



#BEACTIVE

European Week of Sport Flagship event

Summary of Workshop 1 on Current Sport Governance Challenges

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Focus on the why, what and how of sport governance

The workshop on current sport governance challenges offered a framework for applying multiple stakeholder perspectives in a highly engaging and interactive process to:

- Explore the strategic imperative of good governance in sport
- Map and assess critical sport governance issues
- Start exploring evolving good sport governance practices

Critical sport governance issues

Applying multiple stakeholder perspectives comprises a useful tool for developing a 360-degree shortlisting of strategic sport governance issues and for assessing these issues. In the workshop, the collective shortlisting of sport governance issues with high likelihood of becoming critical and high impact on trust, growth and performance was as follows (in no particular order):

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Democratic decision-making models free of the risk of vote buying
- Stakeholder inclusion in decision-making processes
- Conflicts of interest/independent decision-making
- Athlete safety
- Child protection
- Doping
- Match-fixing
- Development funding integrity
- Fair/equal/transparent sport event bidding processes
- Fair/equal/transparent sport event ticket pricing and distribution
- Fair/equal/transparent selection of sponsors and media broadcasters

Where you stand depends on where you sit

Applying different stakeholder perspectives offers an opportunity to appreciate the fact that where one stands often depends on where one sits. The workshop facilitated the integration of the following stakeholder perspectives in the process of strategically assessing the why, what and how of sport governance (in no particular order):

- European national governments, including ministries for sport, education, health and gender equality
- European business, including current and potential sponsors
- Amateur athletes
- Professional athletes
- European national Olympic committees, including the umbrella organization European Olympic Committees
- European civil society organizations, including European national chapters of Transparency International



The strategic imperative of good governance in sport

It is strategically urgent and important to modernize the way that sport organizations are governed. A sound platform of good governance is the foundation for building trust, growth and performance into the future.

From a strategic stakeholder engagement perspective, sound measures of good governance are particularly critical for a sport organization for the following reasons:

- *Athletes* (and potential athletes): To sustain/increase interest and pride in practicing sport.
- *Fans*: To sustain/increase interest in attending sport events and following them on TV and other media.
- *Sponsors and media broadcasters*, expecting a positive association through their investments: To sustain/increase funding.
- *Host governments and intergovernmental organizations*: To pre-empt strict and inflexible regulatory oversight (safeguarding autonomy). To keep privileges such as tax exemptions. To sustain/increase funding.
- *Law enforcement authorities*: To proactively manage legal liability risks for the organization and individuals on its board and executive management.
- *Auditors and banks*: To pre-empt being seen as high-risk business partners and accordingly to sustain competitive rates for services and full flexibility in choosing among all relevant service providers.
- *Civil society organizations*, as the most trusted societal players: To pre-empt critical campaigns and negative media coverage. To sustain/increase the level of trust with all stakeholders of sport.



- European Streetball Federation, including European national streetball federations (a purposely fictive sport and federation)
- European national media broadcasters and social media platforms
- European national anti-doping agencies
- Parents of athletes
- European Commission, with a focus on portfolios such as sport, education, health and gender equality
- European national law enforcement authorities, including EUROPOL
- European national sport betting providers, including European umbrella organizations of such providers
- European national financial institutions, including banks and auditing companies
- Fans

Evolving good sport governance practices

There cannot be effective and value-adding one-size-fits-all solutions to sport governance. Sport organizations are simply too different in terms of size, resources and specific governance challenges - in and across sports and countries. Yet, for sport organizations starting the process of modernizing their governance frameworks, there is a lot to learn from evolving good governance practices across sports and countries.

Beyond starting the thought process of developing solutions to managing critical sport governance issues, the workshop offered an opportunity to get inspiration from one particular case of evolving good practice - the case of Netball New Zealand and its approach to professionalizing the boardroom and managing conflicts of interest.

