



Sports agenda 2017+



THE POWER OF SPORT
TO INFLUENCE SOCIETY
FOR THE BETTER



Credits

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influence society for the
better**

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Preface

We dream of the Netherlands becoming a country in which everyone enjoys sport; because sport is passion, it is a healthy pursuit, and it brings people together. Sport can bring out the best in people, help to build friendships, and foster respect. It is our goal to make it possible for absolutely everyone in the Netherlands to take part in sport and to enjoy being physically active.

We focus on creating the best possible conditions for sports in the Netherlands. We are interested both in participation and in winning. We promote excellence in sport, help athletes win medals, and also strengthen sport research. We encourage people to get a little bit better every day, to use sport as a way of fighting obesity, and to make the Netherlands a safer and better place.

Sport has a tremendous impact on society. The country's 25,000-odd sports clubs make up an important and unique cornerstone of its social infrastructure. Furthermore, sport keeps millions of Dutch people fit and helps those with chronic diseases to improve their health. At the same time sports champions inspire people to do their very best. They are key factor in national pride and contribute to

unite society and present a positive image of the Netherlands abroad.

Major sports events in the Netherlands have much the same effect. They serve as sources of inspiration and pride, and enhance the Netherlands' international reputation. The huge number of sporting events, both large and small, generate positive energy in Dutch society on an almost daily basis and act as a motor for economic and social activity. Hundreds of thousands of volunteers make it possible to organise events of this kind almost every week. This is, for certain, something to be cherished and we will continue our efforts to bring major sporting events to the Netherlands and wouldn't it be wonderful if the Netherlands would be to be able to stage a great Olympic multisport event in the Netherlands at some point in the future.

With the Sports Agenda 2017+, Dutch sport intends to make an even greater contribution to Dutch society than in the past. To achieve this Dutch sport has to bring administration, infrastructure, and management into line with today's conditions. One aspect that will certainly need to receive attention concerns integrity of sport that has come to the fore

in both the national and international sports world.

The Dutch society is changing. This includes decentralisation in the social sphere, the changing economy, the ageing population, and above all the growing importance of digital technology. All these signs suggest increasing attention on the individual needs in the future and more and more people will decide individually what sport to pursue, when and where, and with whom.

Institutions such as the sports federations and the Dutch NOC will have less say in determining how sports should be organised and will instead become more of a facilitator instead. At the same time, each individual's need to connect with other people is as strong as ever. In fact, in these more fragmented times, people feel even more a need to belong to something and join in activities than before. People organise their lives in a variety of ways and since sport exists in so many and such diverse forms, it is an ideal way of connecting and joining in. We are truly living in an age of opportunities!

The Dutch sports federations and the Dutch NOC are keenly aware that in order to harness sport's potential to influence society for the better, it is essential to adopt an open attitude, to be willing to adopt new organisational forms, earnings models, innovations, and partnerships. Cooperation is crucial not just to improve internal cohesiveness but also to forge better ties with

public authorities, the education and health sectors, the business world, and all manner of civil society organisations and initiatives. It is only through cooperation that Dutch sport can pursue the following key objectives:

- organising major international sports events;
- creating the right conditions for our elite athletes to excel on the world stage;
- making everyday sport accessible to everyone.

Moreover, it is only through cooperation that local authorities can use sport as a means to encourage vulnerable people to participate in society; that schools can use sport to help pupils to keep fit and attain or maintain a healthy weight; and that businesses can harness the power of sport to enhance their own image at home and abroad. In short, it is vital for Dutch sport and other sectors to build good partnerships with other sectors, and vice versa, to achieve our shared goals.

The Sports Agenda 2017+ maps out the direction that the Dutch sports sector, together with its partners, intends to pursue to safeguard the positive social impact of sport for the coming decades, and thus to contribute a little to making the Netherlands – and the wider world – a better place.

André Bolhuis,
president of Dutch NOC

Gerard Dielessen,
director of Dutch NOC



For us, sports for all and elite sport are equally important.

A full-page photograph of three children jumping on a trampoline. The children are wearing matching blue and black leotards with a star pattern. They are captured mid-jump against a clear blue sky. In the background, there is a modern building, a food stand with a sign that says 'Mimi's Pannenkoeken', and a white tent with text including 'KOFFIE', 'THEE', 'FRIS', and 'INFORMA'. A Swiss flag is also visible on the left.

Our goal is to encourage people
to get a little bit better every day.

Changing times

As society changes, so does the world of sport. Digital technology is becoming more and more prominent, and the emphasis on the individual is becoming stronger. More Dutch people than ever before have taken up sport in recent years, but without joining clubs. People find new forms and structures. They setting up their own cycling or walking groups for instance or dropping into the gym at a time that fits their personal needs. While some like to play soccer in club competitions on Sundays, others may prefer to play with a group of friends in the park on Tuesdays. This is not a recent trend. However, the rapid pace of change is new and unprecedented and has certain consequences. The traditional structure of the Dutch sports sector, with federations, clubs, and competitions, is under pressure. Dutch NOC and the sports federations must respond to these rapidly-changing conditions.

We are convinced that if we fail to act, the current sport system will collapse. The organised sports sector must take note of the needs expressed by individual participants, and then think of ways to respond to them.

The current changes also affect the funding and affordability of sport, not only because club membership fees and subsidies are under threat, but also because sponsorship solely as brand promotion is a thing of the past. That means that new earnings models need to be developed. Another change relates to the liberalisation of the gambling market, which provides certain opportunities, but also creates uncertainties for Dutch sport. Nor can the role of Dutch public authorities in funding sport be taken for granted as much as in the past. Fortunately, the tremendous benefits of sport are just as obvious today as they were in the past and sport still provides attractive opportunities to companies and public authorities. Moreover, the Dutch sports sector possesses data that are in great demand and presenting opportunities for new forms of cooperation.


In the Sports Agenda 2017+, the Dutch NOC and the Dutch federations focus squarely on the individual participant. Sport belongs to everyone, from club members or people who sign up for a weekly yoga class to those who enjoy their daily jogging routine. The



Making everyday sport accessible to everyone.

Dutch NOC and the federations seek to focus on quality – especially in the sense of enjoyment. Amid all the changes, many aspects of Dutch sport shall remain the same, e.g. children still join clubs for the pleasure of taking part in sport together with

their friends. This evidence is an invaluable part of our sport culture and the outstanding Dutch club structure should be preserved cherished especially when Dutch sport must adapt to the changing times.



Sport belongs to everyone, from club members to those who enjoy their daily jogging routine.

Ambitions and challenges

The Dutch NOC and the Dutch sports federations have set themselves the aim to achieve more medals in more branches of sport in the future, and to secure a place among the top ten sporting nations. Whether people are at a stadium or sitting at home watching TV, they should be able to enjoy inspiring sport at the highest level. Another aim is to get as much people as possible involved in sport and physical activities by creating a wider range of sport activities that meet people's demands.

But major challenges lie ahead, especially in terms of finances. For instance, top-level sport relies heavily on the income derived from the Dutch lottery. Lottery income has fallen considerably in recent years, while the number of potential medallists is actually growing. The challenge here is to ensure that elite sport becomes self-supporting, and cooperation is key to this. Over the past few years, the Dutch sports federations and the Dutch NOC have had to dig deep into their reserves. Therefore, one of the ambitions is to return to the level of financial security as known before 2013.

Another aim is to create the best possible sports conditions for all Dutch people, from world-class athletes to recreational joggers. As the Dutch NOC and the sports federations believe that whenever people experience a real sense of satisfaction in their sporting activities they are willing to pay for it.

The rapid changes in society pose challenges to sport on numerous fronts. Sports organisations and institutions can no longer lay down the rules. Instead, the preferences and needs of individual clients and consumers are crucial and decisive. That means that organisations must learn how to operate more flexibly and creatively. Those in positions of leadership in sports clubs and federations need to display courage and an entrepreneurial spirit in order to respond to these social changes, while at the same time maintaining the traditional club structures.



Our aim is to create the best possible sports environment for everyone.

Sports clubs are an enduring, invaluable part of Dutch culture.



Winning

Securing a place among the top ten sporting nations means winning more medals in more branches of sport. The Dutch NOC and the sports federations continue to aspire to the highest possible achievements. To compete at that highest level means constantly raising the bar, as global competition is increasing all the time. At the 2012 London Games, the Netherlands just missed out on that coveted place in the top ten of the medal table, by a mere 0.64 of a second – the difference in the swimming relay match (4x100 m) between the Netherlands (silver) and Australia (gold). With its seven gold medals, Australia made it to tenth place while the Netherlands, with six gold medals, ended up in thirteenth place.

The Sports Agenda 2017+ picks up the line that was mapped out in the previous Sports Agenda. There are no major changes in the policy surrounding the structure of elite sport. Certain choices had to be made after London 2012, and the Dutch NOC reduced the number of elite sports programmes it supported from 180 to 68. That boosted the available funding for the sports with the best

opportunities, and performances improved in a growing number of disciplines in the years that followed. A clear downside to the reduction in overall financial resources is the increased pressure on programmes to develop new talent, geared towards shaping champions for the 2020 Tokyo Games and thereafter.

To be awarded funding, elite sports or talent programmes now have to satisfy certain criteria. No programme has an automatic entitlement to funding. In the Sports Agenda 2017+, the bar is raised higher still: the aim is to win a place among the best eight countries in the world.

We want to support talented athletes on their way to the podium and beyond as well as possible. This includes among others helping them to start a new career when leaving elite sport. Besides improving sporting achievements, the support for Dutch top athletes also focuses increasingly on other factors that contribute to a longer, more successful career, such as a dual career.



Major sports events serve as sources of inspiration and pride, and enhance the Netherlands' reputation.

Part of our support is to make agreements with top athletes, federations, and other stakeholders about the conduct and activities that are appropriate to their status as top athletes and that are in line with the services they enjoy.



It's about strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit of sports clubs and their management quality.

Enjoyment

The Netherlands has over 24,000 sports clubs, with over four million members. However, the number of Dutch people who practise some form of sport every week is actually nine million. This is one of the highest levels of sport participation in the world and the numbers are still (slightly) rising. A crucial goal of the Dutch NOC and the sports federations is to promote enjoyment of sport among all Dutch people, regardless of club membership.

Dutch sports federations and clubs focus on the preferences of individual participants, trying to provide the best possible conditions in which everyone can enjoy their sport. It is up to individuals to decide how to participate. The Dutch tradition of children joining sports clubs will undoubtedly remain intact. But when children grow up, they do not necessarily want to join a club: each individual will have his or her own preferences.

Specific target groups in the Netherlands such as persons with a disability, the elderly, or those with little education will also be

less likely to join sports clubs. The current trend is towards critical consumers who expect quality, flexibility, and added value. Each person searches for something that suits them, without feeling the need for clubs or competitions: from a dancing class to a fitness group or a run in the woods. Group apps serve as a kind of social network; for many participants, agreeing to meet up for a cycling tour is an ideal alternative to a club.

Many Dutch sports clubs are already exploiting this trend. Sports agenda 2017+ looks at ways of strengthening the entrepreneurial spirit of sports clubs and their management quality. Dutch clubs are encouraged to respond actively to preferences expressed locally and at grassroots level. This means studying the local sports market and conducting frequent surveys to find out more about people's motives.

Sports providers must be open to change as it will make it easier to arrange local and regional partnerships between clubs and other parties such as the local authority,



We want to support talented athletes as well as possible on their way to the podium.

care and welfare sectors, the business community, and schools. The so call 'Open Clubs' with high quality facilities and good supervision provided should be part of every Dutch neighbourhood as they will

enable Dutch people to enjoy their sporting experience even better.

Sport keeps millions of people fit and healthy



Sports events

Sports events fit right into today's rapidly-changing times. From the European Athletics championships, recently organized in Amsterdam, to the Rotterdam marathon or the simplest recreational run in the local neighbourhood, events create new connections with the business community and other parties, bring people together, and enable top athletes to excel in front of a home crowd.

Event organisers are entrepreneurial and innovative; they respond to the needs and preferences of the target group, from the cyclist who is eager to compete in the Tour de France to the runner dreaming of crossing the finishing line of a marathon. Club membership is not an issue anymore. After one event, some participants may want a new challenge: an obstacle run or a 'mud run', for instance. Besides events that attract thousands of participants, there are also major tournaments, of course, that could not be organised without the federations' support. The Dutch NOC is part of the national network known as 'The Power of Sports Events', set up in 2013, which strives

to attract three major sports events to the Netherlands every year, to improve their quality, and to increase their economic, social and sporting impact. To achieve these aims, each big event in the Netherlands is accompanied by a range of side events.

Major events in the Netherlands have a lot to offer the business community: large crowds of spectators, media attention, and the emotions that sport inevitably brings to the surface. In addition, the organisers possess data that is coveted by businesses. At local level too, events help to generate new connections between sport and companies – the soccer club may get together with a local shopkeepers' association to organise a neighbourhood run, for instance. However, in the case of competitions staged by Dutch sports federations, it proves more difficult to forge new partnerships. Therefore, staging events often compels people to work together and no one cares anymore whether the thousands of people taking part in cycling or walking trips belong to a club. What matters is each individual's enjoyment.



Sport events act as a motor for economic and social activity.

Good leadership calls for courage
and an entrepreneurial approach.



What does the Sports Agenda 2017+ mean for...

...DUTCH SPORTS FEDERATIONS

The rapid changes in society pose a challenge to Dutch sports federations. On the one hand they have to try to preserve and protect all the good things that exist within organised sports. On the other hand they need to embrace innovation and renewal. Yesterday's laws no longer meet the demands of today's world. Dutch federations must embrace change, becoming enterprising organisations that are constantly listening to what drives participants. Together with public authorities and sports clubs, they need to provide attractive facilities since that, as all participants will agree, is an important precondition for enjoyment.

...DUTCH SPORTS CLUBS

They need to cultivate a bold, entrepreneurial spirit, one that favours innovation. Clubs must foster an open attitude that will enable them to cooperate with other parties (e.g. the local council, the care and welfare sectors, the business community, and schools). They have a lot on their plate. That is unavoidable, given the vital need to adapt to the rapid changes in our society. A truly welcoming

sports club will focus on ensuring that everyone can enjoy themselves, including non-members.

...DUTCH ELITE ATHLETES

The bar is constantly being raised. Dutch elite athletes hoping to qualify for support from the Dutch NOC must demonstrate that they have a realistic chance of winning a medal in the international arena. The NOC supervision spans an eight-year period from the period of preparing for major events up to and including the move to a new career afterwards. The training programme for Dutch elite athletes now places more emphasis on the prospect of a dual career (school, studies, and employment).

...DUTCH PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

The Dutch NOC seeks to expand on the presentation of the Dutch Olympic team during the 2014 Sochi Games as a unified whole, as the so called 'TeamNL'. A TeamNL is attractive to Dutch businesses, particularly if there are collective sponsors' rights together with the Dutch federations. A TeamNL Business Club is being set up.



Elite athletes send a positive message to the world.

The Dutch NOC and the sports federations have set themselves a target of attracting a million sports fans to get behind TeamNL.

...DUTCH PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

Dutch sports organisers seek to work together with local authorities to set up smart connections with the care and welfare sectors, schools, safety promotion, and the business community. Local authorities are asked to invest in innovation and events to

help raise the Netherlands' international profile, and to invest in an inspiring, wide-ranging vision of sport as well as typical Dutch sports infrastructure, the aim being to ensure that everyone can participate in sport and derive enjoyment from it, as well as taking pleasure in watching sport at the highest level. After all, sport has an enormous impact on society and can help to solve problems such as obesity, loneliness, and social tension.

Final remarks

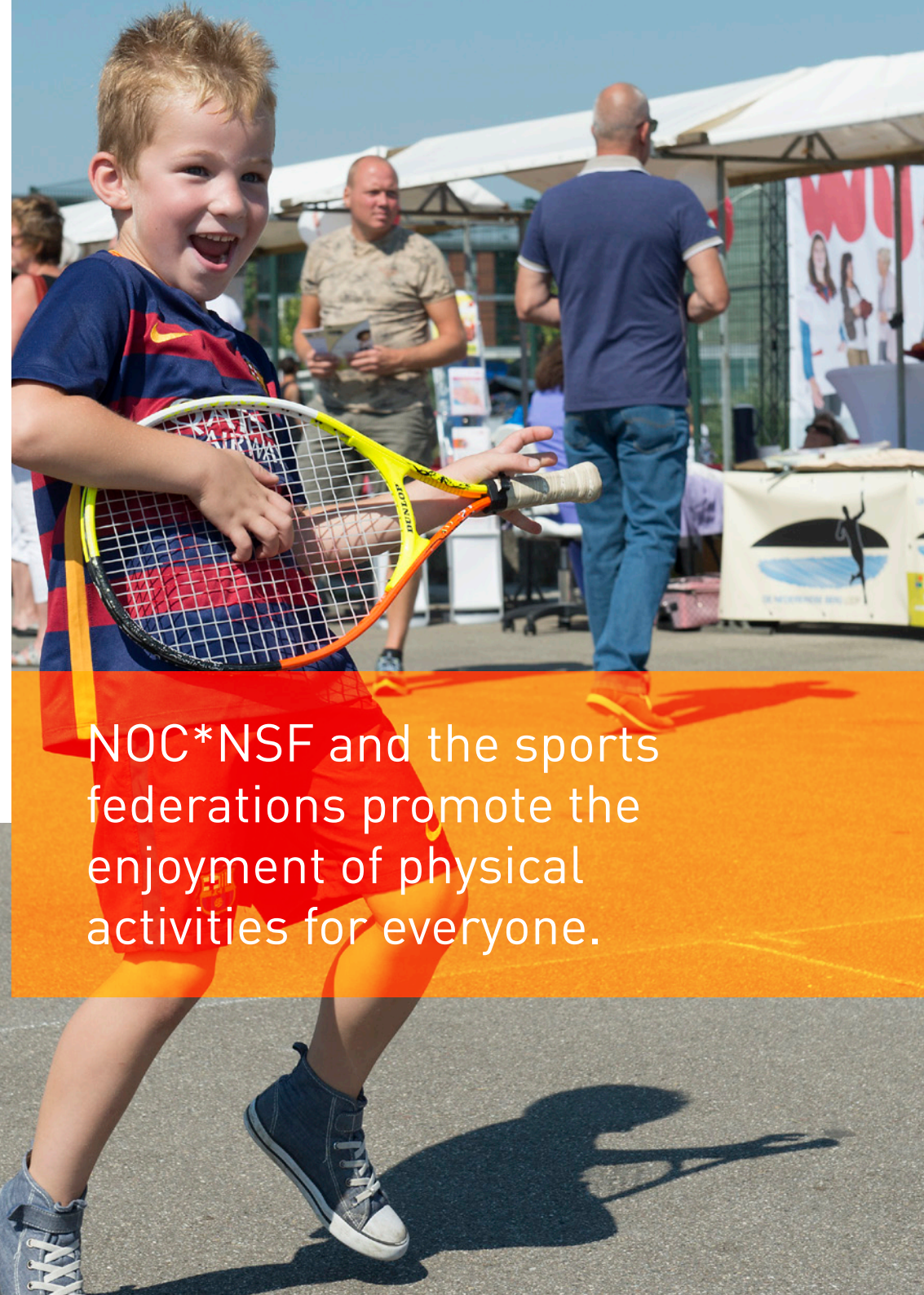
The above pages have provided a summary of the principles underlying the Sports Agenda 2017+. Given constraints of space, it has left out of consideration a number of factors that are equally important to the two main ambitions of the Dutch NOC and the sports federations: that is, securing a place among the top ten sporting nations, and promoting sporting enjoyment for everyone.

For instance, taking sporting enjoyment as a guiding principle and in line with the existing national programme to promote a 'Safe Climate in Sport', directors, coaches, and referees are being trained (and given refresher training) within sports clubs. In relation to encouraging participation, the national programmes 'Local opportunities for sport and exercise' and 'Active without limits' are also worthy of mention.

Sports Agenda 2017+ also devotes attention to the importance of 'cleaning up' sport. For in spite of all the marvellous things sport has to offer, there is also a dark side, with excesses such as doping, match fixing, maladministration, sexual intimidation,

human rights violations, fraud, and discrimination.

All references to Dutch elite sport include the top ranks of Paralympic sport, which have the same ambitions and strict requirements, and the same supervision. One of the aims pursued by Sports Agenda 2017+ is to ensure that participation in sport by persons with a disability can also be expanded into a wide-ranging programme in which supply and demand are more closely attuned.



NOC*NSF and the sports federations promote the enjoyment of physical activities for everyone.



Netherlands
Olympic Committee
Netherlands
Sports Confederation

