



Raising the growth and participation
of female sport officials in Europe

LEARNING RESOURCES

/// PILLAR 1: WOMEN OFFICIALS STRATEGY AND PLANNING

SUB-PILLAR 1.1

**Assess your women
officiating needs -
undertake a needs
analysis and identify
gender gaps**



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Assess your women officiating needs – undertake a needs analysis and identify gender gaps

OVERVIEW

Undertaking a needs analysis and identifying gender gaps in your sport is an important step towards promoting gender equality and inclusivity.

👉 [Here is a step-by-step guide on how to do it:](#)

1. Research and gather data:

Start by researching existing studies, reports, and statistics related to gender participation and representation in your sport. Look for data on the number of participants, their demographics, roles in coaching and administration, and any existing initiatives or policies promoting gender equality.

2. Identify key stakeholders:

Determine the relevant stakeholders involved in your sport, such as athletes, coaches, administrators, officials, officials associations and governing bodies. Ensure representation from both genders to gain diverse perspectives.

3. Conduct surveys and interviews:

Develop and distribute surveys or conduct interviews to gather information directly from participants and stakeholders. Ask questions about their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for promoting gender equality. Ensure the survey is designed to capture gender-specific data.

4. Analyse the data:

Once you have collected the data, analyse it to identify any patterns or trends. Look for discrepancies between genders in terms of participation rates, access to resources, opportunities for advancement, and levels of representation.

**5. Identify gender gaps:**

Based on the data analysis, identify specific areas where gender gaps exist in your sport. This could include areas such as participation rates, funding allocation, media coverage, leadership positions, and decision-making roles.

6. Compare with best practices:

Research and compare your findings with best practices and initiatives implemented in other sports or organisations. Look for successful strategies that have effectively addressed gender gaps and promote inclusivity.

7. Develop an action plan:

Based on your findings, develop a comprehensive action plan to address the identified gender gaps. This plan should include specific goals, strategies, and initiatives to promote gender equality in your sport. Ensure it involves collaboration with key stakeholders and sets measurable targets.

8. Implement and monitor progress:

Implement your action plan and continuously monitor its progress. Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of your initiatives. Make necessary adjustments and improvements to ensure the goals are being achieved.

9. Communicate and raise awareness:

Regularly communicate the progress and achievements made towards gender equality in your sport. Use various channels, such as social media, newsletters, and events, to raise awareness and promote inclusivity.

By following these steps, you can undertake a needs analysis and identify gender gaps in your sport. This will help you develop targeted strategies to promote gender equality and create a more inclusive sporting environment.

>> CONTENT AREA 1: SPORTS OFFICIALS DATA COLLECTION

Collecting data on the gender of sport officials is an important step towards understanding and addressing issues related to gender diversity and representation in sport officiating.

👉 Here are some potential ways to collect such data:

1. Self-identification:

Sports officials can be asked to self-identify their gender when registering to officiate or when providing other relevant information.

2. Observation:

Observers can record the gender (as well as other information) of sports officials during games or other events.

3. Survey:

Surveys can be conducted to collect data on the gender and other relevant information of sports officials. This could involve reaching out to officials directly or to officiating organisations or groups.

4. Registration and Database Systems:

Some governing bodies maintain registration and database systems for sports officials, this could include specific fields related to gender allowing the federation to track the proportion of officials who are women.

5. Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups:

These research methods can provide in-depth insights into the experiences, challenges and perceptions of women sports officials.

It's worth noting that collecting this data is just the first step. The data must be analysed and acted upon in order to make meaningful progress towards greater gender diversity and representation in sports officiating. This may involve efforts to recruit and train more women officials, as well as working to eliminate bias and discrimination against women in officiating roles. Every federation should know how many women officials they have but this is definitely something that is missing in most instances.

Case Studies

It's important when you plan your data collection that you are clear on the channels / routes you wish to use in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. In one example a national Football Federation carried out a survey which had a high percentage of engagement. In order to achieve the best data, they sent the survey to a range of stakeholders including the following:

- Regional Associations
- Independent local Officiating groups
- Leagues / Clubs / Individuals

They held in-person events, online and email all using the same questions in order to gather clear data. Here are a few further examples of data collection projects that have focused on women sports officials:

1. "Breaking the Barriers: Women in Officiating" (United States):

This research project, conducted by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida, aimed to examine the barriers and opportunities for women in officiating across various sports. It involved surveying women officials, collecting data on their experiences, and analysing the challenges they face.

2. “Women in Officiating: Breaking New Ground” (Australia):

This initiative by the Australian Sports Commission aimed to gather data on women sports officials in Australia. It involved conducting surveys and interviews with women officials, analysing their experiences and perceptions, and identifying strategies to increase their representation and support in officiating roles.

3. “Women in Refereeing in European Football” (Europe):

This project, initiated by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), focused on collecting data and insights on women in refereeing across European football. It involved surveys, interviews, and data analysis to understand the barriers, experiences, and development needs of women referees.

4. “Gender Equality in Officiating: A Global Perspective” (International):

This research project, led by the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE) and Women in Sport, aimed to assess the status of gender equality in sports officiating worldwide. It involved collecting data from various countries through surveys and interviews, analysing the findings, and producing a comprehensive report on the current state of women sports officials globally.

These examples highlight research projects conducted by federations and other sport organisations, specifically designed to gather data and insights on women sports officials, aiming to understand their experiences, identify barriers, and inform strategies for promoting gender equality in officiating.

Top Tips

1. Identify what relevant data you need to collect.
2. Identify the appropriate mechanism for data collection.
3. Look at different ways of communicating with your officiating workforce.
4. When sending out surveys make sure they are focused and concise.
5. Ensure that you act on the results that are shown so that you can improve the situation.





>> CONTENT AREA 2: ANALYSIS OF DATA DEMOGRAPHICS

The gender demographics of sports officials vary widely depending on the sport, country, and level of competition. However, in many sports and regions, officiating is still dominated by men.

According to data from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as of 2018, women make up only 14 percent of sports officials worldwide. This figure includes all levels of competition, from local and regional events to major international competitions like the Olympic Games.

In some sports, the gender gap is particularly stark. For example, in football women make up only around 7 percent of registered referees in England, according to data from the Football Association.

However, there are also examples of sports where women are making significant gains in officiating. In Olympic sports like gymnastics and figure skating, women make up a significant portion of officials.

Efforts to increase gender diversity in sports officiating are ongoing, with organisations and individuals working to recruit and train more women to become officials, as well as to address barriers and biases that may prevent women from advancing in this field.

Bearing in mind the gender balance within your sport it's important to identify what data you have collected, and how best to analyse it to inform how your sport ensures equality of opportunity.

The data should offer a clear picture of the strong areas, and the gaps in your officiating workforce. Some areas that may come up are defined below:

- Gender balance at recreational level and throughout the development pathway up to the professional level
- Geographical spread of gender and levels
- Identification of the barriers that may be preventing women from progressing.



🕒 How to Analyse Data

1. Define Key Variables:

Clearly define the variables you are analysing, such as gender, age, and level of officiating.

2. Descriptive Statistics:

Calculate descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the demographic data. This includes measures like frequencies, percentages, means, or medians, depending on the nature of the variables. Analyse the distribution of each demographic variable to identify any imbalances or patterns.

3. Data Visualization:

Utilise data visualisation techniques to present demographic data effectively. Create charts, graphs, or maps to visually represent the distribution or trends in demographic variables. This can help communicate findings more easily and facilitate understanding.

4. Interpretation with Context:

Interpret the findings within the context of the specific sport, region, or governing body. Consider external factors that may influence demographic patterns, such as cultural norms, historical context, or organisational policies. Understanding the broader context will enhance the interpretation of the data.

5. Qualitative Insights:

Consider incorporating qualitative insights, such as interviews or open-ended survey responses, to complement the quantitative analysis. Qualitative data can provide richer insights into the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of sports officials in different demographic groups.

Top Tips

1. Using the data collected, identify positive areas of development to be undertaken by your sport.
2. Identify any gender gaps, geographically and by levels.
3. Using the data to identify your strategy going forward.
4. Share data with key stakeholders and those who contributed

>> CONTENT AREA 3: MAP YOUR OFFICIATING NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Officiating requirements and needs in sports can vary depending on the sport and the level of competition, and the federation responsible for regulating the sport.

Some of the different terms for the classifications of officials include:

- Interactors (e.g. soccer, basketball and hockey referees)
- Monitors (e.g. figure skating and diving judges)
- Reactors (e.g. tennis or volleyball line judges)

However, there are some general requirements and needs that are common across many sports. When mapping the requirements of your sport, along with your data collected, you may wish to consider the following areas of competence, many of which may well have already been considered in your data collection.

1. Knowledge of the laws/rules:

Officials must have a thorough understanding of the laws/rules and regulations of the sport they are officiating. This includes both the formal laws/rules established by governing bodies and any unwritten rules or norms that may be specific to certain competitions or regions.

2. Physical / Psychological fitness and agility:

Depending on the sport, officials may need to be physically fit and agile as well as mentally fit in order to keep up with the pace of play and make accurate calls. This is particularly true in sports like football, basketball, and Hockey, where officials may need to run or move quickly to maintain a good position on the field or court.

3. Communication skills:

Officials need to be able to communicate clearly and effectively with players, coaches, and other officials during a game. This includes both verbal communication and nonverbal cues like hand signals or body language.

4. Impartiality and fairness:

Officials must be impartial and fair in their decision-making, avoiding any bias or favouritism towards one team or player. This requires a high degree of professionalism and integrity on the part of the official.

5. Training and certification:

In many sports, officials are required to undergo training and certification in order to be eligible to officiate at certain levels of competition. This may involve attending classes or workshops, passing written and practical exams, and meeting other requirements established by the governing body of the sport.

Overall, officiating in sports requires a combination of knowledge, physical and mental ability, communication skills, and a commitment to fairness and impartiality. Meeting these requirements and needs is essential for ensuring that competitions are conducted safely and fairly, and that athletes are able to compete to the best of their abilities.

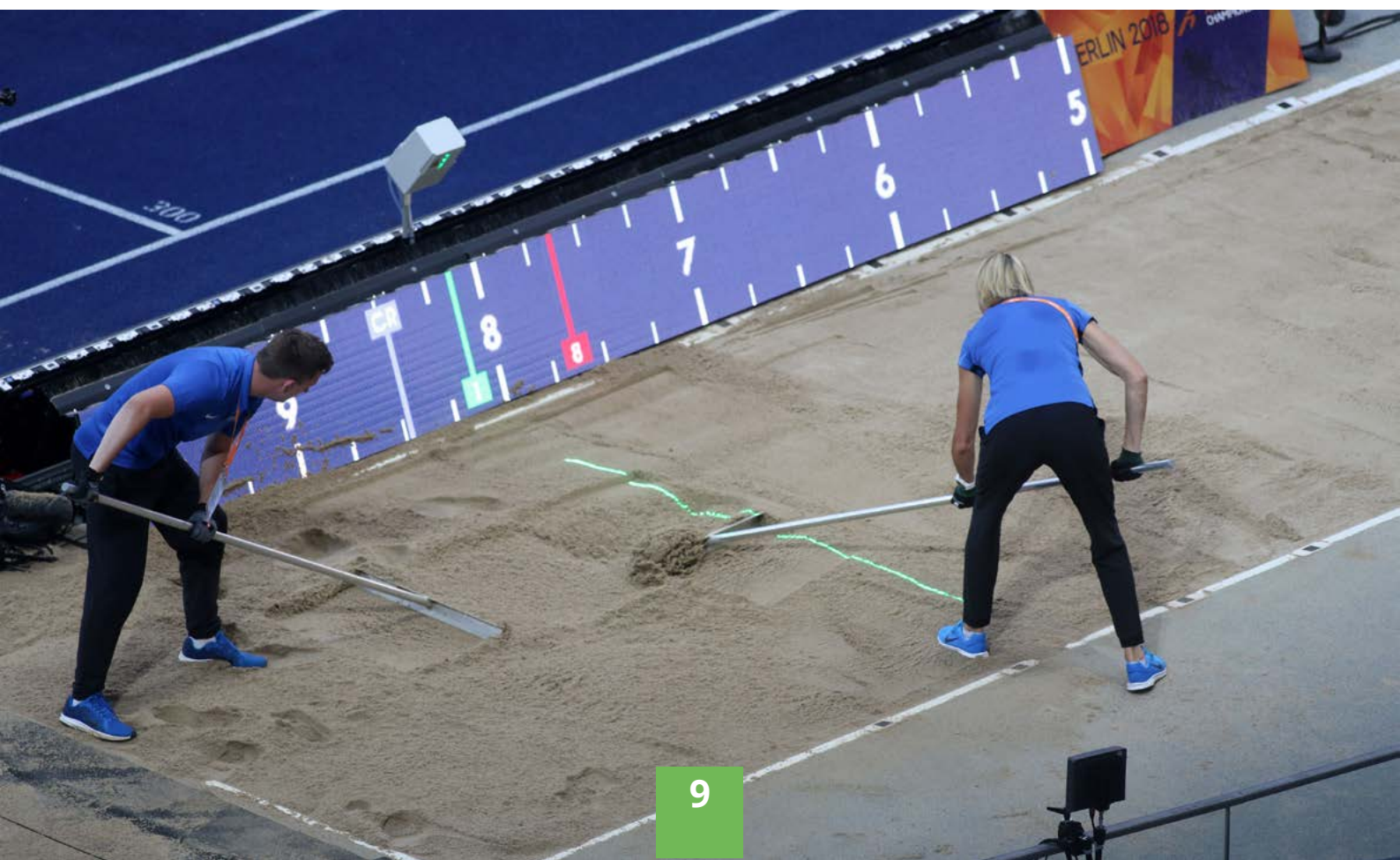
The officiating needs of a federation is a separate matter; they need to consider how many leagues and levels there are; their geographical locations; the frequency of the games and how many officials are needed for each appointment. They will also need to aim for a strong gender balance of these officials across all levels.

As well as the competencies and considerations outlined above, other areas to take into consideration when mapping the needs and requirements of your sport to ensure equality, are as follows:

- A. Recruitment and retention
- B. Pathways
- C. Promotion of opportunities
- D. Mentoring and support
- E. Training
- F. Improve the officiating environment.
- G. Governing body investment
- H. Culture
- I. Women officiating considerations.

Top Tips

1. Determine the officiating requirements – this may include the number of officials per game or competition.
2. Consider the geographical needs of the sport, the leagues, the venues etc
3. Assess activity requirements to ensure those recruited will receive appropriate appointments. This can include assessing the workload and availability of these recruits.
4. Monitor demographics of existing officials, age, level etc and map to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (E.D & I) needs and requirements of the organisation.
5. Consider development and growth – Take into account the potential for future development and growth of the sport, anticipate increases in the numbers of teams, leagues, competitions and adjust your estimations accordingly.





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