



# Green Transition and Sport At All Levels - Research Paper -

# SHARE

initiative



Sport

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## Introduction

There are a series of considerations that are of significance in any exploration of the role that sport and physical activity (SPA) can play in helping to deliver **the transition towards a greener and more sustainable economy**. The main aim of this initiative is to provide **some orientation for sport organisations** on how to contribute effectively to hastening the transition to a more sustainable economy and society. In order to do this effectively, it is necessary to set out:

- what is meant by transition,
- how sports organisations at all levels, including grassroots sport, can participate,
- the advantages both for sport and physical activity and for communities in having sport organisations play an active part in transition,
- how the interventions can be organised and
- how it is possible to seek funding especially from European sources to support them.

It should be remembered that **this paper is not intended in itself to act as guidance** for sport organisations wishing to be involved in transition processes. Rather it attempts to establish a sound basis for developing this guidance, by setting out the main considerations that lie behind the promotion of such interventions and providing an explanation of some of the important issues that will be faced by sport organisations and public authorities that become involved in them. The discussion will therefore begin with some **basic definitions**, then going on to explain **the main characteristics of the transition approach**, **the potential contributions** of sport and physical activity and **the advantages of participation** for sport organisations, before providing an overview of the scope for using this approach in **developing funding proposals** under various EU programmes and initiatives.

# Chapter 1: The Meaning of ‘Green Transition’

In its broadest sense, **‘Green Transition’** is the process of moving the economy, and society more generally, from a situation where it is primarily reliant on the exploitation of finite natural resources, and especially fossil fuels, to one that is based on sustainable production and consumption, is less environmentally destructive and that, in particular, helps us to escape from the climate emergency. It refers, therefore, to **the process of getting from where we are with the environment, to where we want to be.**

In a narrower sense, however, ‘transition’, ‘transition analysis’ and ‘transition management’ have come to refer to **a particular understanding of how this process of change needs to be brought about.** The first task of this paper, then, is to explain briefly through references to the literature on the subject, what are the main elements in the understanding of ‘transition’ in this sense, as they have emerged in recent years.

In the academic literature, discussion of **transition was initially concerned with a more general meaning - the transition from the predominance of one technology to another** in modern economies and societies (Rip & Kemp, 1998; Rotmans et al., 2001; Geels, 2005). As this literature developed, it was frequently concerned with the complexities of such processes and the multi-level interactions of technical and social factors (Geels & Schot, 2007). It is interesting to note that as increasingly, these ideas were applied to the issue of **sustainability transition** – the technological and social changes necessary to create more sustainable production and consumption – a number of the ways that transition in this basic sense was conceived have been carried over to the complex processes that will lead to a green transition. Reviews of the literature on this subject (Markard et al. 2012; Sengers et al., 2016; Barry et al. 2016) point to a growth in articles on sustainability transition over the past 10 to 15 years. They also provide clear characterisations of the central features of the analysis as it has developed. Distinctions can be made within the literature between different approaches that emphasise differing aspects, but all of the analyses in this tradition tend to refer to the **complex interaction of technology and social and political factors** and their **operation at multiple levels** simultaneously.

Consequently, Markard et al. (2012) define ‘sustainability transition’ as:

‘a fundamental transformation towards more sustainable modes of production and consumption’

but they go on to say that this involves the ‘institutional, organizational, technical, social, and political aspects of far-reaching changes in existing socio-technical systems’

More explicitly, they acknowledge that it has long been recognised that ‘established technologies are highly intertwined with user practices and life styles, complementary technologies, business models, value chains, organizational structures, regulations, institutional structures, and political structures’ (e.g., Rip and Kemp, 1998) and that an important consequence of this is that established socio-technical systems undergo incremental rather than radical changes (Dosi, 1982; Frantzeskaki & Loorbach, 2010; Markard & Truffer, 2006), and that major transitions typically unfold over considerable time-spans (50 years and more). A dramatic conclusion from this is that ‘such **incremental changes will not suffice to cope with the prevailing sustainability challenges**’. These need urgent attention.

One of the responses to the urgency of the need for climate and broader environmental action is a school of transition analysis referred to as **‘transition management’**. This is one of the four approaches that are identified by Markard et al. as central to the theoretical framing of sustainability transitions, along with approaches focusing on the functioning of the socio-

technical regime, technology niches and technological innovation systems. It should be said that these different approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The distinctions are more a matter of relative emphasis within the literature.

‘Transition management’ has had particular prominence in the Netherlands and is associated, for instance, with [DRIFT](#), a leading research institute in sustainability transition at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. DRIFT has issued [guidance](#) on developing a transition management approach in an urban context.

Transition management has been said (Loorbach 2009) to provide **an alternative model of governance** to top-down steering by centralised government on the one hand and the liberal free market approach (leaving social change to market forces), on the other. It does so by mobilising bottom-up **community and local action** to address sustainability challenges including through informal network processes, which are seen to be especially innovative and adaptive. In this way, transition management makes links with **social innovation** and **social enterprise** processes that promote community action to address issues experienced at a local level.

At the same time transition management stresses the complexity of modern social and political interactions with technological developments and advocates the use of **a systems analysis methodology** (Loorbach 2010; Maas et al. 2012) in the development of systematic policy approaches, that co-ordinate multiple actors and stakeholders in a way that overcomes policy silos. Importantly, it has also developed an approach of encouraging **an active and practice-oriented research programme**, which stresses a reflexive process of learning and experimenting, supported by evaluation and monitoring and leading to a practical and evolutionary governance process (Nill & Kemp, 2009; Voß et al., 2009; Loorbach and Rotmans, 2010). Thus transition management has been described as ‘... a reflexive and flexible governance approach to socio-technical transitions [which] stresses qualities such as reflection, social learning, wide inclusion of stakeholders and actors, revisability, provisionality and flexibility to change course’ (Barry et al. 2016).

As a result of this approach, transition management has generated multiple **initiatives at the local or regional level**. Some of these are represented in the [Transition Network](#), which is a world-wide network of transition hubs and initiatives, linking what is happening on the ground, exchanging information and offering resources, such as the ‘[Essential Guide to Doing Transition](#)’. This is available in many languages. A number of initiatives by communities participating in this network label themselves as ‘Transition Towns’. It will be seen that the nature and extent of the activities undertaken by transition communities varies considerably, but the following provide interesting examples of what is possible: [Transition Town Lewes](#) in the UK, [Ixelles en transition](#) in Belgium, [Villages d’Yvelines en transition](#) in France and [Transition Bamberg](#) in Germany.

Other related initiatives are co-ordinated by [ECOLISE](#), the European network for community-led initiatives on climate change and sustainability and initiatives by local governments are brought together in a global network: [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#).

At a European level, the [European Climate Pact](#), encourages individuals, communities and organisations to connect and collectively develop and implement climate solutions and build a greener Europe from the bottom up.

It can be seen from these examples that community transition can take various different forms. Indeed one of the strengths of the approach is precisely that it relies on the inspiration of people on the ground in the light of the local situation and the requirements for bringing about a green transition in specific towns and localities. The approach therefore has great flexibility. However, there are some **common features of transition initiatives** of this type, which include actions to:

- Develop community awareness of environmental and social issues
- Promote local sustainable food production, in a range of ways from encouraging the use of allotments, where people can grow their own food, to establishing local farmers' markets for sustainably-farmed produce
- Organise schemes to promote better energy efficiency through better insulation and heat pumps
- Establish and develop community clean energy generation
- Promote greener transport from the take-up of electric cars to the encouragement of walking and cycling
- Encourage improved recycling and waste management
- Protect natural environments and encourage biodiversity
- Promote social entrepreneurship and social innovation

In developing their activities community transition groups have to work with their local authorities and often with local firms and business interests, but this interaction can also include encouraging the authorities and businesses to develop more sustainable practices in their own activities.

**Getting such initiatives off the ground** requires the dedication of individuals, in a sufficient number to form a critical mass, who then form the centre of what hopefully becomes a growing local organisation, with effective decision making processes and a developing programme of activities. The '[Essential Guide to Doing Transition](#)', referred to above, provides ideas and inspiration on how transition groups can organise themselves, while a Guidance Manual developed by five cities from across Europe in the MUSIC project, '[Transition Management in the Urban Context](#)' helps local authorities apply a transition management approach to organising themselves in a way that enables them to promote effectively a transition movement in their localities.

The main problem from the perspective of sport with almost all the transition approaches that have been referred to, is that, although they claim to encompass multiple aspects of modern society, they generally make very **little reference to the role that sport can play** in encouraging and delivering sustainability transition.

However, before going on to look at sport's potential contribution to sustainability transition and how this relates to the approaches to transition that have been summarised, it will be useful to look at one more aspect of transition analysis that has become increasingly significant in recent years, namely '**Just Transition**' which takes into account the social consequences of responses to sustainability issues and tries to encourage a balanced and equitable approach to the changes that are delivered.

The concept of 'Just Transition' was initially promoted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO 2015), which developed key principles, notably fairness, justice and equality, that have been recognised internationally and have influenced how public authorities have approached the management of these transitions. Note that the ILO argues too that a just transition can be 'a strong driver of job creation, job upgrading, social justice and poverty eradication' (ILO, 2013). The initial vision of just transition has been taken up and developed by various other international bodies and national governments. **A useful definition** of it is that of the International Institute for Sustainable Development:

A just energy transition is a negotiated vision and process centred on dialogue, supported by a set of guiding principles, to shift practices in energy production and consumption. It aims to

minimize negative impacts on workers and communities with stakes in high-carbon sectors that will wind down, and to maximize positive opportunities for new decent jobs in the low-carbon growth sectors of the future. It strives to ensure that the costs and benefits of the transition are equitably shared (IISD, 2018)

In Europe, the OECD has argued that a balanced and equitable transition has to be central to the implementation of transition and that it will be necessary to support regions, industries and households that stand to lose out, as well as to create an active social dialogue between government, employers and workers (OECD, 2019). The EU and national governments have paid considerable attention to elaborating how its principles can be implemented (e.g. Moore 2020) and, of course, these principles lay behind the [Just Transition Mechanism](#) that forms part of the [NextGenerationEU](#) Initiative.

It can be seen therefore that the concept of ‘sustainability transition’ is rich and multi-faceted and can provide **the basis for a flexible but dynamic approach to tackling climate change** and other environmental challenges. The major question for us, though, is how these approaches can help structure a contribution from SPA to addressing the critical challenges facing the EU and its Member States.

## Chapter 2: Sport's Contribution to Transition

After considering the potential meanings of the term transition, this next section will address **the central question for this research paper**: now that we know what is meant by transition, how can sport and physical activity and its organisations contribute to it and, in particular, how can there be a contribution to bottom-up, community-based actions of the type envisaged by the Transitions Management school of thought?

There are two aspects of this potential contribution. The first concerns **how sport and physical activity at all levels can make its own facilities and activities sustainable**. How can we green sport? It will be seen that there has already been a lot of work on this issue, though further work will always be needed on translating principles into action. The second aspect is **where this paper makes a more original contribution**. It looks at **where sport and sport organisations can bring new and powerful elements to broader initiatives** to bring about transition. This is more about integrating the efforts of the sport community into initiatives that go beyond sport's own contribution, usually by making use of the strengths of sport organisations for these broader purposes or strengthening developments where sport and its organisations can make special contributions. **Both aspects are needed**. There is further comment on them, therefore, each in turn.

### *The Greening of Sport's Own Facilities and Activities*

There are wide-ranging environmental considerations in the construction and operation of many of the facilities and infrastructures used by sport and physical activity, from large stadiums to local gyms and from the materials and energy used in athletics or cycling tracks to the impacts of skiing and mountain biking on fragile environments. The staging of sport events also raises numerous issues, not least in relation to their overall carbon footprint.

In response to these issues, the responsible bodies for sport and physical activity at all levels have developed programmes to address these issues and provided guidance on how to tackle them at various levels. The United Nations has created a **global framework** in its [Sustainable Development Goals](#), which address climate change, environmental degradation and sustainable cities and communities, but also poverty, inequality and peace and justice, with a view to promoting sustainable development for all. Many initiatives make reference to these Sustainable Development Goals and often assess their own progress in relation to them. More specifically in relation to sport, the Global Climate Action of the United Nations has issued a '[Sports for Climate Action Framework](#)', which provides sports organisations with a forum which will allow those participating to pursue climate action in a consistent and mutually supportive fashion. Participants commit to adhering to a set of five principles and to incorporating them into strategies, policies and procedures, and mainstreaming them within the sports community. The principles relate to making systematic efforts to promote greater environmental responsibility, reducing overall climate impact, developing education for climate action, promoting sustainable and responsible consumption and advocating climate action through clear communication.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has supported this framework, but it has also developed its own strategies. In fact in 1999, responding to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the IOC adopted [Agenda 21](#) as a global action plan, encouraging members of the Movement to play an active part in sustainable development. It sets out the basic concepts and a methodology for environmental action, with advice specifically in relation



to protection of conservation areas and countryside, actions in relation to sports facilities and sport equipment, transport, energy, accommodation and catering, water management, management of hazardous products, waste and pollution and the quality of the biosphere and the maintenance of biodiversity. It also had provisions relating to strengthening the role of women, promoting young people and the recognition and promotion of indigenous populations.

In 2015, a specific Sustainability Strategy was developed with 18 sustainability objectives set for achievement by 2020. The Strategy covered the IOC's three spheres of responsibility: the IOC as an organisation, the IOC as owner of the Olympic Games and the IOC as leader of the Olympic Movement. There are five focus areas: infrastructure and natural sites, sourcing and resource management, mobility, workforce; and climate. An [IOC Sustainability Report](#) in 2020 detailed progress and there will be a new strategy for 2021-2024 that will go even further.

FIFA have produced a [Sustainability Strategy](#) in relation to the World Cup in 2022, so as to maximise the sustainability of the preparation and staging of the cup matches and the post-tournament activities. This strategy is heavily influenced by the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

At a European level, the policy framework on sustainability has achieved new impetus with the [European Green Deal](#), launched in a Communication from the Commission<sup>1</sup> in December 2019. The Roadmap that accompanied the Communication listed 10 headings under which action is to be taken:

1. An enhanced climate ambition on achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions
2. Providing clean, affordable and secure energy
3. An industrial strategy for a clean and circular economy
4. Promoting sustainable and smart mobility
5. Greening the Common Agricultural Policy - the 'Farm to Fork' Strategy
6. Preserving and protecting biodiversity
7. Moving towards a zero-pollution ambition for a toxic free environment
8. Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies (including a Just Transition Fund, and a Sustainable Europe Investment Plan)
9. The EU acting as a global leader
10. Working together – a European Climate Pact

The last heading relates to the involvement of individuals, communities and organisations in achieving sustainability, through the European Climate Pact, as already mentioned. Clearly the capacity of individuals and groups on the ground to address the issues referred to under the other headings will vary, but it will be useful to bear them in mind, when it comes to discussing practical actions that can be taken by transition groups.

As part of the effort to mainstream sustainability in all EU policies, the EU's [Work Plan for Sport](#)<sup>2</sup> for 2021 - 2024 identified Green Sport as a key topic, with a possible Council Resolution on a Green pact for sport being planned for the first half of 2022. It is said that this could possibly be accompanied by a multi-stakeholder declaration. This is a development, as we have seen, that is evident in other contexts and UEFA, for instance, in encouraging its members to pursue

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'The European Green Deal' COM(2019) 640 final of 11.12.2019

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the European Union Work Plan for Sport (1 January 2021-30 June 2024); Official Journal of the European Union 2020 C 419/1; 4.12.20

environmental sustainability in and around their football activities, was one of 17 signatories of the [UN Sports for Climate Action Framework](#).

At a more detailed level in Europe there have been a number of **national initiatives** that have specified ways that the principles set out in international commitments can be implemented on the ground. In France in 2017 and 2018, the Ministry of Sport and WWF France developed two documents each with 15 commitments to environmentally responsible practices and also reflecting UN Sustainable Development Goals. One was addressed to **organisers of sporting events**.<sup>3</sup> The other was addressed to the **managers of large-scale sports facilities and venues**.<sup>4</sup> Over 60 organisers of major sporting events in France have now signed the first set of commitments and 20 managers of large-scale sports facilities and venues.

The environmentally responsible commitments from event organisers were to:

- a minimum of 50% sustainable food (complying with WWF principles for sustainable food)
- a minimum of 80% of journeys made using active mobility, public transport or car sharing
- 80% of purchases made using Corporate Social Responsibility selection criteria
- a 25% reduction in waste and 60% of waste reused, recycled or recovered
- 100% respect for natural sites
- 100% of energy and water consumption controlled and optimised
- (At least) 1 “environmentally responsible” innovation tested at events
- 1 or more sportspersons nominated ambassadors for environmental responsibility for the event or for the sport concerned
- 100% accessibility for the disabled to sites open to the public

The commitments from managers of sports facilities and venues were similar, though they also included a commitment to 25% renewable or reused energy and wider commitments to schemes promoting social involvement and equality and combating discrimination and a commitment to identify and encourage dialogue with regional stakeholders.

As well as having a direct impact these initiatives were also expected to affect the attitudes and practice of spectators and participants in events and to spread the environmental message more widely.

To assist and encourage other sport organisations, the French Government has also published a [Compendium of Experiences](#), which provides **examples of good practice from across France**, illustrating aspects of the 15 environmentally responsible commitments, with material submitted by a wide range of sport and physical activity organisations. Many of these organisations have found that the 15 commitments provide an excellent framework for developing their own well-structured programmes of operational action.

**A similarly useful and practical document** has been developed by the Portuguese authorities in a [Manual of Good Environmental Practices in Sport](#). This document adopts a systematic approach to reviewing the issues for the sport sector raised by environmental challenges and the steps that can be taken by sport organisations to address them. It begins by reviewing the nature of the environmental problems that humankind faces and goes on to consider the role of sport and physical activity in raising awareness of sustainability issues and, in the case of sport events, in acting as a showcase for action to address environmental problems. Sport and the environment are said to be a winning combination.

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<sup>3</sup> EN version: [‘Environmentally responsible commitments from event organisers’](#)

<sup>4</sup> EN version: [‘Environmentally responsible commitments from the managers of large-scale sports facilities and venues’](#)

Drawing on the Olympic Movement's [Agenda 21 - Sport for Sustainable Development](#), ten key areas are identified in which to promote sustainable development in the organisation of an event or the development of sports infrastructure. Overall, a general approach begins with an integrated environmental impact assessment that leads to the identification of environmental issues that have to be managed, but also economic and social issues, with the ultimate goal of promoting citizenship and a healthy life, where sport and environment come together. At the same time it is appreciated that environmental impacts differ across different kinds of sport.

Indicators are proposed in the Manual to support the management of both the environmental aspects of a sustainable strategy and also the economic and social components.

The Manual therefore offers a thorough approach to the management of sustainability by sport organisations at many levels, with a great deal of practical detail on how sports organisations can green their operations.

## Sport's Wider Contribution to Transition Management

Over and beyond sport ensuring that its own activities and facilities are sustainable, sport organisations at all levels, including the grassroots, can make a **much more integrated contribution to transition** to a sustainable economy and society, by making use of their strengths, their roots in local communities and their assets and know-how. And in doing so, these sport organisations can more effectively promote sport and physical activity.

Many sport organisations exist at a local community level and enjoy a high profile in their own communities. Frequently they will have extensive networks of members and volunteers within these local communities and often have a broad social base, bringing people from all sorts of backgrounds together to enjoy sport and/or physical activity. Furthermore, even the sport organisations that operate at a national or international level still often retain strong local connections with the communities that in many cases gave rise to them originally or in which they have their main stadiums, training facilities etc.

This **strong community presence** puts sports organisations in an excellent position to be able to work with others in local communities in undertaking the sort of activities that are typically pursued by transition towns or groups, as outlined above. Sport organisations can join others in promoting greater energy efficiency, the use of electric vehicles and local food production or they can help safeguard bio-diversity. They will be especially effective in advocating developments related to SPA, such as the enhancing of green infrastructure especially in urban areas that facilitates both active lifestyles and healthier environments or sustainable mobility schemes, which encourage the greater use of cycling and walking, but they should by no means be restricted to activities with such links.

It would be useful to explore what are the strengths of SPA in this context. The following is a summary set of **particular contributions that local sport organisations could make**:

- SPA can help transition initiatives have a stronger, more positive image as developments promoting wellbeing and a healthy and modern lifestyle as opposed to actions to avert frightening climatic and environmental change. SPA can also help build the motivation of members of transition groups, as part of this.
- Delivering transition requires a large change in people's habits and SPA can help promote them, motivating changes in consumption patterns, including in the types of food that are consumed, changes in work and travelling practices and in day-to-day living arrangements,

and possibly changes in holiday destinations and activities. Importantly, SPA can also help people enjoy making these changes.

- SPA organisations can help bring a strong health element to the transition agenda, including the promotion of a transition from a responsive healthcare system to a more active preventative approach, known as 'care for health'. This will help build resilience in our communities.
- There are well-organised SPA associations and organisations embedded in communities across Europe's regions, with a diverse local membership, usually with a tradition of voluntary activity, and often with extensive links into the local community. These organisations are capable of making a major contribution to mobilising a wide section of the local community in support of the transition process.
- SPA is very good at engaging with a wide section of society, beyond the usual suspects. SPA organisations can help transition groups bring in supporters from a broad social base.
- The experience of voluntarism in many sport organisations can be a useful contribution to the organisation of community transition groups that are usually formed on a voluntary basis.
- Sport and physical activity promote the development of a wide range of physical and mental skills from greater physical dexterity to self-motivation, discipline, persistence, ambition and social interaction, open attitudes, creativity and enterprise. These skills can make a strong contribution to the development of transition groups.
- SPA organisations can have an immediate impact by addressing mobility or transport issues and promoting walking and cycling by the members of their own associations and the transition group.
- They can also help to bring into the transition process technology and processes developed by sport innovators and sport technology and science, for instance, in extending the application of activity monitoring equipment and developing sport performance apps to generate environmental information
- SPA organisations often have considerable facilities at their disposal, ranging from indoor gyms and exercise and swimming halls to outdoor playing fields and open terrain. These facilities often have provision for catering and refreshment. With appropriate safeguards, these could be put at the disposal of transition groups, offering them the use of facilities for a range of activities, from a location for meetings of the transition group and facilities for events engaging the public to possible locations for developments such as community energy generation or living labs or other more elaborate activities.
- At another level, the sport movement supports and advocates the development of green infrastructure especially in urban areas, to provide the space and facilities necessary for citizens to be able to have more active lifestyles, but this also facilitates the creation of healthier environments.
- SPA can help transition processes make a positive economic impact as well as generating social and environmental improvements, by offering business and employment opportunities in areas from fitness coaching, activity tourism and equipment (especially bicycle) hire and repair right through to employment in living labs and medical and sport research and in marketing and events organisation.

- SPA can contribute to bringing together the green and digital transitions through the use of apps for health monitoring in outdoor activities, such as walking, running or skiing, but also environment monitoring apps, beginning with those for plant and bird recognition to help increase awareness and progressing to more sophisticated data collection apps, such as those that assess air quality. SPA could even help transition groups to become Living Labs for new apps and digital systems, supporting the development of local businesses.

These contributions will be added to those being made by other groups in the local community, including NGOs addressing conservation and environmental and/or social issues and local representatives of national and international NGOs. As the sport associations get to know these other groups better, it would be expected that, as with other social innovation processes, the interaction of sport organisations and the other groups in the formation of strategies and plans for the local transition community, would give rise to new ideas and insights about how the transition group collectively can contribute to the process of moving to a green economy and society.

It has to be recognised in this that **the way that sport associations and clubs are organised at a local level varies considerably across Europe**. Many are often voluntary organisations dependent on the willingness of volunteers to devote time and effort to running the organisation. There are varying degrees of support from national organisations and major sports clubs and from the public authorities and in some cases the association is directly administered by the local authority. Some associations, either because of a membership fee or because they have financial support from the public authorities, are in a position to employ staff and, of course, some organisations operate on a commercial basis. The extent to which community sport organisations are able to engage in activities supporting transition therefore varies and different procedures have to be followed, depending on the status and internal organisation of each association or club. However, most organisations, including commercial organisations, ought to be able to participate to some extent, even if it is on the basis of voluntary contributions on the part of those who are involved in a particular association, club or organisation.

In persuading local sports associations and clubs to become engaged in transition initiatives, **it is important to emphasise the advantages** to them as organisations, as well as the direct ones of being able to make clear contributions to addressing climate and broader environmental challenges. The following are important considerations in this context:

- By promoting the idea of SPA as an intrinsic element in transition to a healthier society and environment, the participation of sport organisations in transition groups can more effectively promote participation in sport and physical activity by individuals in the community.
- By working with other community organisations, sport organisations can raise their own profile in their local community and perhaps learn lessons that will enable them to improve their own organisation and promotion.
- By extending their social contacts in the community, sport organisations will have greater scope for attracting new participants in their main activities and, where relevant, additional volunteers to help organise them.
- Participation in transition work can add to the motivation and coherence of their own members, by broadening the nature of the achievements made by particular sport associations or clubs.

- Participation in transition projects may provide access to additional sources of funding for sport organisations.

**There is huge potential therefore for contributions by community sport organisations to the processes of transition to a green economy, both by greening their own activities and by engaging in a broader community effort.** Awareness of this potential needs to be promoted, especially in relation to how local sport organisations can make their own activities more sustainable and in how they can participate in broader community transition initiatives. There is an important role for European and national authorities and sport organisations in this promotion process through their contact with sport organisations on the ground. However, there is also an important task of alerting transition groups and their networks to the nature of sport's potential contributions and persuading them to include sports organisations in local initiatives.

A start has been made on engaging with transition networks, but much more needs to be done. This and the promotion work by European and national authorities responsible for sport and by European and national sport organisations largely falls outside of the scope of this research paper. However, there does remain an important additional consideration, which will be the subject of the next chapter, namely the extent to which EU funding mechanisms can encourage the participation of local sport organisations in community transition initiatives and projects.

## Chapter 3: EU funding for Transition Initiatives

This chapter will attempt to set out some of **the main considerations that apply in the new programming period** from 2021 to 2027. The provisions adopted for the new period will determine the extent to which various forms of EU funding may be able to support the types of initiative that have been considered in this research paper

The first thing to say is that **all sport organisations should review their activities and facilities and adopt strategies to reduce their environmental impact**. There are also **compelling reasons for sport organisations to look beyond their own internal situation and become engaged in community transition processes** irrespective of whether there is funding available to support them. A number of the advantages outlined above would apply and the community profile of the organisations concerned would be heightened. However, clearly, **if it is possible to secure funding, the engagement of sport organisations with these processes will be much deeper**, more systematic and will have greater eventual impact.

The examination of the potential for EU funding in this area begins with a short review of some transition and related projects that have been supported in the past. This will be followed by an outline of the approach that has to be adopted in order to access EU funds and a characterisation of the type of project that may seek support, before finally moving to a consideration of the main sources of funding that may be relevant.

### Applications of Transition Approaches in EU Projects

There have already been a number of **projects, supported by the EU**, that have made use of a transitions methodology. Many of these focus on the development of **initiatives at a local or regional level**. Among these one of the more immediately interesting is the [MUSIC](#) (Mitigation in Urban areas: Solutions for Innovative Cities) project that used transition management to stimulate climate mitigation through reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy use in urban areas in five North-Western European cities (Maas et al. 2012). In order to develop this approach it was necessary to promote innovative thinking about urban planning in the participating municipalities and to bring about the adoption of an approach based on transition management methodology. This was achieved in a large measure and a Guidance Manual entitled '[Transition Management in the Urban Context](#)' developed for other local authorities. The project was supported by Interreg IVB North West Europe over the period 2007-2013.

The [ARTS](#) (Accelerating and Rescaling Transitions to Sustainability) project examined transition initiatives in five European city-regions. It was funded by the FP7 programme. More recently, the [TRANSrisk](#) (Transitions Pathways and Risk Analysis for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies) was funded by the EU Horizon 2020 programme and started in September 2015. It aimed to assess low emission transition pathways that are technically and economically feasible and acceptable from a social and environmental viewpoint.

A further Horizon 2020 project that ends in 2021 is [SMARTEES](#) (Social Innovation Modelling Approaches to Realizing Transition to Energy Efficiency and Sustainability). This project promotes energy transition, but does this by examining robust policy pathways that foster citizen inclusion and take local peculiarities into account. It has studied innovation processes in five types of energy- and mobility-related local social innovations in ten cities and islands across Europe and has developed a Policy Sandbox Tool to support local governments in moving towards milestones in their local energy and mobility transition. The aim was to help planners working with social innovation to test out different scenarios, and determine the best course of action.

All these projects illustrate how it is often necessary to take transition processes to new levels of sophistication and impact to be able to attract EU funds.

There are other projects that have been supported by the EU and national authorities in recent years and in the new programming period, there are clearly many other opportunities. The Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe produced a briefing paper in 2019 providing an **overview of EU funding sources for transition** (CAN Europe 2019) and it is interesting that DG REGIO in the European Commission organised a series of [five high-level expert workshops](#) with the OECD in 2019 on Managing Environmental and Energy Transitions for Regions and Cities, with a particular emphasis on managing the distributional aspects of such transitions.

Among **ERDF projects supporting green transition processes** during the 2014 – 2020 programming period, [Vilawatt](#) has been a citizen-driven initiative in Viladecans, Spain, to promote the shift to environmentally-friendly power sources and the renovation of homes to make them more energy efficient. A digital currency was created to reward people for saving energy.

In Luxembourg, the '[Infopoints myenergy goes digital](#)' project aims to inform the citizens of Luxembourg about energy transition, promoting state and municipal aid to individuals wishing to carry out an energy retrofit or a sustainable construction project or to install technologies promoting renewable energies, or implement sustainable mobility. It does this through the Myrenovation app developed for the project.

In four districts of Madrid, the [MARES](#) project uses the promotion of four different sustainability areas (mobility, food, recycling and energy) in four separate districts to develop the social economy, generating economic activity and creating jobs and also improving employability among the unemployed and people at risk of social exclusion.

Among INTERREG projects, the [PEACE-Alps](#) project sought to solve the problems of dispersed Alpine communities that want to reduce carbon emissions, but suffer from a lack of technical expertise and are not of a size to take advantage of economies of scale. The project bundled local needs and set up centralised solutions to help communities successfully transition to a low carbon economy.

Among **ESF projects**, in the last programming period, a project in Finland helped the development of [ResQ Club](#), a start-up enterprise that aims to reduce food waste. It has developed phone and web apps that enable consumers to find and purchase surplus, quality food from restaurants or food suppliers in their neighbourhood.

In Portugal, an ESF project supported the fostering of active youth participation in local decision-making, through a Youth Participatory Budgeting programme. Young people, aged between 14 and 30 could present project proposals related to education, employment and sustainable development, and receive up to EUR 100,000 to implement them. Among the projects given an award was 'Minhotactetas', a free bike-sharing service in tourist locations and the Resource Centre for Inclusive Sport, which aims to promote equal access to sport facilities for people with disabilities.

The Rural Development Programmes implemented in each Member State under **the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** (EAFRD) provided opportunities for community organisations in rural areas in the last programming period, especially through Local Action Groups that are a mechanism for providing rural development leadership in rural communities. In Finland, the [ReWI Visions](#) (Resource Wise Visions) project encouraged young people in the Jyväskylä region to learn more about the circular economy and see it as an area with career



prospects. 40 enterprises with circular economy themes have been established by young people through the project.

A citizens' initiative on carpooling in Villerouge-Termenès in France was supported by a LEADER/Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) scheme to provide access to services for less mobile villagers through a [Municipal electric cars-sharing](#) project. The cost-efficient and green transport provided allowed the less mobile villagers to participate more actively in village life, while reducing emissions and saving resources.

As far as projects supported by other EU programmes are concerned, **Erasmus+** offers a number of opportunities. The [Play Green](#) project is an UEFA endorsed initiative that aims to raise awareness of environmental sustainability in sport all across Europe and to help build capacities in the sector, including among volunteers. The project aims to provide a study and guide on environmental volunteering in sport, pedagogical materials on how to green sport events and an overall study on sustainability and sport.

The Green Sports Hub Europe (GSHE) project aims to test the potential of the sports sector as a high-profile & news agenda-driving industry, to be a channel for the societal behavioural changes needed to make the European Green Deal a reality. Initially, it will analyse current good and bad environmental practice, before helping to promote good governance in the sport sector and providing support to organisations by sharing knowledge and best practice. A self-assessment tool will be developed and a 'Green Sports Playbook', which will serve as guidance for all the identified measures and improvements that need to be implemented.

Similarly, **the LIFE Programme** presents a number of possibilities. [TACKLE](#) is a LIFE project operating from 2018 to 2021. It has aimed to improve the environmental management of football matches and the overall level of awareness and attention to environmental issues in the football sector. It has produced [Guidelines for the Environmental Management of Football Events](#) and has analysed all the phases of the sport event life cycle (i.e. conception, organisation, staging, and closure) in order to develop the necessary competences and organisational structures within the National Football Associations (NFAs) that will allow the diffusion of best practice in the football leagues and stadiums.

Other possibilities for funding will be explored below, but it is already possible to see from the cases referred to that, although there are few direct examples of EU funds supporting transition initiatives by sport organisations, there are a variety of ways in which such initiatives could be strengthened and developed through the addition of the complementary elements that the funding has supported.

## How Sport and Physical Activity Organisations Can Access EU Funding

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, all sport and physical activity organisations ought to seek to reduce their environmental impact, but there are also plenty of reasons for them to be involved in transition initiatives at all levels. This is the case even without any funding support, not least because their involvement can help sport organisations to assess their own environmental impact and help develop ways to address this more directly and continuously. Other advantages have been outlined in the first chapter and for these reasons **sport organisations ought to be encouraged to join with other groups locally, either to strengthen already existing transition initiatives or to launch new ones.**

However, it is undoubtedly the case that if sport organisations can obtain funding to support these initiatives, they are likely to be able to make a bigger impact, so the question is: what do sport organisations have to do to obtain funding for environmental action from EU sources<sup>5</sup>?

The first point to make is that, apart from the sport elements of Erasmus +, there is little funding at a European level that promotes sport directly. The main European funds promote regional or rural development or research and innovation or training and social cohesion. **Sport organisations will not be funded because they promote sport but because they are effective vehicles for achieving many of the various stated objectives of the main funds.** In particular in this context, a large emphasis is currently placed in EU policy on promoting the Green Transition. The ERDF Programmes (including INTERREG), for instance, are required to devote at least 25% of their resources to the greening of the economy. So, **the first thing that sport organisations have to do**, if they are eventually to obtain funds, is to think about how they might be able, either on their own, or with other organisations, and preferably through sport activities, to contribute to achieving a Green transition. This could take the form of pursuing transition activities of the type outlined above, such as promoting more efficient energy use, sustainable transport, a circular economy or habitat restoration or development, or all of these activities. If, at the same time, they are able to contribute to the achievement of other Fund objectives, such as creating employment or promoting innovation or providing training, so much the better.

Here we are talking about **sport and physical activity organisations at all levels.** It may be national or regional organisations, who develop sport-based project ideas, but equally, and especially in the transition context, as has been seen in the first chapter, it could be local community-level sport organisations that become the focus for funded projects, albeit at times with support from national organisations. So, in the rest of the chapter, we are mainly talking about local clubs and sports associations, although in many cases this will be in co-operation with other local groups involved in a transition initiative and may be supported by national sport organisations.

It should be said that in developing ideas for projects, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the way that most of the relevant EU-funded programmes are articulated locally. It is important for sport organisations to understand the difference between applying for support under the Cohesion Funds, which are mainly administered by national or regional authorities, and applying for support under Horizon Europe, or Erasmus + or the LIFE Programme, where calls for proposals are made at a European level. Local sport organisations may not be aware of this distinction and most are not likely to be familiar with the national and regional dimensions of the Cohesion Funds. They will need help to become familiar with the relevant authorities with which they will have to deal and with the detail of national and regional programmes. The positive side of this however, in contrast to the Europe-level programmes, is that they are more likely to be dealing with people who have some knowledge of their local circumstances and the transactions can be conducted in the local language.

Once the ideas for a project have been developed and aligned with effects that the relevant programmes are intending to create, the sport organisation needs to consider **practical arrangements, first for writing and delivering a detailed proposal and then for delivering a project**, if the proposal is successful. Local sport organisations will often need assistance with

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<sup>5</sup> Note that funding may be available from national, regional or local sources or from charities or as private sector sponsorship. SHARE is largely concerned with EU funding and this is reflected in this paper, though the approach recommended may well be relevant for the other sources.

these processes, but there are individuals and enterprises that have experience of both proposal writing and project implementation that can be brought in to assist with these tasks.

It has to be remembered that most EU funds do not cover all of the costs of implementing projects. '**Matching funding**' has to be found from other sources. The rate of EU funding can vary quite considerably, depending on circumstances. The ERDF, for instance, provides 85% for less-developed regions, 60% for transition regions and 40% for more developed regions, while there is a maximum rate of 70% for cross-border cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal (INTERREG). Clearly sport organisations need to take the need to raise funding from other sources than the EU into account, although it should also be appreciated that the possibility of EU funding often encourages other sources to be forthcoming.

It may also be appropriate for sport organisations thinking of going down this path to consider if their organisational form is best for undertaking the activities envisaged. Sport organisations can have many forms. Some are established by local authorities and have the status of a public organisation. Many are voluntary organisations that may operate as a charity or have another specific status, but may also be organised more or less informally, without any particular legal character. Most operate on a not-for-profit basis, although some of those who could usefully be involved, could be commercial organisations. Whatever form they take, the sport organisations may wish to look into **the creation of a distinct organisation** to undertake their project, especially if they are working on it with other local groups. For reasons that will become apparent in the next section they should consider the possibility of establishing a social enterprise, an organisation that exists to pursue environmental and/or social objectives rather than profit, but which nonetheless operates in a way that ensures that it remains financially viable.

To obtain funding to support a transition initiative, therefore, sport and physical activity organisations will need to adjust the way they operate in many cases, especially if they are new to the world of EU programmes and projects.

## EU Funds That Can Support Green Transition Initiatives

The possibilities to obtain EU funding for Green Transition projects in recent years have multiplied, not least as sustainability issues have assumed a higher and higher political profile, but the situation has also become more complex. This is especially the case when Next Generation EU is taken into account, - the EU initiative that supports the development of Covid resilience and recovery – since sport and physical activity are clearly involved in this, both as a sector that has suffered and as one that can contribute significantly to the recovery.

SHARE has published **overviews of both Next Generation EU and the MFF** – the financial framework for normal EU funding<sup>6</sup>. These point out areas where there are opportunities for the sport sector. The following section of this research paper will be more selective. It will not attempt to provide overviews of all the funds considered, but will concentrate on highlighting **those aspects that are most interesting in terms of funding sport-related transition initiatives, especially those taking place at a community level**. Past experience suggests that the most useful funds are the core Cohesion Funds – the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund - including INTERREG), the ESF+ (European Social Fund Plus) and the EAFRD (European Agricultural

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<sup>6</sup> See SHARE background paper, Next Generation EU: How can the sport sector benefit, 2021, <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/SHARE-background-document-Next-Generation-EU-guidance-FINAL.pdf> and SHARE background paper, EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027: How can the sport sector benefit, 2021, <https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/SHARE-LAB-EU-MFF-2021-2027-guidance-for-sport.pdf>

Fund for Rural Development). Other possibilities will be referred to, but it is these funds that will be considered first.

### *ERDF*

As has already been stated, [the ERDF Regulation](#) requires that at least 25% of the available funds have to be devoted to the greening of the economy - by promoting 'clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management', to quote the Regulation. The ERDF, of course, like the other Cohesion Funds, has to be 'translated' into national and regional operational Programmes. This means that some Member States and regions will devote more than 25% of available funding to this objective, and, of course, it is always important for sport organisations to get to know the precise provisions in the regional and/or national Programmes covering their own location. However, these are likely to reflect the EU Regulation which speaks of the specific objectives of promoting:

- energy efficiency measures;
  - renewable energy;
  - smart energy systems, grids and storage at local level;
  - climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience;
  - sustainable water management;
  - the transition to a circular economy; and
  - biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution;
- all objectives that a transition initiative would want to pursue.

The sort of actions that **the ERDF can support** relate to:

- investments in infrastructure;
  - investments in access to services;
  - productive investments in SMEs;
  - equipment, software and intangible assets;
  - information, communication, studies, networking, cooperation, exchange of experience and activities involving clusters;
- again actions that a transition initiative would want to undertake.

Integrated territorial and local development strategies are expected to ensure coherence in interventions and in order to facilitate this, the Regulation provides for a European Urban Initiative, which is managed by the Commission. At least 8% of the ERDF budget is devoted to this initiative, which will offer support to cities to promote **sustainable urban development**, in line with the Urban Agenda for the EU. It will fund activities such as capacity-building, innovative actions and the development of knowledge and policy development and communication. Again, community transition in urban area initiatives would appear to fit the bill. Rural areas can be eligible for support for similar projects under EAFRD, on which there will be more information shortly.

### *ESF+*

[ESF+](#) seeks to create a more performing and resilient 'Social Europe' with support for training, employment, addressing social inclusion and tackling poverty and youth. Funding obtained from

ESF+ will therefore be for projects that contribute to the achievement of these objectives. However, like all EU programmes, ESF+ is expected to comply with climate mainstreaming, whereby, overall, 25% of EU expenditure is expected to contribute to climate objectives. Projects that, therefore, combine climate objectives with training or actions to promote social inclusion and/or tackle poverty can access ESF+ funding.

Furthermore, it is deemed essential that Member States encourage the participation of social partners and civil society in the implementation of the ESF+ and an important vehicle for doing this is the ‘**innovative actions**’, which are intended to encourage Member States to support social innovation and social experimentation, through bottom-up approaches based on partnerships, which can involve public authorities, the private sector, and civil society, and may take the form of **Local Action Groups** who design and implement community-led local development strategies. There is plenty of scope for innovative approaches here, as the name of the actions suggests, so that novel, small scale approaches can be tried out with a view to testing and evaluating innovative solutions before they are scaled up. A further advantage is that the co-financing rate for these actions can be up to 95%.

Further support, providing access to finance for social enterprises is available under the [micro-finance and social entrepreneurship axis](#) of the [Programme for Employment and Social Innovation \(EaSI\)](#). This Programme is now integrated into ESF+, though it is administered directly by the European Commission.

Clearly then there is scope for support from ESF+ for transition initiatives, especially at the community level, as long as these are designed to involve training provision and the creation of jobs or promote social inclusion as well as moving the community towards a more sustainable economy, especially if the initiative is organised around a social enterprise.

#### *EAFRD*

The [EAFRD](#) (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) will form one of the two pillars of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the 2021-2027 period, the other pillar being direct support for farmers. Its overall objectives will be to stimulate growth and jobs and climate and environmental actions. There is, however, a delay in implementing the new form of the CAP – until 1 January 2023. During the period until then, the 2014-2020 CAP Regulations will continue to apply, except that they will be supplemented by new elements to reflect the European Green Deal and to allow a smooth transition to the eventual new framework for the CAP.

As with the ERDF and ESF+, **Member States have their own Rural Development Programmes (RDPs)** under EAFRD, which have to be agreed with the Commission. The RDPs are of course focused on the economic and social development of rural areas and have to involve at least four of the six priorities of the EAFRD:

- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- enhancing the viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
- promoting food chain organisation, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

So, again, for transition initiatives in rural areas, seeking funding from the EAFRD, **it is necessary to engage with the national RDP to establish the details.**

The EAFRD also has arrangements that could be relevant for local community groups, notably through the [LEADER programme](#), which specifically supports rural development projects initiated at the local level in order to revitalise rural areas and create jobs. LEADER promotes Community-led Local Development (CLLD) and its projects are managed by [local action groups \(LAGs\)](#). These are non-profit-making bodies, composed of public and private organisations from rural villages with a broad representation from different socio-economic groups, which implement the Local Development Strategy of their respective territory, mainly through small-scale projects. There is a relatively high co-funding rate for these projects (80%) and there is a support network - The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD), whose LAG database allows LAGs to get in touch, network and cooperate with each other, once they are registered.

All this suggests that sport and physical activity organisations located or operating in rural areas that wish to develop a community transition initiative could well look at the possibility of working through a LAG.

The Cohesion policy funds therefore continue to offer interesting possibilities for sport and physical activity organisations and it has been seen that there are features of all the funds considered that encourage new initiatives by relatively small organisations. This makes these funds well suited to sports organisations and physical activity organisations at the beginning of developing activities to promote sustainability and transition. Other Programmes that could be of interest include those briefly explained in the following sections. Frequently, however, these Programmes may be more suited to a later stage in developing sustainability initiatives, enabling early moves to be strengthened, or to deal with particular aspects of the transition process, such as its social and employment implications.

#### *The Just Transition Fund*

The Just Transition Fund is a key element of the European Green Deal and forms part of a wider [Just Transition Mechanism](#), which aims to assist regions with a heavy dependency on energy production and the extractive industries (extraction of coal, lignite, peat, shale oil), by helping them to address the social consequences of transition to a greener economy. The Just Transition Fund has recently been added to the Cohesion Policy funds.

Member States have to submit Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) as for the basis for the allocation of the funds. The economic and social impacts of transition are analysed and the plans identify eligible territories that are expected to be the most negatively impacted by the process. The Just Transition Fund spending has to be matched with funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and additional resources have to be provided. Approval of TJTPs by the Commission is expected towards the end of 2021.

For sport organisations in areas that have been heavily dependent on energy production and extractive industries that have been identified as eligible in the TJTPs, there is a possibility to obtain funds for projects contributing not only to green transition, but also a socially inclusive diversification of economic activity into some of the areas of the new sustainable economy that promise to create new jobs and economic growth.

#### *LIFE*

The [LIFE Programme](#) funds environmental and climate action. In the current period, it has four strands:

- Nature and bio-diversity;
- Circular economy and quality of life;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation;

- Clean energy transition

The relevance for transition initiatives is obvious, especially if they are to attempt to develop novel, innovative solutions, so LIFE should be among the programmes that transition groups look to for possible sources of funding.

Furthermore, as with other Frameworks and Programmes considered, there could be arrangements in the LIFE Programme that make it friendly to small-scale projects by community groups. The details of the Programme for the current period have not yet been settled, at the time of writing, but if the new version of the Programme follows the previous programme in this respect, there may well be calls for proposals for **operating grants to support non-profit-making entities**. It is likely that these will need to be a non-profit-making legal organisation, established in one of the European Union Member States, that are independent from government and political or commercial interests and undertaking environment and/or climate action. They will, however, need to be operating at Union level with activities in at least three European Union Member States.

#### *Horizon Europe & The Single Market Programme*

[Horizon Europe](#) is the EU's main programme supporting research and innovation and climate change and sustainability more widely are certainly major themes for the next programming period. However, as with the [Single Market Programme](#) that, among other objectives, promotes enterprise and entrepreneurship, it is probably not a programme that transition initiatives can take advantage of in their early development stages or possibly even after that, unless they have links with research institutions or organisations involved in promoting innovation, such as clusters. Over the longer term, they may wish to develop such links.

#### *ERASMUS +*

As well as providing mobility opportunities for students and young people, [Erasmus+](#) promotes co-operation in the fields of education, training, youth and sport, helping organisations to network, strengthen their capacities, produce innovative approaches and exchange good practice. A part of the Programme is dedicated specifically to co-operation in sport. However, there are also other opportunities in that Green Transition and promoting young people's participation in democratic life are major themes in other areas of co-operation, though again there is generally a requirement to work with partners from other Member States.

Of particular interest may be the new [Small-scale Partnerships](#), which involve relatively small grants to conduct short duration projects. There are also simplified application requirements in order to encourage newcomers and small organisations.

There are therefore a range of possibilities for EU funding available even for relatively small sport organisations operating at a local community level. Nearly all of them require some effort to clarify the details of eligibility, but the fact that sport organisations have been involved in earlier projects should encourage those wanting to strengthen their own transition initiatives.

## Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

A critical insight of the Green Transition movement is that **climate change and other environmental problems are too pressing for solutions to be developed just at national and international levels**. Everyone needs to be involved, especially since so much depends on changing the habits and practices of the population as a whole. So, although it is essential that sport and physical activity organisations at all levels take action to promote sustainability, a strong theme in this paper has been **the potential for local, community sports organisations to play their part in promoting change** – a development that collectively could be decisive.

In doing so, **sport and physical activity organisations need to go beyond greening their own activities**, by ensuring the sustainability of their events and facilities and being aware of their wider environmental impact. This much should be taken as given and the paper has pointed out initiatives by major sporting organisations and national governments to encourage their sports to adopt a systematic approach to the greening of their activities. All sport organisations should be encouraged to follow these initiatives. However, over and above that, the paper has shown that **sport and physical activity organisations can contribute to transition by bringing the support of established (sport) networks that are well integrated into local communities into the process**. To begin with they can help raise awareness and engagement with the natural environment through extensive outdoor activities, build motivation for transition through processes associating a healthy environment with the growing demand for a healthy and active lifestyle and promote the greater use of alternative transport modes and especially cycling and walking. They can then go on to other contributions to transition that the paper has outlined, but one of the advantages of the community-based approach is that transition groups on the ground will be able to identify multiple additional ways that sport organisations can support transition, based on innovative responses to local circumstances.

There are **many advantages for sports organisations** if they get involved in transition processes, even without external support, but it is also the case, that with some adjustments in the organisations concerned, it should be possible to access EU funding to help strengthen transition approaches.

An important further step will be to explore **the readiness of organisations and individuals already active in promoting transition, to take on board the sport element** in their conception of transition processes. Discussions have already been held with some active in the Transition Network and with research departments working in the area. These should be followed up possibly with a view to getting them to change the guidance that they offer to incorporate greater reference to sport and physical activity.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations arise from the discussion in the paper:

- The public authorities and major sport organisations should continue to encourage sports organisations on the ground to adopt sustainability strategies in line with the guidance they have provided. National authorities and associations can make a particularly important contribution to this effort.
- Sports organisations at the local level should be encouraged to join, or where necessary, initiate community transition initiatives. A useful starting point for local sport organisations would be to consult the [Transition Network](#) to establish if there are already existing transition initiatives in their communities.



- It will be important for local sports organisations to develop links with existing transition activists, but also with their local authorities, local and national environmental NGOs and eventually with researchers and innovators in this field in universities, cluster organisations etc.
- The public authorities and major sport organisations should highlight the benefits for community sport associations of being involved in local transition initiatives.
- Sport organisations on the ground should be encouraged to sign up to the [European Climate Pact Pledge](#).
- Sport organisations on the ground should also be encouraged to sign up to the '[Sports for Climate Action Framework](#)'
- SHARE should assist community transition initiatives involving sport organisations to identify and apply for appropriate EU funds.
- The SHARE Green Transition Group should develop a practical guidance document on community green transition for sport and physical activity organisations on the ground.
- The SHARE Green Transition Group and the wider sport community should bring the potential contribution of local sport and physical activity organisations to the attention of those involved in the community transition movement.

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