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D3.3 Twinning programme

SESE

SHARING EUROPEAN SPORTS EXCELLENCE



SportDrenthe
zet mensen in beweging



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1. Introduction

The Twinning Programme was implemented by the regions participating in the project partnership (Azores, Drenthe, Lapland and Međimurje County), all recognized as leaders in sports excellence. The twin-region method was designed to foster synergy between sport regions, enhance networking opportunities, and promote the exchange of knowledge and experience among sport operators through study visits.

Within the framework of the programme, each participating region first selected one best practice from another partner region to be pilot tested and adapted to its own local context and conditions. The selection process involved the organization of workshops with relevant local and regional stakeholders, during which best practices from partner regions were presented and discussed. Stakeholders then analyzed existing local practices and selected the best practice that demonstrated the highest potential for successful implementation in their region.

Following the selection phase, study visits were organized to facilitate the transfer and pilot testing of the chosen practices across regions. Each best practice holder (the region that originally developed the selected practice) hosted the study visit and prepared a tailored programme according to the needs and interests of the visiting partners.

After each study visit, partners completed a questionnaire to evaluate the visit, the presentation of best practices, and their potential applicability in other regional contexts. The study visits, supported by experts from the Pool of Experts, enabled each region to identify three specific elements from the selected best practice to be implemented locally and pilot tested within the SESE project.

Subsequently, every partner region developed a detailed implementation plan, ensuring that the chosen best practice was adapted to regional needs and specific conditions. Once implementation was completed, a comprehensive evaluation was carried out, leading to the identification of lessons learned and an overall ranking of the implemented practices.

Through this structured approach, the Twinning Programme successfully fostered mutual learning, innovation, and regional cooperation, contributing to the advancement of sports excellence across partner regions.

2. Stakeholders meeting reports

The Twinning Programme serves as a knowledge transfer initiative designed to help partner regions enhance their sport policy development by learning from best practice examples identified in other regions. The participating regions — **the Azores, Drenthe, Lapland, and Međimurje County** — collaborated closely to promote networking, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning.

Each region first identified successful **best practice examples** within its own territory, which were then presented to the partner regions. Based on their specific needs, potential, and capacities, each region selected the practices most relevant and applicable to their context. These selected practices were then discussed in detail during workshops with local and regional stakeholders, taking into account each region's unique conditions and local context.

Together with stakeholders, each region chose **one best practice example to pilot test** through the implementation of tailored activities adapted to their own environment. The selection process was guided by a structured evaluation and grading system that focused on key criteria such as cost, implementation timeframe, community impact, and public interest.

The chosen best practices were subsequently implemented and pilot tested in each region, following the jointly defined elements and approaches developed during the workshops.

Based on this comprehensive evaluation process, the regions selected the following best practice examples for implementation and pilot testing **within the Twinning Programme**:

Region	Selected best practice	Elements of best practice for implementation
Azores	A sport per week	Coach Involvement in the showcase of sports in the Azores region (all 9 islands), Participation gifts, Workshops on Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles
Drenthe	Outdoor space for activity – BIMEP, Trails and St. Vincent Hike	Community engagement in hikes along the Drenthe Path, promotion of walking as a type of physical activity, combining an active lifestyle with the unique experience of being in nature
Lapland	On the Move	Nutrition Smoothies prep workshop and cooking class for children, education about the nutrition diet, questionnaire and feedback from parents.
Međimurje County	Cycling benefit	Fit@work pilot action to motivate employees to use healthier and environmentally friendly means of transport to commute to work, participation gifts, nutrition workshop

3. Study visit reports

Based on the best practices selected for implementation in each partner region, **study visits** were organized in the regions of the respective host institutions. These visits served to showcase the selected best practices, enable direct meetings with the experts and organizers involved, and provide insights into the local contexts in which the practices were implemented.

During the visits, partners had the opportunity to explore several successful initiatives and engage with the professionals responsible for their development and pool of experts members. The experts shared valuable guidance on how these practices could be transferred to different environments and adapted to new regional conditions, highlighting the elements that can be easily replicated elsewhere.

Following each study visit, **all partners completed a questionnaire** to evaluate their satisfaction with the visit, the knowledge gained, and the information collected regarding the implementation of the best practices. Additionally, each partner prepared a report summarizing the hosted study visit and the outcomes achieved.

3.1. Drenthe study visit

Date of the visit: 6/2/2023 - 8/2/2023

Location of the visit: City Hotel de Jonge, Assen

Best practice presented:

- ✓ Neighborhood Sport Coaches
- ✓ Moving in public spaces
- ✓ Lifelong exercise



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Participants list:

-not public-

Study Visit Agenda:

Date	Time	Activity
6. 2. 2023.	All day	Arrival of project partners
7. 2. 2023.	9.30 – 19.00	Study visit to Westerbork
		Study visit – Tour behind the scenes at Wildlands
8. 2. 2023.	8.45 – 9.30	SESE project Press conference
	9.30 – 10.00	Coffee break
	10.00 – 13.00	Presentation of partnering regions and best practices
	13.00 – 14.00	Study visit Moving in public spaces

Study visit Conclusions

The study visit organized in Assen provided a valuable opportunity to explore best practice examples from the Drenthe region, with particular attention to their potential for replication in other regions. Three study visits were conducted, showcasing three inspiring initiatives: Neighborhood Sport Coaches, Moving in Public Spaces, and Lifelong Exercise.

These examples highlighted effective approaches to improving sport policies and promoting active lifestyles. They demonstrated how targeted initiatives can successfully encourage citizens—especially children and young people—to participate in sport and physical activity. The visit underlined the significant impact of regular physical activity on health and well-being, emphasizing the importance of sustained efforts to foster a culture of movement and engagement through sport.

Questionnaire results analysis

The partners recognised the importance of including education sector in the development of sport policies in order to improve the regional development and sports sector overall. Besides that, the cooperation between partners and different institutions/organisations is recognised as crucial for further development, as shown in the Drenthe region as best practice example. It was recognised that community plays important role in the policy making. Over the years, the Drenthe Region bolstered different kinds of events in its territory and the will continue to be proactive through the sports sector can be taken as best practice for the other regions, promoting a constant collaboration with local authorities to permit the promotion of sports initiatives. Best practice examples shown through study visit prove that cooperation is crucial for reaching excellence in the aspect of sports development. Other partners were impressed by the functioning of sports policy in Drenthe, leading to regional development and improvement of life quality for local communities. As shown through best practice examples, the attention should be focused on giving support to young people, on grassroots sport and promoting sport in schools, while at the same time creating the conditions to enhance the excellent sport. It is important to provide infrastructure and modern sport facilities to provide quality conditions

for all. A multitude of initiatives, which held together by a long-term direction, allows citizens to have real benefits from sport and to socialize thorough sport.

Photographs of the project partners meeting and study visit

Below is a presentation of photos taken during every part of the program. These photos represent a good atmosphere impression of the event.





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3.2. Azores visit

Date of the visit: 7/6/2023 – 8/6/2023

Location of the visit: Sport Azores premises

Best practice presented:

- ✓ From 0 to the olympic games

Participants list:

not public

Study Visit Agenda:

Date	Time	Activity
7. 6. 2023.	All day	Arrival of project partners
		Study visit
8. 6. 2023.	9.00 – 10.00	Study visit – Marina de Ponta Delgada
	10.00 – 14.00	Study visit – From 0 to the Olympic Games

Study visit Conclusions

During the study visit, project partners were introduced to exemplary best practices from the Azores Region. The initiatives presented by the Sport Azores Organisation and other key stakeholders demonstrated excellence in the implementation of sport-related programmes, with particular attention given to their replicability potential.

It was highlighted that the selected best practices extend beyond the traditional scope of sports development, encompassing lifelong physical activity, mental and physical health, social inclusion, and contributions to the tourism sector. These insights reinforced the importance of developing comprehensive sport policies that adopt a multisectoral approach, integrating various fields to maximize social and health benefits for all citizens.

The discussions highlighted the growing importance of outdoor sports and the role of nature in promoting physical activity and well-being. Strengths such as accessible infrastructure and strong cooperation with academic institutions were recognized, while challenges related to volunteer engagement, sustainable financing, and regional investment in sport were identified.

Emphasis was placed on the need for a multisectoral approach—linking sport with health, social inclusion, education, and tourism—to ensure lasting impact. Regions should strive to build well-functioning sport organizations supported by clear governance, data-driven policies, and evidence-based practices.

Opportunities lie in innovative financing mechanisms, EU funding, and policy incentives that reward investment in sport. The examples from Drenthe, the Azores, and Lapland underline that excellence in sport development depends on collaboration, focus, and long-term commitment. Ultimately, the model for regional sport excellence should be sport-driven, inclusive, and validated through measurable outcomes and shared European best practices.



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Study visit questionnaire result analysis:

Partners were very satisfied with the presented best practice during the study visit. Experts who are best practice holders provided support and shared their knowledge and experience with project partners, having in mind that replicability is crucial part of the Twinning programme. Although good amount of information was provided, including the organisation, challenges, and replicability options, the partners stated that more data is needed to fully implement these best practices in their regions. It was agreed that best practice holders and experts from the Sport Azores will provide support, logistical information, lessons learned and other relevant information to project partners as well as other regions who want to implemented presented best practice in their own region. Since different territories have specific conditions, situations, legislative framework and policies, it is crucial to adapt each best practice to local conditions, in cooperation with local communities and all relevant stakeholders, encouraging cooperation on different levels and using multi-sector approach.



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Photos:





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3.3. Lapland visit

Date of the visit: 19/3/2024 -21/3/2024

Location of the visit: Lapland University of Applied Sciences

Best practice presented:

- ✓ Cycling benefit
- ✓ Lapin Liikunta
- ✓ Suomu Ski Resort
- ✓ Lappset Group
- ✓ Tanja Poutianen
- ✓ Santasport and Ounasvaara Riikka Varjus

Participants list:

Not public

Study Visit Agenda:

Date	Time	Activity
19. 3. 2024.	All day	Arrival of project partners
		Study visit to the University Campus and Lapland University of Applied Sciences
20. 3. 2024.	9.00 – 15.30	Study visit to the Suomu Ski Resort
		Best practice presentation - Pekka Makkonen – Kemijärvi Municipality, Sports Coordinator
		Best practice presentation - Seppo selkälä – Steering Group Member of Interreg NPA SUB
21. 3. 2024.	9.00 – 13.00	Best practice examples presentation: Lapin Liikunta Tanja Poutianen Lappset Group
	13.00 – 15.00	Study visit to the Santasport and Ounasvaara Riikka Varjus

Study Visit Conclusions:

The Lapland study visit was a successful and enriching milestone in the SESE project. It provided a dynamic platform for strategic planning, peer learning, and cultural exchange. The well-structured program, engaging presentations, and immersive site visits offered a comprehensive view of how sport can be a transformative force in regional development.

The insights and connections forged during this visit will continue to shape our collaborative efforts and inspire excellence across the SESE network.

Study visit questionnaire result analysis:

The study visit provided an inspiring opportunity to explore best practice examples that demonstrated how sport can serve as a driver of regional development. These experiences offered valuable insights into effective cooperation between sectors such as sport, health, education, and tourism. The exchange of knowledge and experience among partners proved essential for understanding how successful approaches can be adapted and replicated elsewhere.

By sharing these inspirational practices, regions are better equipped to implement similar initiatives and strengthen their own strategies for promoting sport, physical activity, and overall well-being.

3.4. Međimurje visit

Date of the visit: 10/9/2024 - 12/9/2024

Location of the visit: Knowledge Centre of the Međimurje County, Sveti Martin na Muri, Prelog

Best practices presented:

- ✓ BIMEP
- ✓ Trail runs and St. Vincent Hike
- ✓ No boundaries project
- ✓ private initiatives (DG Sport Prelog, Terme Sveti Martin, Wine House Hažić, More Adventures)
- ✓ On the Move
- ✓ A sport per week

Participants list:

Not public

Study Visit Agenda:

Date	Time	Activity
9.9.2024.	All day	Arrival of project partners
10.9.2024.	9.00 – 17.00	Study visit to the Terme Sveti Martin (best practice example)
		Study Visit to the Wine House Hažić (best practice example)
		Best practice example presentation – GoVGorice (Trail runs)
11.9.2024.	9.00 – 11.00	Study visit to the Čakovec Knowledge Centre – presentation of best practices: Ecomuseum Međimurje On the Move BIMEP

	11.00 – 15.00	Study visit to the Marina Prelog Best practice presentation: No boundaries project
	15.00 – 19.00	Study visit to More Adventure (best practice example)

Study visit Conclusion:

The study visit to Međimurje County provided valuable insights into innovative approaches for promoting physical activity and wellbeing. Through the presentation of diverse best practices—ranging from public initiatives such as On the Move, No Boundaries, BIMEP, and A Sport per Week to private sector examples like Terme Sveti Martin, DG Sport Prelog, Wine House Hažić, and More Adventure—participants gained a comprehensive understanding of how collaboration between different stakeholders can enhance regional sport and health development.

Feedback from the visiting partners confirmed that the study visit was a meaningful platform for knowledge exchange and mutual learning. The experiences shared demonstrated strong potential for transferability to other EU regions, highlighting how integrated approaches to sport, tourism, and community engagement can foster healthier and more active societies.

Study visit questionnaire result analysis:

PRESENTATION OF BEST PRACTICE

Best practice examples were presented clearly and effectively, leaving a very positive impression on the visiting partner. The presenters demonstrated a high level of expertise and competence, and the information shared fully met the expectations of the participants. The visiting team appreciated not only the quality of the presentations but also the opportunity to visit some best practices on-site. What they saw during the field visit was highly satisfying and reinforced the relevance of the initiative.

The content of the best practices was perceived as very useful and aligned with the interests and goals of the visiting partners. While the overall transparency of data regarding the performance and challenges of the best practices was considered moderate, it was noted that explanations on how to adapt the model to different environments were clearly communicated. Participants expressed interest in additional training, particularly involving real-life case studies from outside the project context, to better understand how these approaches to project implementation functions in other settings. Although the content was well structured, it was suggested that more time could be allocated for in-depth discussion and exchange.



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ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY VISIT

The organizational aspect of the study visit was rated very positively. The hosting partner provided comprehensive and detailed information about the best practices and the broader context of sport-related initiatives in the region. All practical details regarding the visit—such as the agenda, timing, venue, and speakers—were communicated clearly and in a timely manner, contributing to a smooth and well-coordinated visit.

The agenda itself was well-structured, though there is slight room for improvement in terms of time management. Hosts were open to questions and interaction, which was appreciated by the visiting partner, although a slightly more open and extended discussion format could enhance the experience further. Materials and presentations were clear and practical, and the participants had the opportunity to connect with the experts and stakeholders involved, including through networking and exchange of contact information. Overall, the organization was considered excellent.

REPLICABILITY AND FUTURE APPLICATION

The visiting partners believe that the *On the Move* best practice holds strong potential for transferability and could be applicable in their own regional or national context. While all partners don't plan to implement it directly within their own organization, they intend to recommend specific elements of the practice to relevant stakeholders in their network.

Importantly, the steps necessary for replicating the best practice were explained in sufficient detail and considered fully understandable. However, it was also recognized that expert support might be needed during the actual implementation process, especially to ensure alignment with local conditions and policies.

Photos:





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4. Best practice implementation reports

4.1. Međimurje County

Selected best practice and/or best practice element: Cycling Benefit (Lapland Region, Finland)

Period of pilot testing: April 1st – May 31st 2025

Rationale (short explanation about the reasons and circumstances for selecting the particular BP or its element):

The best practice (BP) piloted in Međimurje County was inspired by Lapland's Cycling Benefit and tailored to specific circumstances of the selected employer. The Public Institution for the Development of Međimurje County REDEA (regional development agency) established by Međimurje County (regional authority) was chosen to implement the BP. REDEA employs 25 persons and the team is responsive for different initiatives and the management is supportive when it comes to efforts directed at employees' wellbeing.

There are not many organizations in Međimurje County that have structured employee health and wellbeing practices in place. This is why this BP has been selected as inspiration for designing the pilot action Fit@Work which should motivate employees to use healthier and environmentally friendly means of transport (walking, cycling) to commute to work and to get to different locations during the work day, as well as to use their break for physical activity and try to move regularly during the day. It is intended for the pilot to be transferred to other organizations in the region, starting with the public sector.

Description of the BP pilot testing structure and plan (goals, target groups, activities, expected outcomes):

Fit@Work was designed as a challenge to encourage healthy habits at the workplace, to increase physical activity of REDEA's employees and to improve their overall wellbeing (improve health and reduce stress related to work). Employees were divided into teams of four (one employee did not participate) considering the distance between their home and work. During two months teams were supposed to "collect" kilometres walked or cycled during the work day (commuting to work, to get to meeting locations, to walk around the office while on the phone or to talk to coworkers

related to work, physical activity during the break). They were also encouraged to once per month organize team activity (walking, running, cycling) outside work where kilometres were also measured. The team and the individual with the most kilometres were awarded with a gift card from a sport equipment store.

In scope of the pilot a company bicycle was purchased to be used for driving to meetings and other business obligations. Since nutrition is also an important aspect of health a workshop about this topic was organized as well.

In order to evaluate the impact of the pilot activity a survey regarding physical activity and eating habits was performed at the beginning and at the end of the implementing period.

Results achieved:

During the two months, from April 1st till May 31st 2025, a total of 3085 km was “collected”. The team with the most kilometres (920 km) contributed 24 % to the total amount. The winning individual reached 424 km. In comparison, the team with the least distance walked or cycled had 392 km.

Fit@Work had an impact on the following aspects:

- a) Physical activity. Employees report an increase in the number of steps during the workday (33 % does more than 3000 steps, in comparison to only 13 % before the challenge) and more of them commute to work walking or cycling (50 % of them indicate that the challenge motivated them to do so). The challenge encouraged employees to increase their physical activity in their private time as well.
- b) Overall health. None of the employees reported poor health before the challenge so the starting position was very good. One employee indicates improvement in health after the challenge. The most encouraging result, however, is the fact that 75 % of employees say that Fit@Work encouraged them to adopt a new healthy lifestyle habit.

Lessons learned:

Aspect	Yes/No	Lesson
Was the pilot testing successful?	Yes	Business practices from different regions need to be adapted to specific circumstances and need to consider the needs and motivation of target groups. Results cannot be forced on target groups and what works in one environment doesn't have to work in another. This is why BPs need to be presented as inspiration not a recipe to copy.
Were the planned activities suitable for the selected target group?	Yes	A thorough analysis of the target group while designing the pilot action contributed to the success of planned activities.
Was the duration of the testing period sufficient?	Yes	Two months were sufficient to test the adapted BP in REDEA.
Were there any aspects of the pilot testing that needed to be adjusted during the period of implementation?	Yes	There were only minor adjustments required. Namely, several employees were absent from work for a period longer than a week and for that time an average of their kilometres per day were counted in the team's score. The purpose was for those persons not to feel as if they had let the team down, to keep the spirits up.
Is the best practice transferrable to other target groups in your region?	Yes	This BP adapted as Fit@Work can be transferred to other organizations of similar size with sedentary (office) workplaces. For larger ones and those in different sectors additional adjustments need to be made.
Were there any challenges you came across during pilot testing? If yes, are you satisfied with how you have handled it?	Yes	At first the rules of the challenge seemed a bit complicated and were differently interpreted among employees so these were more clearly explained to all involved. The second challenge was how to synchronize the various apps employees used to track distances. Since there was no single app defined for everyone, this

		created minor inconsistencies. This is something that can be improved in the future.
Is there anything you would change in future attempts to transfer the BP in your region?	No	The concept itself can be transferred with minor adjustments to particular organizations.
Were there any outcomes that exceeded initial expectations?	Yes	Employees adopted other healthy lifestyle habits, particularly related to nutrition.

How would you evaluate the overall success of the BP pilot testing (1 being poor, 5 being excellent – please, indicate below):

1	2	3	4	5
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4.2. Drenthe

Selected best practice and/or best practice element: BIMEP, Trail runs and St. Vincent Hike

Period of pilot testing: September & October 2025

Rationale (short explanation about the reasons and circumstances for selecting the particular BP or its element):

From SportDrenthe, we have chosen to build on a combination of best practices from Croatia, specifically the *Outdoor Space for Activity* initiative and the *Trails and St. Vincent Hike*. The key elements we aimed to test and adapt were the strong community engagement demonstrated in projects such as BIMEP, and from the trails, the promotion of hiking as a way to experience both the natural environment and an active lifestyle.

By applying these elements in Drenthe, we sought to showcase the province as an attractive region for outdoor activity, highlighting its natural beauty while encouraging residents and visitors to embrace a healthy, active way of living. In doing so, we not only promote physical activity but also strengthen Drenthe's profile as a region where nature, health, and community come together.

Description of the BP pilot testing structure and plan (goals, target groups, activities, expected outcomes):

We organized three hikes along Drenthe **Path** on September 25, October 3, and October 10. Each hike covered a distance of 15–20 kilometers. The hikes were organized in collaboration with local volunteers, who are also responsible for maintaining the walking trails in Drenthe. These volunteers contributed not only by supporting the logistics of the route but also by enhancing the overall experience for participants, for example by offering coffee and tea halfway through the walk. In addition, transportation was arranged to bring participants back to the starting point.

The hikes are designed to promote walking as a meaningful and enjoyable way to experience Drenthe, while at the same time being connected to the 50th anniversary of the Drenthe Path. Through this initiative, we aimed to challenge residents of Drenthe to combine an active lifestyle with the unique experience of being in nature.



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Results achieved:

In recent weeks, we celebrated the anniversary of the very first long-distance walking path (LAW) in the Netherlands with three festive stage walks. Hundreds of walkers travelled through the characteristic Drenthe landscape, from Gieten to Borger, Oosterhesselen to Nieuw-Balinge and from Ruinen to Holtingerveld.

The Drenthepad has existed since 1975 and leads over 361 kilometers of dirt roads, heaths, forests and esdorpen. The anniversary walks were a tribute to this unique path and to all hiking enthusiasts who have been walking it for fifty years.

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Drenthepad, three festive stage walks took place in recent weeks. Participants walked through the characteristic Drenthe landscape and responded enthusiastically: "A wonderful way to discover the Drenthepad. You see the beautiful unknown parts of your own province".

The three stages – from Gieten to Borger, Oosterhesselen to Nieuw-Balinge and from Ruinen to Holtingerveld – attracted a large group of hiking enthusiasts. Each walk started with a festive opening and along the way there was a coffee stop in the field. After walking the route, the participants were brought back to the starting point.

In 1975, the Drenthepad was the first long-distance hiking trail in the Netherlands and was realized by Nivon Friends of Nature. The path has now grown into a popular walking route of 361 kilometers. Divided into twenty stages, hikers get to know the primeval landscape of Drenthe, over old sandy roads, along heaths and fens, through forests and esdorpen.

With the anniversary walks, the 50th anniversary of the Drenthepad was celebrated in a special way. The organization looks back on three successful days. Those who missed the walks don't have to miss anything: the Drenthepad is freely accessible and signposted in both directions. More information can be found via the website: [Home – Drenthepad](#)

The Drenthepad Stage Walks are an initiative of Nivon Friends of Nature and were made possible by the Province of Drenthe, Recreatieschap Drenthe, Municipality of Coevorden, Municipality of Midden-Drenthe, Municipality of Aa en Hunze, Municipality of Borger-Odoorn, Municipality of De Wolden and Municipality of Westerveld. The organization was in the hands of SportDrenthe.

Lessons learned:

Aspect	Yes/No	Lesson
Was the pilot testing successful?	Yes	Yes, we can speak of a success with 130 hikers that we were able to reach
Were the planned activities suitable for the selected target group?	Yes	The activity fitted in well and was almost full of people from Drenthe and the surrounding area
Was the duration of the testing period sufficient?	Yes	We were able to test the impact of organizing and promoting this exercise activity differently during 3 different moments. In line with the good example from Croatia
Were there any aspects of the pilot testing that needed to be adjusted during the period of implementation?	Yes	Of course, we have to come up with a Drenthe form, but we were able to make good use of the working elements
Is the best practice transferrable to other target groups in your region?	Yes	We think this is certainly possible. Involving volunteers in the organizations and the social element as 1 of the main goals enriches every element.
Were there any challenges you came across during pilot testing? If yes, are you satisfied with how you have handled it?	Yes	It is important to make the social aspect important in the activity. Just like the good example from Croatia does. In addition, coffee was arranged for 60 people, but the restaurant counted on 6 people. But with each other and with the group from togetherness it has been solved well.
Is there anything you would change in future attempts to transfer the BP in your region?	No	No, it worked very well and we are already in consultation with the participants and organization to do it again next year
Were there any outcomes that exceeded initial expectations?	Yes	The participants' rave reviews! We received an 8.97

How would you evaluate the overall success of the BP pilot testing (1 being poor, 5 being excellent – please, indicate below):

1	2	3	4	5
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4.3. Azores

Selected best practice and/or best practice element: A sport per week
(Međimurje)

Period of pilot testing: September & October 2025

Event n.º1 - this event took place over the course of a morning/afternoon, in partnership with local sports clubs, associations, and schools, giving children the opportunity to try out various sports/activities through a rotation-based system across different sports stations. This event was organized and implemented across all nine islands of the Azores.

Rationale (short explanation about the reasons and circumstances for selecting the particular BP or its element):

For the implementation and testing of the selected best practice (selected as a result of the 3 conducted workshops for public sector, private sector and civil society), as defined by the SESE project, it is essential to reflect upon its details.

This element of the selected best practice broadly consists of a sports day for primary school children, offering them the opportunity to try different sports. This initiative also allows, coaches, and qualified assistants to showcase their skills in specific sports, helping to spark children's interest in physical activity.

Description of the BP pilot testing structure and plan (goals, target groups, activities, expected outcomes):

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Faial	May 16, 2025	Horta Sports Pavilion	09:30 – 12:00	197	36
Event Description / Report: Event organized in stations, rotation system, 11 entities + ESMA Sports students. Coaches presented age-appropriate exercises. Snack between 10:30 and 11:00.					

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Corvo	May 24, 2025	Corvo Sports Complex	17:00 – 17:45	8	3
Event Description / Report: 8 participants, circuit format stations, challenges with ropes, balls, rackets. Focus on motor skills, teamwork, and fun.					
Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Pico	May 28, 2025	Lajes do Pico Village Pavilion	10:00 – 12:00	168	38
Event Description / Report: 168 children participated. 10 sports stations including bouncy castles. Snacks provided. Highly praised by participants.					
Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Santa Maria	May 30, 2025	Santa Maria Sports Complex	09:00 – 12:30	113	25
Event Description / Report: Organized with local school. Part of International Children's Day. 135 children attended. Regional Secretary present. Activities: football, basketball, handball, volleyball, dance, inflatables.					
Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
São Miguel	May 31, 2025	São Miguel Stadium	09:30 – 16:30	2051	30
Event Description / Report: The event took place at São Miguel Stadium, divided into two sessions: in the morning for children aged 3–5 and in the afternoon for children aged 6–10.					
Throughout the day, several activity stations were available, ensuring moments of fun, movement, and physical activity for all participants. Highlights included archery, organized by the Archery					

Association, tennis sessions run by the Azores Tennis Association, horse riding with the support of the Equiaçores Equestrian Club, and traditional games.

The children also had the opportunity to explore the different sports facilities around the stadium, such as the beach volleyball court, basketball court, and football field. A special attraction was the “Super Heroes” area, which drew great enthusiasm from the younger participants.

The distribution of water was fundamental and guaranteed the well-being and safety of all the children during the activities. Overall, the event was marked by joy, strong participation, and highly positive feedback from both children and accompanying adults.

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Terceira	May 31, 2025	João Paulo II Sports Complex (CDJPII)	10:00 – 12:00	550	122

Event Description / Report: 9 stations: football, athletics, handball, basketball, volleyball, judo, karate, chess. Provided snacks and drinks. Strong parent attendance.

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Graciosa	May 31, 2025	Santa Cruz Municipal Field (Synthetic)	10:00 – 12:00	63	11

Event Description / Report: Outdoor event. Organized in psychomotricity and sport circuits. Warm-up dance. Parents attended. Each station supervised by adults.

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Jorge	June 21, 2025	Calheta Municipal Field	09:30 – 12:00	155	31

Event Description / Report: Started with group presentations. Recreational games, inflatables, face painting, sack race, obstacle courses. Snack provided. Each child received a balloon and bag.

Island	DATE	LOCATION	TIME	No. of Students	No. of Staff
Flores	June 14, 2025	Santa Cruz Municipal Field & Pavilion	14:00 – 17:00	123	8
Event Description / Report: Activities in field and pavilion: pedal cars, badminton, volleyball, frisbee, football, obstacle course. Children divided by age groups. Snacks provided. Clubs and volunteers participated. Each child received bag and bottle.					

Results achieved:

The organization of this type of initiative and event is of utmost importance for younger generations as well as for the sports clubs and associations of each island. It provides an opportunity to showcase and experience, in a festive and enjoyable environment, different sports in which children can register and participate.

Lessons learned:

Aspect	Yes/No	Lesson
Was the pilot testing successful?	Yes	It is necessary to organize more initiatives of this kind.
Were the planned activities suitable for the selected target group?	Yes	The sports activities were organized in a simple way, appropriate to the children's ages, and within a festive atmosphere.
Was the duration of the testing period sufficient?	Yes / No	Organizing an activity of this nature in just one morning or afternoon is insufficient. It would be interesting to prepare events like this more frequently throughout the year.
Were there any aspects of the pilot testing that needed to be adjusted during the period of implementation?	Yes	Duration of the event. We had to shorten the 'Good Practice' to just one morning / afternoon

Is the best practice transferrable to other target groups in your region?	No	We believe that the 3–10 age group is ideal.
Were there any challenges you came across during pilot testing? If yes, are you satisfied with how you have handled it?	Yes	We faced some difficulties in coordinating efforts among the various sports partners and entities, such as schools and municipal councils. However, with the collaboration and support of the sports services on each island, we were able to overcome this situation
Is there anything you would change in future attempts to transfer the BP in your region?	Yes	The implementation of initiatives of this type over a longer period, as described in the 'Good Practice', was not applied in this event, and therefore it does not reflect its original form. The original proposal involved organizing sports holiday camps during school vacations
Were there any outcomes that exceeded initial expectations?	Yes	The receptiveness of children and parents to this type of event

How would you evaluate the overall success of the BP pilot testing (1 being poor, 5 being excellent – please, indicate below):

1	2	3	4	5
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Period of pilot testing: Event n.º2 – This event took place over the course of a month, in partnership with the Clube Naval de Ponta Delgada (CNPd), on the island of São Miguel, through a protocol established with Sport Azores. The program was mainly focused on nautical activities, offering a variety of experiences aimed at promoting and valuing sports at sea.

Rationale (short explanation about the reasons and circumstances for selecting the particular BP or its element):

For the implementation and testing of the selected best practice (selected as a result of the 3 conducted workshops for public sector, private sector and civil society), as defined by the SESE project, it is essential to reflect upon its details.

This element of the selected best practice broadly consists of a sports day for primary school children, offering them the opportunity to try different sports. This initiative also allows, coaches,



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and qualified assistants to showcase their skills in specific sports, helping to spark children's interest in physical activity.

Description of the BP pilot testing structure and plan (*goals, target groups, activities, expected outcomes*):

The “Nautical Holidays” event, developed in partnership with CNPD, had as its main objective to broadly promote children's and young people's engagement with nautical activities, while also encouraging physical activity during the school holiday period. Beyond the direct benefits of adopting a healthier lifestyle, the initiative also aimed to foster essential values of citizenship, teamwork, and respect for the environment.

Held between June 30 and August 1, 2025, over a five-week period from Monday to Friday, the program involved young participants aged 8 to 16, organized into groups of 10 to 15 members.

The team responsible for running the event was composed of 1 Coordinator, 7 Certified Instructors, 5 Assistant Animators, 4 Activity Technicians, and 4 Staff Members, ensuring quality, diversity, and safety across all activities.

The program offered a wide range of activities, including swimming, fishing, sailing, windsurfing, stand up paddle, canoeing, snorkeling/diving, sports games, traditional games, nature exploration, boat and jet ski trips, cinema sessions, and environmental education activities. This diversity provided participants with the opportunity to experience different sports, develop new skills, and strengthen their connection to the sea and nature.

To ensure the smooth execution of the program, an Internal Regulation was prepared, covering aspects such as participants' rights and duties, registration process, schedule and timetable, activity organization, meals, insurance information, recommended clothing and accessories, as well as rules for the use of facilities. Results achieved:

The organization of this type of initiative is of utmost importance, not only for younger generations but also for the sports clubs and associations of each island. In the Azores, there is a limited sports offer during school holiday periods, particularly during the summer holidays. We believe that this time of year represents a privileged opportunity for the practice and exploration of different sports, with a special emphasis on nautical activities, which benefit from the exceptional conditions found in our region.

The results observed in this pilot project, highlighted by the strong participation in such activities, clearly demonstrate the high potential and attractiveness these initiatives represent. It therefore becomes evident how relevant it is to establish support mechanisms that encourage sports clubs and associations to develop programs of this nature. In this context, Sport Azores can play a

decisive role by promoting and supporting the implementation of projects that enhance sports in the Azores while simultaneously contributing to the healthy and active growth of younger generations.

Lessons learned:

Aspect	Yes/No	Lesson
Was the pilot testing successful?	Yes	It is necessary to promote and support more initiatives/projects of this kind.
Were the planned activities suitable for the selected target group?	Yes	The selection of activities received excellent participation.
Was the duration of the testing period sufficient?	Yes	
Were there any aspects of the pilot testing that needed to be adjusted during the period of implementation?	No	
Is the best practice transferrable to other target groups in your region?	No	We believe that the 8–16 age group is ideal.
Were there any challenges you came across during pilot testing? If yes, are you satisfied with how you have handled it?	No	
Is there anything you would change in future attempts to transfer the BP in your region?	No	
Were there any outcomes that exceeded initial expectations?	Yes	The receptiveness of children and parents to this type of event.

How would you evaluate the overall success of the BP pilot testing (1 being poor, 5 being excellent – please, indicate below):

1	2	3	4	5
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FÉRIAS 2025 NÁUTICAS

30 JUNHO A 1 AGOSTO

8 AOS 16 ANOS



PESCA
CANOAGEM
STAND UP PADDLE
VELA
SNORKELING
PISCINA
PASSEIOS DE BARCO
JOGOS COLETIVOS
PASSEIO DE MOTA DE ÁGUA
PAINTBALL
CINEMA
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4.4. Lapland

Selected best practice and/or best practice element: On the Move, Međimurje

Period of pilot testing: 1/8/2025 – 7/11/2025

Rationale (short explanation about the reasons and circumstances for selecting the particular BP or its element):

Lapland is a region heavily populated with sports clubs. These clubs accommodate a range of age groups and therefore a great opportunity for us as project partners and regional researchers to try and implement a best practice into the heart of the sport club ecosystem. As children become less active and less aware of what they fuel their bodies with, the “On the move” project from the Međimurje County of Croatia, was an ideal solution for us to educate children and parents on the importance of nutrition in sport.

Description of the BP pilot testing structure and plan (goals, target groups, activities, expected outcomes):

Goal: The goal of the pilot was to reach out to parents and children and ask them about their understanding of nutrition in regard to pre and post sport training sessions.

Target Group: children ages 9-12 and parents

Activities: Questionnaire development and distribution. Hosting an evening with a local cooking class, where children can learn how to prepare smoothies for pre and post training sessions.

Expected Outcomes: To provide information to children of nutrition and the importance of preparing foods that will provide energy and substance during their training and that there are alternatives to sugary snacks.

Results achieved:

Great participation in the event, with around 15 students signing up for the smoothie prep session. Participants were very active and the recipes were very easy to follow with affordable ingredients supplied. The package of smoothie recipes was delivered to the parents after the session and will be encouraged to prepare their children for sports with a more nutritious diet.

Parents provided feedback and the over 50% were not aware of the snacks their children were eating before and after training. Parents also lacked information on how to best support their children's sport through diet.

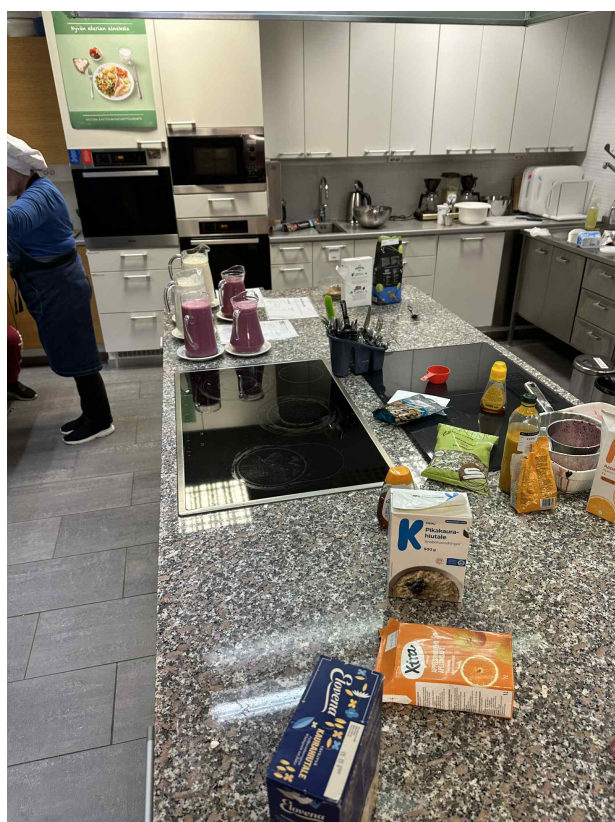
Therefore, the pilot allowed us to understand better the need for regional support to clubs in regard to informative support brochures to detail the best diet for young sports boys and girls. This will help to combat a list of childhood problems in relation to early obesity and inactivity.

Lessons learned:

Aspect	Yes/No	Lesson
Was the pilot testing successful?	Yes	Participation and relevance to the issues.
Were the planned activities suitable for the selected target group?	Yes	Children are interested in what they eat if they can be involved in the preparation.
Was the duration of the testing period sufficient?	Yes	Finding the best time during the off season was the best solution for us.
Were there any aspects of the pilot testing that needed to be adjusted during the period of implementation?	Yes	Within the parent questionnaire, we could adapt the questions to get better information.
Is the best practice transferrable to other target groups in your region?	Yes	Our pilot required an expert in education and cooking. Which can be found in most places.
Were there any challenges you came across during pilot testing? If yes, are you satisfied with how you have handled it?	Yes	We required a change in club due to low response rate, but so many clubs available that the change didn't change the timeline.
Is there anything you would change in future attempts to transfer the BP in your region?	No	
Were there any outcomes that exceeded initial expectations?	Yes	I think the children's response to meal preparation was the most surprising element. Which highlights the interest they have in this area of their athlete journey.

How would you evaluate the overall success of the BP pilot testing (1 being poor, 5 being excellent – please, indicate below):

1	2	3	4	5
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