European Sport Coaching Framework v1.1
Second Consultation Draft
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Enhancing Coaches’ Learning, Mobility and Employability in the European Union

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Authors’ Note

The current version represents the second consultation draft of the ESCF. It will be available on www.coachlearn.eu for a one-month period between 7th March and 7th April. After this, the CoachLearn Project Group will proceed to finalise the ESCF for publication at the project closing conference in Leeds (UK) 31st May-1st June 2017. The final version will also contain a collection of illustrative case studies in each chapter.

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Thank you for your continued feedback and support for this project.
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Advancing Coaching Across a Continent

Exciting things are happening in coaching in Europe, thanks in large part, to work started more than two decades ago. In 1995 the Sport Coaching Expert Group of the European Network of Sport Science in Higher Education initiated a concerted campaign to improve coaching systems and coach education throughout the continent. Progress was subsequently accelerated with the founding of the European Coaching Council (ECC), the European branch of the International Council for Coaching Excellence (ICCE), in 2001 led by the late Professor Pat Duffy. What was learned in that continued effort significantly informed and shaped the drafting of the *International Sport Coaching Framework*, which was first published in 2013. The *ISCF*, created in cooperation with the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations and Leeds Beckett University, has since had a positive effect in the way coach education and development is understood and conducted world-wide.

As originally intended, the ISCF has become a global reference point for the development of coaching and coaches. Countries as diverse as Japan, Italy, Portugal, the USA, India, Malaysia, South Africa, Brazil and Poland, and international federations like the International Triathlon Union, the International Tennis Federation and World Sailing have engaged with ICCE and utilized the principles contained in the *ISCF* to continue to develop their coaching systems. These applications of the *ISCF* have demonstrated it to be a flexible and effective guide to support the tailor-made development and enhancement of coaching systems.

Europe has always been at the forefront in recognizing and promoting quality coaching and coach education. Recently, through a series of white papers, communications and work plans for sport, the European Commission has emphasised the importance of preparing a suitably trained coaching workforce to meet the needs of athletes and participants. Accordingly, the ECC has advocated the development of common guidelines for those working in coach education. And what better way to move toward meeting that goal than to create a Europe-specific version of the ISCF? Thus,
taking into account recent history of coach development in Europe together with the, newly established, broader perspective of education, this European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF or Framework) was created to enhance sport coaches’ learning, mobility and employability across the Union through the provision of a shared reference point and language.

The ESCF was developed from October 2014 to September 2017 as part of Project CoachLearn, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Commission. The first stage of the project focused on creating a solid understanding of the current educational and coaching arrangements in the EU. The European coaching workforce was analysed together with existing European education frameworks and mobility tools which determine the boundaries and rules of play under which coaching systems need to operate. Thus, and in line with the ISCF, the ESCF recognises and covers five key areas of interest that serve as fundamental drivers of all coaching systems:

- Athlete-Centred Vision
- Coaching Practice
- Coaching Expertise
- Coach Development
- Coach Certification & Recognition
The second stage of the project sought to ensure the utility of the ESCF by identifying the most effective approaches and tools in the field. Throughout the book you will find examples of case studies from across the EU. In addition, a suite of development and application tools to support countries and federations have been built and are hosted at www.coachlearn.eu. In this sense, the ESCF is not so much a recipe to strictly follow as it is a menu of options to choose from. The choices made by countries and federations will depend on their unique objectives and circumstances.

As you read the ESCF, keep in mind that it does not substitute or supersede the ISCF. Rather, it simply contextualises the principles and guidelines of the ISCF for the benefit of European practitioners.

The ESCF is another significant resource in the collaborative world-wide effort led by ICCE and its members to develop coaching to new heights. We hope you find it a useful tool to support your work.

Sergio Lara-Bercial – Project CoachLearn Co-ordinator
(Leeds Beckett University & ICCE)
For more information on project CoachLearn, please visit www.coachlearn.eu
Chapter 1  Coaching In Europe Today

Coaches play a central role in promoting sport participation and enhancing the performance of athletes and teams. In accordance with internationally recognized and domestic sporting codes, coaches guide the participation of children, players and athletes. Across 28 Member States, it is estimated that up to nine million volunteer, part-time and full-time paid coaches deliver an array of sporting opportunities to hundreds of millions of participants.\(^1\)

**Defining Coaching**

The ESCF embraces the definition of coaching provided in the ISCF:

\[
\text{A process of guided improvement and development in a single sport and at identifiable stages of development (ISCF, p. 14)}
\]

This definition emphasizes the ongoing nurturing and educational support by coaches of participants/athletes, and the notable signs of progress expected as a result of that experience.

Likewise, the ESCF adopts the ISCF perspective of effective coaching:

\[
\text{The consistent application of integrated professional, interpersonal and intrapersonal knowledge to improve athletes’ outcomes in specific coaching contexts.}
\]

In addition to their core role, coaches contribute to the development of athletes as people, teams as cohesive units and communities with a shared interest. Coaching also can contribute to social aims by promoting activity and health; coalescing citizens

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\(^1\) For example, in the UK research has found that 1.1 million coaches deliver sport to over 10 million participants every year (North, J. (2009). *The UK Coaching Workforce*. Sports coach UK: Leeds). Research conducted as part of CoachLearn (North et al, (2016). Sport coaching workforce data collection across five countries. CoachLearn: Leeds) estimated that between 5 and 8 million coaches could be active in the EU. In addition, recent research by the European Commission found that there were at least nearly four million qualified coaches across the European Union. This report highlighted, however, that this figure could be much higher due to data collection anomalies. (European Commission, (2016). *Study on sport qualifications acquired through sport organisations and (sport) educational institutes*. European Union: Luxembourg)
behind a common cause; and generating economic activity through employment, education, purchase of equipment, use of facilities and attendance at events.

In today’s landscape, coaches work with increasingly diverse populations and face heightening demands from their athletes, their athletes’ parents, administrators and fans. Even in voluntary positions, coaches are required to fulfil a variety of roles that may include educator, guide, sport psychologist and business manager. At higher levels of competition coaches are asked to emphasize positive interaction and overall development of athletes rather than simply the win–loss record. There is greater accessibility to information and visibility to a larger community in the digital age. All of these factors make coaching both more exciting and taxing than ever before.

**A/Current European Coaching Policy**

Over the last twenty years, the ECC has led a number of initiatives to develop coach education within the Union. These initiatives have reflected the wider changes in the overall education landscape. The European Framework for the Recognition of Coaching Competences and Qualifications adopted at the Rio Major Convention (EFRCCQ; ECC, 2007) kick-started the process of modernising coach education in Europe and laid the foundation for its alignment with wider European structures such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The need to transition coaching qualifications from input-based (i.e., focused on number of hours, subject knowledge and curriculum) to output-led (i.e., centred around the development of skills and competences required to fulfil specific jobs and practical and flexible learning) was a major development need stressed by this document.

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2 This theme has been taken up in the recent publication: European Commission Sport Unit (2012). EU Guidelines on Dual Careers of Athletes. Brussels; European Commission

3 For a full review of these developments, please download Project CoachLearn Report #1 from [http://www.coachlearn.eu/project-reports.html](http://www.coachlearn.eu/project-reports.html)

4 The EFRCCQ was developed as part of the wider AEHESIS (Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science) project between 2004-2007 supported by the Socrates Programme of the European Commission
The publication of the *International Sport Coaching Framework* provided new impetus and addressed some of the needs of European partners identified in the EFRCCQ from a global outlook. The guidance and drive provided by the European Commission’s (EC) 2007 White Paper on Sport, the 2011 Communication on Enhancing the European Dimension of Sport, and the Work Plans for Sport 2011-2014 and 2014-2017\(^5\) have also stimulated investment and progress in coaching. All these documents have strongly emphasised the role of a suitably trained coaching workforce in the successful delivery of sport across the EU. Governments, federations and other organizations have been encouraged to invest in coaching.

The integration of sport coaching qualifications within national qualification frameworks (NQFs) has been signalled as central to continued progress in this area. In this respect, the overall picture across Europe remains heterogeneous\(^6\). Two countries have fully integrated their coaching qualifications into their NQF, whilst 15 others have completed this process only partially. Most of the remaining member states have started to consider the transfer and adaptation of coaching qualifications to the NQF, so overall, the trend is positive. Notably, where integration has taken place, this has normally been facilitated by the development of a coaching-specific qualifications framework aligned to the NQF and EQF and adhered to by a critical mass of national governing bodies of sport.

Despite these advances, some key challenges persist.

- There is limited resource for coach education and development within key organisations

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\(^6\) European Commission, (2016). *Study on sport qualifications acquired through sport organisations and (sport) educational institutes*. European Union: Luxembourg
• Ensuring coaching qualifications have a practical focus with sufficient time and resource allocated to experiential learning modes requires new thinking and investment.
• Facilitating alignment between coach education provided by different sectors, and the recognition of prior learning remains problematic.
• The value and nature of coach certification and licensing continues to be debated.
• The development of a suitably trained coach developer workforce is still a low priority in some countries and federations.
• Aligning with EQF/NQF may seem limiting for some coach education organisations

A/Coaching Status in Europe

A significant feature of the European coaching landscape is the large amount of variability in relation to the employment and remuneration status of coaches. Research data and evidence from different countries shows that the coaching community consists of volunteer, part-time paid and full-time paid coaches as outlined in Figure 1.2. For instance, in the UK, 76% of coaches are volunteers, 21% are part-time employed and just 3% are employed full-time. By contrast, in Lithuania all coaches are either part-time or full-time employed, even if the same coaches also do some additional voluntary coaching. In many cases, however, volunteers undertake pre-coaching roles where a formal decision to coach or gain qualifications has not yet been made.

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Figure 1.2 – Categories of coaching status.

The variations in the ratio of these categories according to sport and context, leads to contrasting ways in which the identity of coaches is perceived (see Table 1.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional identity</th>
<th>Blended identity</th>
<th>Voluntary service identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High proportion of paid coaches, committed to professional standards; organization and professionalization.</td>
<td>Majority of unpaid coaches, with a substantial number of paid roles. Commitment to a process of professionalization and organisation</td>
<td>High proportion of volunteer coaches with few, if any, paid roles. Commitment to service and volunteering for its own sake. Varied agenda on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.2 Coaching Status and Identity

Coaching differs from other occupations due to its high proportion of volunteers, many of whom are parents and older athletes who take on immediate coaching needs. For this reason, coaching is seen as a ‘blended’ occupational area.

A/European Coaching Systems

Each country and sport needs to find the most suitable way to meet the needs of coaches and athletes. This does not happen in isolation but is the result of the interactions between the constituents of what can be termed The Coaching System⁹.

The Coaching System: The people, organisations, structures and processes that play a part in the recruitment, education, development, employment and recognition of coaches in a particular context.

The people, organisations and functions that make up the coaching system can be seen in figure 1.1.

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⁹ For more information regarding coaching systems, and for a simple tool to explore what your current system looks like and what you may want to be like in the future please visit www.coachlearn.eu/developmenttools
Effective coaching systems may differ in size, structure, and number of components to fit available resources and to reflect the socio-cultural and institutional reality and objectives in which they are embedded.

The existence of an organisation or consortium of organisations with an official mandate to lead the coaching system and facilitate the coordination of its constituents is central to success. The articulation of the existing system, even if it has not been formalised, is paramount to understanding its strengths and areas for improvement.
Chapter 2  Athlete-Centred Vision

Coaches face many distractions and pressures that can affect their practice and impact. By having a clear focus, they are able to appropriately direct their attention and energy towards meeting the needs of their athletes, optimize their well-being, and improve their performance in their specific sports contexts.

A/Coaching Philosophy and Responsibilities

Coaches, like everyone, direct their attention and actions toward the things they value.

A prerequisite of coaching should be a strong interest and commitment to the positive sport experience and development of each athlete.

Even at the highest level of competition\textsuperscript{10} research has shown that successful coaches operate from a coherent and robust philosophy which is built on a genuine desire to do well for others and which provides them with a reference point which facilitates ethical and values-based decision-making.

The premise of an athlete-centred approach is the protection of and respect for the integrity and individuality of those with whom coaches work. Coaches have a responsibility to safeguard and protect children and young people in their care. At the elite level, coaches have a moral duty to ensure that athletes are supported in the development of ‘dual careers’ which allow them to transition seamlessly into a new phase of their life once they retire from national and international competition. Recent

work led by the European Commission, the International Olympic Committee and the Council of Europe has focused extensively on these areas\textsuperscript{11}.

Coaches must also abide by the international and national rules relating to anti-doping as defined by WADA in the CoachTrue programme\textsuperscript{12}. They must also remain vigilant with regards to the threat of sport corruption and the International Centre for Sport Security has developed guidelines and tools in this respect\textsuperscript{13}. The clear expectation is that coaches will perform their duties in an ethically responsible way, play by the rules at all times and protect the integrity of sport.

Coaches should be supported to explore their values and beliefs and to develop a personal, ethically-grounded coaching philosophy over time. This will encourage coaches to develop the self-awareness required to discern whether their values and behaviours are aligned, and to do something about it when they are not.

A coaching philosophy should be informed by basic ethical principles and aimed towards supporting the objectives of each athlete in specific contexts. If the values held by the coach are different to those of the athletes and their families, it is unlikely that the outcomes will be satisfactory.

It is also important for coaches to establish if the values of their employers match their own. Coaches need to be able to reconcile the interests of employers, teams and groups with that of the individual athletes. A strong philosophy helps coaches be proactive and decisive when a conflict of interests arises.


\textsuperscript{12} \url{www.coachtrue.wada-ama.org}

A/Positive Athlete Development

The needs and goals of athletes vary across the different sport domains and participant development stages. The purposeful and positive consideration of this evolving picture for each individual in the planning and delivery of a sport system has been termed *Long-Term Athletic Development*.

One of the most popular models which attempts to explain the phases of engagement in sport through a lifetime, was developed by Istvan Balyi. His Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model is outlined in Figure 2.2\(^{14}\).

![Figure 2.2 – Long Term Athlete Development](image)

**LTAD** uses a number of physical and psychological markers to propose a continuum of developmental stages and the associated coaching practices to maximise the performance potential of each individual, as well as foster life-long participation. Though the model has received some criticism\(^ {15}\), it has been adopted and adapted by a


\(^{15}\) An alternative model, the Youth Physical Development Model proposed by Rhodri Lloyd and Jon Oliver builds on and challenges the LTAD model to offer additional guidance on best practices in participant development across
significant number of sports organizations and national federations, and has, in most cases, proven to be a good starting point for participant development planning. Crucial to long-term athletic development, however, are the context-specific modifications of the model, including the titles and objectives of the stages and the associated age categories.

A complementary approach, the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP), developed by Jean Côté\(^\text{16}\) identifies different engagement trajectories in sport, namely recreation and performance. In the performance trajectory, this model proposes three key phases:

- **Sampling Phase.** Children take part in a variety of activities and develop foundational movement and game skills in an environment characterised by fun and enjoyment.
- **Specialising Phase.** Young athletes begin to focus on fewer sports, possibly favouring one in particular.
- **Investment Phase.** Athletes commit to achieving a high level of performance in a specific sport.

For the recreation trajectory, the sampling and/or specialising phase are instead followed by the recreational years, in which children or adolescents continue to take part in sports for social interaction, healthy lifestyle and sheer enjoyment.

As with LTAD, the extent to which the stages described in the DMSP exist in different sports and countries will vary depending on culture, tradition, structures and available opportunities. Individual variation will also be present. These models, however, provide a basis for identifying key areas of focus in coaching at the various stages, taking into account individual needs and rates of development along the way.

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This may require adjustment of ages and stages to reflect the actual state of affairs in any given sport or country.

**B/Coaching Domains in Europe**

Research evidence\(^\text{17}\) has identified two main types of engagement in sport: *participation sport* and *performance sport*. The former emphasises involvement and enjoyment; the latter accentuates competition and results. Within each of these two types of sport engagement are three subdivisions\(^\text{18}\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Children</td>
<td>4. Emerging Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adolescents</td>
<td>5. Performance Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adults</td>
<td>6. High Performance Athletes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 – Sport participation segments

These segments are outlined in figure 2.1 as part of an overall sport participation map. The definition and extent of these segments and the nature of the sport participation map need to be defined based on the needs of each sport and country. This approach may also involve the development of two maps: the existing position and the desired future one.


To achieve true athlete-centred coaching, coaches’ philosophy, knowledge and capabilities need to reflect and match the changing needs of participants and athletes at different stages of their engagement in sport. Coach education, therefore, must account for the different participation segments coaches work with. This is likely to entail the provision of specialist training to gain the required level of competence to fulfil the needs of participants in a specific segment. Coaches must continually improve and expand their capability. The organizations that employ them owe it to coaches to ensure they have sufficient educational footing, philosophical orientation and resources to fulfil the duties expected of them.

**Coach development programmes need to reflect the domains and contexts in which coaches will work. This will support coaches develop the relevant philosophy, knowledge and capabilities to maximise the chances of athletes and participants having positive developmental experience in and through sport.**
Based on the two main types of sport engagement, participation and performance, the ISCF proposed two coaching categories and six coaching domains across (see figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2 – Coaching categories and coaching domains**

The number and makeup of the coaching domains may vary among nations and sports, depending on the participation and performance pattern. Each sport should conduct an analysis of its participant base to more precisely determine the contextual fit and coaching domains required to meet the needs of participants. It is also important to recognise that coaches may work simultaneously across the two main categories and within different domains depending on the nature of their role.

**B/Coaching Outcomes**

Effective coaches establish objectives for and with their athletes. These goals stem from positive values and a desire to create the best possible experience for them. The goals will also often align with the over-arching aims of the organization, institution or programme in which the coach works.

For assistance in this goal-setting process, a coach can consult one of the many available classifications of athlete outcomes and coaching objectives. Some of these classifications focus on sport-related competences, such as physical, mental, technical
and tactical proficiency. In other cases, the emphasis is on outcomes related to the holistic development of the participant. Either way, coaches should see the athlete as a whole person with their own individual needs and preferences.

Based on on-going research\textsuperscript{19}, the outcomes associated with effective coaching can be grouped into three main categories:

- **Sport competences**: physical, technical, tactical and cognitive capabilities required to take part at different levels. These competences form the traditional core business of sport and occur within the context where participants strive for and deal with the consequences of competition, success and failure.

- **Personal competences**: capabilities that relate to the development of the whole person and which may be supported/developed through participation in sport. These can be grouped into self-development, cognitive, emotional, moral, and social outcomes.

- **Life experience**: the personal life experiences lived through sport which may positively contribute to the individual life course of the participant (for example, the adoption of a healthy lifestyle; the development of a strong personal and professional network of contacts; a professional career as a player and/or coach; or a disposition to give back to the community).

Coaches have a strong responsibility to identify the objectives they are seeking to achieve with their athletes. Coaches should also develop a clear sense of why they are striving for these objectives informed by their values, philosophy and a two-way interaction with the athletes. The long-term benefit and well-being of the athlete should always be paramount.

\textsuperscript{19} This research has been conducted by Lara-Bercial, S., McKenna, J., Côté, J., and North, J. This research has also informed the development of a variety of curricula and courses for the training of coaches in countries such as Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ireland, South Africa, Japan and Philippines. Additionally, current research led by Schipper van Veldhoven, N., Fix, M., Lara-Bercial, S. and North, J., is looking to develop a European Coaching Children Curriculum as part of Erasmus+ co-funded project iCoachKids.
The outcomes and objectives outlined in this chapter offer a menu of options for coaches. This menu will also assist in the design of coach education programmes for specific participation domains.
Chapter 3  Coaching Practice

In previous chapters, we discussed how coaches in Europe work to fulfil a broad range of athlete and institutional outcomes across a variety of domains and contexts. The variety of objectives and the number of factors that impact on their work make coaching a complex and challenging activity. This chapter covers a series of functions and related tasks that, if effectively and consistently executed, can make coaching not only a doable and effective job, but a rewarding one as well.

A/Primary Functions of the Coach

The *European Sport Coaching Framework* specifies six primary functions for guiding athlete development and improvement, essentially defining the daily work of the coach. These primary functions have been derived from consultation, and a substantial review of the extensive existing literature and newly developed primary research

1. **Set the Vision and Strategy.** The coach creates a vision and a strategy based on the needs and stage of development of the athletes and the organizational and social context of the programme. The coach develops a specific plan outlining the steps required to bring the strategy to life and realise the vision.

2. **Shape the Environment.** The coach work with a group of athletes and takes responsibility for the common and individual objectives and the institution’s. In order to do so, the coach seeks to optimise the environment in which the programme occurs through the procurement and maximisation of personnel, facilities, resources, working practices and the management of other coaches and support personnel.

3. **Build Relationships.** The coach builds positive and effective relationships with athletes and others associated with the programme. This includes personnel at the club, school, federation and other levels. The coach is responsible for engaging in, contributing to and influencing the organisational context through the creation of respectful and effective working relationships with those he is accountable to (i.e. performance managers, board of directors, etc.).
4. **Conduct Practices and Prepare and Manage Competitions.** The coach organises suitable and challenging practices using effective pedagogy and methodology to promote learning and improvement. The coach prepares for targeted and appropriate competitions and also oversees and manages the athletes in these competitions. The coach creates additional and relevant internal and external competitive opportunities where appropriate to promote individual and team development.

5. **Read and React to the Field.** The coach observes and responds to events appropriately, including all on- and off-field matters. Effective decision making is essential to fulfil this function and is a cross cutting capability that should be developed in all coaches at each stage of their development.

6. **Reflect and Learn.** The coach evaluates the programme as a whole as well as each practice and competition seeking improvements. In addition, personal evaluation and reflection underpin a process of ongoing learning and professional development. An important element of this process is the coach’s efforts to support the education and development of other coaches.

Figure 3.1 The primary functions of the coach
The primary functions, as seen in figure 3.1, are interrelated, interdependent and occur within a cyclical process of continuous improvement that includes planning, implementation, review and adjustment. The foundational role of a sound vision and strategy, informed by the objectives of athletes, teams, and the organisational and institutional context, cannot be overemphasised.

These primary functions describe how coaches accomplish their aims in general terms. Substantial variation may exist depending on the nature of specific coaching roles and circumstances. Experienced coaches typically are more engaged in all of the functions than are early-stage coaches. However, all coaches should be aware of and strive to fulfil these primary functions regardless of experience.

**B/Task-Related Coaching Competences**

In the process of successfully fulfilling the primary functions on the job, coaches demonstrate task-related competence. Coaching qualifications and development opportunities should go beyond the acquisition of knowledge and foster its integration and application to effectively develop this competence. The ISCF classified the range of tasks coaches carry out according to the six primary functions. More recently, ICCE, has refined this classification20 (Table 4.2).

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20 In response to the ever growing number of universities offering sport coaching bachelor degrees, ICCE convened an expert working group in 2015 led by Professor Alfonso Jiménez to develop the International Coaching Degree Standards. The standards were published in 2016 and are downloadable from [www.icce.ws](http://www.icce.ws). Sergio Lara-Bercial led the technical development of the document supported by Andy Abraham, John Bales, Pascal Colmaire, José Curado, Kristen Dieffenbach, Masamitsu Ito, Olivia Mokglate, Lutz Nordmann, and Steven Rynne.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Functions</th>
<th>Task-Related Competences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Set Vision & Strategy** | - Understand the big picture and align practice with local, regional and national policy and objectives  
- Develop a suitable vision for the program relevant to the athletes in it and also to institutional priorities  
- Set up a relevant strategy that supports the fulfilment of the vision  
- Make effective and informed decisions relating to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mid- to long-term programmes of practice and competition based on institutional and participant/athlete needs |
| **Shape the Environment** | - Effectively identify and recruit participant/athletes and staff  
- Identify, reflect on and challenge prevailing beliefs, values and assumptions within the coaching environment to establish a suitable culture  
- Identify and source the relevant resources (human and material) required to fulfil programme and participant needs;  
- Employ all reasonable measures to keep participants/athletes and staff safe from harm |
| **Build Positive Relationships** | - Lead and influence the attitudes, behaviours and understanding of key stakeholders (i.e. parents, managers etc.) through the meaningful presentation of ideas  
- Establish and maintain an ethical, effective, inclusive and empathetic relationship with athletes, staff and other stakeholders  
- Appreciate physical, mental and cultural diversity in participants and adapt practice accordingly  
- Adhere to established codes of conduct and legal requirements in coaching  
- Educate participant/athletes, staff and other stakeholders to enhance their contribution to their own objectives, the program’s and their overall wellbeing |
| **Conduct Practices and Prepare and Manage Competitions** | - Conduct comprehensive needs analyses for individual athletes and/or teams in order to design and deliver tailored coaching programmes, taking into account participant needs and capabilities in the context of wider programmes, curricula, policies and targets  
- Select, design and justify appropriate pedagogy, practice and communication methods to facilitate the short, medium and long term learning needs of participants  
- Conduct a functional analysis of multi skill activity or of their chosen sport(s) and identify the implications for coaching practice. |

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21 The capacity to engage in meeting these primary functions requires a synoptic application of knowledge, skills and professional competences. The contribution of each being dependent of the specific context and demands.

22 Multi skill activity refers to sport sessions aimed at the development of overall psychomotor skills, typically in children, sometimes referred to as Fundamental Movement Skills. These types of activity can be done as part of a sport specific session (i.e. multi skills with a theme of tennis) or as outright multi skills sessions.
- Identify the core elements of multi skills or of their chosen sport(s) at the key stages of participant development.
- Devise, interpret and apply an appropriate curriculum for a multi skill environment or in their chosen sport(s) in line with participant needs and the agreed industry standard.
- Deliver a series of coaching sessions in the context of medium term and long term planned programmes of practice and competition using a wide range of appropriate learning modes for participants and coaching behaviours.
- Can conduct and work to risk assessments in order to deliver safe and ethical coaching practice.
- Identify, create and manage suitable competitive opportunities to contribute to participant/athlete on-going development.
- Develop appropriate competition strategies to maximise chances of learning and success.
- Maintain a professional attitude towards coaching practice, athletes and all stakeholders at all times.

**Read and React to the Field**

- Conduct an insightful analysis of coaching practice to make informed judgement relating to the efficacy of the learning environment established.
- Conduct an insightful analysis of athlete/team performance to make informed decisions regarding ‘on the spot’ adjustments to enhance it.
- Conduct an insightful analysis of the programme to make informed judgement relating to the efficacy of the environment established.
- Make good ‘in-action’ and ‘post-action’ decisions to increase chances of reaching objectives.

**Reflect and Learn**

- Identify and reflect on assumptions and practices as a coach and student, demonstrating the ability to conduct informed analysis and a willingness to apply the principle of continuous improvement to own coaching.
- Identify own learning needs and take responsibility for the development and application of strategies for further self-development, as part of an on-going profiling process.
- Take an objective and critical approach to problem identification and solution, using evidence-based approaches and appropriate research methodologies.
- Develop an initial personal coaching philosophy and style, recognising the need for further growth based on learning, evidence and experience.

Table 4.2 Task-related competences of the coach (adapted from the International Coaching Degree Standards, ICCE, 2016, p18-19)

These task related competences are fluid and inter-related. They have been located within a specific function for ease of understanding and representation, but some of them span across multiple areas.
Chapter 4  Coaching Expertise

For both coaches seeking to improve their coaching practice, and those within the coaching system responsible for improving the effectiveness of their workforce, it is important to recognise there will be differences between those who have just started coaching and have very little experience, and those who have extensive experience. It is also important to recognise differences between those who have not been able to capitalise on their experience (extensive experience does not always mean improved performance), and those who have.

In sport coaching research, it has been common to compare the knowledge, skills and competencies of beginner or novice coaches, and those who may be underperforming, with those who have taken advantage of their experiences and are seen as experts. There are many different definitions of expertise, and indeed problems finding a definition that most are happy with, but in the ESCF we broadly equate it with consistently superior performance\(^{23}\). Thus, expert coaches, consistently outperform other coaches in terms of, for example, setting up a vision, shaping the environment, building relationships, conducting practice, reading and reacting, and learning in the contexts they work. They are also more likely to achieve the goals and aspirations of their participants and performers.

The idea of a novice-expertise continuum is very useful and powerful. It provides a framework within which individual coaches can understand where they are now, and what they can aspire to, in terms of the development of their practice. It also provides system builders with important thinking tools for structuring coach development and qualification pathways discussed in more detail in chapters 5 and 6.

\(^{23}\) Performance here is understood as the process of coaching, not a win-loss record.
A/Thinking about expertise

There is now a great deal of research on expertise and expertise development across the professions and in sport in terms of athlete development and coaching. However, within this research there are different underpinning assumptions, ideas, and models available. As a general term, nevertheless, expertise is a useful composite term for a range of experiences, knowledge, skills, behaviours, capabilities and competencies that enable an individual coach to consistently perform at the very highest level in the contexts they work.

Research from cognitive psychology – which focuses less on the actual characteristics of expert practice (i.e. what coaches do) and more on the cognitive resources that coaches require to perform – often cites the following characteristics of expertise.

Experts have:

- more knowledge of their chosen fields and contexts
- more complex representation of that knowledge
- superior memory performance
- more effective storage and access to knowledge
- are better at reading situations and situational data
- interpret greater meaning from available information
- have superior anticipation skills
- and, ultimately, make better decisions.
The understanding of expertise must, however, go beyond the cognitive characteristics of experts. We need to understand how they combine with more tacit ways of knowing and doing, through experience in the coaching context, to provide the basis for effective practice. This means that expertise in any coaching context is not straightforward – it has cognitive, behavioural and social dimensions – and thus, as we will note later, is prone to development in many different ways.

**B/Thinking about expertise development through stages**

A useful thinking tool that has emerged from the expertise research is the idea of *stages of expertise development*. This concept originated from philosophy\(^{24}\), but has also been adopted by researchers in other fields like, for example, education\(^{25}\). Sport coaching researchers\(^{26}\) have also adopted and adapted it. This research compares the characteristics of experts (the final stage of development) with those at lower levels.

The original education research proposed five stages – novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. In the research on coaching, the novice and advanced beginner phase have been collapsed into one beginner category to produce a four-stage model. Each of these development phases is describable – see Table 4.1.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 1: Novice</strong>&lt;br&gt;Learning about the environment through common characteristics and context free rules</td>
<td><strong>Beginner</strong>&lt;br&gt;Less than 3 years of experience&lt;br&gt;Learning rules and norms of coaching&lt;br&gt;Delivering structured sessions and maintaining athlete behaviour more important than athletes learning&lt;br&gt;Feel out of control when situation doesn’t match rules/norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage 2: Advanced Beginner</strong>&lt;br&gt;Experience used to develop episodic and case knowledge, and to situate propositional knowledge. Similarities across contexts are recognized. Early strategic knowledge developed</td>
<td><strong>Level 3 Competent</strong>&lt;br&gt;Prioritise and plan&lt;br&gt;Conscious choices about action&lt;br&gt;Can work out what strategies are important in context&lt;br&gt;Accepts responsibility for actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3 Competent</strong>&lt;br&gt;Prioritise and plan&lt;br&gt;Conscious choices about action&lt;br&gt;Can work out what strategies are important in context&lt;br&gt;Accepts responsibility for actions</td>
<td><strong>Cultivating competence</strong>&lt;br&gt;More experience and knowledge&lt;br&gt;Recognise patterns between events&lt;br&gt;Develop strategic knowledge&lt;br&gt;Contingency if/then planning&lt;br&gt;Work to bigger picture goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 4 Proficient</strong>&lt;br&gt;As a result of extensive experience, they recognize similarities across context, developing holistic view, problems solved through intuition/know-how&lt;br&gt;Can predict likely problems</td>
<td><strong>Practicing proficiency</strong>&lt;br&gt;Significant number of years coaching&lt;br&gt;More focused on athlete learning including individualised learning&lt;br&gt;Stronger perceptual skills&lt;br&gt;More intuitive, with stronger sense of control and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 5 Expert</strong>&lt;br&gt;Intuitive grasp of situation, nonanalytic and non-deliberative ways to appropriate response to be made&lt;br&gt;Effortlessly fluid and adaptable&lt;br&gt;Usually successful, analytical when not</td>
<td><strong>Excelling to expert</strong>&lt;br&gt;Consistently outstanding performance&lt;br&gt;Extensive knowledge; committed to learning and synthesising new knowledge; greater variety of strategies for same task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Stages of expertise development in teaching and sport coaching

This work is useful because it provides a set of ideas to think about the development of sport coaches through a number of clear stages. Although it is recognised that individual development will not be so linear this approach provides a useful guide for identifying next steps and potentially a structure for curriculum building. Indeed, it is not surprising that most international coach education and qualification systems use either a
three- or four-level approach with an additional entry phase. The use of stage models in coach development and qualification will be discussed more in sections 5 and 6.

**A/Coaching Knowledge**

A central element underpinning coaching expertise is coaching knowledge. Various authors have proposed a number of knowledge classifications which help inform the development of curricula.

Jean Côté and Wade Gilbert\(^{27}\) have proposed that for coaches to be effective, they need to consistently integrate and apply three types of knowledge: professional (subject matter knowledge and how to teach it), inter-personal (knowledge related to the ability to connect with people and build positive relationships) and intra-personal (knowledge of self and personal philosophy based on experience, self-awareness and reflection) (Table 4.2). As expressed in chapter 2, the centrality of intrapersonal knowledge is highlighted by ICCE. Coach behaviour must be underpinned by a clear and explicit set of values, ethical principles and responsibilities. Coach education and development initiatives should ensure all three types of knowledge are included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge area</th>
<th>Samples of subject matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional knowledge</td>
<td>The Sport Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sport science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaching theory and methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foundational skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal knowledge</td>
<td>Social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal knowledge</td>
<td>Coaching philosophy and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2 – Coaching Knowledge Areas (reproduced from ISCF, 2013; adapted from Côté and Gilbert (2009)).

An alternative and complementary classification has been proposed by Andrew Abraham and colleagues\(^{28}\). They proposed that to facilitate their decision-making, planning, and practice, coaches can consider the requirements of the participant (who), the specific demands of the sport or activity (what), and the methodological and pedagogical approach to facilitate development (how). The Abraham and colleagues model emphasises the need for knowledge to be contextualised to the needs of the participant and the sport and the importance of coaches’ understanding of how to create a positive and optimal learning environment. This model also highlights the relevance of coaches’ understanding of the cultures and context in which they operate and of their own personal values and philosophy. (Figure 4.2).

![Diagram of the who-what-how model of coaching knowledge](image)

Figure 4.2 – The who-what-how model of coaching knowledge (Abraham et al., 2015)

Chapter 5  Coach Development

The Framework emphasises that a coach’s primary mission is to help sport participants develop not only as athletes, but also as people. To fulfil that aim, a coach requires a set of functional and task-related competences, underpinned by knowledge and reflection. Coaches will have different levels of expertise based on their experience, education and development pathway. So, just how does one progress to greater levels of expertise in a coaching role?

As we saw in the previous chapter, expertise development takes time and effort. Any appropriate approach to coach development must therefore proceed in a progressive and sustainable way. There is thus a need for Long-Term Coach Development (LTCD). This approach must consider coaches’ stages of development, how coaches learn and which participants coaches are working with.

LTCD will address both coaching for participation and coaching for performance across the six sport engagement domains described in Chapter 2. It will also foster the progression of coaches within and across domains through the offering of a variety of learning and development opportunities. The LTCD pathway may look different for each country, sport or discipline, as it needs to be tailored to specific needs and available resources.

Coaches may also have different developmental pathways due to varying personal circumstances and exposure to diverse sources of learning. The gradual accumulation of experiences contributes to the long-term development of the coach.

National and international federations and other providers have a key role in identifying the optimal developmental process that will enhance the learning and progression of their coaches. Recent research\(^\text{29}\) has indicated that the combination of athletic experience, coaching experience, and a mix of educational opportunities provides the basis for a pathway that may lead to higher levels of expertise in

performance coaching (see Figure 5.1).

For coaches working in youth sport, the route into coaching may start as parents supporting their children’s participation in sport. Their initial coaching practice is likely to be largely influenced by their own playing experiences, yet progressively become shaped by exposure to formal coach education and the interaction with other coaches.

The Learning Process

Education and development in general must support the establishment of effective behaviours, skills and attitudes, and not merely the accumulation of knowledge. European policy has long recognised that learning is a lifelong process and that multiple experiences can facilitate the development of competence. Each nation and

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sport should develop a clear view of what Long-Term Coach Development means in their context and the expertise required at every level. This will provide a firm foundation for curriculum development and delivery that includes a variety of learning experiences to meet the needs of coaches at each stage of their development.

The ESCF proposes a classification of learning situations adopted from the work of Jennifer Moon31. This classification distinguishes between three types of learning situations: mediated, unmediated and internal.

**Mediated learning** is aided directly by another person or through the use of a medium that simplifies the material of teaching. This can be formal (e.g., college or federation program of instruction) or non-formal (e.g., mentoring).

**Unmediated learning** refers to when coaches initiate their learning, choose what they want to learn and decide how they wish to learn it. (e.g. observing others coach, having a discussion with a fellow coach, reading a book or watching a DVD). This has also been referred to as informal learning.

**Internal learning** is the process of consciously or unconsciously reflecting on our lived experiences that leads to new realisations. This process is constantly taking place, yet the amount of learning we take from it can be optimised.

**A/How Coaches Learn**

Beginner coaches are not a blank slate. Whether through personal experiences as an athlete or spectator, they arrive at their first coaching experience with their own conception of what coaching is. From that starting point, as research indicates, coaches learn in multiple ways. However, the relevance of the different learning modes changes as coaches progress through their developmental journey.

In the early stages, coaches may benefit strongly from mediated learned opportunities provided through formal education. These can be seen as laying a knowledge foundation, challenging or confirming initial personal theories and supporting

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the creation of a conceptual framework which helps coaches organise and make sense of their practice. As coaches continue to develop, informal and non-formal learning opportunities become more relevant as the interaction with clinicians, mentors, open source material and other coaches provides a chance to ‘check & challenge’ their emerging philosophy and way of doing things as well as gaining new knowledge.

Research also shows that coaches learn best when:

- Their prior experiences and abilities are recognised and they are encouraged to reflect and build on them;
- They are motivated to take responsibility for learning and are given opportunities to drive it and direct it to their own needs;
- The application of what is being learned to the practical context in which they coach is clear and facilitated;
- The topics and learning materials are and feel relevant;
- The climate is positive and supportive to minimise anxiety, encourages experimentation and challenges them appropriately;
- Interaction and sharing with other coaches is promoted;
- A variety of learning activities is offered; and
- They experience some success and gain feedback that builds their self-confidence.

Research also shows that much of coaches’ learning takes place on the job. Coach education must therefore also focus on equipping coaches with tools to maximize learning that takes place as a result of day-to-day practice. Coaches’ self-awareness and their ability to reflect on the occurrences of their work is essential.

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The educational and developmental experiences of coaches ought to mirror the complex and changing environment in which they operate. Effective coach development should therefore offer a blended learning package composed of mediated and unmediated learning situations and significant job-related components to foster optimal internal learning. This will promote knowledge gains, behavioural change and encourage coaches to seek additional self-directed learning opportunities.

B/ Experiential Learning

Traditionally, coach education has provided mediated, predominantly formal, learning situations. Very often, coach education has been classroom based, assessment focused and compliance driven. However, the general education trend in Europe is to facilitate the translation of knowledge into practical skills through the completion of practical assignments and practicum periods. Coach education is no different and there is ample evidence that coaches learn well from practice-based experiences and interaction with other coaches. The need to ensure that knowledge imparted in the classroom can be assimilated by coaches through reflection on what it means for their practice is also paramount. All this points to the need to balance formal coach education in the classroom with learning experiences on the field, court, track, pool or gym.

Indeed, experiential learning is central to coach development. However, it is very different to learning from experience. Experiential learning is intentional and can be mediated or unmediated. Through exposure to a broader range of situations, it provides coaches with a chance to discover what knowledge and skills they already have and to enhance their decision-making capabilities across a broader spectrum of coaching circumstances.

Research conducted by the ICCE has shown that many coach education programmes across the world fail to provide a link between theoretical knowledge and

its applicability to coaching practice in specific contexts. The use of experiential learning pedagogies such as reality-based assignments, problem-based learning, micro-coaching opportunities, reflection in/on action and supervised practicum periods have demonstrated to make a positive contribution to coach development.

Many coaching courses in Europe include a mix of classroom-based teaching and instruction on the court, playing field, track or pool. Whilst a positive development, it is important to distinguish between ‘practical learning’ and ‘experiential learning’. During a practical learning session, coaches may experience the activity themselves as participants or see others delivering coaching. Experiential learning, on the other hand, is more about taking what has been learned in the course and applying it in a real environment. It can also be about carrying out an assignment before any instruction has been given and then discussing it with the course tutor and fellow learning coaches.

Experiential learning requires self-awareness and self-reflection on the part of the coach. Awareness and reflection are teachable skills and should be a central part of a balanced coach development programme.

B/ Mentoring

An effective on-the-job learning option is the use of trained mentors. Coaching organisations must value, recognise, respect, trust and encourage the contribution that experienced coaches can offer in guiding, educating, mentoring and developing less seasoned colleagues. More senior coaches must also recognise that this mentoring and support role is a core part of their professional responsibility.

Mentors can come from the same or a different sport or from another professional field altogether. They may operate along a spectrum from trusted advisor, to sounding board to critical friend and anything in between based on the needs of the coach and the specific situation.

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34 Scoping studies of coach education programmes in Japan, India, Philippines and Malaysia showed this trend.
The process of coach development takes place over time and includes athletic experience, coaching experience, formal, informal, and non-formal education. The design of coach education programmes should make provision for learning opportunities that take account of coaches’ experience and working contexts.

B/ Communities of Practice

Coaches can also learn from being part of a community with a shared interest. In education theory, this is known as a community of practice. It is proposed that the interaction with others who deal with the same challenges and are passionate about similar topics leads to the sharing of practical knowledge, the consideration of diverse points of view, and the co-generation of new ideas and ways to solve those challenges. Communities of practice also provide coaches with the social support required to make critical changes to their practice which otherwise may be difficult.

The extent to which ‘regulated’ communities of practice can be effectively promoted and used as part of coach education programmes is still uncertain. The role of a skilled facilitator has been highlighted as key to the learning process in these cases. Online forums and social media may also hold great promise in this regard.


Coaches also gain much knowledge from experts in related fields such as strength and conditioning specialists, biomechanists, sport psychologists and nutritionists. The value of these exchanges is increased when the knowledge is conveyed systematically, gauged at the appropriate level of complexity and combined with examples and applications to the coaching of the athletes.

**A/ How Coach Developers Can Help**

The quality and preparation of those delivering coach education opportunities is fundamental to participant learning. However, very often, they have not been trained to deliver coach education\(^{38}\), but find themselves in that position by virtue of their expertise. However, being an expert in a topic does not necessarily imply an ability to communicate it to others in a manner that leads to the learners being able to apply the new knowledge.

Federations, coaching organisations and educational institutions seeking to develop coaches are advised to give careful consideration to how they identify and train those who will deliver their coach education programmes (coach developers). These coach developers must be, not only experts in the topic in question, but more importantly experts in learning. They also require a genuine interest and passion for developing others. It is therefore paramount that they be carefully selected and recruited, have a suitable support system and be evaluated regularly so that their competence and growth in the role can be assessed.

Coach developers also play a vital role in the delivery of non-formal learning situations and the promotion of coaches’ engagement in unmediated ones. Coaches with sufficient experience and a real desire to develop other coaches’ skills may wish to train to become coach developers. Each sport and nation should establish a long-term career pathway for coach developers, clearly linked with and aligned to coaching categories, domains and roles.

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Federations, countries and educational institutions should invest time and resources in creating an effective coach developer workforce. This will enhance their ability to develop existing coaches as well as increase the number of new coaches coming into the system in those areas where they are needed.

For more information in this area, please see the International Coach Developer Framework published by ICCE\textsuperscript{39}.

\textsuperscript{39} International Coach Developer Framework (ICCE, ASOIF & LBU, 2013).
Chapter 6  Coach Certification and Recognition

The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 officially gave the EU competence over sport to ensure that its contribution to society is optimised across the Union. The central role of coaches, and the need for effective coach education and certification programs to ensure the development and maintenance of a capable sport coaching workforce have been recognised in many European policies and communications (see Chapter 1).

A/ The Plan for Coaching in the EU

In the evolving context of the implementation of the EQF and the creation of National Qualification Frameworks (NFQs) across the 28 Member States, the Work Plans for Sport 2011-2014 and 2014-2017 (and the respective Expert Groups40) have clearly signalled the need for coaching qualifications to be integrated within these formal national and European structures. It is hoped that such integration will contribute to an increase in the quality and transparency of coaching qualifications and to enhanced employability and mobility for coaches.

The Expert Groups have concluded that the pace and success of this integration process depends on:

- The maturity stage of the country’s education system and framework.
- The role and relevance attributed by governments to sport and sport qualifications.
- The existence of sufficient investment and political and organisational commitment to transform existing coaching qualifications into modern ones based on units of learning and learning outcomes.
- The inclusion in the qualifications of the professional and occupational profiles they are aimed at, and clear indicators of the levels of attainment (i.e. complexity

of knowledge, skills, competence and responsibility) required to fulfil those roles referenced to NQF and EQF.

- Greater collaboration and alignment between different sectors of education.
- The creation of effective Recognised Prior Learning systems.
- The degree to which national governing bodies of sport use guidance provided by international federations and bodies like ICCE/ECC

A/ The Professionalisation of Coaching

In recent times, there has been an encouraging trend to regulate and/or professionalise coaching in many countries. This has been spurred by directives from the European Commission regarding the regulation of sport professionals, and guidance from international bodies like ICCE/ECC. The regulation and professionalisation of coaching has one main goal: to guarantee a minimum level of quality in the coaching workforce for the benefit of athletes and participants. It also aims to increase the recognition and representation of coaches as qualified professionals which fulfil a very important role in society.

Different countries and different sports, however, have different traditions and identities pertaining to coaching. These revolve around three key areas:

- **The social status of the coach.** In some countries and/or sports, the figure of the coach, not just in performance sport, but in any domain, is held in similar esteem to that of professionals such as teachers and doctors, whereas in others it has a much lower profile.
- **The employment status of coaches.** The proportion of volunteer, part-time paid, and full-time paid coaches varies considerably between countries and sports. This has led to coaching been classed as a blended occupational area\(^{41}\).

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• **The qualification status of coaches.** It is estimated that only around four million of the potential ten million coaches in the EU are qualified\(^{42}\). Again, there is great variability between countries and sports. In some cases, coaches are expected either by law or social tradition to hold a qualification to be able to coach, whereas in others such expectation does not exist.

 Any attempts to further professionalise and increase the recognition of coaching and coaches must address the three areas described above. However, the solutions may be different in each country and sport based on their traditions, resources and needs. European legislation and reference points like the EQF, ECTS and ECVET, and international guidance such as this document provide a springboard to conduct the analysis of the current picture and develop a strategic plan for the future at a sport-specific or national level.

**A/Coach Certification**

Depending on their quality and rigour, coach education, certification and licensing programmes can ensure that all participating coaches have an acceptable level of competency. A certificate or licence from an approved coach education programme ensures quality in the coach development process. Well-structured educational coursework and demonstrated on-the-job mastery to merit the award of a certificate or licence benefit everyone in sport.

 Recent exploratory work across Europe has identified the different elements countries and sports consider when building a coach certification and recognition system\(^{43}\). These include:

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- different underpinning theories of learning - often emphasising different coach characteristics such as knowledge, competencies, competences, expertise etc.
- coaching role: functions and tasks
- deployment and regulatory issues.

**B/Theories of learning**

Coaching system builders have a choice with regards to the learning theories that underpin their education and qualification system. Table 6.1 offers a summary of the most common ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge approach</th>
<th>Competences / expertise approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The traditional approach (and still a very common in many Eastern European countries)</td>
<td>• North western mainland European countries; common approach in medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on knowledge inputs especially propositional disciplinary theoretical knowledge</td>
<td>• A focus on the person, recognising her place in complex environments, with complex tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This approach is criticised for providing knowledge often too abstracted from practical tasks and problems (e.g., practitioners have problems applying it)</td>
<td>• A broader view of competences which incorporates functional, cognitive and meta-skills (knowledge, mental models, and reasoning) and personal and social attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Experts solve problems/make judgements in context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies approach</th>
<th>Socio-cultural approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• US and UK driven approach (and, it is argued, underpins the EQF)</td>
<td>• Increasing influence in educational practice both outside and inside sport coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on outputs, tasks, activities to do the job</td>
<td>• Significant focus on learning in situ with reference to ‘more capable others’ such as mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effective practice can be broken down, and distilled into objective, generalizable, replicable, and assessable functional competencies captured in competency statements</td>
<td>• Very little importance attached to explicit propositional knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This approach is criticised for underestimating the complexity and contingency of effective practice (e.g., coaching is much more unpredictable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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These are all viable choices to underpin a coach education system – although the recent evidence tends to suggest that a combination of approaches (depending on the context, goal and task) is most productive. The systems builder will be required to select the approach or mixture that best meets the needs of their context and coaches.

B/Coaching Roles

Coaching system builders also ought to consider how the coach certification and recognition structure aligns with different coaching roles typically performed by coaches within their systems. Coaching roles entail different expectations with regards to the need and capacity of coaches to perform a certain set of functions, tasks, and activities. These roles are typically linked to levels of expertise. The higher the level of expertise required to perform a coaching role, the higher the demands on the coach in terms of functions, tasks and activities.

For example, at the different levels of expertise development (see section 4), coaches are:

- asked to think about planning over different time frames (e.g. beginners at the session level, experts at the seasonal or programme level)
- take on different levels of responsibility (e.g. beginners assist sessions, experts develop programmes)
- have different functions (e.g. beginners support other coaches to deliver sessions, experts develop, review and evaluate programmes).

The ISCF proposed the following coaching roles: Coaching Assistant; Coach; Advanced/Senior Coach; and Master/Head Coach. Table 6.2 adopts and adapts this classification to show how coaching qualifications may align with the various levels of expertise and the generic coaching roles proposed by ISCF. The existence of these roles and their nomenclature may vary from country to country and between sports, yet they serve as a comparative reference point. It is also important to remember that qualifications are simply minimum standards and that expertise develops and manifest
in complex ways that may be difficult to evaluate and assess within formal education channels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Title</th>
<th>Level of Expertise (Berliner, 1994)</th>
<th>Expected Coach Outputs</th>
<th>Timescales</th>
<th>Typical Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Assistant</td>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Expected Coach Outputs: Support the delivery of programmes assisting in sessions/competitions led by a Coach or higher. Must be supervised and guided.</td>
<td>May be able to plan and deliver single sessions or parts of sessions.</td>
<td>Pre-entry (Level 0; Instructor) or Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>Advanced Beginner</td>
<td>Expected Coach Outputs: Support the delivery of programmes assisting in sessions/competitions led by a Coach or higher. Must be supervised and guided.</td>
<td>Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over a season.</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced/Senior Coach</td>
<td>Competent to Proficient</td>
<td>Expected Coach Outputs: Support the delivery of programmes assisting in sessions/competitions led by a Coach or higher. Must be supervised and guided.</td>
<td>Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over multi-annual seasons/cycles.</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master/Head Coach</td>
<td>Proficient to Expert</td>
<td>Expected Coach Outputs: Support the delivery of programmes assisting in sessions/competitions led by a Coach or higher. Must be supervised and guided.</td>
<td>Can plan, deliver and review coaching sessions over multi-annual seasons/cycles.</td>
<td>Level 4 (National Coaching Certificate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 – Coaching roles linked to expertise, levels of responsibility, timescales and typical qualifications.

45 Alignment based on prior experience of the ESCF writing team. It may vary between countries and sports.
Table 6.3 shows the link between the different coaching functions and specific functional tasks and levels of expertise.\(^{46}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Functions(^{47})</th>
<th>Task-Related Competences</th>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Advanced Beginner</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set Vision &amp; Strategy</strong></td>
<td>• Understand the big picture and align practice with local, regional and national policy and objectives</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop a suitable vision for the program relevant to the athletes in it and also to institutional priorities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Set up a relevant strategy that supports the fulfilment of the vision</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Make effective and informed decisions relating to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of mid- to long-term programmes of practice and competition based on institutional and participant/athlete needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shape the Environment</strong></td>
<td>• Effectively identify and recruit participant/athletes and staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify, reflect on and challenge prevailing beliefs, values and assumptions within the coaching environment to establish a suitable culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and source the relevant resources (human and material) required to fulfil programme and participant needs;</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Employ all reasonable measures to keep participants/athletes and staff safe from harm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Build Positive Relationships</strong></td>
<td>• Lead and influence the attitudes, behaviours and understanding of key stakeholders (i.e.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{46}\) A grey box denotes no expected responsibility and expertise. The Red-Amber-Green scale denotes progressively greater levels of expected responsibility and expertise in a particular functional task (Red=low; Amber=medium; Green=high)

\(^{47}\) The capacity to engage in meeting these primary functions requires a synoptic application of knowledge, skills and professional competences. The contribution of each being dependent of the specific context and demands.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conduct Practices and Prepare and Manage Competitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct comprehensive needs analyses for individual athletes and/or teams in order to design and deliver tailored coaching programmes, taking into account participant needs and capabilities in the context of wider programmes, curricula, policies and targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Select, design and justify appropriate pedagogy, practice and communication methods to facilitate the short, medium and long term learning needs of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conduct a functional analysis of multi skill activity or of their chosen sport(s) and identify the implications for coaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify the core elements of multi skills or of their chosen sport(s) at the key stages of participant development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Devise, interpret and apply an appropriate curriculum for a multi skill environment or in their chosen sport(s) in line with participant needs and the agreed industry standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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48 Multi skill activity refers to sport sessions aimed at the development of overall psychomotor skills, typically in children, sometimes referred to as Fundamental Movement Skills. These types of activity can be done as part of a sport specific session (i.e. multi skills with a theme of tennis) or as outright multi skills sessions.
- Deliver a series of coaching sessions in the context of medium term and long term planned programmes of practice and competition using a wide range of appropriate learning modes for participants and coaching behaviours

- Can conduct and work to risk assessments in order to deliver safe and ethical coaching practice.

- Identify, create and manage suitable competitive opportunities to contribute to participant/athlete on-going development

- Develop appropriate competition strategies to maximise chances of learning and success

- Maintain a professional attitude towards coaching practice, athletes and all stakeholders at all times

**Read and React to the Field**

- Conduct an insightful analysis of coaching practice to make informed judgement relating to the efficacy of the learning environment established

- Conduct an insightful analysis of athlete/team performance to make informed decisions regarding ‘on the spot’ adjustments to enhance it

- Conduct an insightful analysis of the programme to make informed judgement relating to the efficacy of the environment established

**Reflect and Learn**

- Identify and reflect on assumptions and practices as a coach and student, demonstrating the ability to conduct informed analysis and a willingness to apply the principle of continuous improvement to own coaching.

- Identify own learning needs and take responsibility for the development and application of strategies for further self-development, as part of an on-going profiling process

- Take an objective and critical approach to problem identification and solution, using evidence-based approaches and appropriate research methodologies
Table 6.3 – Levels of competence and responsibility in coaching

**B/Deployment and regulatory issues**

Linked to the coaching functions and tasks above, coaching system builders will also need to consider the implications of the coach certification and regulation system for coach deployment and workforce regulation. For example, who are beginner coaches allowed to work with (i.e. what kind of participants and performers) and who are they not? At what stage is a coach suitable to lead a session or work with the very highest performing athletes? Qualification certificates should state the participant population the coach is qualified to work with, and clearly describe what that qualification allows a coach to do.

In the case of licensing systems which attest the competency and right to practice, the awarding organisation must clearly specify how long the licence is valid for and the requirements for its renewal. Coaching licences may be particularly relevant for coaches earning income from their work and for those in high-risk environments.

In the case of pre-coaches, their roles need to be clearly defined and the time scales and expectations for progression to formal coaching roles and the associated certification should be. This whole process should take account relevant national and international qualifications frameworks and any legislative requirements that exist or are envisaged.

Coach certification will vary according to sport, nation and institution. Federations at the national and international levels take the lead sport-specific certification courses. Institutions of higher education tend to focus on more universal topics such as sport science, coaching methods and theory. There also is a positive trend for such institutions to include sport-specific components. It is recommended that partnerships be forged between federations and educational institutions to maximise the
quality and relevance of the courses offered to. Figure 6.1 outlines a process to maximise this partnering approach to curriculum design and coach certification.

![Coaching education context diagram](image)

Figure 6.1 – Curriculum design process

### C/Minimum Standards for Deployment

In addition to the licensing requirements, those employing coaches, either as volunteers or in any paid capacity, may wish to enforce a series of complementary minimum standards for deployment before a coach is allowed to work with athletes. Examples of these used in some sports and countries include: criminal background checks, and basic training in equality and inclusion awareness, safeguarding and protection of vulnerable participants, first aid, safety and risk assessment, etc. Many organisations have already embedded these additional requirements as part of their coaching courses and qualifications.
Coaches should be appropriately trained and qualified for the roles that they play and the domains within which they will or may work. National agencies and national and international federations should specify the designations (certification and/or licensing) required to fulfil specified roles, taking account of relevant national and international qualifications frameworks.

A/Coaching Qualifications and the EQF

Coaches deserve appropriate recognition nationally and internationally for their expertise and qualifications. Coaching qualifications should be referenced against appropriate national and international standards and benchmarks in education and vocational training.

In the European context, coaching qualifications should be referenced first to their NQF and subsequently to the EQF. Where coaching qualifications are integrated into existing NQFs, this will be done automatically as part of the process of having the qualification endorsed by the national agency for education. Where coaching qualifications are not integrated in the NQF or no NQF is in place, the qualification provider is encouraged to conduct a mapping exercise to award it a comparative level to either the NQF, EQF or the ESCF.

Some countries have developed National Coaching/Sectorial Qualification Frameworks (i.e., United Kingdom, Poland, Netherlands) which governing bodies of sport use as their reference point for the development of qualifications. These are normally referenced to their NQF, the EQF or both, thus facilitating a transparent comparison process.

This becomes a much easier procedure if coaching qualifications are designed and built based on units of learning, learning outcomes, and credits. The guidance
provided in chapters 3 and 4, and tables 6.2 and figure 6.2 below as well as the mapping tools hosted at [www.coachlearn.eu/tools](http://www.coachlearn.eu/tools) can support this process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise Level</th>
<th>Achievement Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National &amp; International Federation Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>Level 4 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Level 3 or 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Beginner</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 Alignment of achievement standards with coaching expertise
Figure 6.2 – Example of mapping process between different coach education streams (figure to be modified for final version)
Recognition of Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience

RPL&WBE\(^{49}\) has been a priority for EU Member States and countries of the European Economic Area since 2004 and several guidance principles have been published since\(^{50}\). RPL&WBE is seen as a way to improve lifelong and lifewide\(^{51}\) learning. At the heart of RPL&WBE is the need to 'make visible and value learning that takes place outside formal education and training institutions, for example at work, in leisure time activities and at home'\(^{52}\). As described in chapter 5, coaches learn not only from formal, but also from non-formal and informal coach education opportunities. Formal coach certification systems, therefore should factor in the RPL&WBE of coaches.

The benefits of RPL & WBE are shown on table 6.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits to Society</th>
<th>Benefits to Individuals</th>
<th>Benefits to Education Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortens the time spent in formal education</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Motivated students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could cut the expenses of formal education</td>
<td>Easier access and quicker completion of formal education</td>
<td>Increased funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes life-long learning</td>
<td>Increased motivation to learn what you don’t already know</td>
<td>Assessing student baseline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports workforce mobility</td>
<td>Inclusivity</td>
<td>An appropriate protocol for competence recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can increase equity</td>
<td>Greater flexibility and choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can support workforce adaptation to new demands</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 – Benefits of Recognised Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience

\(^{49}\) Other terms in use are: Recognition of Current Competences, Accreditation of Prior Learning, Recognition of Experimental Learning, and Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement


\(^{51}\) Lifewide learning recognizes that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces – like work or education, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, traveling and taking holidays and looking after their own well-being mentally, physically and spiritually. So the timeframes of lifelong learning and the spaces of life-wide learning will characteristically intermingle and who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling (http://www.lifewideeducation.uk/lifewide-learning.html)

\(^{52}\) Cedefop (2009) p. 7
Although the benefits are clear, operating an optimal RPL&WBE system requires commitment and investment to develop appropriate protocols for competence recognition, individualised and flexible study pathways, and sufficient student guidance and support.

Project CoachLearn has developed a full report on the state of RPL&WBE in coaching in Europe, and guidance and development tool for countries and sports wishing to review their RPL&WBE systems. To access it please go to www.coachlearn.eu/tools

A/ Universal Access to Coach Education and Development

Access to coach education and development opportunities has been identified as a barrier to coaches’ achieving qualifications and licensed status\(^5^3\). Organisations in charge of the development and delivery of coach education should strive to ensure access to them is universal and inclusive.

Increasing access may require rethinking how courses are delivered. For instance, the use of a learner-centred methodology aided by technology that allows coaches to access part of the training at a time to suit their needs and availability or the implementation of RPL&WBE protocols. Governments and sport organisations must ensure that the cost of qualifications and licences remains affordable for the vast majority of coaches. The majority of coaches are volunteers. Without coaches, sport, and particularly youth sport, will not survive. I thus stands to reason that, especially in the early stages, coach education is subsidised or offered at a reasonable price to avoid deterring potential coaches from completing the qualifications and entering the system.

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Chapter 7 Coaching Framework Benefits

The European Sport Coaching Framework contextualises the principles proposed in the ISCF to the specific landscape and needs of the European Union. The relevant policies, recommendations, trends and examples of best practice are brought together to create a common space and language shared by all those working in coach education. The ESCF is thus an important step to support the creation of relevant, sustainable and high-quality coach education, development and deployment systems in Europe. The adaptation and implementation of the principles contained in the ESCF to sport and country specific circumstances offer multiple benefits that will be described throughout this chapter.

A/Create Consistent and Comparable High-Quality Coach Education

The ultimate objective is to further enhance the quality of coaching in different sports and countries. The Framework is not mandatory, but presents a series of practice and research-supported principles and tools that may be applied to specific contexts. Coach education and development programmes that follow its principles will bolster their coaches’ competence and knowledge, which will then benefit their athletes at all levels.

The ESCF and its associated tools can serve as valuable aids in designing new programmes and benchmarking or aligning existing ones (Figure 7.1).
The ESCF, serving as a reference tool, can help to ensure quality and consistency in many circumstances:

- Coach education and development programme providers can compare their own qualifications with an internationally recognised framework. This may be particularly relevant as a translation device between the different systems that operate across the continent, and between federation and higher education qualifications.
Coaching organisations and those employing and deploying coaches can more effectively assess the competences of coaches coming from different sports or nations and in specific roles. This will assist in the recognition of coaching qualifications and prior learning as well as in the identification of gaps in competency.

Nations or federations looking to develop new systems or qualifications can use the ESCF in conjunction with their NQF and EQF to help determine standards of coach qualification for each level and the necessary content to fulfil the associated requirements.

Those who train and employ coaches can use the competences defined in the ESCF as an informal assessment and development tool for their coaches, leading to the identification of training needs. Coaches can use it in a similar way as a self-reflection exercise.

A/Evaluate and Improve Existing Programmes

The ESCF provides a prism through which to identify, implement and evaluate practices in coach education and development. It highlights the building blocks that affect quality, efficiency and effectiveness and provides a set of tools and concepts that can be tailored to specific contexts.

By analysing the ESCF blueprint and comparing it to their own programme design, sport administrators may be better able to prioritise and allocate resources in a manner that maximises their return on investment. Quality assurance processes, applied over time will underpin the continuous improvement of coaching and coach development on a systemic and sustainable basis.

A/Define Areas for Research and Evaluation

The ESCF offers clarity regarding both the desired competences of coaches to maximise participation and performance as well as the key components of systems that support coach education and development. This creates a potential index of areas for future research and evaluation, which will advance the blended profession towards new degrees of expertise and effectiveness.
A/Provide a Sound Base for Decision Making

The Framework can also serve as a basis for creating, evaluating, and revising regulations and laws to underpin the quality, sustainability and blended occupational nature of sport coaching. This will allow for more uniform and measured political and legal decision-making by administrators, boards, and authorities throughout the sport and educational communities.

A/Stimulate Global Exchange

The establishment of a common language will facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge between partners, and even competitors, within and across countries and sports. This will in turn enhance understanding between them at all levels and open new avenues for cooperation, as well as clear templates for the recognition of coaching qualifications between countries. Members of the sport community who stand to benefit from the ISCF are shown in figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2 – Beneficiaries of the Framework

A/Support and Adapt to Current Efforts

Since its publication, the ISCF has had a major impact in the way coaching systems and coach education and development are conceptualised world-wide. It was originally proposed that it would be reviewed and updated every four years. In working with countries and sports across the globe, ICCE has experienced first-hand the benefits of
a framework approach, yet we have also experienced the reality faced by those trying to improve or develop a coaching system. Building the momentum, expertise and resource to undertake this kind of work takes time. It is because of this, that ICCE has felt the need to let the ISCF become solidly embedded in the global community before producing an updated version.

The European Sport Coaching Framework, however, in addition to putting the principles of the ISCF into the EU context, can serve a broader function. In the work conducted on the ground, ICCE has seen the need for the development of guidance, development and implementation tools to help those in the frontline assimilate and enact the ISCF/ESCF principles and make a real difference. For that reason, a major objective of Erasmus+ co-funded Project CoachLearn was to develop both a set of tools to stimulate and support implementation across Europe and beyond. The following tools have been developed and can be accessed from www.coachlearn.eu/tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tool #1 - Coaching System Mapping Tool</td>
<td>This tool will allow organisations involved in coaching to understand what is meant by a Coaching System. It will also support the process of mapping the system and the identification of the key stakeholders, their roles and their interdependences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool #2 - European Education Landscape Factsheet and FAQ</td>
<td>This tool will provide an overview of the key features of the European Education landscape (i.e., EQF, ECTS, etc). It will support those embarking on the process of developing a coach education programmes ensure they are aligned with European policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool #3 - Participant Development Model Builder</td>
<td>This tool will allow system builders better understand the current population taking part in their sport (a model of the sport) and compare it with the desired future picture (model for the sport). The overall purpose is to determine the kind of environments we need to create for different populations and the types of coaches (and their skill sets) that will be needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool #4 - Coaching Qualification Curriculum Builder</td>
<td>This tool will support coach developers to contextualise the 6 primary functions to different environments/domains. Therefore, it will allow for the identification of the skills, competencies and knowledge basis needed for a particular coach working in a particular context with a particular population of participants/athletes. The tool will also support the development of suitable curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool #5 - Qualification Mapping &amp; Conversion Tool</td>
<td>This tool will allow system builders, coach developers and coaches to compare qualifications between sports and between countries by reference to roles in ESCF/ISCF and EQF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool #6 - Step by Step Guide to RPL&amp;WBE</td>
<td>This tool will provide guidance as to how to set up effective and efficient RPL&amp;WBE systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As both the *ISCF* and *ESCF* become embedded in real-world environments and new examples of best practice emerge, and as new research into coach education and development brings to the fore new concepts and ideas, the need for updated versions of *ISCF* and *ESCF* will become apparent. The timing and nature of the changes to these two Frameworks will be evaluated continuously and discussed with key partners and experts in the field at each ICCE Global Coach Conference.

In the meantime, from all at ICCE and Project CoachLearn we wish you all success for the future. Please do not hesitate to get in touch at info@icce.ws