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GUIDING TOOLKIT

FOR SPORT EVENTS ORGANIZERS

April 2026

The ReWSE toolkit is designed for event organisers seeking to promote equality, sustainability, visibility, and inclusion in women's sports events across Europe.



ReWISE

REINFORCING WOMEN SPORT EVENTS



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Index

Module 1:	4
Sustainability and Green Impact (VIDC)	4
Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?	5
Difficulties and Strategies	6
Step-by-step timeline	8
Resources	10
Best Practice Examples	11
Final advice / checklist	12
Module 2:	14
Accessibility and Inclusion (IWA)	14
Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?	15
Difficulties and Strategies	17
Step-by-step timeline	18
Resources	20
Best Practice Examples	20
Final advice / checklist	21
Module 3:	23
Networking and Donor Engagement (ENGSO)	23
Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?	24
Difficulties and Strategies	24
Step-by-step timeline	27
Resources	30
Best Practice Examples	31
Final advice / checklist	33

Introduction

This **Guiding Toolkit** is an output of the “ReWSE – Reinforcing Women Sport Events” Erasmus+ Sport project (2025–2027). It was developed and drafted by the various stakeholders in the consortium.

ReWSE aims to promote equality, sustainability, visibility, and inclusion in women's sports events in Europe. The project targets **two groups**, namely (1) women¹ in sport, event organizers, and young women who want to become organizers and managers of sports events, with a special focus on the active involvement of women with disabilities; and (2) recreational, grassroots sports organizations and associations.



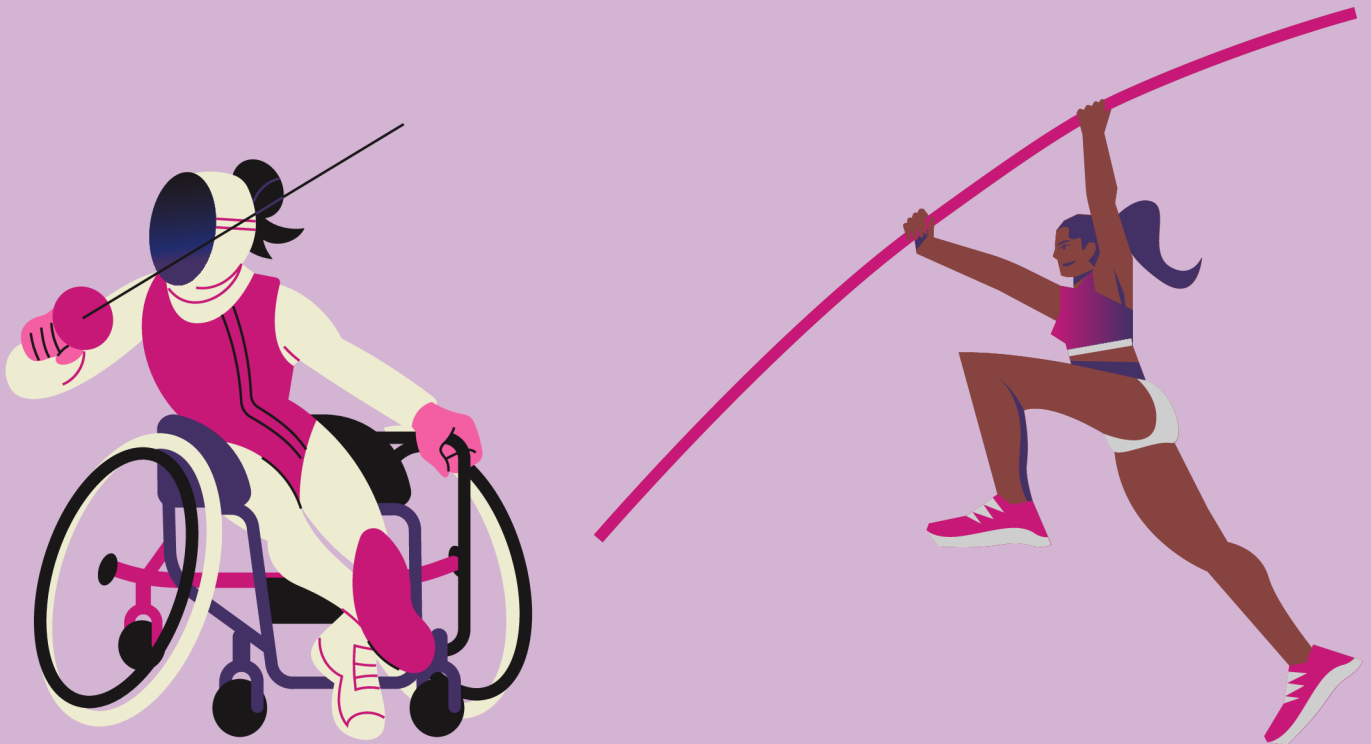
¹ The ReWSE project is committed to inclusivity and therefore also addresses non-binary, inter and trans (TIN) people.

This Toolkit has the objective to strengthen the skills and preparation of women sport event organizers to (a) put into practice the EU Green Deal guidelines, and (b) be inclusive and accessible to women with disabilities. In addition, the Toolkit will increase concrete networking and donor engagement skills of sport organizers.

This document is meant to give guidelines to anyone who reads it with the idea to enhance the impact of sports events and empower its organizers. We are aware that it is difficult to organize “the perfect event” and implement all recommendations collected here. This should not deter current and future women sport event organizers from aiming to learn, to get a bit better each time, and to focus on feasible tasks from our checklists. Change takes time and the first step is an honest commitment and openness. The consortium of the ReWSE project hopes that this Toolkit will inspire you and offer concrete measures to you and your organization!

MODULE 1:

SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN IMPACT



Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?

Sports play a major role regarding sustainability and climate protection: The sports sector is both a victim and a contributor to climate change—sports activities now account for nearly 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time, sporting events and athletes worldwide face major challenges due to extreme, unpredictable weather conditions (heat, lack of snow, flooding).

Nevertheless, sports have the unique ability to unite communities, inspire hope, and encourage collective action. Sporting events bring together diverse groups of people, creating a unique opportunity to promote and model sustainable practices. They can serve as powerful platforms to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because sport has the potential to be accessible, engaging, and having a unifying effect across different communities.

In most Western countries, people are living far beyond their means. From a global perspective, we need more sustainable development. Sustainability means using our resources efficiently. People today should not be living at the expense of people in other regions of the world and of future generations. Sustainability affects all areas of our lives and economies and is thus a task for the whole of society. It requires societal development that is ecologically viable, socially fair and economically efficient.

The unifying and positive qualities of sports already contribute in part to the SDGs. But sports clubs could do a lot more to increase the sustainability of the events they organize by taking deliberate measures in areas from transport to waste

management concepts or sustainable trophies. Integrating sustainability into sporting events not only reduces their environmental impact—such as waste production, energy consumption, and transportation emissions—but also encourages positive social change, including equality, accessibility, and fair working conditions. Small and medium-sized events, in particular, occur more frequently and therefore have a broad cumulative impact.

By adopting sustainable practices, organizers can set a visible example, influence audience behavior beyond the event itself, and contribute to long-term ecological, social, and economic well-being. Moreover, responsible event management ensures respect for local communities, minimizes strain on resources, and helps safeguard the future viability of both sport and the environment.

Difficulties and Strategies

Everybody, who has ever organized a small or medium-sized sports event, has faced a number of challenges. This Toolkit lists several of the main challenges – as well as potential strategies to overcome them – one might encounter when trying to achieve certain objectives.

Difficulty 1: Lack of awareness or motivation

Many organizers, participants, and spectators are not aware of the importance of sustainability, or do

Strategy:

- Integrate sustainability goals and also benefits in your communication from the outset

not see the benefit to themselves or to an event.

- Use the event's opening ceremony for social messaging
- Make certain sustainable actions as easy as possible (e.g., provide prominent recycling options for visitors)
- Communicate sustainable measures that can be taken by visitors and offer incentives (e.g., discounts for public transport use)

Difficulty 2: Limited financial resources

Implementing sustainable measures can be cost-intensive.

Strategy:

- Partner with local businesses, eco-friendly suppliers, second-hand supplies, and sustainable service providers
- Hire, share or re-use as much as possible
- Focus on cost-neutral or cost-saving measures (e.g., waste reduction or energy efficiency, limited or no giveaways, self-produced catering)

Difficulty 3: Logistical challenges in providing sustainable transport, catering, and infrastructure.

Strategy:

- Plan early to coordinate schedules with public transport providers

- Select venues with existing sustainable infrastructure
- Prioritize regional suppliers to reduce transport distances

Step-by-step timeline

Chapter III of each Toolkit Module offers step-by-step timelines for applying the information at a real sporting event – with specific tasks to plan and/or implement before, during, and after the event in question.

BEFORE the event	
12 months before	• Define sustainability goals • Appoint a sustainability coordinator • Partner with eco-certified suppliers • Plan sustainable transport options
3 months before	• Finalize a waste management concept ◦ Include a concept regarding plastic / disposable tableware ◦ Calculate food needs carefully to reduce waste as well as costs.

	Donate leftover food or dispose of sustainably, avoid unnecessary food waste (by distribution of food or donating to a food bank) • Source sustainable trophies and merchandise • Coordinate with local transport and eco-friendly accommodation providers
1 week before	• Communicate sustainability measures to all participants and staff • Prepare signage for recycling and accessibility • Ensure all materials are ready

DURING the event	
Step 1	Monitor waste stations, transport, and catering for compliance with sustainability guidelines.
Step 2	Use the event program and ceremonies to highlight sustainability messages and

	encourage participation in eco-friendly actions.
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AFTER the event	
Step 1	Collect data on waste, energy, and participation in sustainable transport.
Step 2	• Evaluate the outcomes against your initial goals • Share the results publicly and with all stakeholders • Publish a sustainability report

Resources

- EWSE [Roadmap to Sustainability](#)
- Web Portal for [sustainable \(major\) sporting events](#)
- [Council for Responsible Sport](#) – international best practice and tools
- fairplay [Factsheet on Sustainability](#) (in German)

Best Practice Examples

Forest Green Rovers Football Club (UK) – recognized as the world's greenest football club, with vegan catering and renewable energy use.

Werder Bremen – a German professional football club, that is trying to achieve the net zero target by 2040. Werder has, among other things, joined the UN initiative "Sports for Climate Action". In addition, they were the first professional club in Germany to become a club member of "Common Goal" and, as members of "Fußball kann mehr" (Football can do more), are explicitly committed to promoting women in all areas of the company.

Vienna Climate Run (website in German only) – The Vienna Climate Run aims to rekindle society's enthusiasm for climate protection through sport and fun, make active contributions to climate protection and biodiversity, and promote an ecological and healthy lifestyle. The goal of the event is to raise awareness of climate protection and the importance of biodiversity in an entertaining and active way.

Grandma's Marathon in Minnesota – Evergreen certified event, clear list of measures online (from recycling of marathon clothing to sustainable water supply onsite).

Final advice / checklist

- Consider venues that are easily accessible by public transportation
- Encourage the use of public transport, clean vehicles (i.e. bicycles, electric cars) or carpooling and offer a discount to people who can prove that they came using one of these methods
- Ensure that there is a waste management concept for sorting and recycling waste (avoiding single-use plastic and disposable items)
- Avoid unnecessary food waste and costs; distribute and donate leftover
- Choose accommodation easily accessible by foot, bicycle, or public transportation
- Choose accommodation options that have been certified as eco-friendly and offer special discounts for event participants and spectators
- Provide prominent recycling options for visitors
- Reuse and/or recycle goods and supplies used during and after the event
- Support local businesses and second-hand supplies by hiring, sharing and re-using as much as possible

- Take into consideration local residents who are likely to be affected by the event
- Collect data and feedback on the environmental impact and create an operational guide for future projects

MODULE 2:

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION



Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?

The development of more accessible models of sporting events is often driven by women's sport and, more broadly, by movements toward equality in sport. However, despite this progress, many event organizers lack the skills, knowledge, and experience required to effectively include parasport, athletes with disabilities, and their families. This gap also affects other groups who may require specific approaches or support to participate in sporting events, such as cultural minorities, older adults, or individuals with additional access needs. As a result, accessibility is frequently treated as an afterthought rather than a core element of event planning.

Accessibility at sporting events is essential because it directly determines who can participate as a spectator, athlete, volunteer, or staff member. Sport plays a central role in social life, community identity, and well-being, yet without intentional planning, entire groups of people can be excluded. Inclusive event design ensures that sport fulfills its purpose of bringing people together rather than reinforcing barriers to participation.

From a legal perspective, accessibility is a requirement in many countries. Often, laws protect people with disabilities from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society, including access to sporting and leisure facilities. In many cases, sports organizations are required to provide "reasonable accommodation" to ensure equal access to goods and services. This may include physical adaptations such as ramps, automatic doors, accessible seating, lowered

reception counters, and hearing or induction loops, as well as the provision of information in accessible formats such as large print, audio, or braille.

Beyond legal compliance, accessibility promotes equity and inclusion. People with disabilities represent a significant proportion of the population, and their participation in sport should not depend on whether a venue happens to be accessible. Features such as clear signage, accessible transport links, adaptive equipment, and inclusive digital platforms enable people with diverse mobility, sensory, and cognitive needs to engage fully with sporting events.

Accessibility also improves safety for all attendees. Measures such as step-free access, wide pathways, visual and auditory alerts, and accessible evacuation procedures benefit not only people with disabilities but also children, older adults, and individuals with temporary injuries. Designing for diverse needs creates safer, more navigable environments for everyone.

Finally, accessible sporting events enhance community engagement and organizational reputation. Inclusive events attract larger and more diverse audiences, strengthen fan loyalty, and support the long-term sustainability of sporting organizations. Most importantly, they reflect the true values of sport—fairness, participation, and respect—by ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to experience the social connection and excitement that sport provides.

Difficulties and Strategies

Difficulty 1: Venue access

Event organizers often choose venues based on the quality and availability of the facilities without taking transportation, travel distance, and time of day into consideration.

Example: An event is held at the national sports campus, which has no connections with public transportation and is outside of a city.

Strategy: Venue checklist

- Check links with public transportation (i.e. buses, trains, metros, etc.) prior to confirming the venue for your event
- Provide clear directions on how to arrive and depart from the venue and communicate them prior to participant registration
- Partner with transportation companies to provide shuttles / charters to the event

Difficulty 2: Accessible facilities at venues

Many venues selected for sporting events do not have accessible facilities and make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to attend and participate in events.

Example: A wheelchair basketball event was booked at a facility without an accessible entrance, no designated car parking near the

Strategy:

- Organize a site visit 3-months prior to the event to check accessibility at the following:
 - ☒ Entrance & reception
 - ☒ Internal layout
 - ☒ Changing facilities
 - ☒ Competition area
 - ☒ Technical area
 - ☒ Spectator area

sports hall, and with only one accessible toilet for 100 participants.

- Cross check venue facilities with IWA Best Practice Guidelines

Difficulty 3: Suitable equipment

Accessible equipment is often expensive to purchase and difficult to store, which means many event organizers do not have adequate equipment on site.

Example: A wheelchair rugby program is actively recruiting new players, but does not have a dedicated space on site for storing equipment, or the correct number of wheelchair rugby chairs to facilitate the growing numbers.

Strategy:

- Liaise with a disability sport organization / National Paralympic Committee to borrow equipment
- Apply for local grants dedicated to equipment purchase
- Check if the venue has adequate storage facilities and if you can avail of them

Step-by-step timeline

BEFORE the event

6 months before

- Consider additional budget required for any adapted equipment needed

	• Identify potential venue and check capacity to store equipment pre / post event • Identify potential volunteers to help staff the event
3 months before	• Walkthrough of venue, ensuring accessible facilities as per guidelines above • Check transportation options to / from the venue • Ensuring adequate storage of equipment pre / post event • Train all volunteers that will be staffing the event
1 month before	Engage with on-site staff to ensure all facilities are in working order
1 week before	• Inform venue of any changes to participant numbers • Bring any equipment needed for the event to the site to be stored

DURING the event	• Regularly check facilities to ensure they remain in working order (e.g toilets unlocked, lifts working, doors open etc.) • Work with venue staff to ensure all participants are catered for • Communicate with participants to ensure all needs are met
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AFTER the event

- Distribute feedback forms to participants
- Return all borrowed equipment
- Thank all volunteers for their time and effort in managing the event

Resources

- EWSE resources / website - [Home EN – Assisitaly](#)
- IWA-Sport
- Paralympic Committees and disability sport organizations
- Local Sport Partnerships
- Sports NGOs
- Active Disability Ireland - [Active Disability Ireland](#)
- IWA Best Practice Guidelines - [Best Practice Access Guidelines 4 -IWA](#)

Best Practice Examples

Irish Para Powerlifting Invitationals

Successfully partnered with local hotel to ensure accessible competition area, spectator area, accommodation, facilities, airport transfers and international travel.

Her Moves

Multi-sport event held at Irish Wheelchair Association headquarters, a fully accessible venue, catered towards teenage girls (12–18) with physical disabilities, highlighting local sporting opportunities, designed to inspire and support participants to be active.

Women in Sport Leadership (IWA in partnership with Basketball Ireland)

A leadership program designed to provide training, guidance, and expertise to support women with physical disabilities and IWA Members, to thrive in leadership positions in sport. Accessible considerations are timings of sessions, digital format, and graduation at a fully accessible venue.

Final advice / checklist

→ A – Awareness

Understand the needs of people with disabilities and promote disability awareness among coordinators, event management, staff and volunteers. Modify rules, equipment, and environments to suit different functional abilities. Encourage innovation in making sports fit the athlete.

→ C – Collaboration:

Work with disability organizations, athletes and stakeholders to continuously upskill on the needs of their members. Understand the needs of people with disabilities and promote disability awareness among coordinators, event management, staff and volunteers.

→ C – Communication:

Ensure clear, accessible communication before, during, and after the event (e.g., plain language, signage, alternative formats). Promote *dignity*,

equality, and athlete-centered language. Respect lived experience and involve para-athletes in the planning process.

→ **E – Education**

Train staff, volunteers, and participants on *disability awareness, inclusive practices, and Paralympic values.*

→ **S – Support Services:**

Provide necessary accommodations like accessible transport, personal assistance, and adaptive equipment.

→ **S – Site visits:**

Assess physically accessible venues (e.g. ramps, seating, restrooms, parking, sensory-friendly zones). Design events where *everyone* can engage—athletes with varying impairments, support teams, and spectators. Promote adaptive opportunities for inclusion.

MODULE 3:

NETWORKING AND DONOR ENGAGEMENT



Why is it important to consider this topic at a sporting event?

Networking and donor engagement are essential to the **long-term sustainability, visibility, and growth of women's sports events**. Strong networks help organizers access funding, expertise, volunteers, venues, media attention, and in-kind support that may otherwise remain out of reach. For women in sport – especially women with disabilities and organizers from underrepresented groups – networks also open doors to mentoring, partnerships, and decision-making spaces that are often difficult to enter.

Donor engagement makes it easier to provide accessible infrastructure, inclusive communication, staff training, and higher-quality participant experiences. It also reduces reliance on a single source of funding and helps events build long-term resilience. When approached strategically, networking and donor relations do not only support one event; they help create a stronger ecosystem around women's sport and increase the chances that future activities can grow in scale and impact.

Difficulties and Strategies

Difficulty 1: Limited visibility

Potential donors and partners often underestimate the value or reach of women's sports events, especially those involving women with disabilities. Women's sport events

Strategy:

- Connect with local and regional media first: they are more likely to give visibility to smaller events
- Develop clear data packages (attendance numbers, social

are also covered less by the media at professional and amateur level.

Example: A regional women's running event struggles to secure sponsorship because local companies believe the audience will be "too small".

media reach, community impact). Provide donors with visibility options (branding, speaking slots, cross-promotion)

- Use ambassadors or local role models to increase perceived value

Difficulty 2: Lack of existing networks

Many women organizers or organizers of women sport events, especially new or young managers, start with limited professional contacts.

Example: A student-led multisport event cannot find partners due to limited networking experience.

Strategy:

- Join local and national sport federations, women's networks, and disability organisations
- Use digital tools (LinkedIn, Facebook groups, online communities): regular communication on your organization's channels is essential to publicize your activities and advocate
- Ask established organizers for introductions (warm contacts have a much higher success rate)

Difficulty 3: Donor fatigue or lack of long-term commitment

Companies may support one event but show no interest in long-term partnerships.

Example: A corporate sponsor supported a women's football tournament once but withdrew the following year due to shifting budgets.

Strategy:

- Create tiered sponsorship packages with recurring benefits
- Maintain year-round communication (impact reports, newsletters, invitations)
- Offer co-branding opportunities that align with a company's Corporate Social Responsibility and inclusion goals

Difficulty 4: Budget cuts and political de-prioritization of diversity and gender programs

Across Europe and globally, public and private funding for diversity, inclusion, and gender equality initiatives is often reduced in challenging political climates. This makes securing consistent support for women's sports more difficult.

Example: Several regional women's tournaments face reduced municipal and national funding due to changing policy priorities, despite proven community impact.

Strategy:

- Diversify funding sources (public, private, EU programs, NGOs, community support)
- Emphasize social impact, inclusion, and community benefits to appeal to value-driven donors
- Build multi-year partnerships with smaller, consistent contributions rather than relying on large one-off grants

Step-by-step timeline

BEFORE the event	
6 months before	Step 1: Develop an inclusive and sustainable donor strategy • Identify donors and partners whose values align with gender equality, disability inclusion, environmental responsibility, and community impact • Prioritize organizations with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals related to inclusion, accessibility, and sustainability • Design sponsorship packages that allow donors to support specific inclusive and green actions (e.g. funding sign language interpretation, accessible transport, reusable infrastructure, or eco-friendly catering)
	Step 2: Map inclusive and sustainable networks • Contact women's sport organizations, disability advocacy groups, environmental NGOs, local authorities, and community associations • Identify and contact potential event ambassadors and spokespeople with a high media visibility • Ensure women with disabilities and underrepresented groups are actively involved in planning and decision-making • Favor local partners and suppliers to reduce environmental impact and strengthen community ownership
	Step 3: Prepare accessible, low-impact communication materials

	• Create digital-first, accessible sponsorship brochures and pitch decks (screen-reader friendly, clear language, high-contrast design) • Use QR codes and websites demonstrating inclusion and sustainability commitments, avoiding unnecessary printed materials
3 months before	Step 4: Conduct inclusive and accessible donor outreach • Offer online, hybrid, or physically accessible meetings • Present inclusion and sustainability as added values, showing how donors contribute to real social and environmental impact • Tailor proposals to donors' CSR objectives, clearly linking support to measurable outcomes
	Step 5: Confirm partnerships and shared commitments • Define visibility benefits that are inclusive and sustainable (digital branding, inclusive announcements, accessible websites instead of excessive physical branding) • Agree on concrete commitments such as accessible facilities, inclusive communication, waste reduction, and responsible sourcing
	Step 6: Train staff and volunteers • Provide training on inclusive behavior, disability awareness, gender sensitivity, and sustainable event practices • Appoint inclusion and sustainability focal points within the organizing team to liaise with partners and donors
1 month before	Step 7: Coordinate inclusive and sustainable communication

	• Share digital toolkits with donors, including inclusive language guidelines and sustainability messaging • Encourage donors to promote the event in ways that highlight accessibility and environmental responsibility
	Step 8: Final checks • Confirm accessible infrastructure (venues, toilets, signage, transport) • Ensure sustainability measures are visible and understandable (recycling stations, refill points, clear guidance)

DURING the event	Step 1: Deliver inclusive and sustainable donor visibility • Ensure all agreed visibility measures are accessible (reads easily, audible, barrier-free) and low-impact (reusable or digital) • Avoid non-inclusive or single-use promotional items; prioritize useful, sustainable materials
	Step 2: Facilitate inclusive networking opportunities • Create networking spaces that are physically accessible, sensory-considerate, and welcoming to diverse participants • Encourage interaction between donors, athletes, organizers, and community groups, ensuring representation of women with disabilities
	Step 3: Document impact responsibly • Collect photos, videos, and testimonials reflecting diversity, accessibility, and sustainability • Use consent-based and inclusive storytelling practices

AFTER the event	Step 1: Send accessible digital thank-you messages (within 48 hours) • Use accessible formats and inclusive language • Highlight both social inclusion outcomes and environmental impact
	Step 2: Share a digital impact and accountability report (2–4 weeks after) • Include data on participation, accessibility measures, donor contribution, and sustainability actions • Use clear visuals and accessible formats instead of printed reports
	Step 3: Strengthen long-term, value-based partnerships • Invite donors to feedback sessions with organizers and participants, including women with disabilities • Co-design future events with higher inclusion and sustainability ambitions to ensure continuous improvement and donor retention • Add the event to the ReWSE Digital Map

Resources

You can find relevant experts and organizations through the [ReWSE Digital Map](#), which collects contacts, networks, and resources across Europe. You can also look at the resources proposed by the International Working Group on Women in Sport (IWG) and the initiatives they mapped globally on their [Insight Hub](#).

Potential experts to include:

- National women's sport organizations
- Local disability inclusion NGOs
- Sport business and marketing consultants
- Chambers of commerce and business networks
- Erasmus+ youth and sport contact points
- Municipal sport departments

Best Practice Examples

Women International Sports Days In Nice (WISDIN) – Caram'elles Nice

<https://wisdin.wixsite.com/caramelles/fr> (in French)

By prioritizing participation over performance, the WISDIN Tournament in Nice, France, creates a welcoming space for all women*, including underrepresented and LGBTQIA+ communities, which attracts donors and partners aligned with values of gender equality, social inclusion, and community empowerment. Partnerships are built with local businesses, municipalities, and community organizations, often in-kind, reducing financial and environmental costs while fostering long-term collaboration. Visibility focuses on authentic impact stories rather than branding, and resources are shared or reused to minimize waste. This approach demonstrates that clear values, community-rooted partnerships, and sustainability-conscious practices can effectively secure committed donors while promoting inclusive, grassroots women*'s sport.

Donasport FLINTA Multisport Tournament – Panteres Grogues

<https://donasport.panteresgrogues.com/> (in Spanish)

The Donasport FLINTA Multisport Tournament in Spain, organized by Panteres Grogues, is a leading example of effective donor and partnership engagement in inclusive women*'s sports. The event combines a wide range of sports and cultural activities, creating a space for women* and FLINTA* participants (including lesbian, intersex, non-binary, trans, and agender people) to engage in sport in a non-competitive, supportive environment.

Donasport has successfully activated local sponsors, queer-friendly businesses, and institutional supporters, fostering long-term, community-rooted partnerships that sustain the event year after year. By emphasizing participation, visibility, and social impact rather than competition, it has demonstrated how grassroots initiatives can secure loyal donors and partners who value inclusion, diversity, and feminist principles in sport. The tournament also prioritizes accessible and eco-conscious practices, such as shared venues and sustainable resource use, enhancing its attractiveness to socially responsible sponsors.

DISCOVER FOOTBALL Festival – Discover Football

<https://www.discoverfootball.de>

The DISCOVER FOOTBALL Festival in Germany is a strong example of strategic donor and partnership engagement. Funded by the German Foreign Office, the Ministry of Interior, and the German Football Federation's Cultural Fund, with in-kind support from Volkswagen, the festival combined financial and material resources to deliver both sporting and cultural programming.

Partnerships extended to media outlets such as taz and Deutsche Welle, which amplified visibility and public impact. By aligning funding with the festival's values of inclusion, cultural exchange, and women*'s empowerment in football, the organizers effectively built a diverse ecosystem of support, demonstrating how

multi-sector collaboration—public, private, and media—can sustain inclusive events and attract committed donors.

Final advice / checklist

- Define and clearly identify the public / audiences targeted by your event.
- Start building your network early – partnerships take months, not weeks.
- Prepare a clear, inclusive sponsorship package that aligns with donors' values.
- Use data and storytelling to show why women's and inclusive sports matter.
- Engage donors year-round, not just before the event.
- Diversify your supporters (public, private, NGOs, community groups).
- Make it easy for partners to say "yes" by offering flexible, meaningful collaboration opportunities.
- Organize a debriefing with the co-organizes, associations or actors that participated in the events in order to create a sustainable, long-term network.



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