with favourable conditions for a career post sport and to optimize their contributions to the labour market, to the European society overall.

**Table: Challenges of businesses in the field of dual career**



## Recommendations

The key recommendations are aimed at:

- a) establishing appropriate measures to strengthen collaboration between enterprises and actors of dual career
- b) promoting further development of current activities
- c) raising awareness in general and on existing initiatives that should be recommended or enforced.

These activities should be piloted or extended by national sport organisations and further facilitated by national authorities.

## Guidelines for Action

### Guideline 1: National Authorities Should Support Initiatives Facilitating the Involvement of Businesses

- National authorities should assemble Ministries of Sport, Education, Commerce, and business leaders together with the sport organisation's executive committee members to create a basis for dialogue and cooperation on dual career.

- National authorities should play an active role in creating and reinforcing a positive perception about athletes in business among society and company leaders.
- National authorities should develop a cooperative financial funding scheme providing tax exemptions or incentives to companies hiring athletes similar to a retraining incentive and subsidize businesses offering a premium remuneration while providing flexible arrangements.

Example of good practice:

- France: The French transportation enterprise RATP, active in sports sponsorship, entered an agreement with the French Ministry of Health, Youth and Sport to hire active athletes recommended by the Ministry. They are provided a full-time remuneration while benefiting from a less intense work load. This salary differential is compensated by federal budget and the enterprise may additionally profit from tax incentives. In the long term this model will increase the contribution that the athletes will provide in society (income tax provider vs. welfare user).

## **Guideline 2: Businesses Should Be Open and Available for Dialogue**

- Businesses should jointly sponsor events hosted by sport organisations and national authorities to raise awareness with businesses to facilitate further career engagements.
- Businesses should be motivated to participate in “Athlete Career Fairs” and “networking events” providing athletes and businesses the opportunity to establish contact.
- Chambers of commerce should actively cooperate with sport organisations to raise awareness with the employment market and encourage partnership with the business world.
- Businesses on their side should be willing to share and enter agreements in professional organisations (e.g. chambers of commerce) to support athletes and further participate in joint leadership committees.

Examples of good practice:

- Austria: The Austrian “Career After Sports (KA:DA)” initiative developed by the Austrian Sports Aid Foundation in association with the national employment service offers sportsmen a professional career perspective post sports. KA:DA collaborates with the Institute of Economic Promotion of the



Austrian Federal Chamber which further facilitates access to and links with the labour market.

- Germany: The German Sports Minister Conference (SMK), the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) and the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) adopted a common agreement on “High Performance Sports and Career in Industry and Commerce related Jobs”. The document has been elaborated under the leadership of the sports minister conference of the federal states aiming at providing optimized dual career planning for high performance athletes. Next to commitment to high performance sports, as such recognizing its economic significance within the country, the agreement focuses on providing expert advice for businesses, sports clubs and Olympic training centres in issues relating to vocational and educational training and employment. It further involves measures to enhance networking between persons and institutions relevant to dual career.

Moreover, the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce is actively involved in the promotion of dual career. Via its internet job platform “partners of top sports”, both enterprises and athletes are provided an opportunity to meet and establish contact. The initiative is conducted in collaboration between the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce, regional Olympic Centres and the Hamburg sports federation.

### **Guideline 3: Businesses Should Open Up General Recruitment**

- Enterprises should be open or motivated to introduce a personalized recruitment track and considering meeting with an external mentor/expert who can provide expert advice on best practice integration of sportspeople.
- When concluding sponsorship agreements, sport sponsors in particular, should commit to offer athletes the opportunity to gain working experience in their enterprise.

Example of good practice:

- Adecco hires athletes into its business through employment opportunities ranging from internships, part time, and full time employment. The recruitment uses alternative recruitment processes to assess future potential rather than past experience alone. Adecco further typically assigns a mentor to support the athlete with the transition.

### **Guideline 4: Businesses Should Consider Structural Advancements and Innovation**



- Businesses should envisage agreed flexible arrangements between the company and athlete staff to balance schedule demands with business needs.
- Further measures should include a clear internal and external communication scheme next to specialized athlete managers facilitating the integration of sportspeople. Then, when competition is complete, this could form the basis for a long term relationship.
- Promotional actions of the enterprise should include to publish good practices and combine the integration of sportspeople with corporate social responsibility.

Examples of good practice:

- France: In the French RATP Top Athlete Program, active athletes benefit from flexible working arrangements adapted to the changing employment needs during their career. Additional good practices include a coherent communication strategy both internally (i.e. seminars) and externally (i.e. local media) and the integration of athletes by a specialized human resources team.
- At Adecco, within certain part time positions, flexibility is included in the athlete's schedule that could be based upon weekly or quarterly needs of the athletes balanced with the employment needs.

#### **Guideline 5: Businesses Should Participate in Networks**

- Businesses should be open to participate in networks. These could be networks of "athlete-friendly employers" or a "dual career network" consisting of athletes, business experts, sport organisations, coaches and educational institutions. They could be locally adapted and aim at sharing and building upon knowledge, experience and good practice.

Example of good practice:

- Finland: Within the Finnish "Sports Academy Network" comprising diverse actors of dual career, the employment provider Adecco Finland is part of the network involving small and large sized enterprises throughout the country. So far, it has supported 250 athletes through career training and job placement services. Athlete satisfaction derives from strong commitment and a good working relationship between the network actors.

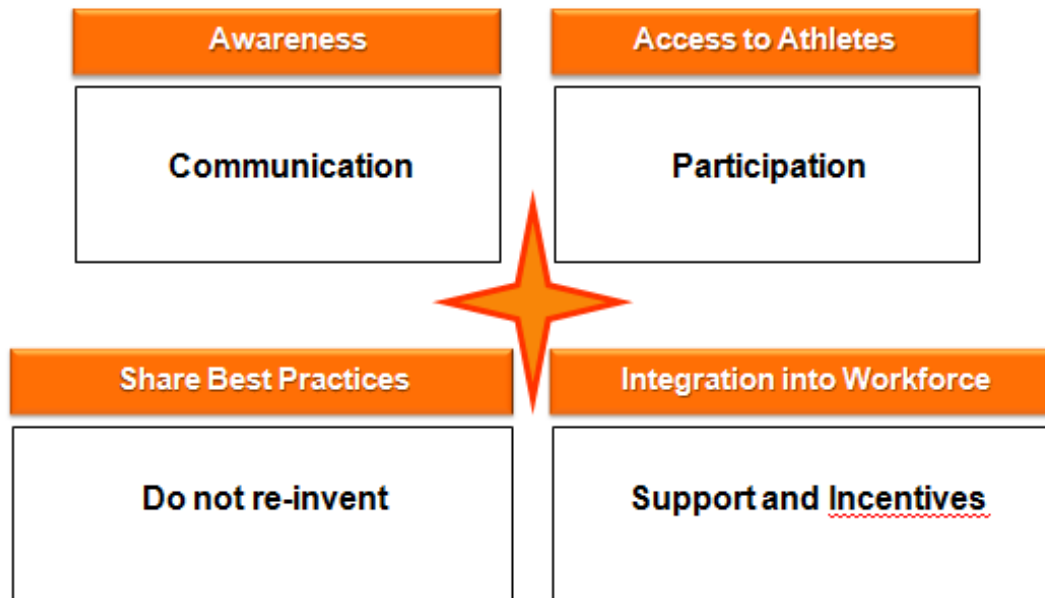
**Guideline 6: Athletes Should Be Made Aware of Existing Opportunities with the Labour Market**

- There is a necessity for creating awareness on existing athlete programmes and spreading the availability of services among athletes. Possibilities to integrate with the labour market should be accessible via a website.

Examples of good practice:

- Finland: The Finnish “Sports Academy Network” has a multiplier effect in efficiently informing athletes on the services available to them. A website [www.eliteathlete.fi](http://www.eliteathlete.fi) is providing additional advice on job placement services.
- Hungary: The Hungarian Sports Confederation informs and guides athletes through the hiring process of AXA enterprise [www.nssz.hu](http://www.nssz.hu). Statistics reflect that (former) athletes accomplish well in their positions, evidenced by two to five times better performance in comparison to regular staff.

**Table: Possible future activities of businesses**







Guidelines  
for  
Educational Institutions  
to promote Dual Career





## **General Project Findings**

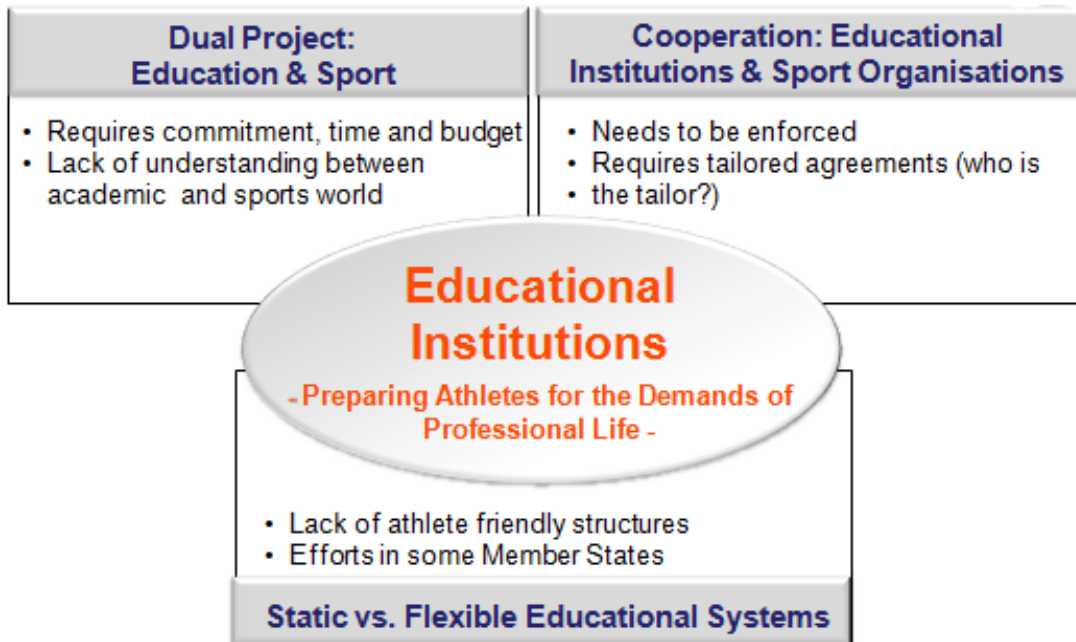
### **Status Quo on Dual Career and Education**

While athletes are young it is relatively easy to be exposed to the different demands of sport and education and participate with success and enjoyment through the compulsory school period. As athletes mature and grow the demands increase in both sport and post-secondary education which elevates the challenges faced by many young people. They are confronted with the question of how to manage the demands of dual career in sport and education and deliver successful results in sport and position themselves for a long term contribution in the labour market.

The findings of the Taj INEUM study on “The Training of Young Sportsmen and Sportswomen in Europe” published by the European Commission in 2008 underline the current deficits in dual career with regards to education. The research found particular difficulties in managing combined sports and education at tertiary level; oftentimes, the support provided lacks formal arrangements specific to athletes and initiatives only contain a limited number of agreements with educational institutions. While some nations such as France and Finland have made efforts to diversify the ways of assisting athletes, the focus by nation varies significantly and there needs to be an improvement on a general EU level.

A consistent feedback from the A2B questionnaire reflects that the educational systems across the EU do not seem readily adapted to the needs of athletes: Sportspeople overall express a need for more flexibility, lighter study conditions and better study advice. To address these demands and support a stronger structure to provide a fair access to athletes to be able to participate in sport and fulfil their long term dreams to then bring this unique experience to the labour market it must start with a stronger relationship with the educational organisations. Enhanced cooperation and structured dialogue among sport organisations, national authorities, the academic world, and potentially even business leaders could lead to the introduction of small changes that could deliver major positive results across the EU.

**Table: Challenges of educational institutions in the field of dual career**



### Recommendations

The first step must include the active promotion on increasing the cooperation with education and sport to be created or strengthened and maintained at local, national and European level. One strategy would be to have the national sport organisations take the lead in developing dialogue while Member States should provide a broad base of support. Educational institutions should be open for change and should be assisted with guiding principles and potentially structural changes to be able to develop athlete friendly education. This should include human resources who have the skills, knowledge and position to effectively negotiate and implement principles that could assist athletes pursue their dual career ambitions. A broader network could identify and promote educational establishments who have responded to the specific needs of student athletes and enhance the exchange of good practices on a European level.

## **Guidelines for Action**

### **Guideline 1: Member States Should Provide an Enabling Framework**

- National authorities should promote and strengthen dialogue between sport leaders and educational leaders at both national and local levels to develop concepts that could be adopted based on a more flexible system for combining high level sports and academic education.
- Legislature within the EU Member States should make it possible for educational institutions to have the freedom and possibility to be sport friendly without imposing penalties such as funding for innovation in the process enhancements. The legislation should instil flexible learning, grant time off and implement recruitment policies.
- Ministries of Education should implement guiding principles determining a structure for educational institutions to develop athlete friendliness.
- Relevant ministries should consider a budget for dual career allowing educational institutions to develop athlete friendly systems such as distance education and e-learning.
- Relevant ministries should make financial aid such as scholarships more easily available to student athletes based on eligibility criteria.
- Apart from a university education, “on the job” training and vocational courses should be accredited. This should focus on formalising educational qualifications and recognizing and supporting non-formal and informal learning.

#### Examples of good practice:

- Hungary: In the Hungarian society sport has played a significant role and is particularly supported by national authorities. This long-term promotion has resulted in early action-taking on combined sports and education by the Hungarian Olympic Committee: in the framework of the “Olympic Career Path” Programme bi-lateral agreements have been signed with all significant higher educational institutions to support athletes’ academic and sporting aspirations.
- Finland: Educational institutes (universities, polytechnics, universities of applied sciences) in the local elite sport networks (sport academy network) have a signed contract in which they state their commitment to dual career

and indicate that they are willing to find flexible study possibilities for high performance athletes and to promote dual career. They have also nominated a contact person who is helping the athletes in dual career issues acting as a “link” between athletes, professors, coaches, sport organisations etc.

- United Kingdom: TASS is a government-funded sports scholarship programme in the United Kingdom assisting athletes aged between 16 and 28 to balance sports with a University or college education. Instead of direct monetary support, scholars receive access to an individual support service programme delivering tailored guidance on combined education and training.
- Germany: In Germany, the so called “Eliteschule des Sports” are very helpful to combine high-school education and sport at the same time. There are 39 schools spread throughout Germany with about 11.300 sport students who are trained by 480 coaches. As a result 29% of the Olympic team in Beijing are current or former sport students of these schools.

## **Guideline 2: Collaboration Should Be Promoted and Maintained**

- Educational institutions should show flexibility for change and training and commit to attend informational sessions in a University Sport Forum. National authorities should provide motivation to Universities to be able to implement change without a negative impact to themselves or the athletes they serve.
- Educational establishments should sign agreements with the national sport organisation to support the integration of student-athletes’ sporting and academic ambitions. National Authorities should work to remove any legal impediments that could block or slow down the rate of change that would allow athletes to participate on a level playing field with non – athletes.
- In the effort to handle and maintain effective partnership, there could be a neutral body to bridge in between sports and education to minimise conflicts.
- National level strategic and action plans in both the educational and sports sector must discuss and plan the financial and human resources and their bearers, including sponsors.

Examples of good practice:

- Hungary: In the frame of the Hungarian “Olympic Career Path” Programme higher educational institutions keep being committed to provide sportsmen with tailored study arrangements and services by formally re-signing the bi-lateral agreements with the Hungarian Olympic Committee. A central office manages programme at the Semmelweis University.



- Germany: The German Olympic training centre in Berlin has elaborated a “Five Phase Concept” with the Beuth University of Applied Sciences Berlin facilitating the integration of athletes with Universities. A first stage includes career counselling by specialized staff of the Olympic training centre in conjunction with a University information session taking into account individual preferences of the student-athlete. A third stage contains individual study advice provided by the relevant department head. In the subsequent phase, the student-athlete may benefit from a facilitated registration process. Finally, student-athletes receive individual guidance by a team of experts from the Olympic training centre and responsible athlete mentors at the educational institution. Success factors of this concept named “studies à la carte” are long-term individual guidance, special flexibility arrangements and effective communication between the involved actors.
- United Kingdom: In the United Kingdom, TASS is acting as an interface between dual career actors, bringing together sports and education.

### **Guideline 3: Educational Institutions Should Envisage Structural Advancements**

- University leadership and staff should embrace the notion and practice of an athlete-friendly environment by adopting new or altered elements in the institution’s regulatory documents.
- Educational institutions should provide athletes with flexibility in time, options and process to successfully pursue higher education. This should in particular include the opportunity for distance and e-learning as well as flexibility on periodic curriculum. Ideally, these institutions are assisted by guidelines determining this structure.

#### Examples of good practice:

- Sweden: The Swedish Dalarna University is a supportive institution for dual career, currently hosting 80 student athletes. Flexibility involves the possibility for extended studies in terms of part-time curricula, a wide choice of study programmes as well as an elaborate web-based learning system. This gives student athletes the opportunity to effectively balance sporting and academic commitment. In addition, they are supported by coaches on the highest international level who are employed by the regional sport federation solely to the benefit of student athletes.
- Germany: The German Olympic Sports Confederation is annually awarding a label named “educational institution of high performance sports” to a selected partner educational institution. Selection is based on a criterion catalogue



including provision and implementation of services facilitating a dual career. The educational establishment may in turn profit from increased publicity.

#### **Guideline 4: Provision of Individual Support Assisted by Networks**

- In the frame of combined education and training, there should be a central guidance counsellor who could navigate athletes to the appropriate service provider in both, sports and education.
- The advisor should be supported by a network comprising the stakeholders that appear locally relevant. Unless there are pre-existing processes, these networks should be controlled by a larger national network of advisory actors.

Examples of good practice:

- United Kingdom: Funded by the governmental organisation UK Sport, the English Institute of Sports (EIS) is a nationwide network of services involving sports, education and profession related support. Trained athlete advisors are available to give guidance on topics such as individual study planning and employment preparation to world class level athletes.
- Finland: Supported by the Ministry of Education, an academic network associates sport actors and educational institutions in Finland to combine knowledge developing new or promoting existing policies and practices to provide athlete friendly education. This network contains smaller locally adapted units while being steered and supervised under the umbrella of the Olympic Committee of Finland.
- On a European level, the EAS network unites educational establishments who have or wish to respond to the specific needs of student-athletes and promotes the exchange of practices which may assist European athletes to combine high performance sport and education. To date, it counts members from over 20 countries.

#### **Guideline 5: Higher Authorities Should Create and Strengthen Dialogue**

- The EU commissioner of sport and education should assemble with leaders in sport that could include the President of the IOC, the president of the EOC, the president of the IPC, or federation presidents and motivated leaders in business to discuss the issues related to combine sports training and education that would result in a positive access to employment.



- Dialogue should be initiated by a joint statement between the EU Commission and the EOC EU Office and the European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO).

**Table: Possible future activities of educational institutions**

Athlete Friendly Structure	Study Visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible studies</li> <li>• Scholarship system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g. EAS, in cooperation with A2B-group, currently preparing a study visit scheme</li> </ul>
Customized Programs	Erasmus Sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special educational solutions by contract between sport organisations and universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Life Long Learning to sports</li> </ul>



Guidelines  
for  
Sport Organisations  
to promote Dual Career





## **General Project Findings**

### **Status Quo of Dual Career and Sport Organisations**

Per findings of the A2B questionnaire, the majority of sport organisations do not offer tailored services to prepare athletes for their post-competition career. Some major reasons for not providing the services include a lack of funds and low awareness about the significance of the issue. For those sport organisations that do run an athlete career programme, they typically consider it very important for their organisation and the development of athletes.

Athletes who participated in the A2B project and in the A2B questionnaire criticized the lack of professional career support from sport organisations. In addition, a lack of awareness on dual career entails that it is not mainstreamed in the sport organisation's various activities, and therefore, they cannot actively promote it.

### **Dual Career Networks/ Expert Guidance**

Exemplary, the actors involved in dual career cooperate through a network at European, national and regional level. Such networks bring together athletes, coaches, federations, relevant authorities, educational institutions, businesses, sport clubs and providers of services related to sport and education.

As a forum for cooperation and exchange, they ideally contain signed agreements on the commitment to dual career. National sport organisations should assume a leading role in this event.

At the national level, sport organisations should initiate the formation of a team of experts and stakeholders consisting of athletes, specialists from national authorities, businesses, chambers of commerce, educational institutions and sport federations. This group takes on a mentor role giving advice about the implementation and enhancement of dual career programmes. Furthermore, it provides businesses and educational institutions with guidance on the integration of athletes with regards to their specific needs and programmes which can be implemented.

### **Availability of Dual Career Guidance**

High performance athletes shall have the opportunity to receive dual career support. As athletes frequently interact with sport organisations, they shall therefore be able to inform the athlete about dual career matters in order to avoid that due to the lack of information athletes cannot benefit from dual career services/programmes despite their existence.

**Table: Challenges of sport organisations in the field of dual career**



## Recommendations

Sport organisations should be made aware of the issue and benefits of dual career and how crucial this topic is for athletes and their development. Awareness alone will not bring the needed benefits; sport organisations should also commit to allocate resources to dual career complemented by resources helping athlete commissions to function. Athletes participating in the project consider, that sport organisations have to be as active in the field of dual career as in other important fields of sport e.g. training science.

The findings of the A2B project show that athletes who pursue a sports career and are offered support on dual career often perform better both in sports and education.

## Guidelines for Action

### Guideline 1: Collaboration with National Authorities, Higher Educational Institutions and Businesses

- **National Authorities**



In matters of combined education and training, sport organisations establish cooperation with national authorities, including ministries for sport, education and economy. This should involve governmental support in developing athlete-friendly education, approaching enterprises and creating public problem recognition. Public money shall be made available to co-finance dual career programmes implying incentives for athlete friendly educational institutions and enterprises.

- **Higher Educational Institutions**

Prior to approaching higher educational institutions, sport organisations have a clear concept about the benefits (e.g. publicity) they will provide as a return on investment.

In their efforts to integrate athletes, higher educational institutions are provided guidance and best practices by assigned mentors.

Agreements between the two sides should contain customised services and scholarships for enrolled student-athletes.

- **Businesses**

Overall, businesses are attracted by shared values and engagement in sport sponsorship. To approach non sport sponsors and business associations, sport organisations seek the help of chambers of commerce, business associations and companies with an interest in the aligning talented athletes with leadership companies.

Sponsorship contracts should be motivated to imply a clause on dual career with enterprises committing to offer career opportunities (e.g. internships, part-/ full-time employment) to sportsmen fulfilling the profile requirements.

In advance, the sport organisation should develop a benefit package (incentives, increased publicity, etc.) to leverage the engagement of businesses.

### **Commitment of the Athlete Entourage**

Sport organisations make concrete efforts in sensitizing the athlete's environment involving families, coaches, sport federations, clubs and teachers to gain commitment on dual career. Such efforts consist of education, training and information sessions. In particular, sport federations and coaches should be required to demand a professional career plan from their athletes. Importantly, coaches should not be single advisors since their emphasis is primarily on sporting results.

### **Support from National Authorities and the European Union**

In order to improve structures for policy and capacity building as well as organisational development, sport organisations achieve support from national authorities and the European Union. This includes coordinative, regulatory and financial assistance.

Furthermore, European authorities ideally support the formation of a European network on dual career which reaches out to relevant, cross-sectoral stakeholders.

- More governmental guidance and support should be provided regarding the combination of education and sport. Central coordination which should be managed by the Ministry responsible for education/ universities and which could culminate in regulatory acts and could provide a good framework to promote dual career.
- If a central approach is not possible to tackle this issue, networks bringing together various stakeholders should assume a coordinative role.

Example of good practice:

- France: The French State is planning to support high-level amateur athletes by paying social security and pension allowances during their sports career. Estimations reflect that in between 2.500 and 3.000 sportsmen will benefit from this athletes' funding scheme.

## **Guideline 2: Commitment Internally**

- The executive committee of sport organisations should be committed to the topic and consider dual career as a priority issue. This commitment can translate into various ways such as referring to dual career in the statutes, strategic planning (on dual career), defining dual career as a policy/service portfolio, allocating resources and/or engaging staff. At the beginning, hired staff could advocate dual career and provide important and pertinent information both for the organisation/ members and athletes. Smaller sport federations could share staff providing dual career advice.

Examples of good practice:

- Finland: The National Olympic Committee of Finland hired one full-time employee for dual career matters promoting this topic and being available for athletes.
- The FIFA regulations on the status and transfer of players refer to the issue of dual career in article 19 letter b) point ii which demands that if a transfer of a football player within the EU or European Economic Area under 18 is made, the receiving club will have to "guarantee the player an academic and/or school and/or vocational education and/or training, which will allow the player to pursue a career other than football should he cease playing professional football".
- Germany: In the frame of an "elite plus programme" the Deutsche Sporthilfe (German Sports Aid Foundation) provides special grants of 1.500 EUR per month to athletes in preparation of the London Olympic Summer Games 2012 who have a dual career project.



- Germany: Provision of Career Advisors, called "Laufbahnberater" working in the 19 Olympic Training Centres, for a holistic coaching to achieve an optimal athletic as well as professional career of high-performance athletes. Only those athletes, who receive the best possible support, strive for national and international top-level performances. This includes many years of hard work, ambition and determination. The Career Advisors are the contact persons for top-level national athletes and outstanding young athletes. They support the best possible development of young athletes with regard to sport and profession as well as from the social and personal perspective. To achieve this, targeted consultations are held. The Career Advisors play a central role of this network where it all comes together. Wide-ranging assistance, ideal time management, and individual support are the requirements for top international performances. From the moment of entry into high-performance sport through to the post-sporting career support, the Career Advisors represent an important coaching agent. The way to success passes through many stages. It is important to become a world champion and in the same time to succeed in school. The coordination with the university partners ensures a "Study à la carte" instead of a "Study light".

### **Guideline 3: Commitment Externally**

- Externally, the sport organisation represents itself as committed to dual career evidenced by mainstreaming dual career in its policies, activities and interactions with external stakeholders. Cooperation agreements with relevant stakeholders, in particular with sponsors, could incorporate references to the promotion of dual career. These references could tackle e.g. internship possibilities, recruitment opportunities for athletes and/or job training etc. Agreements with economic umbrella organisations such as chambers of commerce could include awareness raising activities among their member organisations.

Examples of good practice:

- France: The French Olympic Sports Confederation (CNOSF) has concluded a cooperation agreement with the Mouvement des Entreprises de France „MEDEF" with the aim of promoting dual career.
- Germany: Due to its federal system, Germany established a decentralized counseling model (provided by Olympic training centers) that allows athletes to stay in their area of origin facilitating networks to regional actors in business and educational institutions.

#### **Guideline 4: Awareness and Information**

Sport organisations shall develop a communication plan aiming at providing greater publicity on dual career and related programmes/ services on a national level. In order for athletes to benefit from any dual career programme/ services, they should have to be fully aware of it. Sport organisations shall therefore communicate the dual career offer via their media channels, social media platforms and sport events as well as using athlete commissions, coaches, clubs and sport federations as multipliers.

Examples of good practice:

- Germany: The German Athletes Commission regularly publishes press releases dedicated to the issue of dual career on the website of the German Olympic Sports Confederation.
- Finland: The website of the National Olympic Committee of Finland contains an own section on dual career.

#### **Guideline 5: Dual Career Network**

- In order to promote dual career, sport organisations shall establish a thematic network bringing together relevant stakeholders such as educational institutions, athletes, sport organisations, businesses, public authorities and coaches.

Example of good practice:

- Finland: The National Olympic Committee of Finland has set up a dual career network (Sports Academy Network) which has proven to be very effective in the promotion of dual career as it is providing a sound basis for cooperation and information exchange.

#### **Guideline 6: Cooperation**

- In the interest to successfully generate an enabling environment for dual career, sport organisations would have to cooperate with additional stakeholders of particular relevance. It is advisable to set up framework agreements defining commitments for the promotion of dual career. In this regard, the extension of already existing agreements, e.g. sponsorships, to the field of dual career would be highly recommended.
- Cooperation agreements with



- Educational establishments could contain arrangements for greater study flexibility of student athletes, e.g. regarding the postponement of exams and e-learning opportunities.
- Businesses should contain arrangements for internships, specialized recruitment procedures for athletes, flexible working arrangements, the organisation of job fairs for athletes etc.
- Public authorities could contain arrangements for the co-financing of dual career programmes, special scholarships for athletes, etc.

Example of good practice:

- Various sport organisations have set up cooperation agreements with national Adecco branches which run Athletes' Career Programmes facilitating the athlete's transition into the labour market.

#### **Guideline 7: Commitment of Athletes**

- Sport organisations should demand a professional and/ or educational career plan from their athletes next to a sporting plan.

Example of good practice:

- Denmark: The national sport associations which receive support from Team Denmark, responsible for the overall planning of elite sports in Denmark, are obliged to provide a plan for the professional and other educational programmes for top-level athletes.

#### **Guideline 8: Capacity Building**

- In cooperation with other stakeholders, sport organisations should appoint and set up a central entity to collect and disseminate information on dual career and direct athletes to appropriate service providers. Together with relevant stakeholders, they shall ensure the availability of career guidance to every athlete, consisting of personalized career development, networking opportunities for job placement and training sessions.
- In addition, sport organisations should enable and support athlete commissions in the development of their activities in the field of dual career.

Example of good practice:

- Germany: The German Olympic Sports Confederation employs a person working for the German Athletes Commission who supports them – among others – in the field of dual career.

**Table: Possible future activities of sport organisations**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Commit to Dual Career</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust statutes and strategies</li> <li>• Generate internal commitment</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Provide HR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire part/ full-time employees promoting DC</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Conclude Cooperation Agreements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational Institutions</li> <li>• Businesses</li> <li>• Chambers of Commerce</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Set up a DC Network</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve athletes, higher authorities, businesses, educational institutions, athlete entourage</li> </ul>