



## SPORTSMANS EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR DUAL CAREER



Disclaimer: “The information and views set out in this study are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on the European Commission’s behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.”

# **SPORTS PEOPLE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR DUAL CAREER**



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DUAL CAREER PROGRAMS FOR CLUBS AND CYCLING STRUCTURES**

**PROJECT REFERENCE NUMBER: 613520-EPP-1-2019-1-BG-SPO- SCP**

## Table of contents

<b>Dual Career in Europe</b> .....	5
Dual Career general intro .....	5
Dual Career challenges.....	6
Dual Career policy areas .....	7
<b>SET4DC project</b> .....	8
Organizations participating in the project:.....	10
SET4DC framework.....	11
SET4DC research .....	11
SET4DC training.....	11
SET4DC online platform .....	12
<b>SET4DC guidelines</b> .....	13
Guidelines for cyclists / athletes .....	13
Be active towards your dual career .....	13
Guidelines for coaches / sport clubs.....	14
Guidance.....	14
Guidelines for school directors and teachers .....	14
Guidelines for higher education institutes .....	15
Guidelines for business and employment agencies .....	15
References .....	16



# Dual Career in Europe

## Dual Career general intro

During a sport career, many talented athletes have to combine training with education or employment which requires a tailored plan for each athlete, but often they are facing multiple challenges throughout their sport careers (EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, 2012). The successful combination of training, education or employment with sport is known as a “Dual Career”.

→ 120.000 EU young individuals are in a ‘situation’ of Dual Career  
*(trying to perform sports at high level, in combination with education or work)*

For an effective dual career prospect, a supporting system with special arrangements is required, in addition to the high levels of motivation, commitment, resilience and responsibility from the athletes. Such "dual career" arrangements should be beneficial for athletes' sporting careers, allow for education or employment, promote the attainment of a new career after the sporting career, and protect and safeguard the position of athletes.

→ Sport is an important policy domain in most EU member states  
*(elite athletes create added value for Europe)*

Many dual career arrangements are common among EU countries, but sometimes these arrangements lack solid agreements between the sport system and either the educational sector or the labor market.

Guidance could be helpful to develop and improve the conditions needed for sustainable dual career programmes allowing for tailor-made arrangements for talented and elite athletes throughout Europe, either in their role as student-athletes or employee-athletes (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2016).

## Dual Career challenges

Intensive training and participation in competitions (in different levels) are difficult to combine with the challenges and limitations of the education system and professional realization. It is not uncommon for talented and prospective elite athletes to have to choose between sports and education or employment. Furthermore, it also common that athletes abandoning the sport at the age of 30-35, are in a situation of incompatibility with the labor market. The lack of a legal framework and a stable government policy with a strong interrelation between the sport system, the education system and the employing conditions, lead athletes and potential future champions to resign from sport at early ages, but also results in less people participating in sport clubs thus shrinking the athlete's population altogether.



### *General Dual Career challenges for EU Member States*

Several stages reflecting similar but distinct challenges for athletes have been identified:

- ✓ The safeguarding of the development of young athletes, especially of children in early specialization sports, young people in vocational education and training, and disabled athletes
- ✓ The balance between sports training and education and, at a later stage of life, the balance between sports training and employment
- ✓ The end-of-sporting-career phase of athletes including those who leave the system earlier than planned

In addition, further parameters that add to the adversity towards dual careers involve:

- ✓ The athletes regularly train and/or compete abroad which makes the combination with study more complex

- ✓ Enterprises is difficult to adapt to the changing employment needs that athletes have at different stages of their careers
- ✓ Is hard for educational institutes to individualized pathways in education or distance learning for each athlete

## Dual Career policy areas

A policy document “EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes” developed in 2012 from the Sport Unit of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission in order to provide “inspiration for the formulation and adoption of action-oriented national dual career guidelines and to raise awareness at national level about the concept of dual careers” (p. 3) (Wylleman, De Brandt, & Defruyt, 2017).

The notion of a dual career for elite athletes by definition involves engagement in the sports domain and the domains of education, employment, but there is no single model to be recommended on how to include all related policy domains in the dual career framework (EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes, 2012).

### Sport

- ✓ Sport policies should aim at talented and elite athletes participating in a combined career of sport and education or employment.
- ✓ Sport organizations (e.g., federations, clubs) should define their policies and require the development of dual career programmes, for example through developing supportive services (e.g., psychological preparation) and facilities (e.g., access to a gym)
- ✓ High-performance training centers, besides the professional training of athletes, special emphasis should be given to their personal development and all-round education with the help of coaches and teachers (e.g., functioning time schedule)
- ✓ Coaches should manage their performance team and take care that athletes improve their technical, tactical, physical and mental capabilities, but also develop their personal, social and lifestyle capabilities through educational and career pathways.

## Education

- ✓ Educational policies should aim to encourage talented and elite athletes in order to maintain their educational programmes through a personal learning supporting system.
- ✓ School education should grant beneficiary athletes particular terms for athletes
- ✓ Vocational education through vocational education and training institutes should be leading to sport-related qualifications
- ✓ Higher education should make specific arrangements for the athletes, but also provide scientific support

## Employment

- ✓ Employment policies should provide advice and support to athletes in their career planning, and liaise athletes with the job market
- ✓ Transition to the post-sport career programmes should empower athletes during their sporting career in their preparation for the post-sport career, facilitate their adaptation to life after sport, help them to avoid crisis-transition scenarios, and provide future work opportunities.

## **S**ET4DC project

The SET4DC project aims at supporting the professional realization of bikers in the cycling field through the development of an innovative three-dimensional sports management programme for dual career in cycling, which includes the following dimensions:

- ✓ Cycling Clubs Management: Entrepreneurship and leadership skills and attitudes in boost of a dual career
- ✓ Volunteers Managing: Identifying, attracting and managing volunteers to help cyclists
- ✓ Fundraising and Sponsorship: Before, during and after the sports career

Participants in the three-dimensional sports management programme were 80 elite cyclists (from four partner organizations countries) willing to continue their professional sports career as managers, coaches, mentors or support staff in cycling organizations, not only in their country but throughout Europe. Seven organizations from Bulgaria, Ireland, Sweden, Greece, France, Germany and Romania provided a set of inter-connected and inter-related key activities, designed to develop and implement a sustainable virtual learning environment with online learning programs like a distance learning support for dual career of cyclists.



## Organizations participating in the project:



novák CYCLING ACADEMY



UNIVERSITY OF  
THESSALY



- ✓ Bulgaria: SDRUZHENIJE SPORTEN KLUB DRAG (coordinator)
  - <https://dragbicycles.com>
  
- ✓ Ireland: CHAMPIONS FACTORY IRELAND LIMITED
  - <https://championsfactory.bg/>
  
- ✓ Greece: UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY
  - <http://www.pe.uth.gr/>
  
- ✓ Sweden: NORDIC EUROPEAN MOBILITY
  - <http://www.nordiceumobility.eu/>
  
- ✓ France: MARTIGUES SPORT CYCLISME
  - <https://www.martiguessportcyclisme.fr/>
  
- ✓ Germany: SSV GERA 1990 e.V.
  - <https://ssv-gera.de/>
  
- ✓ Romania: CLUBUL SPORTIV INTERSPORT
  - <https://novakgroup.ro/>

## S ET4DC framework

The accomplishment of the main and specific objectives and the expected results from the implementation of the project, organized through six work packages:

- ✓ Project cooperation and management
- ✓ Research
- ✓ Development of a three-dimensional management program
- ✓ Implementation of “3 Stage Dual Career Program”
- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Dissemination and visibility

## S ET4DC research

The research framework has been developed based on desk-research (e.g., internet search) and empirical research (e.g., online surveys).

The research conducted through different target groups, including cyclists, coaches, school directors, business, and employment agencies.

The research phase of the project aims to identify needs in 4 directions:

- ✓ Training needs in the structures of cycling organizations and the challenges they face to develop elite cyclists and support post-sports career development
- ✓ Needs related to fundraising and sponsorship to support cyclists’ dual careers
- ✓ Needs related to the recruitment and contribution of volunteers to support cyclists’ dual careers

## S ET4DC training

Three-Dimensional Sports Management Programme for Dual Career Cyclists

This programme aimed to facilitate an optimal combination of high-quality trainings and education to young cyclists, using face-to-face workshops. The key objective was to facilitate a successful preparation for combining the sporting career of young cyclists by bringing them the right supportive training and helping them learn to manage and balance their time and personal investment between sports training and current academic study, in preparation for a later transition to employment, or to higher education.

Three modules / stages:



## Education

- ✓ This module focuses mainly on self-awareness, goal setting, and planning
- ✓ Personal Development Plan
- ✓ Habit Formation Theory
- ✓ Habit Formation Action Plan

## Life Skills

This module focuses on the soft skills that all human beings require to be successful in their interpersonal relationships

- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Discovering Personal Values and Rules
- ✓ Team Work

## Employment

This module focuses on recognition cyclist's career interests and how they can create plans, preparing for job interviews and acquire knowledge for business models

- ✓ Career Orientation
- ✓ Career Skills
- ✓ Business Model Canvas

## **S**ET4DC online platform

An innovative digital platform with open educational resources was developed, to provide a cross-border virtual portal with special applications for interactive learning techniques with the opportunity to pick educational programs:

- ✓ Specially selected positive practices and experience
- ✓ Guidelines for entrepreneurship and leadership
- ✓ Useful contacts and links, weight-grade tests, and answers to challenging issues

It involves a digital way of learning, self-identification and guidance for alternative career opportunities for present, future and retired elite cyclists.

Topics on macro-level sport management, mobilizing local and state authorities and creating a better, coordinated and consistent sport policy in Europe are also addressed.

## SET4DC guidelines

One of the key outputs of SET4DC was the preparation of specific guidelines that could contribute to the facilitation of cyclists/athletes' dual careers. Following the desk and the empirical research identifying the needs of the cyclists/athletes, but also the development, the implementation, and the evaluation of the Three-Dimensional Sports Management Programme, a collection of guidelines addressed to different individuals and agents involved in cyclist cyclists/athletes's dual career was developed. Accordingly, in what follows guidelines for cyclists, club managers and coaches, parents, school directors and teachers, and business, are provided.

## Guidelines for cyclists / athletes

### Ask for help and support

- ✓ Openly communicate challenges of dual career to both sport club and school/work and attempt cooperation between them in order to resolve them
- ✓ Request counseling/training services regarding time management and social skills
- ✓ Request professional support for the psychological preparation for sport and developing psychological skills

### Be active towards your dual career

- ✓ Keep up to date with dual-career initiatives in your country
- ✓ Think about your career prospects and develop a career plan
- ✓ Make yourselves attractive to sponsors; maintain an active social profile, avoid conflict, and promote sport values
- ✓ Take care of yourselves and keep a good balance; diet, rest, sleep, recreation, friends, family

## G uidelines for coaches / sport clubs

### Guidance

- ✓ Raise awareness to your cyclists/athletes and peers regarding dual career opportunities and resources
- ✓ Encourage pupils-cyclists/athletes to seek counseling to develop time management, social skills, and psychological needs
- ✓ Inform the cyclists/athletes regarding the characteristics and actions that would attract business sponsorships/employment

### External support

- ✓ Cooperate with schools and communicate with teachers to assist pupils-cyclists/athletes more effectively
- ✓ Cooperate as a club with a person that can provide dual career support services

## G uidelines for school directors and teachers

### Raise awareness

- ✓ Encourage sport participation and emphasize its benefits
- ✓ Inform the teachers regarding the high demands of pupil-cyclists/athletes' dual role
- ✓ Participate and encourage colleagues to participate in educational programs about dual-careers
- ✓ Recognize and promote the pupil-cyclists/athletes sporting achievements in public events organized by school
- ✓ Acknowledge publicly the academic achievements of dual career cyclists
- ✓ Promote volunteerism for sport events among pupils and staff

### Be considerate

- ✓ Provide extra time for pupil-cyclists/athletes to prepare their homework
- ✓ Spread tests and exams over the complete school year in order to avoid accumulation of tests/exams at the end of the school year or at the end of the semester
- ✓ Develop distance learning methods and adopt individual testing methods, such as oral examination
- ✓ Provide flexibility to cyclists in periods of competition

### Provide support

- ✓ Provide supportive tutoring/mentoring for pupil-cyclists/athletes
- ✓ Cooperate with sport clubs to become aware of the stressful periods
- ✓ Communicate with parents to stay informed about pupil-cyclists/athletes' states
- ✓ Provide vocational guidance and arrange visits from professional career consultants

## **G**uidelines for higher education institutes

### **Tangible support**

- ✓ Provide scholarships to elite cyclists/athletes
- ✓ Establish awards for academic achievements of elite cyclists/athletes
- ✓ Provide to student-cyclists/athletes accommodation close to sport/training facilities
- ✓ Offer training hours in the sport facilities of the university
- ✓ Equip the University's sport facilities with contemporary training equipment

### **Study and career support**

- ✓ Provide scientific support for student-cyclists/athletes to address sport and study needs
- ✓ Plan seminars, workshops and meetings on dual career within the educational programme for all the academic staff
- ✓ Establish and reward peer-to-peer support programmes
- ✓ Establish a sport career / dual career office in your institute

### **Academic benefits (without compromising the quality standards)**

- ✓ Offer flexible study path including individual study plans
- ✓ Offer increased absence limits
- ✓ Provide alternative schedules for exams
- ✓ Allow extra suspension of studies for a limited period

## **G**uidelines for business and employment agencies

- ✓ Invest on sponsoring cyclists/athletes – they are a moving advertisement
- ✓ Be aware of the unique competencies that cyclists/athletes bring to an employer
- ✓ Keep up to date with dual-career initiatives in your country
- ✓ Advertise professional development courses for cyclists/athletes
- ✓ Develop vocational training courses and seminars for cyclists/athletes



## References

*EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes*. Recommended policy actions in support of dual careers in high-performance sport (2012). Brussels: Sport Unit of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, (2016). *Study on the minimum quality requirements for dual career services: final report*, Publications Office.

Wylleman, P., De Brandt, K., & Defruyt, S. (2017). *GEES Handbook for Dual Career Support Providers*. Gold in Education and Elite Sport consortium.