

SUCCESSFUL ELITE SPORT POLICIES

An international comparison of the Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS 2.0) in 15 nations



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The lack of a coherent theoretical model about sports policy factors that influence international sporting success lies at the root of the formulation of the SPLISS model. The SPLISS model differs from these studies in its scope, methodology and integration, as will be explained in the next sections.

2.2 The SPLISS model

2.2.1 Nine Pillars as policy components of elite sport success

The various building blocks that lead to elite sport success are complex, multi-faceted and multi-layered. As noted earlier it can be argued that factors influencing success can be classified at three levels: macro-, meso-, and micro-level (De Bosscher et al., 2006). The SPLISS model is based on this classification. *Macro-level* factors influence the (dynamic) social and cultural environments in which people live, including economy, demography, geography and climate, urbanisation, politics, and national culture. *Meso-level* factors influence the policy environment of nations (e.g., policies on coach development, policies on talent identification and selection). At the *micro-level* are factors that influence the success of individual athletes, ranging from the influence of inherited genes to social influence of parents, friends and coaches. Many researchers have tried to explain the success of individual athletes instead of comparing nations (e.g., Conzelmann and Nagel, 2003; Duffy, Lyons, Moran Warrington and McManus, 2006; Gibbons, McConnel, Forster, Riewald and Peterson, 2003; Greenleaf, Gould and Diefen, 2001; van Bottenburg, 2000; Wylleman and Lavallee, 2004). However, the interaction of factors at the micro-, meso- and macro-levels is what best explains achieving elite success, but it is also the most complex analysis to undertake.

The purpose of the SPLISS framework is to model the relationship between elite sport policy policies and international success—the focus of research therefore is directed at meso-level factors. The SPLISS model

SPLISS aims to model the relationship between elite sport policy systems and policies and international success

(Figure 3) is based on a comprehensive literature review regarding the organisational context of elite sport development in countries (meso-level), supplemented by two studies at the micro-level, where the focus was on better understanding of the determinants of success for individual athletes. The first study examined the views of international tennis experts on the factors determining tennis success. The second study examined the views of Flemish athletes, coaches and performance directors as the main stakeholders. Based on these studies the SPLISS model was developed and tested in six countries including Belgium (separated in Flanders and Wallonia), Canada, Italy, the

Netherlands, the UK and Norway, now better known as the SPLISS 1.0 study. We refer to previous publications for more in-depth information on the SPLISS model and the methodology (De Bosscher et al., 2006; De Bosscher De Knop, van Bottenburg, Shibli and Bingham, 2009).

SPLISS measures nine Pillars or policy components, at the level of inputs (Pillar 1) and throughputs (Pillars 2-9), that can lead to increased outputs or success

It was concluded that most critical success factors that can be influenced by policies can be distilled down to nine key areas or 'Pillars', including inputs (Pillar 1) and throughputs (Pillars 2-9) (Figure 3).

- Inputs are reflected in Pillar 1, as the financial support for sport and elite sport. Countries that invest more in (elite) sport can create more opportunities for athletes to develop their talent.
- Throughputs are the policy actions that script and deliver the processes ('what' is invested and 'how' it is used) that may lead to increasing success in international sport competitions. They refer to the efficiency of sport policies, that is, the optimum way the inputs can be managed to produce the required outputs. All of Pillars 2-9 are indicators of the throughput stage.

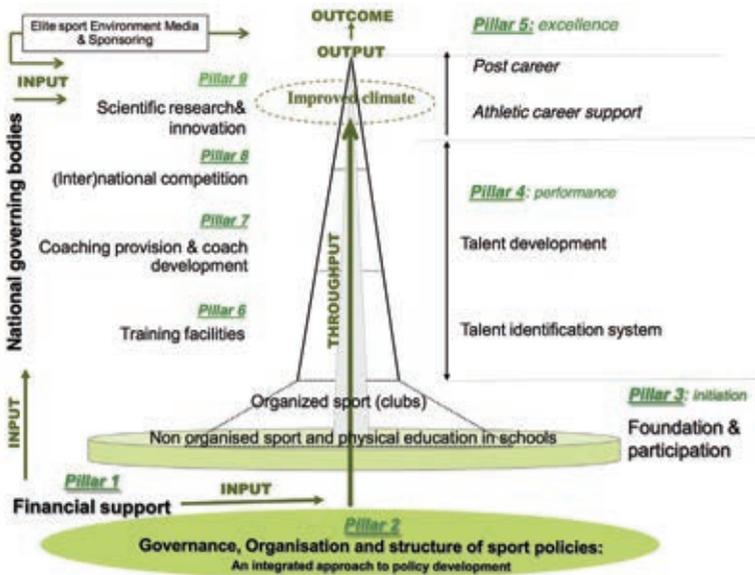


Figure 3: The SPLISS model: Theoretical model of 9 Pillars of sports policy factors influencing international success (adapted from De Bosscher et al., 2006) (reprinted with permission from Taylor & Francis Ltd, www.informaworld.com, and slightly adapted from De Bosscher et al., 2006)

The SPLISS model uses the actual performance of nations in elite sport competitions as the output measure of the system. There are various indicators by which the outputs of an elite athlete production system can be measured. For example, by counting the number of medals won during the Olympic Games or other events; by counting the number of finals achieved (top eight places); by determining the relative success (e.g., medals per head of population or number of medals corrected for country GDP) or even the number of participants qualifying to take part in major events. All of these methods appear to correlate significantly ($r_s > 0.8$) (De Bosscher et al., 2007). Chapter 4 will delve deeper into these measures.

The nine Pillars are underpinned by Critical Success Factors (CSFs) as will be explained in this chapter. The shape of the SPLISS model (a pyramid) accounts for the fact that of many talented athletes entering elite sport systems only a few will reach the international top and achieve medal-winning success. Our contention is that for a national sporting system to merely have the nine Pillars in place is only the start to achieving elite sporting success; what then becomes important is how the Pillars connect, interact and are invested in by policymakers (and others) (De Bosscher, 2007). It is the unique combination and variation of inputs and throughputs that will determine success levels.

Input

Pillar 1: Financial support

Financial resources are measures of **input**. Previous research clearly indicates that countries that invest more in (elite) sport create more opportunities for athletes to achieve success. Hogan and Norton (2000) found a linear relationship between money spent and total medals won by Australia since the 1980s. An important outcome of the SPLISS 1.0 study was that:

'In terms of input-output analysis, the best predictor of output appears to be the absolute amount of funding allocated to elite sport (p. 134).'

However, the SPLISS 1.0 findings also suggested that over the past decade, this relationship has become less pronounced. With more countries investing in elite sport there are diminishing returns on (base) investments and it seems that successful countries need to continue investing in elite sport simply to maintain existing performance levels (De Bosscher et al., 2008).

Throughput

Pillar 2: Governance, organisation and structure of (elite) sport policies, an integrated approach to policy development

The amount of resources devoted to elite sport is important, but it is the organisation and structure of sport and its relationship to (a national) society that enables efficient use of these resources to further the chances of elite sporting success (SIRC, 2002). There is, in that regard, no consensus or preference regarding the necessity for centralisation or high level of government intervention in elite sports policies (Houlihan, 2009). Furthermore, it has been argued that it is equally important to have a good national communication system, clear distribution and description of roles in the system, and simple (efficient) administration (Clumpner, 1994; Oakley and Green, 2001). The importance of involving stakeholders in elite sport policy development has also been noted (Thibault, Kihl and Babiak, 2010). Besides these elements, important variables of this Pillar also relate to organisational, historical and cultural contexts that differ per country. It is therefore important to observe how policymakers and policy systems respond and adapt to change, such as the increasing commercialisation and professionalisation of elite sport (Houlihan and Green, 2008).

Pillar 3: Participation in sport

Although the (lacking) relationship between sport for all and elite sport is often debated, most top athletes originate from grassroots participation. Van Bottenburg (2002) found a significant correlation between mass participation and medals won during the Olympic Games (Barcelona and Sydney) especially when grassroots sport was 'intensive and competitive.' Similarly, at a sport-specific level, a high correlation was found between the number of tennis players and international success in 40 nations (De Bosscher and De Knop, 2002). On the other hand, there are examples of low participation sports that deliver high levels of success, such as diving and cycling in Australia (Elphinson, 2004; Green, 2005). It can be argued that a broad base of sport participation is not always a condition for success, but it may deliver a foundation for potential success because it provides a supply of young talent and various training and competition opportunities for this talent to hone their skills.

Pillar 4: Talent identification and development system

Pillar 4 concerns the discovery and development of talented athletes. A well-developed talent identification and development system is particularly important in countries with small populations (talent pools) (Harre, 1982; Régnier, Salmela and Russel, 1993). Policymakers therefore need to focus their attention on creating monitoring systems to identify talent characteristics, robust talent detection systems that minimise drop-out, and well-organised scouting systems (Rowe, 1994). In most nations talented athletes are recruited in single sports, by the national governing bodies. Therefore,

much data related to this Pillar needs to be studied on a sport-specific basis. The second part of this Pillar concerns talent development, where young talents follow a period of intensive training during which they develop a mastery of their sport. Many countries have developed nationally co-ordinated initiatives to support governing bodies in setting up high-level training and competition programmes and to support athletes to combine their academic career with a sport career.

Pillar 5: Athletic and post-career support

The logical extension of the talent identification and development phase is the production of elite athletes capable of competing at the highest level. Many athletes who have the potential to reach the top, drop out of the system before they achieve true success. National sport governing bodies play an important role in supporting athletes during and after their career which is why factors important in this Pillar also need to be analysed at a sport-specific level. In only a few sports can athletes make a living from their sporting earnings and pay for all the costs they incur. We look at the different ways in which governments provide financial support for athletes to meet their living costs and have support programmes to provide access to the services required to realise their potential. Finally, athletes also need to be assisted in preparing for life after sport.

Pillar 6: Training facilities

Training facilities (Pillar 6) are an important success factor in the process of enabling athletes to train in a relevant and high-quality sporting environment. The extent of facility provision also provides a link between participation and excellence. De Bosscher and De Knop (2002) showed that the number of tennis courts was highly correlated with international success of nations in tennis ($r = 0.858$). At the top level, this Pillar is concerned with a network of high-quality national and regional facilities, specifically for elite sport purposes, including administrative headquarters, overnight accommodation, a close link with sports medics, a close link with sports scientists/co-operation with universities, and a close link with the education institutes of younger athletes.

Pillar 7: Coaching and coach development

With regard to Pillar 7, the quality and quantity of coaches is important at each level of the sport development continuum. At the high-performance level, two criteria provide points of comparison. The first considers the quality and organisation of training certification systems where, for example, in some countries like France and Australia, certification of coaches is required in sport clubs (D'amico, 2000). The second is concerned with the level of time and resource commitment that (elite) coaches can give to achieving excellence with their athletes. In some nations professional coaches are the standard; in other nations coaching largely remains an undervalued and underpaid or even voluntary activity.

Pillar 8: (Inter)national competition

A co-ordinated approach to staging international events is the eighth identified indicator for successful elite sports policies. It has been shown in many studies on the Olympic Games (Clarke, 2002; Johnson and Ali, 2002; Kuper and Sterken, 2003) that the organisation of international events in the home country has a positive effect on international success. Athletes performing in their home country have the benefit of low travel costs and familiar weather conditions and facilities. In addition, a well-developed and high-level national competition structure is a significant criterion as frequent exposure to sporting competition is a necessary factor in athlete development (Crespo, Miley and Couraud, 2001). National competition structures mainly need to be analysed at a sport-specific level.

Pillar 9: Scientific research and innovation in elite sport

Pillar 9 seeks to examine the extent to which nations take a co-ordinated approach to the development, organisation and dissemination of scientific research and knowledge. It also is concerned with the extent that (technological) innovation plays a role in elite sport success. At the core of the Pillar are the ways in which nations systematically gather and disseminate scientific information in areas such as talent identification and development, medicine, nutrition, psychology, physiology, biomechanics and sport coaching.

As shown in Table 2, the SPLISS model has combined information that other authors also consider to be the elements of an elite sport system. The main difference is that the nine Pillars in the SPLISS study have been further extended by detailed critical success factors (De Bosscher et al., 2009) that will be explained further. The focus of SPLISS in that regard is on meso-level factors (sport policy) unlike many studies that focus their attention on explaining elite sport policies in a broader political or historical context. The SPLISS study can therefore be seen as complementary to these other studies.

We feel it is important to stress that the nine Pillars of the SPLISS model are general elite sport policy dimensions, for which it can be argued that all the factors that can be influenced by sport policies, can be classified under one of these Pillars. However, as indicated in earlier work: '*Its (SPLISS) function is not deterministic: rather it aims to identify pivotal issues and to generate crucial questions in a benchmark study of elite sport systems*' (De Bosscher et al, 2006, p. 209). The SPLISS model is therefore dynamic, and will continuously be adapted over time and to different sport settings, different sport contexts and situations. Nations might not necessarily increase their chances of success by investing in some or all Pillars but rather they need to find the most suitable blend of Pillars and CSFs that best fit the unique situation of that nation.

2.2.2 INPUT-THROUGHPUT-OUTPUT: A multidimensional model to measure effectiveness of elite sport policies

Input-throughput-output models, such as the SPLISS model, are also well known in strategic management literature. With the advent of total quality management (TQM), statistical process control (Deming, 1982) and the balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996), the emphasis in strategic management has shifted away from output measures (such as success) and input measures (such as financial resources) to measures of processes and strategy (Neely, Gregory and Platts, 2005). The SPLISS model integrates the elite sport policy literature that focuses on sport policy factors that are important for international sporting success (see earlier) and the literature that deals with effectiveness (quality of output) (De Bosscher, Shilbury et al., 2011). We have used a multidimensional approach to evaluate effectiveness of organisations by Chelladurai (2001) and applied this to a national sport policy context. This is illustrated in Figure 4.

The SPLISS model provides a multidimensional approach to effectiveness evaluation of elite sport policies at the levels of input, throughput, output and feedback

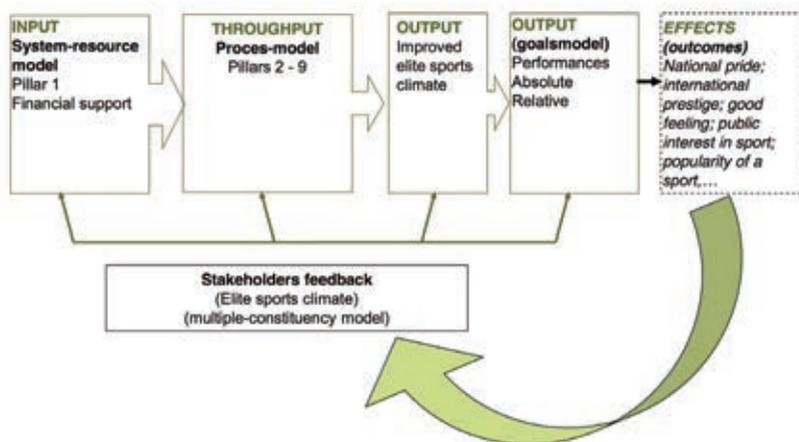


Figure 4: SPLISS as a multidimensional model to measure effectiveness of elite sport policies (De Bosscher et al., 2011)

The model's multidimensional structure stems from the integration of (a) the measuring system-resource model (e.g., Frisby, 1986; Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967) that suggests measure inputs, (b) the internal process approach that evaluates throughputs (Pfeffer, 1977; Steers, 1977),

(c) the 'goals' model (Etzioni, 1964; Price, 1972) where effectiveness is defined as the degree to which an organisation has achieved its goals, and (d) the multiple constituency model (feedback) or the participant satisfaction model (e.g., Connolly, Conlon and Deutsch, 1980; Papadimitriou and Taylor, 2000) which defines organisational effectiveness according to an organisation's 'ability to satisfy key strategic constituencies in their environment' (Sowa et al., 2004, p. 713). All of these elements are integrated in the SPLISS model and considered in our study. To that end it is assumed that elite athletes, coaches, performance directors and others should be formally involved in the policy evaluation process.

**The outcomes concern:
why do nations invest in elite sport?
These are not measured in SPLISS**

In addition to the input-throughput-output relationship, the 'outcomes' in Figure 4 refer to the multitude of reasons why nations may want to invest in elite sport and how governments justify why it is important to win more medals. Politicians and policymakers often argue that elite sport affects national identity, pride, international prestige, diplomatic recognition, international prestige, feel good factors, public interest in sport and an increasing popularity of a sport (De Bosscher, Sotiriadou and van Bottenburg, 2013). Governments tend to justify large investments of public money using the argument that elite athlete success and hosting international events generate many of these positive outcomes. Policy documents often refer to the positive impact of elite sport on society, including economic impact, social impact, individual development of talented people and the capacity to inspire increased mass participation in sport (van Bottenburg, Elling, Hover, Brinkhof and Romijn, 2011). Because millions of people are emotionally connected to (elite) sport, there is a widespread trust in the 'good of (elite) sport' (Coalter, 2007). Interestingly, little research evidence has been generated to support these widely acclaimed broader societal benefits of elite sport. Apart from a few studies on the (mainly economic) impact of events,² the evidence of impact that elite sport has in society remains scant (De Bosscher et al., 2013). Given the complexity of collecting such evidence, the impact (outcomes) of elite sport success are not considered in the SPLISS study and as such present an opportunity for future SPLISS related research.

2 See a literature overview in De Bosscher, Sotiriadou and van Bottenburg, 2013. Due to differences in methodology, perspective and definitions, the estimation of economic value of elite sport events differs quite strongly between studies.

2.2.3 Critical success factors (CSF): The processes that drive the Pillars

One of the key characteristics of the SPLISS model is that Pillars are operationalised into measurable items, named critical success factors (CSFs):

'The SPLISS study does not just identify 'what' characterises successful elite sport policies, but also 'how' these different dimensions can be developed. The unique feature of this research is that in addition to measuring easily quantifiable variables, such as inputs (e.g., money) and outputs (e.g., medals), it also delves into understanding the 'black box' of throughput (De Bosscher et al., 2008, p. 35).'

In strategic management literature a 'critical success factor' is the term describing a process or activity that is required for ensuring the success of a company or an organisation. CSFs are vital components of a company strategy and critical to an organisation's operating activities. A CSF drives the strategy forward; it makes or breaks the success of the strategy (hence 'critical') (Friesen and Johnson, 1995). CSFs should not be confused with key performance indicators (KPIs) which are measures that quantify management objectives and enable the measurement of strategic progress and performance. Accordingly, the CSFs identified in the SPLISS model are vital for the evaluation of each Pillar, but are not essentially performance indicators (such as the number of medals). The term 'Leading' in the SPLISS acronym can in this respect be mistaken for pointing at a (not implied) cause–effect relationship. In the SPLISS model the CSFs drive and measure each Pillar rather than being indicators of performance (De Bosscher, Shibli, van Bottenburg, De Knop and Truyens, 2010). They may increase chances of international success but do not guarantee success, due to the many other confounding variables that can also influence success.

The Pillars and the critical success factors that make up each Pillar can be seen as the ingredients of an elite sport system. As stated by Marcel Sturkenboom, former director of the Dutch National Olympic Committee and National Sport Federation (NOC*NSF) (2007): *'having the ingredients does not automatically lead to success. How you bring the ingredients together is what counts'*. As outlined in Table 3, a total of 96 CSFs and 750 sub-factors have been measured in the SPLISS 2.0 project.

The nine Pillars and 750 CSFs are underpinned by a total of 96 CSFs in PLISS 2.0. These CSFs are the elements that can drive the Pillar forward

6 Pillar 2: Governance, organisation and structure of (elite) sport policies: An integrated approach to policy development

6.1 Concepts and definition

Pillar 2 concerns the governance, organisation and structure of elite sport. Of all Pillars, this one is the most complicated to evaluate due to the significant differences between national elite sporting systems, how they are structured and organised and how elite sport is embedded in the overall policy system. There is no consensus amongst sport managers or academics about the best practice approach to

Pillar 2 is the most comprehensive Pillar. The elements dealt with, concern the national co-ordination, long-term planning, stakeholder involvement, staff, communication, decision making and collaboration with commercial partners

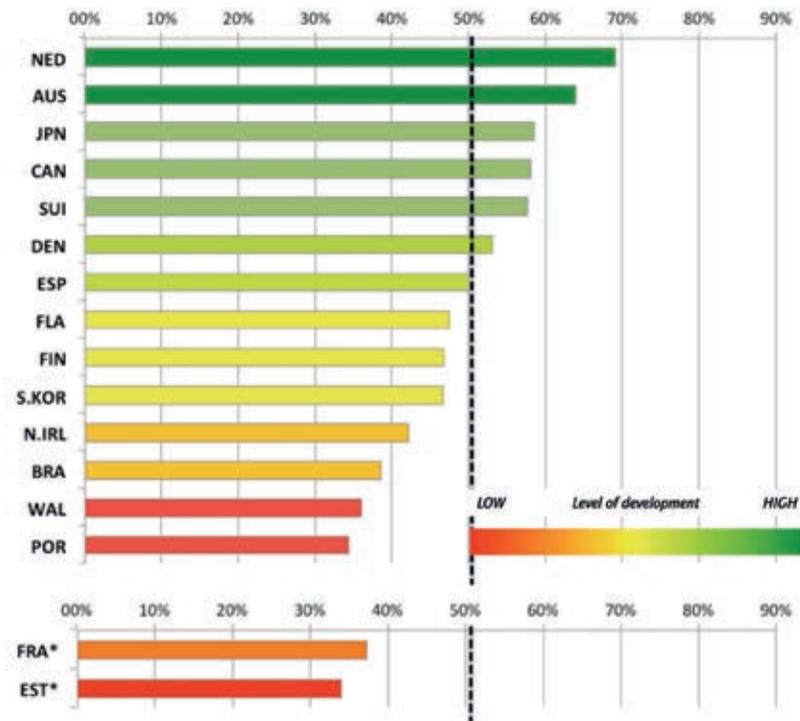
developing and implementing elite sport policies and governance. Andersen and Ronglan (2012), for example, found different pathways towards excellence among Nordic elite sport systems, with a centralised strategy in cycling in Denmark and a decentralised model in tennis and golf in Sweden. The authors argue that both can be seen as efficient and well suited to the particular organisational situation in a specific period of time, which is in effect a contingency approach to building elite sport systems. As argued by many authors (e.g., De Bosscher et al., 2008; Digel et al., 2006; Houlihan and Green, 2008), there is no magic formula for elite sport success, but there is room for different approaches within and between countries and within and between individual sports.

On the other hand, Green (2009) indicated that the need for control and co-ordination is more pronounced in elite sport than in other sport settings, which is in line with Mintzberg's (1994) early organisational theories that illustrate the preference for centralisation when a high degree of specialisation is required (such as in elite sport). It is reasonable to say that the SPLISS study adopts the perspective that for nations to maximise their chances of elite sporting success, government or National Sport Associations (NSAs) need to take charge of developing policy and governance structures strategically. National co-ordination could be concerned with steering, guiding, shaping and leading, whether sporting competitions are organised in a centralised or decentralised manner. Operationally, a coherent and holistic structure is a prerequisite for the efficient use of resources. Oakley and Green (2001) and Clumpner (1994), in that regard, state that it is especially important to delineate clearly the responsibilities of different agencies; to ensure there is effective communication between them; and to simplify administration. Pillar 2 deals with these issues.

Furthermore, research shows the importance of engaging stakeholders, in this case elite athletes and coaches, in decision-making processes and the evaluation of elite sport policies prior to and after decision making (Dooms, 2009; Thibault, Kihl and Babiak, 2010).

Pillar 2 is the most comprehensive Pillar, with 18 CSFs that are investigated in this Pillar, including 119 subfactors. Data collected for Pillar 2 from all 15 sample nations (13 nations and 3 regions: Flanders, Wallonia, Northern Ireland) contained over 500 pages. Additionally, some critical success factors were explored in greater depth by seeking the views of the main stakeholders (athletes, coaches, performance directors) using the elite sport climate survey.

6.2 Key findings



* Note: 13 nations + 3 regions (FLA, WAL, N-IRL). Only partial data available in France (no elite sport climate survey); South Korea and Estonia (no inventory). Caution is therefore needed when interpreting the scores.

Figure 21: Total scores of the SPLISS sample nations against the 18 CSFs of Pillar 2

For most countries, the score on Pillar 2 is a reflection of their success in summer sports or in winter sports, which is confirmed by the significant correlation between medal performance and the Pillar 2 scores.¹⁸

The score on Pillar 2 (organisation, structure, governance) is a reflection of the success of nations in summer sports or in winter sports

In other words, within the sample there is a positive association between the governance, organisation and structure of elite sport policies and medal-winning success. The findings show that National Sport Associations (NSAs) of the best performing nations in the sample, all have full-time management staff for the continuous support of elite athletes, coaches and performance directors. This factor has the strongest relationship with success, both in winter and summer sports, and is indirectly related to the financial resources available to countries (Pillar 1). Management staff are responsible for dissemination of important information, the delivery of consultancy and storage (centralisation) of expertise including well-developed support services and consultancy for NGBs. Furthermore it appears that high performing nations have strong national co-ordination of activities and financial inputs with clear task descriptions and deliverables. One key finding is that it is not the countries with the most centralised approach that perform best, but rather those who best co-ordinate activities and collaborate with different partners. NGBs are heavily dependent on government funding, and governments therefore set targets for NGBs to achieve against the funding provided, using the principle of 'earned autonomy' (Goodwin and Grix, 2011). This system of governance allows governments to intervene when NGBs do not deliver on targets. In some countries it seems that elite sport systems are emerging (such as Australia) where 'sport runs sport' and where government devolves the strategic responsibility to NSAs. Principles of 'new public management' practised in the public sector, where decentralisation, collaboration and accountability principles have been more prominent, are also embedded in elite sport. In high performing nations such as Australia and the Netherlands, governance of the governing bodies is carefully planned and monitored by government and a strong service-oriented approach is advocated underpinned by setting clear objectives, and using key performance indicators to make NGBs accountable for the funding they receive. Successful nations also seem significantly more likely to involve athletes and coaches in policy evaluation and to give them a voice in the decision making process of the NSA.

A key finding regarding Pillar 2 concerns the prioritisation strategy that many nations have implemented over the past decade targeting funding at those sports that have medal-winning potential. Improving efficiency by doing more with fewer resources is one possible answer in response

The SPLISS results show no straightforward link between a strategy seeking to prioritise funding for certain sports over others and success

18 $r_s = .720$ $\rho < 0.01$ for summer sports and $r_s = .685$ $\rho < 0.01$ for winter sports.

to an escalating global sporting arms race. Even though absolute funding has increased for most nations, more nations have entered the medal race, and most of the existing competitors have increased funding. In that context, the SPLISS results show no straightforward link between a strategy seeking to prioritise funding for certain sports and success. For example, at one end of the continuum is Australia, one of the early adopters of a prioritised funding strategy, and at the other end is France with the most diverse approach (investing in many sports), yet these are also the two most successful countries in the sample. Other examples of successful countries that invest in a diverse number of sports are Canada, the Netherlands, South Korea, Spain and Brazil. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that countries that invest in a higher number of sports, such as France and Canada, are also successful in more sports.

Scores on Pillar 2 vary from 34% (least developed/integrated) in Portugal to 69% (most developed/integrated) in the Netherlands.

Figure 21, the overall score against 18 CSFs, reveals that the Netherlands and Australia have the most integrated approach to elite sport policy development. Both countries' approach can be characterised by strong national co-ordination, long-term policy planning and NSA policies that are regularly evaluated by athletes and coaches. Furthermore both NOC*NSF (Netherlands) and the Australian Institute of Sports have sufficient full-time staff; they provide a range of services to their NGBs and other stakeholders and the quality of the communication and decision-making structure is evaluated positively in the elite sport climate survey. Interestingly both countries have a different funding approach—priority funding in Australia and diversity funding in the Netherlands (concepts that will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter).

**Countries score well
on different blends of CSFs**

A second group of countries is formed by Canada, Switzerland, Japan and Denmark that perform above the average of all sample nations. Their situation can be characterised by having full-time management staff at the NSA level along with a range of elite level services offered to NGBs. In regard to some CSFs elite sport development approaches are less homogeneous. In Canada and Denmark most elite sport decisions are made by one or a small number of organisations, whereas in Switzerland and Japan there appears to be greater plurality of involvement in elite sport decision making. Co-ordination of regional elite sport activities is well the developed in Denmark. An important strength of the Japanese and Swiss elite sport policies is their focus on long-term planning, which is less developed in Denmark. Canada shows especially strong involvement of stakeholders in the policy decision-making process. Switzerland and Japan are quite unique in their development of a national strategy in collaboration with commercial partners. An interesting point needs noting in the Danish elite sport policy. Since the revised Act on elite sport

in 2004, there exists collaboration between 18 elite sport municipalities, which was identified as a key to success after 2009 by Storm (2012), because it has released financial and organisational resources focussed at elite sport development not previously seen in Denmark at municipal level.

With the exception of South Korea, the remaining countries suffer from a lack of national co-ordination and lack of support services through the NSA. Stakeholder involvement is most problematic in Northern Ireland, Brazil and South Korea.

In conclusion, Pillar 2 shows evidence that countries' score is composed of different blends of CSFs. France, in many ways, seems to be an outlier on Pillar 2 compared with other high performing nations. The results reveal remarkably low scores that fail to explain France's success when considering the scores of other nations on this Pillar. This is shown in the separate results for the inventory only in Figure 22 (France did not complete the elite sport climate survey). France was the best performing nation in the sample in absolute terms in summer sports and was also relatively successful in winter sports. France has the most region/provincially-centred elite sport policies of all nations, and it has staff appointed at the national sport institute INSEP who lead on programmes for elite sport and the organisational development of NGBs. On the other hand, limited co-ordination exists between the 16 regional training centres, called CREPS (Centres de Resource, d'Expertise et de Performance Sportive) and the 115 local departments. There is less long-term planning and stakeholder involvement in policy evaluations. It seems that France is moving from a strong state-centred policy approach towards more decentralised elite sport development with room for collaboration with the private sector.

Neither the elite sport climate survey (as perceived by athletes, coaches, performance directors) nor the inventory (the Pillar objective data as collected by the researcher) independently correlate significantly with summer or winter sport success. However, when combining both scores there is a significant correlation, implying that absolute and perceived reflection in combination provide a more complete picture of reality. This is further explained by looking at the case of Flanders', which is a politically autonomous (Northern) region of Belgium. When looking solely at the elite sport climate survey evaluation by athletes, coaches and performance directors (Figure 22), scores are generally low, with the highest score (59%) achieved by Flanders. Despite the lack of Belgian success in international competition, the positive evaluation by athletes, coaches and performance directors can possibly be explained by the fact that Flanders' elite sport budgets have more than tripled over the past decade, and a range of additional services were provided to stakeholders. As such, the first evaluation of the elite sport climate conducted in 2004 improved from 'average' to 'good' in the 'third measurement' in 2011 (De Bosscher and De Croock, 2012).

In the next part of the chapter we continue with a detailed comparative analysis and discussion of each cluster of CSFs.

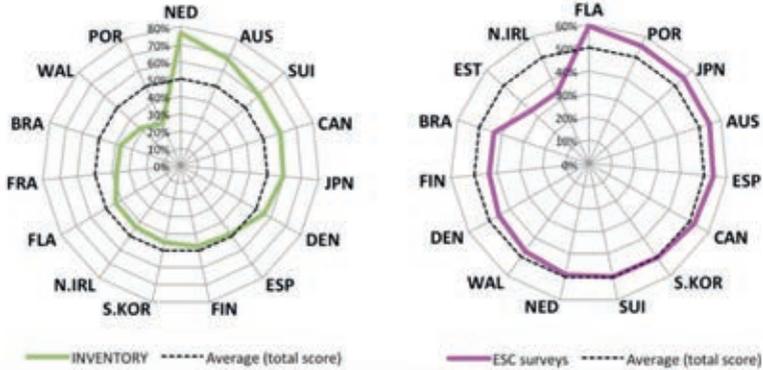


Figure 22: Separate scores of the SPLISS sample nations for the overall inventory (left) and the elite sport climate survey (right) on Pillar 2 (sorted from largest to smallest)

6.3 Comparative and descriptive analysis

6.3.1 National co-ordination of elite sport policies

Critical success factors P2		INVENTORY	SURVEY		
I. There is strong co-ordination of all agencies involved in elite sport, with clear task descriptions, no overlap of different tasks and political recognition		O	A	C	PD
CSF 2.1	There is national co-ordination of activities and financial inputs (horizontal) and a clear decision making structure: there is (only) one organisation at the national level that makes the major decisions on elite sport only and that co-ordinates and records expenditures and activities centrally so that no overlap takes place.	X	No survey evaluation on these CSFs		
CSF 2.2	There is co-ordination of financial inputs (vertical direction) and activities: allocation of funding and management of activities in regard to elite sport at regional/district level: if there is any significant financial input of this type it is recorded and co-ordinated nationally.	X			
CSF 2.3	Elite sport is recognised as a valuable component of a politician's portfolio of responsibilities.	X			

Source of information: O: overall sport inventory; A: athletes' survey; C: coaches' survey; PD: performance directors' survey

Elite sport development in many countries has been characterised by increasing 'governmentalisation' and institutionalisation over the past 20-30 years.

Governments set goals but autonomy is provided to the NSA to identify how the goals should be reached

Governmentalisation refers to *'the development of a state apparatus for the delivery and management of services that were previously the primary role of responsibility of organisation of civil society'* (Houlihan, 2009, p. 55). Sport policy studies have noted increasing government intervention to establish and refine elite sport policy objectives, alongside the provision of substantial investment of public and lottery funds in elite athletes' development (e.g., Green and Houlihan, 2005; Bergsgard et al., 2007). While former communist countries have a long history of state direction of elite sport, a similar approach to elite sport development emerged much later in many non-communist countries.

Among the sample nations, strong government involvement can still be observed in South Korea, Australia and Spain. An interesting finding is that countries such as Australia and, to a lesser degree, France seem to be moving away from significant government involvement, with the emphasis now being more on a 'sport runs sport' approach with funded organisations held more accountable for delivering agreed objectives. Based on the view that 'strategy' requires a 'macro' perspective but that implementation may require a 'micro' lens, it seems logical for governments to be engaged with setting strategic goals but not necessarily driving the process by which these goals should be reached.

Horizontal co-ordination at the national level

A key finding from the SPLISS 1.0 study was that countries with only one national co-ordinating elite sport body responsible for elite sport (and not sport for all), such as UK Sport or Olympiatoppen

In successful nations, only one national co-ordinating body takes the major strategic decisions in elite sport

in Norway, have an advantage over countries where decision-making responsibilities are split between different organisations. Such a structure reduces transaction costs and avoids strategic disagreement, and reduces internal competition between elite sport and grassroots sport. This 'level of horizontal co-ordination' as a critical success factor is confirmed by the results in the sample countries. The National Sport Associations (NSA) in Australia (Australian Sports Commission via the Australian Institute of Sport), Canada (Sport Canada), France (the Sports Ministry via INSEP), Spain (the Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD), South Korea (Korea Sports Council/Korea Olympic Committee) and the Netherlands (NOC*NSF) take the lead in the elite sport decision-making process. In other countries elite sport is co-ordinated by at least two organisations, and sometimes by three in Japan and Wallonia or even more in Flanders (see Table 24). As a partial solution, some countries have a department that co-ordinates the operations of the different agencies and

institutions so that expenditures and activities are recorded and co-ordinated (Flanders, Japan) or they have formulated an agreement to ensure collaboration and task description (such as in Switzerland). Interestingly, in South Korea, a separate body was established by the government in 2007 for the development of young talents: NEST, Next Generation Sport Talent Foundation.

Table 24: Level of horizontal national co-ordination of elite sport activities and expenditures

	Number of decision-making organisations for elite sport development	Level of national co-ordination
AUS	1	High
BRA	2	Low
CAN	1	High
DEN	2 ⁴	High
FIN	2	Low
FRA	1	High
JPN	3	Medium
NED	1	High
S. KOR	1	High
POR	1	High
ESP	1	High
SUI	2	Medium
N. IRL	2	Low
FLA	5 ²	Medium
WAL	3 ³	Medium

Notes:

- In Finland the organisations responsible for elite sport are the NOC and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The NSA is excluded, because it has a very limited role in elite sport despite the fact that they do participate in elite sport strategy processes. There is no clear co-ordination for elite sport. Organisation of Finnish elite sport is very fragmented like the whole sport movement in Finland.*
- As a solution to the dispersion of responsibilities in Flanders, a task force in elite sport has been set up as a co-ordinated meeting where the main decisions in elite sport are taken. This task force consists of five organisations that meet once a month: Ministry of Sport, Department CJSM (culture-youth-sports-media), Bloso (the national sports administration), BOIC (National Olympic Committee), VSF (Flemish Sports Federation). Bloso (as a governmental organisation, responsible at operational level) takes most of the final decisions, however, this always happens in consultation with the task force.*
- In Wallonia, it needs to be noted that most athletes from the German community are affiliated with a French-speaking federation and that the Ministry of the German Community (only 70,000 inhabitants) and French-speaking community organise meetings to co-ordinate their activities.*
- In Denmark, Team Denmark is in charge of most top elite sport, but it is still DIF (merged with NOC) which announces the team for the Olympics (in co-operation with Team Denmark).*

Only in Switzerland (since 1997), South Korea (since its establishment) and the Netherlands (since 1993) is the National Sports Association (NSA) merged with the National Olympic Committee (NOC). This can be seen as strengthening the national co-ordination and decision making-process in elite sport.

The NSA and NOC
are merged in two nations

While the NOCs have the most decision-making power for elite sport in Brazil, Finland and Japan, NOC influence on elite sport policy is limited in most other countries. In many countries there exists tension between the NOC and the NSA because of the limited power the NOC has in regard to determining elite sport policies, mainly resulting from their limited elite sport funding role—with the exception of South Korea (€100m), Japan (€41m) and to a lesser extent Canada (€11.6m). Their influence reaches as far as athletes' preparation for the Olympic Games. In Japan the governmental role of the NAASH (National Agency for the Advancement of Sports and Health) has significantly increased over the past years since they established the Japanese Institute of Sport Science (JISS) in 2001 and the National Training Centre in Tokyo in 2008, mainly with governmental funding. This was reported by the Japanese researcher as one of the keys to Japan's increased success in recent editions of the Olympic Games.

National co-ordination challenges are unique in Belgium, quite different from all the other countries in the sample. Because of the complex state structure, responsibility for sport is delegated to the independent regions (Dutch-speaking

Flanders, Wallonia and Northern
Ireland have separate elite sport
systems and are seen as distinct
nations in SPLISS

Flanders, French-speaking Wallonia and German-speaking community). Consequently there is no national sport policy driver other than the National Olympic Committee (BOIC), which only has limited funding. There are three ministries of sport, for which the law (i.e., decree) determines that they cannot fund another region or a federal (Belgian) sport structure; accordingly there are three national sports administrations and also national governing bodies, although for Wallonia and the German-speaking community many NGBs are merged. Limited collaboration at the federal (Belgian) level exists. NGBs only co-operate for the selection of athletes for international competitions, and even this process often creates tension. A Belgian virtual co-operation exists, called the ABCD commission. This is a meeting, assembled once a year between Adeps (Sports administration in Wallonia) Bloso (Sports administration in Flanders), BOIC (National Olympic committee, called COIB in French) and D (Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft, sports administration in the German-speaking part of Belgium). For these reasons, Flanders and Wallonia are seen as two distinct nations in this study. Apart from this complex state structure, different organisations influence elite sport policies even within Flanders and Wallonia (governments, NSA, BOIC,

umbrella of the sport federations), which does not foster straightforward decision-making. Clearly, the situation in Belgium is less than ideal compared with nations in the sample that have less complex political and operating environments.

Compared to the above, the situation in Northern Ireland (NI) and the UK is different. With UK Sport as the co-ordinating authority, there is a relatively centralised structure. In Northern Ireland, DCAL (government Department of Culture, Art and Leisure) sets the policy direction and Sport NI puts it into practice. Some sports are supported at UK level; others are supported at the home nation level of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland competes as a nation in its own right in football and sports contested in the Commonwealth Games, and as such it has no separate National Olympic Committee. Athletes from Northern Ireland can choose to represent either Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland and therefore the relevant NOCs are the British Olympic Association and the Olympic Council of Ireland.

Vertical co-ordination between regions

Good collaboration with and co-ordination between regional training activities is critical in large countries

Another level of vertical co-ordination deemed a critical success factor happens at the level of regional training departments and training centres. Co-ordination and collaboration appears to be more critical in larger countries where this is

more difficult to get organised. For example, in France, where the 16 regional CREPS (Centres de Ressource, d'Expertise et de Performance Sportive) depend on the national ministry and where also six partnerships centres exist with local governments, the need for national co-ordination between them and collaboration with the national trainings institute INSEP is seen as a key area for improvement. In Australia, a National Institutes System Intergovernmental Agreement (NISIA) was recently developed (in 2011) which aims to generate a structured co-operative agreement between the eight (independent) state (provincial) institutes and academies of sport. However, they are not compelled to deliver programmes against NGB plans and there remain disagreements on who should pay for working towards achieving outcomes required at national level. In the Netherlands, NOC*NSF has developed an accreditation system, for which regional centres receive funding. In this way activities are nationally instigated and standardised documentation has been developed to be completed by each region. In the South Korean system the 16 regional sport councils are funded by the KSC/KOC (albeit only with €142,800) in order to prepare for participation in the National Sports Festival, the biggest national sporting event held every year. This is seen by the South Korean researcher as a unique system strength, because of the engagement it creates at the regional level between sport organisations.

Finally, also of note is the existing collaboration between Team Denmark (TD) and 18 recognised elite municipalities (21 since 2014) who are responsible for talent development in collaboration with the NGBs and local clubs. Each municipality delivers on a number of focus sports. Six professionals are appointed within TD with the specific responsibility to develop these elite municipalities and elite facilities across Denmark. This strategy facilitates elite sport investments at local level and is part of the national elite sport strategy. It was identified by Storm (2012) as one of the explanations for Danish success after 2009. It facilitated the co-ordination of local efforts and raised sponsorship revenue for local elite sport projects. Such local development increased following the 2004 elite sport act revision. To some extent such local involvement in elite sport policies also exists in the Netherlands, through seven regional Olympic networks, recognised by NOC*NSF as partners in elite sport development. The strength of these networks is that they create collaboration and involvement of municipalities, NGBs, educational institutions, and local industries in sport and elite sport development, which in turn has an indirect effect on the local community as a whole. In some support centres, over 45 staff members are appointed on a full-time basis.

Elite sport municipalities as stakeholders for local elite sport development exists in Denmark and to a lesser extent the Netherlands

6.3.2 Long-term planning regarding elite sport policies

Critical success factors P2		INVENTORY		SURVEY	
II. There is (evidence of) long-term planning for elite sport development with the commitment of subsidies for elite sport		O	A	C	PD
CSF 2.4	Long-term policy plans are developed (at least on a 4-8-year period) specifically for elite sport and are communicated in public, regularly evaluated and supported with financial resourcing	X			
CSF 2.5	NGBs are subsidised for (at least) a four-year cycle	X			P1
CSF 2.6	Long-term policy plans are required for governing bodies in order to receive funding, including requirements regarding the development of elite sport	X		X	

Source of information: O: overall sport inventory; A: athletes' survey; C: coaches' survey; PD: performance directors' survey. Right column shows if the CSFs are interlinked with other Pillars.