

## SHORT TERM SCIENTIFIC MISSION (STSM) SCIENTIFIC REPORT

**This report is submitted for approval by the STSM applicant to the STSM coordinator**

Action number: **CA18236**

STSM title: **WESTERN BALKAN PLATFORM FOR SPORT INNOVATION**

STSM start and end date: **17/11/2020 to 28/11/2020**

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### **PURPOSE OF THE STSM:**

The goal of this STSM that I have conducted during my stay at the host institution was twofold.

It is well-known that modern organizations clearly stand out as leaders in their industries have one common factor that brings them together around the fact they are successful, and that is they are all largely committed to innovation. For that reason, it was clear to all subjects in sports sector that it is necessary to pay special attention to innovations in the sports industry too. However, as sports innovation is an underdeveloped area in the Western Balkans, for this reason the first goal was to focused on preparing a questionnaire in local language for conducting a research analysis of links between the sports sector, sports industry and knowledge organizations and innovation in one of the selected Western Balkan countries (Montenegro) and start working on collecting data for a scientific study that would promote (unacceptable) situation on the ground.

As the situation is estimated to be worse than expected, especially due to the fact that there is no PSI laboratory specialized in sports innovation, an initiative has been launched to bring together leading experts in the field of sports management to determine certain methodology and criteria for research and development in the field of sports innovation. In this way, the second goal of this STSM was focused on creating a draft of an adequate methodology and criteria for establishment a "Leading Sport Innovation Lab for Western Balkans" and organise a set of physical and online meetings with the colleagues interested to be the proposers of the ahead mentioned laboratory.

### **DESCRIPTION OF WORK CARRIED OUT DURING THE STSM:**

At the first place, it is important to justify why the proposal was undertaken at the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education at the University of Novi Sad. It is due to the reason this university unit has a very good rating Sport Science programmes (from 201 to 300 Sport Science Schools and Departments within 2019 Shanghai Ranking's Global Ranking) and wide range of teachers (recognized experts in the field), as well as numerous experts from this field that promised the high-quality meetings during my stay and prospective project proposals in the future. However, the main reason was the expertise of my host, Dr. Radenko Matic and our multi-year cooperation, and the joint idea to bridge the possibly impediments in both proposed goals of this STSM and provide some instruction and support services for Montenegrin and Serbian colleagues as well as all others from the Western Balkan countries.

From the reason the goal of this STSM was twofold we had to launch two parallel activities as soon as I arrived at the host university. First of all, my host and I have created the questionnaire for the survey. We have modified the Community Innovation Survey (CIS) to satisfy the requirements that would help us to test

our hypotheses. The mentioned questionnaire was designed to collect the data (35 items) that can offer us to explore links between the sports sector, sports industry and knowledge organizations and innovation in one of Western Balkan countries (Montenegro) and promote (unacceptable) situation on the ground. The questionnaire contains four separate parts: [1] general information (12 items); [2] innovative activities (12 items); [3] cooperation (6 items); and [4] market (5 items) and it was distributed electronically (Google Forms). The questionnaire was shared by social network tools and sent to personal contacts.

On the other hand, it is the fact that sport is known to be a dynamic and fast-growing sector with an underestimated macroeconomic impact. In addition, the fact that the share of gross value added (GVA) related to sport in total GVA in the EU varies from 1.76% to 3% in the broad sports sector, while total employment in the EU generated by sporting activities is 7.3 million and this is equivalent to 3.5% of total employment in the EU. The data observed in the previous sentence confirm that sport is an important economic sector in the EU and plays a significant role in national economies. This analysis and significant data was preceded by the valuable work of experts in sports science and sports innovation across the EU, while in the Western Balkans it was significantly neglected. Hence, any new study is welcome, as is any gathering within scientific associations or PSI labs to generate innovation in the subject area, especially because sport can play an important role in a number of major societal challenges, such as physical inactivity, sustainable development and educational gaps. From this reason, the second goal of this STSM and second parallel activity has initiated us to draft an adequate methodology and criteria for the establishment of the "Leading Sports Innovation Laboratory for the Western Balkans" and organize physical and online meetings with colleagues interested in being the proponents of the laboratory, as well as prepare official documentation for NGO registration which was submitted on 30 November 2020 to the Ministry of Public Administration in Montenegro (No. UPI-06/2-056/20-3512) as the proposers decide the headquarters will be located in Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro.

With the help of my host, all planned activities were carried out in the proposed period of time. I have collected the data from 75 subjects from the headquarters of sport organizations and did data processing and presented the preliminary (descriptive) results (further analyses will be conducted later). Lastly, I have prepared the official documentation for NGO registration as well as prepared this scientific report.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE MAIN RESULTS OBTAINED:**

Given the limit on the number of words, only the main results achieved during my STSM will be presented in this part of the report. In the first place, an empirical research was conducted with the aim of determining a research analysis of links between the sports sector, sports industry and knowledge organizations and innovation in Montenegro. The second part of this section will present the results related to the establishment of the PSI laboratory, i.e. its main goal and tasks that were established by the proposers and based on the application of the appropriate methodology and criteria around which they agreed.

From the general information perspective, it is important to emphasize that 75 subjects included in this empirical study were from all geographical parts of Montenegro and represented their sports organizations as executive directors, presidents, secretaries, founders, coaches, etc. who have a basic knowledge of the main business flows of their organization and potential innovative activities. It is important to emphasize that most of the selected sports organizations do not have more than 8 employees, while their business focus, as expected, is focused primarily on services (89.3%), then products (6.7%) and, finally, trading (4.0%). It is interesting to point out that more than half of these sports organizations are privately owned (50.7%), as well as the fact that in 64% of surveyed organizations annual revenues range from 0 to 100,000 euros, and in 14.7% in range from 100,001 to 500,000 euros, which does not deviate much from European standards, provided that the distribution is evenly distributed in the first category. However, the fact that 32% of respondents indicated that their income had increased compared to the previous year was encouraging, as was the fact that 38.7% of respondents stated that their income had not changed compared to the previous calendar year. Also, it is important to point out that 73.3% of respondents stated that they carry out their activities individually, while 26.7% are part of a group, then 92% of organizations direct their activities at the national level, while 8% have international engagement, as well as that 80% of organizations have, exclusively clients from Montenegro.

Furthermore, it is interesting to point out that 58.7% of the surveyed sports organizations do not have an employee who is responsible for innovative activities, while in those organizations that have it, the majority answered that only one person is in charge of these activities. Nevertheless, 42.7% of respondents answered that, in the last three years, the sports organization has introduced new or significantly improved products or services, then new or significantly improved working methods (45.3%), new or significantly improved marketing activities (50.7%), new or significantly improved organizational activities (56%), and new or

significantly improved innovative activities related to environmental protection (57.3%), while only 21.3% of respondents indicated that their organization received any form of financial support for innovative activities.

When asked to state how much profit sport organizations spend annually on innovation, 17.3% of respondents answered that they allocate over 5%, then 20% pointed out that they allocate 3-5%, and 16% to allocate 1-3%, while 13.5% stated that they allocate less than 1%, and as many as 33.3% did not allocate at all. On the other hand, when asked to state what share of the sports organization's income is the result of innovative activities in the past financial year, as many as 45.3% of respondents answered that there is no such income, while only 7% of respondents stated that over 50% of income is the result of innovative activities.

It is interesting to note that 33.3% of respondents recognize internal sources as the most important source of knowledge that leads to the development of innovation in sports organization, then 32% believe that these are personal and informal contacts with other organizations and colleagues from the region, 20% believe that these are research and development (R&D), 1.3% that these are customers, while 13.3% of respondents did not respond specifically. Finally, it is worth noting that only 26.7% of respondents from sports organizations stated that they have established cooperation with universities, while the term "open innovation" has never heard of 88%, and the term "innovation platforms" 86.7% of respondents. In addition, about half of the respondents believe that there is uncertainty in the market; a new competition is emerging; and the sports market is growing in Montenegro.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that the "Sport Innovation Lab for Western Balkans" was established on November 26, 2020 by five experts in this field, two from Montenegro (Dr. Sanja Pekovic and Dr. Stevo Popovic), two from Serbia (Dr. Ivana Milovanovic and Dr. Radenko Matic) and one from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dr. Dino Mujkic). After a series of online and physical meetings, as well as the final meeting at which the decision on establishment was made and the Statute of the organization was adopted, the methodology and basic work criteria were determined, as well as the main and specific goals of the organization that was established indefinitely. The main goal of the "Sport Innovation Lab for Western Balkans" is to build links between sports and related disciplines, industry and knowledge organization in the field of innovation, through creating business opportunities for its members, coordination and management of prepared and implemented investment, research and development, organizational and IT projects and through identifying opportunities for innovations that will meet the health, social, environmental and market needs of natural and legal entities living and working in the Western Balkans, while 18 specific goals have been identified that will represent the main activities of the organization in the future.

#### **FUTURE COLLABORATIONS (if applicable):**

It is important to start with the fact that building advanced knowledge about links between the sports sector, sports industry and knowledge organizations and innovation, with a focus on Western Balkan's sport organizations and creation of PSI Lab with the same idea, is the main reason for this STSM and it is strongly related to this Action objectives. Hence, this STSM should specifically contribute to the scientific objectives of the COST Action, whilst at the same time allowing those partaking in the missions to learn new techniques, gain access to specific data, instruments and methods not available in my home institution. The main impact of the STSM attendance was personal impact at the first place, mostly due to the reason I had a chance to stay unusually longer and meet various people from the host institution, as well as work with them closely. I was primary focused on developing personal connections that I cannot completely do through emails, as well as skype and ZOOM meetings. From the professional perspective I have to underline I have worked with my host colleague and his research team (in compliance with the measures prescribed by the crisis headquarters of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to prevent the spread of coronavirus) and we did a great job, so we have a plan to continue working on my STSM topic and do some more complex analyses later on, as well as discuss some new research questions. From the reason I was so satisfied and thankful to my host colleague, I recommend him to work together and prepare the abstract with the results from the STSM and submit it to the upcoming scientific conference organized by Montenegrin Sports Academy in Dubrovnik from 8 to 11 April 2021 (the extended deadline is on 15 January 2020). If abstract will be accepted I have also recommend him to apply for the ITC conference grant within our COST Action. In addition, I have also encouraged my host colleague to jointly work on writing a full-length paper that would be published in the journal indexed in Scopus database at least. Generally speaking, this COST Action helped me a lot to strengthen the existing research connections, to travel and meet new people, as well as start working with them, to invite some of my connections and possibly host them through our COST Action, and many other satisfactions. From the previously mentioned, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to have this opportunity and promise you that I will continue working in the line of the COST Action objectives and keep networking with the experts from the field.