

TOWARDS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORTER LIAISON OFFICERS



TPDS

Quality reports – Internal Evaluation



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This deliverable provides a comprehensive review of the TPDS initiative's progress, highlighting challenges and successes.

To ensure a thorough review, an FSE staff member who was not previously associated with the project facilitated a discussion with the project partners.

The primary objective of this analysis is to refine existing operational methods and gather critical insights to inform future collaborations involving Football Supporters Europe.

This analysis is part of the project Monitoring and Evaluation plan and provided great insight to the project team and to FSE (the Project Coordinator) to tailor and adapt the project implementation and management structure with the objective of facilitating the consortium participation and engagement while increasing the quality of the activity's implementation and the output production.

3 short Internal Reports were developed, following direct conversations with the project consortium.

Internal Evaluation – Report 1 - Jan 2024

Start of Project

The project started in April 2023, but many of the partners saw the meeting in Frankfurt in October 2023 as a real kick off. All partners agreed that the project was ambitious, but they were anxious to be a part of it.

The Frankfurt meeting, like all meetings following, was especially useful and well organised, with time for group activities and bonding activities that made the partners feel like a team that helped them collaborate during the project.

Communication

The feeling was that compared to other projects it was a particularly good atmosphere and there was good collaboration. The agreement was that the partners found it easy to work together. Communication was also made easy in between in-person meetings with responses to emails and questions always prompt and helpful.

One perspective that was echoed by the other partners was it was appreciated to have the combination of various perspectives: academic knowledge alongside the practices and experiences of other stakeholders. The feeling was that integrating researchers, professionals, activists, and fans yields excellent results.

Working with different countries

Partners shared the feeling that the project was (and is) excellently prepared from a substantive standpoint, with a team composed of individuals who possess immense knowledge and experience in their respective fields and learned a great deal from each other. It was also echoed that a strength of the project is getting the more global perspective with having CONMEBOL, from South America involved. They have been involved and they seem enthusiastic and committed to trying to take the model, adapt the model and put it into action.

A challenge that many partners brought up was how they could standardize, especially the courses, with the countries being at quite various levels when it comes to SLOs and fans. Some countries were much smaller and other even had barriers related to the specific nature of the fan community in that country, which is characterized by distrust and a closed-off atmosphere. Partners said that this required work and patience and again having insights from the other partners was still useful if not always transferable.

Collaborations

During the first year of project activity there has been lots of level of collaboration, from with the partners themselves, within the Technical Working Group and between partners within

their national context (SLOs, leagues, etc.). The consensus among the partners was that all levels of collaboration were high.

The project partners all felt that between partners there was good collaboration with the interpersonal relationships being very valuable. Partners highlighted that they felt included and never overlooked and always respected. It was this level of inclusion and integration that was seen as a big plus to the project's success. Partners never felt siloed or on their own and there was no competition between partners- trust was given and appreciated. All discussions, either at in person meetings, online meetings or within correspondences were open, honest and transparent.

Support of FSE

The consensus from the group was that everyone was truly satisfied with the level of support from FSE and believed that the project couldn't have happened without the FSE network and that it was encouraging to the partners to see that FSE was also very committed to the project, and truly believed in its importance. The partners felt supported by all the FSE people involved in the project that were working on it from the start and were happy with the support. The level of support was also very apparent from the FSE team lead, Mattia, who was praised for his organisation and collaboration skills and was mentioned to always be there to help and guide, with work packages or templates, when the partners were having challenges with deliverables. Many partners, especially some that were working with FSE for the first time, were pleasantly surprised by the collaboration and mentioned they would be happy to do it again.

Looking Forward

At this check-in point of the project the feeling amongst the partners is that they are highly confident that the project will be a success because they can see that in individual countries, the project has the potential to translate into concrete initiatives related to SLO training.

Internal Evaluation – Report 2 - July 2025

Progress

One of the main focus of the previous period project implementation was the organisation of the Pilot Training Activities in which the University of Gdansk, the University of Malmo and CDES had the chance to test the modules developed in the previous stage of the project and gather feedback from relevant national stakeholders to further develop the modules.

Each of the three partners tailored and adapted the learning points gathered during the project implementation to their specific national context.

A fundamental part of the piloting work was the involvement of the wider network of national stakeholders in Sweden, France and Poland (football clubs, policy makers, football governing bodies, active SLOs, supporters groups). Moreover, the project consortium contracted an Academic Evaluator to carry out a specific Academic Evaluation of the training modules produced by the 3 academic partners in charge of the piloting.

This approach allowed to gather multiple perspectives on the modules and receive feedback not only on the quality of the modules methodology, content and structure but also to assess their relevance in the specific national football and cultural environment.

Another highlight of the previous project stage was the organisation of the TPDS European Multiplier Event, which was held in Malmo on the 27th of June 2025, in the framework of the European Football Fans Congress organised by FSE.

This was the first of the two Multiplier Event part of the TPDS project plan and the first main occasion for the consortium to address a wider audience and present the work carried out in the project.

Successes and Challenges

The course piloting was raised as one of the biggest challenges of the project to date. While all the training activities were delivered, the partners expressed that it was a lot of work, and they thought the project deadlines were a bit of a challenge. Still, thanks to the support that the partners gathered from other relevant national stakeholders, they were happy to see that the deliverables were successfully produced. The positive feedback that was shared by partners was that they were grateful for the freedom allowed in the courses by country and thought that worked very well.

The European Multiplier Event was mentioned by the partners as a success for the project implementation. Having the chance to share the work done during the last 2 years with a wide audience and gathering feedback from relevant stakeholders proved the relevance of the project objectives and activities. Witnessing the interest coming from football stakeholders was also indicated as a strong motivational support by the partners.

Support of FSE

The consortium shared satisfaction with the level and quality of the support received by FSE, the Project Coordinator. In particular, the involvement of staff members with a wide experience and deep knowledge of the SLO role represented a strong added value to the development process of the Training Modules and the continued work on the SLO Occupational Standards.

The partners also praised the logistical and organisational support provided by FSE as the organiser of the European Multiplier Event. The partners were satisfied with the level of participation from the event audience and were glad to see the event included in a wide event focused on football fans, as this led to stronger networking connections and promoted the sustainability and impact of the project activities.

Points to highlight

The partners highlighted that the following are things they feel are important to address before the project ends.

- Partners would like to ensure that there is an extended online meeting to close off the project and discuss the sustainability of the project outputs.
- Partners also raised that they are concerned about sustainability- what the next steps are, and how to keep it going after the project is completed in 2026.
- Following the European Multiplier Event, the partners mentioned the importance of focusing on the dissemination of the project activities, especially when targeted to relevant stakeholders as this was indicated as a fundamental step to ensure the project sustainability.
- It was raised that while it is great that FSE is a legacy organisation that is capable and committed to taking the deliverables forward into the future there needs to be buy in from major stakeholder like UEFA and European National associations so they too become a valuable piece for the research and development so that collectively there is a strong future strategy for SLOs, football safety and standards of service.
- Thought also needs to go into making the most of the project legacy after the roadmap for South America.

Internal Evaluation – Report 3 - April 2026

Progress

This final report follows a discussion held at the end of April 2026, once all of the project activities were successfully completed.

The main highlights of this last project stage were:

- The development and publication of the “Handbook for Implementation of Occupational Standard framework”. This deliverable represents one of the main successes of the TPDS project, providing an in-depth definition of the work of the SLO and of the required skills and competencies that the SLO should possess to successfully carry out its role.
- The finalisation of the project training modules, following the piloting stage from the University of Malmo, the University of Gdansk and the CDES. These trainings will be a fundamental part of the project legacy and for the professionalisation of the SLO role.
- The development of the Road Map for the South-American continent, in cooperation with CONMEBOL and its presentation at a Global Multiplier Event held in Asuncion, Paraguay, at the CONMEBOL Headquarters. This event represented a fundamental first step in the development of the SLO role in the South American Continent and set the first stone for the cooperation among CONMEBOL, the TPDS project consortium and European stakeholders such as UEFA.

Successes and Challenges

The consortium was very satisfied with the work methodology followed in the development of the Occupational Standards, based on an iterative process and a strong involvement of active SLOs and relevant stakeholders to fine-tune the deliverables.

Regarding the training modules, following the feedback shared in the previous period, the University partners were ultimately satisfied with the work carried out and with the finalised training modules produced. Some challenges remain in connection with the legacy and sustainability of this training, for which support from FSE and a stronger commitment of national stakeholders is required.

The organisation of the Global Multiplier Event was, in itself, a great challenge for the consortium. Initially planned in Rio de Janeiro, with the support of Brazil Football Association (CBF), the event had to be then moved to Asuncion following some organisational and strategic changes in CBF. CONMEBOL, as the project partner from South America, with the support of FSE, worked on planning the event in Asuncion, at the CONMEBOL Headquarters. The event was ultimately a success, with a strong involvement of Paraguayan and South American football stakeholders.

Support of FSE

Looking back at the entire project implementation, the consortium was satisfied with the level of support received by FSE, as Project Coordinator.

The partners were happy to see that all the main activities and deliverables were completed and to assess that the project objectives were reached.

Regarding the last stage of project activities, partners praised the support of FSE in the development of the Occupational Standards, providing, through their network and expertise, a team of experienced SLOs and SLO experts to feed into the deliverable.

Moreover, CONMEBOL was very happy with FSE's support in the development of the Road Map for the South American Continent and, in particular, the organisation of the Global Multiplier Event.

The consortium shared a commitment to a continued effort for the project's legacy and sustainability actions, following FSE's lead as one of the main actors in the development and professionalisation of the SLO role.

For the future projects

In general, all the partners are pleased with the project, and several said that they hope the cooperation with FSE is long-lasting and continues with other projects.

Some learnings that might be useful for future projects that partners raised as challenges for the particular project are:

- A clearer road map with timelines for all the deliverables should be shared with the partners on day one with each meeting having time allocated to check-ins on the timelines. The feeling is that this will lead to fewer surprises for the partners in the middle of the project.
- Regarding communication, a few more check-ins with partners, especially at the beginning, would be helpful. However, the partners were pleased there were no "useless" meetings.
- Partners felt that clearer communication about the financial part would be beneficial from the start to ensure partners are aware of the expenses they need to cover (e.g., the piloting course).
- After the first in-person meeting there were some logistical questions around reclaiming expenses as at times they had challenges but as the project went on it was clearer. A clear, streamlined, and consistent process would be useful for partners to have from the start.