

(SP) STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SPORT FEDERATIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Introduction

Strategic planning process is widely used by businesses and organisations at European level. According to Bryson (1988), strategic planning, which has developed in the private sector, can help public and nonprofit organizations anticipate and respond effectively to their dramatically changing environments. Strategic planning is defined as the process of determining the mission, major objectives, strategies, and policies that govern the acquisition and allocation of resources to achieve organizational aims (Johnson & Scholes, 1999).

The primary purpose of this project is: (a) to determine the extent to which the strategic planning process is being used in Northern and Southern sport federations in Europe; (b) to identify the key factors that discourage Northern and Southern European sport federations from engaging in strategic planning activities; (c) to identify the differences in strategic planning activities between Northern and Southern European Sport Federations, and (d) to develop and recommend a generic strategic planning process model, which can be implemented by European sport federations.

Methods

A questionnaire is being designed by the authors based on the reviewed literature on strategic planning as well as on the recommendations from the reviews offered by existing publications and selected experts (Kriemadis, 1992). The questionnaire aims to collect data regarding the following steps of the strategic planning process: (a) mission statement and objectives, (b) strategic programming and action plans and (c) budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. The population of the study consists of about 120 sport federations of Germany, Netherlands, Finland and United Kingdom representing the Northern European Sport Organizations and 120 sport federations of Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal representing the Southern European Sport Organizations.

Results

This study will identify the extent to which the strategic planning process is being used by European sport federations as well as any differences in the development and implementation of the strategic planning process between the Northern and Southern European sport federations.

This study will also identify the factors that highly discourage European sport federations from engaging in strategic planning activities.

The authors will develop and recommend a *generic strategic planning process model*. They may help European sport federations to think strategically, clarify future direction, deal effectively with rapidly changing environments, and anticipate and initiate change. The authors will also provide an analysis of the several components of the strategic planning process model introduced, which will be a generic one so that to be adjusted and

modified appropriately by the sport federations' cultural, social and economic environments.

Discussion

Decision makers have begun to consider strategic planning as one of their primary responsibilities rather than an additional task. The authors will propose educational and training programs emphasizing such skills as human relations, analytical thinking, time management, and participatory decision making, which can greatly assist sport federations in carrying out the strategic planning process.

The authors will explain that strategic planning is not a static product, which once being set, stays as it is throughout the implementation of the strategy (Stopford, 2001). It is a constantly evolving process, trying to follow the continual changes in the environment (Bryson, 1993). Each sport organization ends up developing its own nature and model of strategic planning, often by selecting a model and modifying it as they go along in developing their own planning process.

References

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