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Enhance Sustainable Measures In Sports Facilities (ESMIS)

D2.2 Benchmarking study

Version: 1.0



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SPORT IRELAND



Universidad de
Castilla-La Mancha



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Abstract

The ESMIS project aims to elevate the sports sector's sustainability practices through comprehensive research, data analysis, and knowledge exchange across Europe. **We are committed to improving the implementation of best practices in sustainable sports facility management and providing a robust support platform for professionals and stakeholders in this field.**

The benchmarking study (D2.2) can be considered as the deliverable that leads to the first significant upgrade of the digital mapping platform and toolkit created in the project. This document describes the feedback from the main target audiences in the project – sport facility managers and owners (public and private), sustainability managers and businesses that provide innovative sustainability solutions for sport facilities. The benchmarking study outlines concrete steps for improvement for the ESMIS mapping platform and focuses on the needs of the primary target groups that have to be taken into account in the next steps of the ESMIS project. All of this will contribute to the achievement of the desired end result: build an engaged community around the digital platform with mapping system for innovative best practice solutions to make sport facilities more sustainable. **The current deliverable also gives outline on the best practices and innovative solutions that project partners researched and published on the platform.**

The feedback, analysis and recommendations in the deliverable will navigate the future development of the ESMIS platform (<https://mappingsmis.com/>) in such a way that it inspires sports facility managers and sustainability experts in sports facilities and builds an engaged community of users that not only share information but look at the platform as source of inspiration.



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1 Introduction

The traditional model of sport facilities is being challenged due to its environmental impact and vulnerability to climate change. The ESMIS project aims to pioneer a new era of sustainable sport facilities across Europe.

Our goal is to empower sport facilities to adapt sustainable practices, driving positive change in the sports sector. We do this by creating a digital platform with best practices of innovative sustainability solutions for sport facilities from all over Europe. The platform will serve as a source of inspiration and exchange of experience to ensure good examples are replicated in sports facilities in different European countries.

The prototype of the mapping platform is already available: <https://mappingsmis.com/> with the first selection of best practices. It was presented in front of over 150 local sports facilities in March 2025 in Barcelona during the EFISPORT conference organized by the project partner INDESCAT.

2 Benchmarking study in the ESMIS project (D2.2)

This benchmarking study should be considered as something bigger than just an overview of the listed best practices currently on the mapping. It is the roadmap from getting the platform with best practices from a prototype (TRL 6) to a fully developed solution that can help sport facilities on their way to sustainability (TRL 9). The document will focus on all the lessons learned and gathered feedback from stakeholders in Work Package 2 and transform it into a plan of action that will help the ESMIS partnership to further develop the functionalities of the platform.

While D2.1 can be considered as the design paper that supported the creation of the prototype of the ESMIS platform, D2.2 will help complete the development journey of the platform until the end of the project and make sure that:

- Changes are made to the platform interface and the data collection tool to better reflect the needs of managers and owners of sport facilities.
- Further functionalities and resources are created to address the needs of managers and owners of sport facilities in the best way possible.
- The right communication strategy is in place to promote the platform and grow the number of users, listed best practices and inspire stakeholders across Europe.



The benchmarking study provides answers to all the questions related to the future development of the mapping platform of best practices for sustainable sport facilities. It answers the following questions:

- How to build upon the lessons learned from other mapping platform already existing and leverage the knowledge from other EU projects and initiatives as well?
- How to ensure long-term stakeholder engagement?
- Should the types of data collected for each of the best practice cases be changed and visualised in a different way?
- What is the customer journey of the target audience that will use the digital platform with best practices?
- What is the best way to approach and onboard new best practices on the platform?
- How should the ESMIS partnership ensure involvement from countries outside of the project and attracts them to use the digital platform?
- How should the project communication be adapted to promote the digital platform with best practices?

This document makes a deep dive into the lessons learned from all over Europe and provides recommendations to identify, analyse and classify sustainability the next steps for the development of the interactive digital platform, part of the ESMIS project. Think of the benchmarking study as the report after the initial beta-test of the prototype for a new software. Both have a similar role when it comes to setting the framework and the guidelines for the upcoming development for the final product. This benchmarking study will be the foundation for the next steps in WP 3, WP 4 and WP 5 of the ESMIS project and will facilitate the creation of the final version of the digital platform in the ESMIS projects, with aspirational targets and guidelines set out to support the future activities of the partnership.



3 The benchmarking study in the context of the ESMIS project

This benchmarking study will help us deep dive into the all the knowledge gathered in the scope of the WP 2 activities:

- The data collection process and onboarding of best practices from sustainable sport facilities from all over Europe.
- The local workshops with stakeholders who shared their feedback, needs and recommendations about the platform as concept and a tool they can use to enhance the adoption of sustainable best practices for their sport facilities.
- Consultation session with the experts from the Netherlands who have been part of the development, management and promotion of the Dutch Sustainability Atlas: <https://atlas.duurzamesportsector.nl> (example visual below):



- Two in-person workshops among the project partners during the transnational project meeting in Barcelona (11 of March 2025) to discuss all the feedback gathered and based on that to plan the next steps in the platform's development.

All of these actions helped us to elaborate the necessary actions for the final year of the ESMIS project. They have been described in detail in further sections of this benchmarking study.

3.1 Data collection – feedback and lessons learned.

The first phase of the data collection process in the ESMIS project started on 4th of November 2024 and ended on the 7th of March 2025. This first round of best practice selection was done for the prototype of the platform and had to test:

- The first version of the data collection tool – to see if we can get the data that



we want in all details, to check how sport facilities react to the questions. If there is something they are missing, or maybe we are asking too much and too complex things.

- The approach to engaging stakeholders for data collection – to see how effective the selected approach for engaging sport facilities is and how it works for the different countries and types of entities from the partnership.
- To see if there can be alternative ways of gathering best practices for the ESMIS mapping platform.

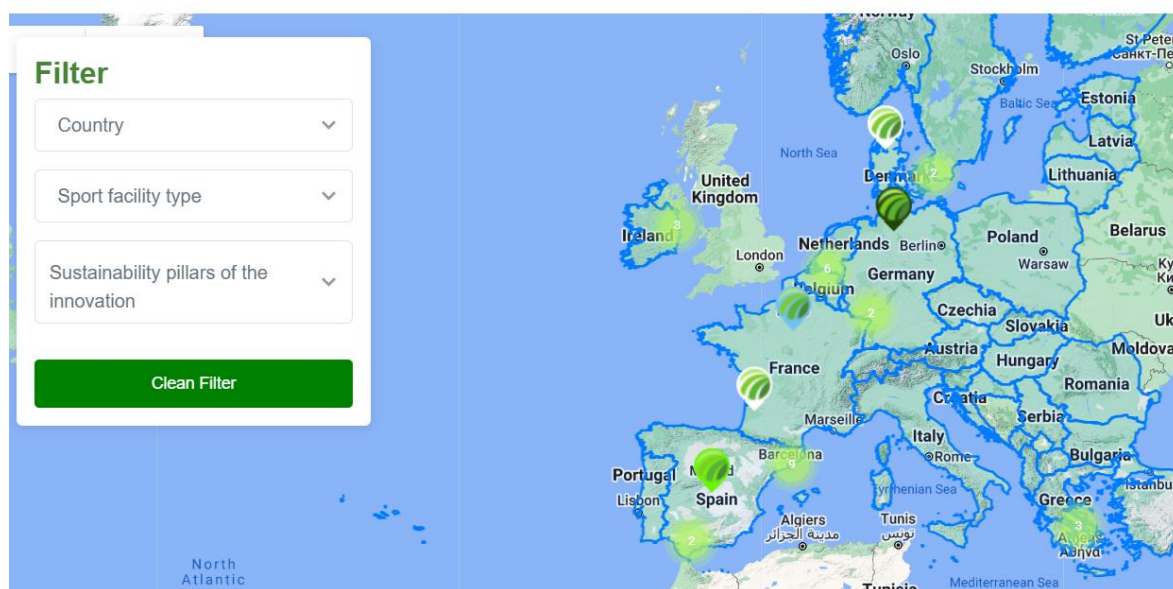
From a geographical aspect, the data collection and mapping initially focused on the following countries for the prototype of the mapping platform:

- Netherlands.
- Ireland.
- Belgium.
- Germany.
- Spain.
- Greece.
- Sweden.
- Denmark.
- Finland.
- France.

These are the countries covered by the first version of the digital platform in the ESMIS project. All aspects related to the initial data collection were elaborated in *D2.1 Methodology framework for the selection of best practices*.

In the next stages of development other countries will be added depending on the stakeholders we manage to reach thanks to our communication efforts.

The data collection resulted in gathering 33 best practices from the countries mentioned above. They are all currently listed on the prototype version of the ESMIS platform: <https://mappingesmis.com/innovation/>



From the perspective of the data collection around 60% of the information for the best practices originated from sports facilities directly, while around 40% came from desk research. However, all best practices that are from countries outside of the project were listed as a result of desk research.

This shows that the first and most important goal of the partnership has to be creating an engaged community of stakeholders in the countries beyond the ESMIS partnership. This process has already started in WP 2 with the creation of a database of interested parties from various countries across Europe.

Geographical scope of the best practices.

In terms of geographical spread there is a good balance between North and South Europe and by countries we see the following division:

- Netherlands – 4 best practices.
- Ireland – 3 best practices.
- Belgium – 2 best practices.
- Germany – 2 best practices.
- Spain – 12 best practices.



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- Greece – 3 best practices.
- Sweden – 1 best practice.
- Denmark – 2 best practices.
- Finland – 1 best practice.
- France – 3 best practices.

The reason for the big difference between Spain and the other countries is that there are 2 project partners from this country.

Sport facility types in the best practices.

CEM Claror



Sport facility type ⓘ
Indoor sports centre



ESMIS
ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE MEASURES
IN SPORTS FACILITIES

General Information

Country
Spain

Address
c/Sardenya 333, 08025 Barcelona

Owner
Ajuntament de Barcelona

In these 33 cases various types of sport facilities are represented with various sustainability innovations. All four primary sustainability areas are covered – energy, water, materials and governance. The types of sport facilities that are covered include:

- Indoor swimming pools.
- Indoor sport centers with multiple sport halls for various sports.
- Football stadiums with artificial or natural grass.
- Outdoor courts for sport from other materials (non-grass).
- Sport complexes that combine two or more of the sport facilities mentioned above.

Data collected for the best practices.





Facility Indicators

Indicator	Value
Visits per year	487,164
Water Consumption (m ³ /visit)	0.0
Primary energy Usage per year (kWh/m ²)	146.9
Water Saving (%)	75
Energy Saving (%)	
Waste and Resource Saving (%)	

Other Indicators

LED lights

After doing a deep dive in all 33 listed best practices several trends emerge:

- All cases have a very good descriptive part and sometimes links to useful external resources and information for sustainability innovation. Unfortunately, sometimes the text can be too long and the links to the external sources are not present in a user-friendly way.
- Images vary in quality and in some situations are missing. There should be a way to ensure that we get images that belong to the sport facilities to ensure that we are not violating any copyrights.
- Although quantitative data was mentioned as the most important one, it is the hardest to get. However, it is very important to obtain it to show the impact of the implemented best practices.
- We see that sometimes the data that is provided by sports facilities may contain errors.
- It is very beneficial that we have included a question about the future plans of different sport facilities related to sustainability. In that way, we know what



they plan to do next and give us the basis for potential matchmaking for the future with facilities that have implemented a similar best practice.

Interest in a specific need that can be addressed by a company offering an innovative sustainability solution.

How our current and future facilities are designed to ensure our carbon footprint is zero or minimized to the smallest extent possible

- Desk research can be a powerful way to add new sports facilities, but on its own it is not enough. Contact with the sport facilities has to be made.
- Partners who don't have direct access to the target audience of sport facility managers/owners struggle to onboard best practices on the mapping platform.

3.2 Local workshops – feedback and lessons learned

To make sure we follow a consistent and coherent approach in the organisation of the workshops and to ensure the successful execution of the task we at Cluster Sports & Technology (CST) organized the first workshop in Eindhoven in November 2024 and provided a variety of preparatory resources for the project partners such guidelines for organisation, presentation template and structured example questions to obtain relevant feedback.

All partners had the flexibility to organise more than one event online or offline with relevant target audience defined in the previous deliverable D2.1. Below you can see the main lessons learned from these encounters per country and how they can impact the project.

The Netherlands (Cluster Sports & Technology and SportInnovator)

In the Netherlands, Cluster Sports & Technology organized two workshops as part of Work Package 2:

- 13th of November 2024 in Eindhoven as part of the ELIS Innovation Summit (<https://elisinnovationhub.com/summit/>) with contribution from SportInnovator and Sport Ireland.
- 20th of February 2025 in Den Bosch, organized with the support of SportInnovator and Municipality of Den Bosch.



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After the first workshop Cluster Sports & Technology and SportInnovator saw the need for organizing a second follow-up event to dive deeper into the needs of different stakeholders on a local level in the Netherlands and to better understand how the ESMIS mapping platform can be developed as a tool to address their needs. Details for the two workshops can be found below.

13th of November 2024 in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.



On the 13th of November as part of the ELIS Innovation Summit, Cluster Sports & Technology organized the workshop for the Netherlands for WP 2 of the ESMIS project. The title of the workshop was “Sustainability innovation for resilient sport facilities”. The workshop brought together 20 people, mainly from the Netherlands but also from other countries that the project aims to influence (such as Finland).

The goals of the workshop were:

- Create awareness on the ESMIS development in the stakeholders group.
- Receive steering input on the current developments and preliminary results



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of the ESMIS project, especially:

- ESMIS mapping platform.
- ESMIS data collection tool.
- Receive information about the added value and expected barriers in introducing the ESMIS mapping tool.
- Form a platform of stakeholders for future reference.

The following target groups that the projects aim to influence were represented in the audience:

- Businesses providing innovative sustainability solutions to sport facilities.
- Universities and research centers that work in the area of sustainable innovations.
- Regional authorities who manage sport facilities.
- Clusters and network organisations with members who own or/and manage sport facilities.
- Sustainability experts.

The workshop was prepared by Cluster Sports & Technology in collaboration with the associated ESMIS partner Sportinnovator and had a representative of the project partner Sport Ireland. The workshop had the following elements:

- **Cluster Sports & Technology** (Venelin Dobrev) presented the ESMIS project, introduced the basis of the ESMIS mapping platform and the ESMIS data collection tool.
- **Sportinnovator** (Mijke Sluis) presented the Dutch experience in the creation of similar sustainability mapping platform (duurzaamheids-atlas) on national level and shared the main lessons learned that could serve as valuable project in the creation of the mapping tool in the ESMIS project.
- **Sport Ireland** (Scot Reid) presented their experience on how a mapping platform as being developed in ESMIS can contribute to the implementation of sustainability innovations in sport facilities.

After these presentations a discussion was moderated to get input on the following questions:

1. What is the added value of creating a mapping platform and sharing best practices on sustainable sport facilities?



2. What do you expect to find in such a mapping?
3. What information are you currently missing in existing platforms?
4. What are the barriers to adapt best practices?

The discussion was enriched with other topics beyond the 4 mentioned above and provided valuable insights for the current and future actions of the ESMIS project.

1) Building a community: Establishing a community around the platform is crucial. Beyond good practices on a website, focus on enabling connections, shared learning, and community management.

2) End-user engagement from the start: Identifying and involving end users early is vital. Define their problems, ensure ownership, and create a seamless customer journey. ESMIS must prioritize this from the start.

3) Learning from Failures: The platform should not only present best practices yet also include unsuccessful innovations to provide valuable lessons in a separate section.

4) Learning from Dutch Experience: ESMIS should apply lessons from Dutch approaches during the development of the mapping.

5) Quantifying Impact: Users like Sport Ireland value the platform for measuring the impact of sustainability innovations, particularly in areas like carbon savings and energy use. Filtering by facility type and technology is essential.

6) Active Community Building: Success relies on involving problem owners and sustainability businesses, providing clear introductions, and naturally sparking interaction. The platform must clearly communicate its offerings to ensure user success.

7) Perspective from public authorities: In principle they are interested in innovative solutions for energy efficiency and solutions related to the use of materials, recycling of materials and things like this. Maybe it could be a useful tool for resource sharing to tap into the challenges that are bigger than anyone can solve by themselves.

8) Business perspective: Businesses can offer solutions to help sport facilities address key sustainability issues.

9) University perspective: Interested in starting the conversation and seeing where the knowledge is already. Those are great examples already, maybe they can



develop further or start talking about new ideas with their researchers etc.

10) Summarized comments from sustainability experts: The map is a wonderful tool for examples/inspiration. But if you're with your feet on a pitch and you look around you also need to strategize, what do you need to do (work on water, heat savings etc.). From a local point of view, how can you strategize is an integral problem. So, you should fill in the missing gap between the local challenge: what can I do to create impact? There should be a way to receive a tailor-made recommendation for a specific type of facility based on their capacity, budget, needs, ambitions and goals. How to bridge the best practice from the platform to the local platform. This matching and strategizing can be the start of the discussion between the stakeholders. Quantification is very important in this process – there needs to be a set of parameters to understand the impact a sustainability innovation has. It should be an evidence-based and scientific-based. The indicators have to be adapted to the local context to make sure that it works well.

-Some of the key takeaways from the workshop have already been identified as important topics also in D2.1 and the ESMIS partnership has taken them into account. Other type of feedback clearly showed that the ESMIS platform will be a wonderful tool that needs to be combined with other efforts to ensure the transfer of sustainability solutions. All of these findings resulted in the organisation of a second workshop 3 months later:



20th of February 2025 in Den Bosch



On the 20th of February in Den Bosch, Cluster Sports & Technology organised the second workshop for the Netherlands for the ESMIS project. The title and the goals remained the same. However, the target audience was handpicked to serve the best way the needs of the project. The workshop brought together 10 people from the Netherlands representing various stakeholders that the project tackles like representatives of municipalities that own various sports facilities, businesses that offer sustainability solutions to sport facilities and experts responsible for the development of the Dutch Sustainability Atlas.

The workshop was prepared by Cluster Sports & Technology in collaboration with the associated ESMIS partner Sportinnovator and Municipality Den Bosch. The workshop had the following elements:

- **Cluster Sports & Technology** (Rene Wijlens) presented the ESMIS project, introduced the basis of the ESMIS mapping platform and the ESMIS data



collection tool and led the discussion.

- **Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen** (Michael Poot) presented the Dutch experience in the creation of similar sustainability mapping platform (duurzaamheids-atlas) on national level and shared the main lessons learned that could serve as valuable project in the creation of the mapping tool in the ESMIS project.
- **Other representatives** around the table shared useful information and feedback about the main challenges they are facing in adoption of sustainable solutions and shared experiences from their cities (Den Bosch and Amsterdam) on what they do for the adoption and promotion of sustainability.

In the course of these presentations a discussion was ongoing and moderated to get input on the following questions:

1. How can the challenges and needs of sports facility managers, suppliers and providers be helped by the tools being built in the ESMIS project?
2. How can a platform like this be kept current and relevant for all interested parties?

The discussion was enriched with other topics beyond the mentioned above and provided valuable insights for the current and future actions of the ESMIS project.

1) Holistic view on sustainability: Sustainability goes beyond greening—it must include multi-use functionality, long-term economic viability, and efficient energy–water management. It must be approached holistically, integrating environmental, operational, and economic dimensions rather than focusing solely on “greening.” - addressing multi-use, long-term viability, and energy–water circularity.

2) Innovation and procurement: The tension between innovative solutions and rigid procurement standards requires a structured process for evidence-based validation and gradual scaling. Balancing the need for innovation with strict procurement procedures in municipalities. The role of evidence-based, scientifically validated solutions to reduce risk in tender processes. Discussion on establishing standard specifications and a sustainability label for sports facilities.

3) A well-maintained online platform is essential: not only to showcase solutions but also to provide clear, actionable insights tailored to varying municipal needs. How



the platform can serve as a matchmaking tool for sharing experiences, technical details, and best practices. Challenges in keeping content up to date, ensuring quality, and engaging a diverse group of stakeholders.

4) Learning from Dutch Experience: ESMIS should apply lessons from Dutch approaches during the development of the mapping.

5) Recommendation for South Europe in general: Provide long-term management contracts to sport facility managers so they have the economic reason to invest in sustainability measures. It can be one of the policy recommendations that the project can provide. Strict sustainability requirements should be included in the contracts to ensure implementation and maintenance in sustainable way for years to come. **This can be shared with WP 4 leaders INDESCAT and included in the materials related to policy recommendations that will be developed in WP 4.**

6) The ESMIS platform as first point of contact: For municipalities that are interested in implementing sustainability projects but don't know where to start the ESMIS platform might be the first step to offer support. The platform can:

- Provide clear guidance on best practices. (Answer the question: Where do we start?).
- Connect municipalities with experts and companies that can help. (Answer the question: Which solutions are already available and tested in similar environments?).
- Help cities avoid common mistakes by learning from others. (Answer the question: What innovations have failed in other places and why?)

7) One of the biggest challenges for municipalities is securing the budget for sustainability projects. How do we make sure the ESMIS platform also helps with financing? The ESMIS platform could focus on providing insights on different opportunities for funding the sustainability measures for sport facilities like:

- Government grants and EU funding – the platform can list funding opportunities.
- Public-private partnerships – sport facilities can partner with companies that fund part or the whole project in exchange for a contract. The ESMIS platform



could provide training on such opportunities and maybe even facilitate them (in the long term).

- Performance based contracts - Instead of paying upfront, cities only pay if the solution delivers results. The platform can share such experiences as case studies (Amsterdam already has one).

By putting these kinds of financial models on the ESMIS platform, we can help cities find solutions that fit their budgets.

-As in the previous case, right after the workshop, the ESMIS project team started implementing some of the recommendations from the event.

16th of January 2025 in Spain (Barcelona, INDESCAT)



The workshop was organised on the 16th of January by INDESCAT in Barcelona with the participation of 35 sport facilities. The discussion focused on the data collection tool and the applications of the ESMIS mapping platform as a tool for sharing best practices and inspiration. The workshop was very successful in terms of engaging the audience since all of the best practices later published on the mapping from Catalan sport facilities were from people attending the event.

The goal of the workshop was to create awareness about the ESMIS project and to present the platform and the map of best sustainable practices. One of the goals, besides communicating that the platform exists is that the facilities that have an innovation in terms of sustainability can register it and appear there. The event was led by Genis Puigvert from INDESCAT.



The following target groups that the projects aim to influence were represented in the audience:

- Sports facility managers.
- Companies that can provide innovative solutions related to sustainability to facilities.
- Regional authorities such as city councils, who are owners of many sports facilities.
- Universities and research centres that work in the area of sustainable innovations.

The presentation was done to an audience that was mainly homogeneous (as sports facility managers) but with also other actors representing various organisations.

Some of the feedback that we received is the following:

- One of the main needs of the facilities is to be able to track their performance on sustainability through indicators, and for this they need digitalisation. Some of them have already invested on the technology and others are starting now.
- With the need above is solved, they have to be able to compare themselves with other facilities, so that they know if they are doing good, average or they can improve. To solve this, we may have to dedicate a bigger part of the questionnaire related to indicators, so that they can see how they are doing compared to the others in various fields.
- The attendees have all agreed upon the fact that creating a platform that serves the purpose of inspiring other sports facilities that have some common challenges is a very interesting idea.



30th of January 2025 in Spain (Madrid, UCLM)



The University of Castilla-La Mancha developed a workshop in the context of the ESMIS project activities for WP 2. The Workshop was developed during the development of a series of days on sustainability in sports facilities, organized by the Spanish High Council of Sports, the Association of Sports Managers of Madrid and the University of Castilla-La Mancha itself. Therefore, due to the organizers and general theme of this event, the development of the workshop had a lot of potential.

The workshop is entitled “Good Practices of Sustainability in Sport Facilities. Necessities and Expectations”. The workshop brought together 32 people, mainly from sport facilities and firms near Madrid (center of Spain).

The goal of the workshop was:

- Create awareness on the ESMIS development in the stakeholders group.
- Present the ESMIS mapping platform and objectives.
- Obtain information about the reasons and expectations of the ESMIS mapping platform.
- Receive information about the added value and expected barriers in introducing the ESMIS mapping tool.
- Looking for potential sport facilities for the map and benchmarking study.

The following target groups that the projects aim to influence were represented in the audience:

- 6 sport facilities construction firms and architects.
- 26 responsible of sport facilities (public and private).
- Several of them, municipal sport managers with several sport facilities



responsibilities.

The workshop was prepared by Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. The workshop had the following elements:

- Leonor Gallardo, University Castilla-La Mancha, presents de project and the platform.
- Jorge García Unanue, University of Castilla-La Manch, presents the data collection tool and the dynamic of the session.
- In first term, all attendances answer several questions with a real time quid. The questions are related with the perceived utility of the platform, the reasons they would like to participate and if they know about any facility that could be incorporated in the platform.
- Finally, a discussion was moderated to deep more in these questions:
 - How important is sustainability among the priorities of sports managers?
 - Do you think you can take into account such a tool to assimilate good practices for your sports facilities?
 - What information do you consider relevant that does not exist in the current version of mapping?
 - Would you be interested in sharing good practices? Do you see any barriers to doing so?

The discussion was enriched with other topics beyond the 4 mentioned above and provided valuable insights for the current and future actions of the ESMIS project. 75% of participants did not know of any sports facilities that stand out for incorporating innovations in sustainability. 90% considered that a tool that allows them to discover and search for innovations, which serve to inspire and as a reference for making decisions, can be very useful for improving the ecosystem of sports facilities.

Regarding the reasons why they would use the ESMIS mapping platform, it is noteworthy that 100% of participants agreed that they would use it to “Search for examples to intervene in the sports facilities that I manage”, in second place and with the same percentage “Search for other professionals in sports facilities to exchange information”. However, although more than 50% of participants selected



it, the least repeated option is “Publish and disseminate the innovations of my sports facilities”.

Entering into the debate, the group highlighted the great importance of sustainability for the new decisions that are made in interventions in sports facilities. However, in addition to awareness of sustainability, there was great concern about legal impositions on the subject. It seems that complying with legislation was more important than having independent initiatives for commitment to the environment and the ecological transition.

Again, participants highlighted that they need information and news about possible sustainability innovations to incorporate in sports facilities, but that they are not convinced if they do not see real examples and feedback from other professionals who are already managing them. This is the main use they see in the platform.

Regarding the map's shortcomings, two notes are drawn from the participatory conversation. Firstly, the map will be more attractive the more facilities it has. It seems that variety is an incentive for its use. Secondly, they highlight that the most useful part of the form is the description and explanation of the innovation, with the indicators being aspects that are more difficult to evaluate and reproduce.

Finally, there was general interest in sharing their sports facilities in case there were innovations in sustainability, but they highlight that, in the market they know, there are very few examples.

The following bullet points stand out as conclusions of this local workshop:

- Interest in the map is high, especially due to the need to learn about experiences of sustainable innovations that serve as inspiration and reference for decision-making.
- Participation in the map is influenced by the number of previous uses. It is important to incorporate examples during the ESMIS project.
- In the market/environment of the participants (central Spain, Madrid), there is hardly any knowledge of sports facilities that stand out for innovations in sustainability. Therefore, the weight of innovations will be quite uneven between the participating countries.

13th of February 2025 in Ireland (Sport Ireland, online)



On the 13th of February Sport Ireland organized a webinar for National Governing Bodies for Sports in Ireland, for WP 2 of the ESMIS project. The title of the workshop was “Webinar - Enhance Sustainable Measures in Sports Facilities (ESMIS) Project”. The workshop brought together 13 attendees.

The goal of the workshop was:

- Create awareness on the ESMIS development.
- Receive input on the ESMIS project, especially:
 - ESMIS mapping platform.
 - ESMIS data collection tool.
- Receive information about the added value and expected barriers in introducing the ESMIS mapping tool.
- Form a platform of stakeholders for future reference.

The following target groups that the projects aim to influence were represented in the audience:

- National Governing Body representatives for Sports in Ireland (Irish Ice Hockey Association, Snooker Billiards Ireland, Federation of Irish Sport, Golf Ireland, Basketball Ireland, Rowing Ireland, Diving Ireland, Swim Ireland, Canoeing Ireland and Special Olympics).
- Sport Ireland Facilities
- Sustainability experts.



The webinar was prepared by Sport Ireland (Scott Reid) in collaboration with Sport Ireland Facilities (Alan Bennett). The workshop had the following elements:

- Introduction to ESMIS.
- Introduction to Mapping.
- Introduction to Data Collection.
- Barriers / Opportunities Discussion.
- Next Steps.

A discussion was moderated to get input on the following questions:

1. What is the added value of creating a mapping platform and sharing best practices on sustainable sport facilities?
2. What do you expect to find in such a mapping?
3. What information are you currently missing in existing platforms?
4. What are the barriers to adapt best practices?

The main takeaways from the discussions are:

- A barrier was discussed in the context of Ireland that often sporting organisations and clubs don't have ownership of the facility they are using, so are limited in applying sustainable measures. Targeting the sports bodies for the data collection / use of the mapping platform is more challenging if they don't own the facility
- There is a difference in the target audience who may input data into the data collection tool, and those who would be interested in the best practice sharing of knowledge. The benefit of the mapping is broader than the audience who may input into the tool.
- Opportunity – Could the mapping provide more insight / experiences in accessing funding. Funding is seen as a key challenge to implementing sustainability measures.
- Opportunity – positive sustainability measures can still be achieved even where a sports organisation doesn't own the facility they use.
- General sustainability knowledge sharing is very important, beyond just the specific actions added to the mapping.
- Two new categories for the mapping were proposed to improve the benefits



of the mapping:

- o Admin / Office Facility Types - Many sporting organisations have a centralised office space that it is important to deliver positive sustainability actions for
- o Events - Sport organisations and facilities often hold large scale events that have a sustainability impact – there are benefits to sharing best practice for holding sustainable events and this attracts a wider audience to benefit from the tool.

5th of March 2025 Greece (Olympiacos)



On the 5th of March 2025, Olympiacos SFP organized the workshop related to Work Package 2, 'Methodological Framework: Best Practices and Innovative Tools' - T2.2, Mapping Innovative Sustainable Measures in Sports Facilities of the ESMIS project. The workshop brought together 22 participants, including representatives from sports facility and sports club administrations from Greece.

The workshop's objectives were to:

- Increase the stakeholders' awareness of the ESMIS project.
- Obtain feedback regarding the current status and outcomes of the project,



particularly concerning the ESMIS mapping platform and the data collection tool.

- Discover the expected difficulties and advantages of implementing the ESMIS mapping platform.
- Establish collaboration between stakeholders for the continuous exchange of views and best practices regarding a green transition in the sports sector.

The audience included the following target groups that the projects intend to impact:

- Representatives of sports facility administrations.
- Representatives of sports club administrations.
- Members of sports clubs.
- Employees in sports clubs and sports facilities.

Christina Tsiligkiri, on behalf of Olympiacos SFP and as local project manager for the ESMIS project, presented the project to the participants, placing particular emphasis on the ESMIS mapping platform and the ESMIS data collection tool. She mentioned that in a previous phase of the project, during which desk research was conducted, it was identified that few sports facilities in Greece have implemented sustainable and innovative tools. Following the presentation, a discussion was held to gather opinions. The issues raised by the participants can be summarized as follows:

- Improvements to the ESMIS mapping platform.
- Suggestions regarding the adoption of tools and practices to improve the operation of sports facilities with the aim of a green transition in the sport sector.
- Issues that should be faced so to adopt tools and implement practices to improve the operation of sports facilities with the aim of a green transition in the sport sector.

In the context of the discussion, the following opinions and suggestions were recorded from the participants regarding the improvement of the ESMIS platform and the adoption of sustainable practices in sports facilities, aiming to support the green transition in sports. Additionally, challenges were identified that need to be overcome in order to effectively implement sustainable practices.



- Improvements to the ESMIS mapping platform:
 - User-friendliness: They would like a more user-friendly platform that allows quick access to key features, such as the location of facilities, sustainability indicators, and energy consumption data.
 - Customization options: The ability to customize the platform to meet their specific needs, such as setting priorities for certain sustainability goals.
 - Collaboration and knowledge sharing: Creating a space for facility managers to share experiences, best practices, and solutions for common sustainability challenges, as well as the ability to collaborate with other sports facilities.
 - Training and support: They would like clear guidelines and support to ensure effective use of the platform, including the creation of a manual.
- Issues that should be faced so to adopt tools and implement practices to improve the operation of sports facilities with the aim of a green transition in the sport sector:
 - High Initial Costs: Numerous green technologies and sustainable methods, such as installing renewable energy sources, utilizing energyefficient systems, and employing ecofriendly construction materials, necessitate a large initial investment.
 - Lack of Incentives or Funding: Occasionally, sports venues may not experience immediate financial benefits from adopting sustainable methods, particularly when there is a lack of funding or grants for ecofriendly projects.
 - Lack of Awareness and Knowledge: Management and staff in facilities might not have a strong understanding of green technologies, sustainable practices, or the newest tools for energy management and



waste minimization.

- o Resistance to Change: Employees, management, or stakeholders may resist changes because of comfort with existing methods or fear of unfamiliar approaches, especially when shifting from conventional techniques to new, ecofriendly strategies.
- o Sustainability Culture Integration: Sustainability efforts should be integrated into the culture of the facility, rather than being considered separate initiatives.

4-5 February 2025 - EPSI workshops in the European dimension – online

As part of the Enhance Sustainable Measures In Sports Facilities (ESMIS) project, EPSI organized two dedicated online workshops aimed at engaging key stakeholders in the discussion about sustainability in sports facilities. These workshops targeted two specific groups:

- Facility managers (February 4, 2025)
- Regional and local authorities (February 5, 2025)

Given EPSI's role as an international network, the online format allowed us to gather participants from various European countries, ensuring a broad and diverse discussion on expectations, challenges, and potential improvements related to the ESMIS platform and the project as a whole. To facilitate participation, an online call for registration was published, inviting interested stakeholders to sign up for the workshops. The registration process was conducted via an online form where participants provided the following details:

- Full Name
- Surname
- Country
- Organization
- Role
- Email Address



- Workshop Selection (Facility Managers or Regional/Local Authorities)
- Specific questions or topics they wanted to be addressed during the workshop.

The workshops attracted 32 registered participants from various European countries, representing different sectors involved in sports facility management and governance. While the workshops generated significant interest, with many people registering in advance, the actual attendance was lower than expected. Despite this, the diversity of participants who joined ensured valuable discussions and meaningful engagement.

Workshop for Facility Managers

The ESMIS Workshop for Facility Managers began with an introduction to the project, outlining its objectives and the challenges faced by sports facilities in Europe. The team explained that ESMIS was developed to address issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, sustainability concerns, and the need for strategic investment in sports infrastructure. This set the stage for a detailed exploration of how the platform could support facility managers in their sustainability efforts.

Following the introduction, a video was shown to illustrate the current state of sports facilities and highlight the need for sustainable renovations. The video also demonstrated how the ESMIS map could aid these initiatives, providing a visual representation of the platform's potential to foster innovation and collaboration.

After the video presentation, the session moved into a Q&A segment, where facility managers had the opportunity to ask questions and share their insights. Participants from Croatia and Bulgaria actively engaged in the discussion, raising important points about the practical challenges they face. They discussed issues such as financial constraints, the complexity of integrating new technologies, and the importance of clear metrics to measure the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives.



The conversation also touched on the topic of greenwashing, with participants emphasizing the need for transparency and credible indicators to ensure that sustainability projects deliver a real environmental and economic benefits. The discussion highlighted the value of accreditations and certifications in validating sustainable practices and building trust among stakeholders.

During the open discussion, several **key questions** were addressed:

- What type of data or features would be most useful to support your sustainability goals?
- What challenges do you face when adopting or integrating sustainable innovations?
- How can collaboration with other sports facilities improve your sustainability efforts?
- What incentives or support would motivate you to engage with a sustainability-focused platform regularly?
- How can a mapping platform help you implement and promote sustainable practices in your facility?

Participants suggested:

- Including detailed metrics on energy savings and cost analysis.
- Providing case studies of successful sustainability projects.
- Offering clear guidelines for obtaining sustainability certifications.
- Ensuring regular updates to keep users engaged.
- Moreover, the organizations put a strong emphasis on the importance of showcasing how sustainability improvements are achieved and the financial sources of investment. Understanding funding mechanisms and financial strategies is crucial to facilitating the implementation of sustainable solutions.



As the workshop progressed, many facility managers expressed a strong interest in contributing to the project. They asked for the link to submit their inputs and register their facilities to be part of the ESMIS platform. This active participation demonstrated their commitment to advancing sustainability in their operations and their eagerness to collaborate with other facilities across Europe.

The workshop concluded with a strong emphasis on the practical aspects of sustainability, with many participants expressing a keen interest in continuing to engage with the platform and contribute to its development. The insights gained from this workshop will help shape the platform to better meet the needs of facility managers, ensuring it becomes a valuable tool for promoting sustainable practices in sports facilities across Europe.

Workshop for Local and Regional Authorities

The ESMIS Workshop for Regional and Local Authorities commenced with an introduction to the project, detailing its objectives and the challenges faced by sports facilities across Europe. The team explained that ESMIS was developed to tackle issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, sustainability concerns, and the need for strategic investment in sports infrastructure.

A video presentation illustrated the current state of sports facilities and underscored the necessity for sustainable renovations. The video also showcased how the ESMIS map could aid these initiatives.

A key feature of the project is an interactive map designed to promote sustainability and innovation in sports facilities. This tool enables users to search for facilities by innovation type, access detailed descriptions, and apply filters for pertinent information. The project team highlighted that they are currently gathering data and encouraged sports facilities to register their innovations. The workshop's primary aim was to collect input on the types of data and features that would best support



sustainability goals and to understand how the platform could be an added value for public institutions working at the local or regional level.

During the Q&A session, representatives from various organisations expressed interest in adding their facilities to the map. They mentioned conducting surveys to evaluate the number of disabled users in their facilities to inform renovation efforts.

Participants engaged in an open discussion, addressing **questions** such as:

- How could a mapping platform help support your sustainability initiatives at the local or regional level?
- What data or resources would be most valuable to inform your policies and programs for sustainable development?
- What obstacles do you encounter when promoting or implementing sustainable measures within your jurisdiction?

Suggestions for enhancing the platform included adding comparison filters for similar-sized stadiums and facilities in the same region and incorporating sustainability certifications to boost credibility. Moreover, the organizations put a strong emphasis on the importance of showing how these sustainability improvements are obtained and the financial source of investment.

As the platform continues to evolve based on user feedback, it aspires to become a valuable tool for promoting sustainability and innovation in sports facilities across Europe. Despite lower-than-expected attendance, the high registration numbers indicate strong interest in sustainability within the sports sector. This presents an opportunity to engage registered participants in future ESMIS activities and expand the platform's reach.

The workshops provided valuable insights into the needs and expectations of facility managers and local/regional authorities. Key takeaways include:



- Demand for clear sustainability metrics: Participants emphasized the importance of transparent indicators to avoid greenwashing and ensure sustainability initiatives yield a real environmental and economic benefits.
- Practical recommendations for platform improvements: There was strong interest in comparison filters, sustainability certifications, case studies, and financial data to enhance the platform's credibility and usability.
- The financial aspect is crucial: Organizations highlighted the need to showcase how sustainability improvements are funded, including available investment sources and funding opportunities.
- Engagement beyond the workshops: Participants expressed a willingness to register their facilities and collaborate further, demonstrating a long-term interest in the project.

Common recommendations and outcomes from all stakeholder workshops:

1. Build an Active and Engaged Community – inspire users and create an opportunity for peer exchange, interaction, and shared learning. Provide regular updates related to the needs of the users to keep them engaged. Identify key stakeholders and involve them in the journey from prototype to market ready product to ensure relevance and adoption.
2. User-friendliness is essential: Simplify navigation, access to filters, and result interpretation. Make sure to provide tailored recommendations as much as possible based on facility size, type, goals, budget, and location.
3. Share both success and failure - Include failed or less successful examples to promote honest learning and avoid repeating mistakes. Provide transparent insights, avoiding greenwashing, and ensuring evidence-based content.
4. Try to learn from the good and not so good practices of other mapping



platforms on national and international level.

5. Make sure that you have detailed quantitative impact indicators (e.g., carbon savings, energy use, water savings) but also add comparative filters (e.g., by region, facility size, innovation type).
6. Give the opportunity for sharing experiences – in the creation of the resources include sports facilities as much as possible and address different issues they face related to procurement, funding, etc. For example, show how projects were funded and what business models were used.
7. Start with your primary target audience but expand to others - help users that don't own sport facilities (e.g., clubs using third-party facilities) understand their role in driving sustainability.
8. Focus on content variety and real examples - the more facilities featured, the more attractive the platform becomes. Users seek real examples from real experts with feedback and outcomes more than theoretical potential.

Moving forward, the ESMIS platform should integrate these insights to better support stakeholders in implementing sustainability measures and ensure that the tool remains practical, relevant, and widely used across Europe.

3.3 Dutch sustainability mapping – lessons learned.

Since the project has been inspired by the Dutch Sustainability Atlas, with the help of the associated partner SportInnovator, the leaders of the project from Cluster Sports & Technology reached out to experts from Kenniscentrum Sport & Bewegen (Knowledge Center for Sports & Exercise) who worked on the initial version of the Dutch mapping tool. The representatives from the Dutch organisation contributed by:

- Participating in the two workshops with local stakeholders in the Netherlands in November 2024 and February 2025.
- Participating in online consultation session on 6th of March before the



transnational project meeting and the in-person workshops in Barcelona.

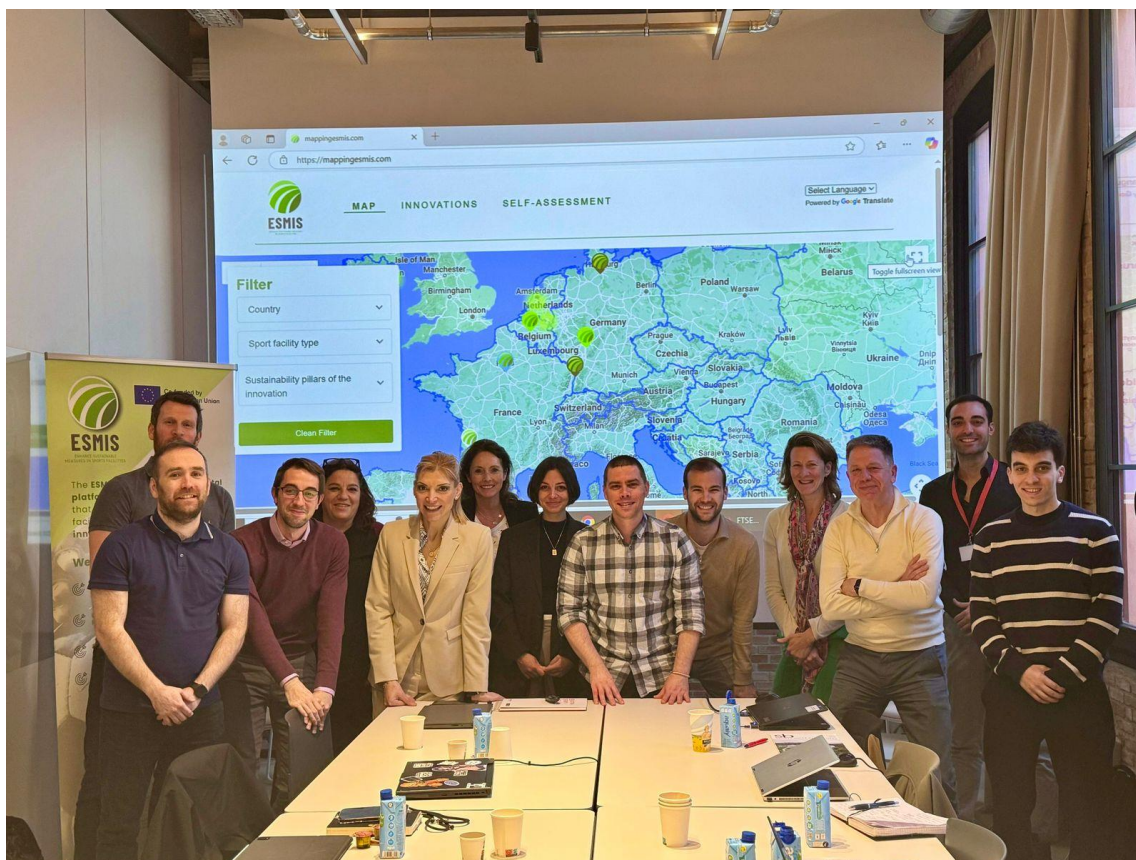
Their valuable input and knowledge will provide great added value for the next steps of the development of the ESMIS mapping. The main lessons learned are as follows:

- Just replicating the approach of the Dutch sustainability mapping will not work if we want the ESMIS platform to be successful on European level.
- It is difficult to keep the innovations up to date. It is almost impossible to do that.
- The platform should be attractive and user friendly.
- Keeping the innovations up to date should be done by innovators, but independently factchecked to ensure unbiased quality.
- The platform can serve as a tool for inspiration, but there is a need to facilitate matchmaking and best practice exchange.
- There are differences in the needs of small and big municipalities and sport facilities.

The involvement of the experts who worked on the Dutch Sustainability Mapping will continue in the later stages of the development of the ESMIS mapping.



3.4 Workshops during the TPM in Barcelona – main topics.



During the transnational project meeting in Barcelona two workshops were organized among the participating project partners:

1) The first workshop focused on the development of the ESMIS platform in the final year of the project. Going forward from a prototype to a market ready solution. It focused on:

- The lessons learned in Work Package 2.
- What has to be created in Work Package 3 and Work Package 4 in a way to address the needs of sports facilities identified in Work Package 2.
- How to attract users, add value, and ensure engagement and community building for the digital platform in the next one year (by the end of the project).

The second workshop was more focused on the long-term viability of the platform after the end of the project. Both workshops lasted around 3,5 hours. Here are the main suggestions made as a result of the discussion among the project partners:



Workshops overview:

1. The ESMIS mapping should learn from the Dutch experience and mapping and realize to keep the innovations database up to date.
2. The accessibility of the ESMIS mapping and submission process for the best practices is better than the one for the Netherlands.
3. Branding – image and name of the mapping platform is very important as well. If the name is long and complex, it is not going to work.
4. It is very important to keep information up to date and make sure that we don't promote outdated practices.
5. There should be a disclaimer added to prevent any liability.
6. We should ensure that users put minimum effort but get maximum impact and find the results they want at the right time and with a few clicks.
7. Currently the information available is not enough for high-quality benchmarking. A comparison between facilities is possible, but for now not a general comparison between countries.
8. Communication efforts for the platform should be the focus of the next one year and put it in the spotlight. The project should be on the second level – be present, but not the focus.
9. In different countries (like Greece) there are central registers with information for all sports facilities in the country. The ESMIS partnership should search for ways to map and use such resources for the promotion of the mapping platform.
10. The customer journey for the platform has to be checked and if needed – adapted to ensure that we attract and retain users.
11. It is not just about who visits the platform but also – when. We should know when to approach sport facilities with the solutions they need at the right time.
12. Printable versions of the best practices should be available.
13. Keyword search for best practices should be integrated in the platform.
14. The keyword search option will be enough to compensate for the need for a more detailed filter system.
15. Case studies can be a tool to get people inspired. And innovations might need to be adapted to address local issues, however in general the issues of sports facilities are quite similar.
16. When a filter is applied it will be good not only to get the results on the map as locations of the best practices, but also as a list somewhere – on the side or in a different window.
17. In order to be successful with the limited resources and time, the ESMIS platform should initially focus on 1-2 target groups of users and center the communication around them.
18. In order to achieve good impact, it is important to involve organizations like INDESCAT and Ireland Active that have a lot of sports facilities as members. Network organizations that have direct access to our target group.



19. The toolkit should be kept simple but also useful to sports facility owners. It should be developed in coordination between Work Package 3 and Work Package 4 based on the lessons learned in Work Package 2. Tasks and activities should be planned together.
20. The storytelling element should be used when the different materials like guidelines and policy recommendations are designed. A good example is the story how Olympiacos changed the legislation in Greece to implement sustainability measure for energy efficiency.
21. Issues with obtaining relevant data can come due to the fact that sports facilities just don't have records and don't measure data.
22. The reference of the data reported in the mapping should be provided in order to give a better context to the best practice to interested parties. For details maybe we should say that the owner of the best practice should be contacted.
23. Each country has very specific local challenges and issues related to the way sports facilities are managed and those need to be taken into account when the platform is promoted on a local level.
24. The platform should be inspirational with cases completed as much as possible with high quality information.
25. The platform will naturally attract big sport facilities because they have bigger consumption, municipalities and sport facility managers.

4 Recommendations for the ESMIS platform

Before deep diving into the improvement of the platform, an important refinement needs to be made by the whole partnership related to the target audience. This must be a task done by all partners to ensure that the next steps in the development of the platform are successful. The workshops and the data collection have made one thing clear – the situation in the different countries related to the way how sports facilities are managed is different and very fragmented. Each partner has to identify the right target audience for their country in the context of the general target audience already defined for the project. And it has to be clear that the users that benefit from the platform might be different from the users sharing best practices. This also has to be taken into account when sports facilities from new countries are approached in the future.

4.1 Data collection tool – suggestions for improvement.

- Limiting the space for text but giving the opportunity to include external links if users want to learn more about the specific innovation.
- Submitting images should be described better as a process and also a disclaimer should be added that the person submitting a best practice confirms that this image can be used for the needs of the platform and does not violate any copyrights of 3rd



partiers. This is very important in the situations where best practices are submitted as a result of desk research.

- To ensure the obtaining of good quantitative data a contact with the sport facility should be established at all costs. It is advised that, when possible, the information for the best practice that is publicly available is already pre-filed in and then the sports facility manager/owner has to provide the rest of the quantitative data for the sustainability innovation. It will help very much if this is done in their local language.
- There should be a prep-meeting/communication with the person providing the information for the sustainability best practice and letting them know what kind of data they have to provide. In that way, they can check the different sources of data and provide high-quality input for the mapping platform.
- There should be a second screening done by the person filling in the information and by a person from the ESMIS platform to ensure that all the information is entered correctly.
- It is very good that we are asking sport facilities about their future plans for sustainability improvements, but we also have to ask when they plan to execute them.
- Of course, after the data collection tool is updated the information for all sport facilities that are already present should be updated as the first step before new cases are listed.
- Specific feedback for quantitative data – suggestions have been made by sport facilities to adapt/modify the different measurements. These suggestions have to be reviewed by the partnership and further consulted with a wider group of sport facilities before they are implemented.
- Don't just include the return or investment (ROI) but also indicate the profits coming after that for the whole lifecycle of the sustainability innovation. You can have a sustainability innovation with design life 20 years, and ROI after the first 10. The savings from the next 10 years can be considered a profit.

4.2 ESMIS platform – suggestions for new methods, resources and functionalities.

- Establish quality control on project selection & data entry on the platform.
- Guidance for sports and leisure facility operators on submitting an innovation available in the languages of the project.
- Establish a process of obtaining an agreement for data sharing between the project partners, but also with the entities submitting the best practices. However, this



should be done in a user-friendly way.

- Better representation of businesses providing sustainability innovation for the sport facilities.

- Recognition of project innovations from the ESMIS partnership on the platform.

- Offer step-by-step guidance for newcomers ("Where do we start?").

- What is currently missing is a way to understand if sustainability innovation is suitable for big, medium or small sport facilities. This should be indicated in a way in the platform for each best practice and added as a question to the data collection tool.

- In order to promote sustainability efforts across Europe, the ESMIS platform can have a dedicated section linking other mapping tools on national level like the <https://atlas.duurzamesportsector.nl/atlas/> and other sustainability initiatives/projects to ensure the promotion of sustainability further.

- A contact person should be assigned to the platform, and a dedicated email should be created with the web domain of the mapping. For example: info@mappingsmis.com

- We can host sustainability matchmaking inspiration sessions based on needs for the community of sports facilities that are created around the platform. This has to be checked with the needs of the specific facilities and can be created in the scope of WP 3 and WP 4.

- There could be a way to mark the really effective innovations with a gold mapping pin and develop them into case studies (to be discussed with the communication working group). However, for that a clear criterion must be set.

- It will be valuable to have a section on the platform that also shares bad lessons learned from implementing sustainable solutions. What not to do. That too can be a very useful experience. It can be a blog section. This action should be coordinated also with the communication working group in the ESMIS project.

- There should be an advisory group of sports facility managers/owners to test any new functionalities we implement and to give feedback on how they can be improved further.

- The ESMIS project with the support of stakeholders can explore ways to educate how procurement processes can allow room for innovative and sustainable solutions. This can be done by examining the current procurement practices to identify barriers to innovation and explore the development of educational videos, events and other resources to help sport facility owners and municipalities. Municipal procurement departments and policy teams can exchange experience on a preliminary event/workshop with recommendations in the scope of the project and



they can be included in the project toolkit and in the policy recommendations. The ESMIS project team together with the ESMIS community of stakeholders (sport facilities, municipalities, businesses, etc) can set up specialized working groups focused on training and resource creation to see what the most valuable topics will be. Some are already identified like funding for sustainable innovations. This action can be aligned with the efforts of WP 3 and WP 4.

- The platform should not only aim to educate but also to connect sport facilities who wish to implement sustainability measures with other experts that have already implemented them. This can be considered as a separate action that goes in parallel with the mapping tool which will serve as an inspiration and motivator to make those contacts.

- Options to search based on keywords.

- Include a downloadable printable version of each best practice in PDF.

- Follow-up with the Dutch Sustainability Atlas to check what kind of disclaimer they had on their platform to make sure they don't have liability for the actions conducted.

- URL of the best practices should be adapted to the name of the best practices for a better user experience.

- On the platform there should be an option for people to sign up for the newsletter.

- When a filter is applied it will be good not only to get the results on the map as locations of the best practices, but also as a list somewhere – on the side or in a different window.

- There should be a date when the data was published and then an added disclaimer that for the latest data and more information about the best practice that you can reach out to the best practice owner with the contact information on the right.

- It is suggested that a cost savings section be added along with the rest of the savings (energy, water, waste and resources). This is to be discussed internally with the ESMIS partnership and the wider stakeholder group.

- It is suggested that carbon savings be added (or replace) the energy savings metric. This is to be discussed further by the ESMIS partnership and with the wider stakeholder group of sport facilities.

- Quality of the information is directly linked with the inspiration of the users. So, it is important that we establish a quality standard of the information. There should be a minimum level of data that needs to be added to each best practice. If that data is not available, then the best practice should be removed. It might be listed as an article, but not on the mapping. This action has to be elaborated further in the working group of WP 2, WP 3, WP 4 and Sport Ireland.



- The platform can facilitate contacts between interested partners in thematic webinars that need to be created in WP 3 and WP 4 and build a community around the platform.
- It might be beneficial to have contact points per country to facilitate easy access to knowledge in their local language.

The creation of a working group consisting of the leaders of WP 2, WP 3, WP 4 and Sport Ireland to implement the suggestions for the improvement of the data collection tool and the new resources and functionalities will be the next step to ensure smooth implementation of all suggestions in the next one year and testing their impact with selected sport facilities. Wider consultation with sport facilities might also be needed.

4.3 Communication efforts for onboarding new cases – suggestions for improvement.

We see several things work very well in the obtaining of new cases for the ESMIS platform:

- The creation of Google Analytics for the ESMIS mapping platform is a good first step – the data should be followed, and other tools like Google AdGrants can be utilised to promote the platform further, while taking into account the rules and regulations of the EU about data protection.
- The main goal of the platform is to inspire, and the communication should be focused on that in the different aspects – keeping an engaged community around the platform while onboarding new cases.
- Engaging with sport facility managers/owners in their local language and helping them with pre-filling of part of the information.
- We should aim to engage stakeholders that have direct access to our target group or are representatives of our target group to ensure maximum impact.
- It is crucial that there are stakeholders with strong European network to get access to new countries and engage local stakeholders. However, it is also needed to find partners in every country that have direct access to a big number of representatives of sport facility managers/owners (like Ireland Active, for example). This combination will ensure that there is a wide European presence, but also a strong involvement of facilities in each country/region.
- Engaging businesses that offer sustainability solutions on the platform to be



present through a client of theirs has given positive results in the initial data collection and can be a very good way to onboard many new cases on the mapping platform with high quality information.

- In order for the platform to provide added value we need to know what kind of sustainability measures different sport facilities owners aim to implement and when in order to approach them with relevant information in the best moment possible.
- The best sustainability innovations from the mapping platform can be further developed into inspiring stories via case studies, blog articles, interviews, videos, etc.
- The strategy to present the platform in different events where the target audience is present has been very successful so far for the project. This approach should continue to be implemented.
- It is not yet clear how the different partners can utilise their networks to engage new stakeholders and interested parties for the ESMIS platform. This should be checked by the representatives of communication working group on an organisational level. After this inventory is done, the communication working group can use the input for the update of the communication strategy.
- We wish also to have a list of sport facilities who have not adopted best practices but wish to implement sustainability measures. It is very important to know when and what kind of measures.
- The first step to onboarding new organisations and creating stakeholder community around the platform is for partners to reach out to their local, national and international connections that might have an interest to participate or promote the platform. This will create the momentum and fuel the domino effect that can serve as a growth engine for the ESMIS project and the mapping.
- Adapted version of the customer journey also will be needed to be in line with the new functionalities and development of the ESMIS mapping platform.
- We are highly dependent on the contributions of the sport facility managers/owners who fill in the questionnaire for the content of our platform (data). We have to think about why they should want to contribute to the platform: what's in it for them? We have already identified ways to help them fill in the information easier, however, we also have to ensure that we attract them from the communication perspective.
- When a newsletter is developed for the ESMIS platform, the first subscribers



can come from the stakeholder list already available in WP 2, the people who filled the data collection tool and the participants of the workshops. A consent should be obtained from the people that have not given it.

- Partners should research if there are central registers with all sports facilities in their countries regions and try to reach out to them via these central registers. Each partner should research and map such resources in their countries/regions.
- It is needed to check the customer journey of the platform and adapt it if needed to reflect better the needs of the target audience.
- It would be very good to use the credibility and popularity of sport facilities that are already on the platform to attract others to join.
- In discussion with the WP 2, WP 3 and WP 4 working group there could be unique links that provide traceability to the different sports facilities and motivate them based on the number of people who have visited their best practice.
- Presence in specialised events and presence in specialised media (printed and online) is essential to drive popularity of the ESMIS platform.
- When users subscribe for the newsletter, they should select the type of sustainability innovations and facilities they are interested to follow a maybe also the type of facilities. In that way we can ensure that they get more personalised information.
- The storytelling element should be used when the different materials like guidelines and policy recommendations are designed.
- Specific best practices or cases that are being promoted can be related with upcoming legislation requirements for sustainability (waste directive coming into effect by 2030, the artificial grass rules of the EU, etc). Parthers should take into account these things when they plan the promotional activities of the platform, since it can be a big catalyst for sustainability change for a lot of sport facilities.

The focus of the already created communication working group in the scope of the project with updating the communication strategy based on the feedback provided in this document and planning a content calendar and different tools like newsletter, social media posting, videos, list of events where the project can be promoted will ensure:

- The successful establishment of engaged community of stakeholders around the ESMIS platform.



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- Onboarding of new cases with high quality information.



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5 Best practice transferability – from inspiration to implementation

The ESMIS partners have agreed on a joint purpose of the platform – to provide inspiration for matchmaking and future implementation of sustainable best practices for sport facilities across Europe. In order to do that in the best way possible, several questions still have to be answered in the remaining one year of the project:

- What is the long-term ownership and role of the ESMIS platform and how does it complement other projects/initiatives of the project partners?
- Can the platform be linked with other wider sustainability initiatives/projects across Europe to ensure wider adoption?
- Is there a business case that can be integrated into the platform or around it?

These questions, have to address various recommendations from stakeholders mentioned below, but also in other sections of the document:

- The platform should remain open and without any commercial or business implications.
- Ensure the platform content stays updated and the community continues to grow.
- Engage with facility managers/owners in the right moment, before starting building/renovations and issuing tenders for them, to ensure impact.
- On a later stage connection to other sectors/organisations beyond sports is also important.

In order to address this, project partners will work internally on different scenarios and present them in the upcoming project meetings (online and in-person). A mutual decision will be made to ensure the long-term sustainability and durability of the tools and resources created in the ESMIS project.



6 Recommendations for the future development of the ESMIS platform beyond the ESMIS project

For the future functionalities of the platform, there are some ideas that have been discussed, but it is not yet clear how they can be implemented:

- Promote integration of sustainability into facility culture, not just isolated projects.
- Having a specific person in the role of a community manager, who checks how the different sports facilities on the platform are doing, what are their future plans and goals and try to find a good match for them in terms of new sustainability best practices they can learn from.
- A suggestion of a new functionality can be an integrated dashboard that shows the total number of savings all best practices on the platform have. This can show the overall impact of all implemented cases and serve as a great motivational tool for users and stakeholders alike.
- The platform itself can remain free and open, however, different business activities could be built around it like the organisation of study visits, trainings, consultation, etc, all taking into account and serving the needs of sport facility managers/owners in the best way possible.
- In the future best practices for sustainable sports events can also be a functionality that is interesting for the same target audience of sport facility managers/owners.
- AI Chatbot that compliments the keyword search function and makes the user-experience of users even better.
- Build an API to enable integration with other websites so that the best practices can easily be integrated into the websites of the sport facilities or with other portals.
- From the branding perspective – think about if a new identity is needed for branding of the platform beyond the ESMIS project. This would involve creation of a brand identity that can carry out the legacy of the project but also be a separate brand on its own.
- The different sustainability pillars from the ESMIS platform might be linked with the sustainable development goals of the UN to ensure that the activities are recognized and in line with international standardization.
- Include admin/office spaces and sport events as new facility types to widen the scope of sustainability actions over time.



7 Main conclusions from the benchmarking study

This benchmarking study provides a practical and usable approach to create the project result: the final version of the digital platform with mapping of innovative sustainability solutions in sport facilities across Europe. All of this should be done while considering the proper target audience and what is interesting and relevant for them. By doing all of this, the ESMIS project also aims to influence positively other EU-funded projects working on similar topics, but also stakeholders in other countries beyond the ones defined in the methodology and pave the road for the European network of sustainable sport facilities.

8 Summary of sustainability best practices for sport facilities for the prototype of the mapping platform.

Below in detail you can find the different types of sport facilities per country and the type of sustainability innovation they have implemented:

Sport facility name	Sport facility type	Part of sport complex (Y/N)	Country	Energy	Water	Materials	Governance
IVY climbing	Indoor sports centre	Y	NL			X	
Tongelreep swimming stadium	Indoor swimming pools	Y	NL	X	X		
Johan Cruijff ArenA	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	NL	X			X
Football field of football club SV Donk	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	NL	X			
Hylliebadet swimming complex	Indoor swimming pools; Indoor sports centre	Y	SE	X			X
Multi Sport Pavilion	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass;	Y	IRE	X			



	Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)						
Aviva Stadium	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	IRE				X
Croke Park Stadium	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	IRE		X		
Melina Merkouri Indoors Hall	Indoor sports hall	N	GR	X			
Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium	Indoor sports hall; Indoor sports centre	N	GR	X	X		
Peace and Friendship Stadium	Indoor sports hall; Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)	Y	GR		X	X	
Commerzbank Arena, Frankfurt (Deutsche Bank Park)	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	GER	X			X
Hamburger Polo Club	Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)	N	GER		X	X	
Luola Sports and Events Centre	Indoor sports hall; Indoor sports centre	Y	FIN	X		X	
Hall C – Arsenaløen	Indoor sports hall; Indoor sports centre; Outdoor courts of	Y	DEN	X		X	



	artificial or natural grass						
Løgstør Sports Hall	Indoor sports hall; Indoor sports centre	Y	DEN	X		X	
King Baudouin Stadium	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	BE			X	
BXL Pump Park	Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)	N	BE			X	X
Tennis Club de Strasbourg	Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)	Y	FR				X
Paris 2024 Olympic Aquatic Centre	Indoor swimming pools	Y	FR	X		X	
UCPA Sport Station Bordeaux	Indoor sports hall; Indoor sports centre; Outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass)	Y	FR	X		X	
Benito Villamarín Stadium	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	N	ESP				X
CEM Can Felipa	Indoor sports centre	N	ESP	X	X		X
David Lloyd Malaga	Indoor swimming pools	Y	ESP	X			
CEM Joan Miró	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X	X		
Eurofitness Perill	Indoor sports centre	N	ESP	X	X		X
CEM Montserrat Canals	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X	X		



Eurofitness Can Dragó	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X	X		X
Campo de fútbol Colegio Arenales de Carabanchel	Outdoor courts of artificial or natural grass	Y	ESP				X
CEM Corxera	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X			
Club Natació Sant Andreu	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X	X		
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (SAF)	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP	X	X		
CEM Claror	Indoor sports centre	Y	ESP		X		
Total number of sustainability innovations in the categories:				22	13	10	11

Enough data is available to conduct a brief analysis based on the sustainability best practices:

1. 21 out of 33 sport facilities have reported different form of savings as result of the implemented best practice (savings in energy, water or/and waste and resource savings). For the rest 12 facilities data is not provided for the moment.
2. 6 of these 21 sport facilities report water savings as a result of implemented innovative sustainability solutions.
3. 6 of these 21 sport facilities report waste and resource savings as a result of implemented innovative sustainability solutions.
4. 13 of these 21 sport facilities report energy savings as a result of implemented innovative sustainability solutions.

The way that sports facilities introduce sustainability innovation also differs:

1. 13 out of 33 sports facilities have introduced one innovative sustainability solution.
2. 17 out of 33 sports facilities have introduced two innovative sustainability solutions in the following combinations:
 - 9 of the 17 sport facilities combine innovative sustainability solutions for energy and water saving – the majority of the cases. This is a common



practice for Spain, but we see best practices from Greece and the Netherlands as well. In 8 of the 9 cases the innovations are applied by an indoor sports centre. Only in the case of the Netherlands this is applied to a swimming pool. A deeper investigation into these examples might be needed to determine if there is a potential for a deeper case study. **To be discussed with WP 4 leader.**

- 3 of 17 sport facilities combine innovative sustainability solutions for energy savings with governance. They are from Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden. The type of sports facilities differs; however, the majority of cases are focused on Northern Europe. It is interesting to note that in Spain governance is introduced in all cases when there is combination of solutions for energy and water savings together, which indicates that this is not a standalone process, but part of an overall strategy and culture for the sport facility development.

- 2 of 17 sport facilities combine innovative sustainability solutions for water savings and implementing sustainable materials and reduction of resource waste. Although the countries are different (Germany and Greece), the type of sport facilities that implements these innovative practices is the same - outdoor courts of other materials (non-grass). While more cases are needed to determine if there is a trend, however, if implementing sustainable materials in outdoor courts of non-grass surfaces can lead to less water saving, that might be an interesting option for all sport facilities that want to reduce their water consumption to tackle the effects of climate change.

- 5 of 17 sports facilities combine innovative sustainability solutions for energy savings and implementing sustainable materials and reduction of resource waste in France, Denmark and Finland. While the type of sport facilities differs, the common thing between them is that they are all newly built sports facilities or such that are designed and created in buildings that had other purpose (factories, barracks, etc).

- 1 out of 17 sports facilities combines implementing sustainable materials and reduction of resource waste with governance. It is located in Belgium, and it is an outdoor court of other materials (non-grass). In the future it would be interesting to explore if more similar cases have this combination and what



trends emerge.

3. 3 out of 33 sports facilities have introduced 3 innovative sustainability solutions in the combination energy savings + water savings and governance. This could be considered interesting replicable trend for Spain since it was implemented by sports facilities in the country that are all indoor sport centres. A deeper investigation into these examples might be needed to determine if there is a potential for a deeper case study. **To be discussed with WP 4 leader.**

Below you can see a detailed list of the sport facilities and the percentage of savings they are making in different areas as a result of the adopted sustainability best practices:

Sport facilities reporting energy savings:

1. CEM Corxera in Spain – 50%
2. Campo de fútbol Colegio Arenales de Carabanchel in Spain – 50%
3. Eurofitness Can Dragó in Spain – 35%
4. CEM Montserrat Canals in Spain – 30%
5. Eurofitness Perill in Spain – 75%
6. CEM Joan Miró in Spain – 50%
7. UCPA Sport Station Bordeaux in France – 56%
8. Paris 2024 Olympic Aquatic Centre in France – 90%
9. Hall C – Arsenaløen in Denmark – 30%
10. Commerzbank Arena, Frankfurt (Deutsche Bank Park) in Germany - 85%
11. Hylliebadet swimming complex in Sweden – 95%
12. Football field of football club SV Donk in the Netherlands – 80%
13. Tongelreep swimming stadium in the Netherlands – 80%

Sport facilities reporting water savings:

1. CEM Claror in Spain – 75%
2. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (SAF) in Spain – 26%
3. CEM Montserrat Canals in Spain – 10%
4. CEM Joan Miró in Spain – 27%
5. Hamburger Polo Club in Germany – 30%
6. Croke Park Stadium in Ireland – 10%

Sport facilities reporting waste and resources savings:

1. Club Natació Sant Andreu in Spain – 100%



2. Campo de fútbol Colegio Arenales de Carabanchel in Spain – 60%
3. Paris 2024 Olympic Aquatic Centre in France – 100%
4. King Baudouin Stadium in Belgium – 70%
5. Aviva Stadium in Ireland – 80%
6. IVY climbing – 100%

It should be noted that the savings can vary in real quantities and measurements depending on the size of the sports facility and the context in which the sustainability best practice is being implemented.

9 Annex 1 – Complete list of the sustainability best practices for sport facilities for the prototype of the mapping platform.

Below you can find a complete list per country with all listed best practices for the prototype version of the platform. All best practices are listed here: <https://mappingesmis.com/innovation/>

1. [CEM Claror, Spain.](#)
2. [Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona \(SAF\), Spain.](#)
3. [Club Natació Sant Andreu, Spain.](#)
4. [CEM Corxera, Spain](#)
5. [Campo de fútbol Colegio Arenales de Carabanchel, Spain](#)
6. [Eurofitness Can Dragó, Spain](#)
7. [CEM Montserrat Canals, Spain](#)
8. [Eurofitness Perill, Spain](#)
9. [CEM Joan Miró, Spain](#)
10. [David Lloyd Malaga, Spain](#)
11. [CEM Can Felipa, Spain](#)
12. [Benito Villamarín Stadium, Spain](#)
13. [UCPA Sport Station Bordeaux, France](#)
14. [Paris 2024 Olympic Aquatic Centre, France](#)
15. [Tennis Club de Strasbourg, France](#)



16. [BXL Pump Park, Belgium](#)
17. [King Baudouin Stadium, Belgium](#)
18. [Løgstør Sports Hall, Denmark](#)
19. [Hall C – Arsenaløen, Denmark](#)
20. [Luola Sports and Events Centre, Finland](#)
21. [Hamburger Polo Club, Germany](#)
22. [Commerzbank Arena, Frankfurt \(Deutsche Bank Park\), Germany](#)
23. [Peace and Friendship Stadium, Greece](#)
24. [Georgios Karaiskakis Stadium, Greece](#)
25. [Melina Merkouri Indoors Hall, Greece](#)
26. [Croke Park Stadium, Ireland](#)
27. [Aviva Stadium, Ireland](#)
28. [Multi Sport Pavilion, Ireland](#)
29. [Hylliebadet swimming complex, Sweden](#)
30. [Football field of football club SV Donk, the Netherlands](#)
31. [Johan Crujff ArenA, the Netherlands](#)
32. [Tongelreep swimming stadium, the Netherlands](#)
33. [IVY climbing, the Netherlands](#)

10 List of references

1. Sustainability Atlas, Netherlands: <https://atlas.duurzamesportsector.nl/>.
2. Good practice collection from the City, Green, Go! Project: https://citygreengo.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/CityGreenGo_2.1_GoodPracticecollection_FINAL.



[pdf](#)

3. Mapping of existing initiatives (tools and standards) in Green Sport Hub Europe: https://greensportshub.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/GSHE-IO-1_Mapping-of-initiatives_Final.pdf
4. Case study: Sustainable energy through heat exchange in Tongelreep swimming stadium: <https://www.kuijpers.nl/actueel/nieuws/duurzame-energie-door-warmte-uitwisseling-in-zwembadion-tongelreep/>