

Sports Diplomacy

Overview

Sports can offer a powerful means for governments to support the achievement of national diplomatic objectives. This may include promoting a positive image abroad and strengthening relations with specific partners, while also advancing development agendas in partner countries.

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair” – Nelson Mandela

Key dimensions of sports diplomacy



People to people contact

Erasmus+

EU sponsored global initiative to support youth development through sports and education



Showcase society



Signaled to the world South Korea's emergence as a leading industrial nation



Idea exchanges



Cooperation agreements with several countries to share best practices and learnings



Economic opportunities

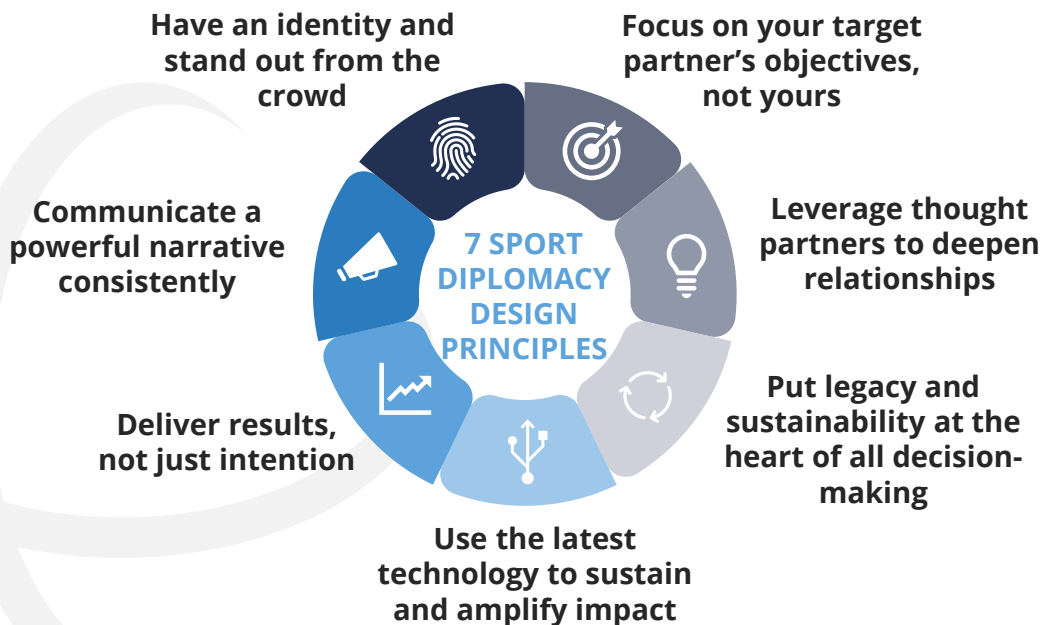


The world's most valuable football league, driving growth of a football economy in new countries

Portas Thinking



Based on our experience of supporting governments to develop a sports diplomacy strategy, there are seven design principles to maximise impact



Case Study - USA

The U.S. Department of State’s Sports Diplomacy Division (formerly SportsUnited) was established in the wake of 9/11 as a means of reaching out to youth in the Middle East through soccer, but subsequently expanded to include all regions and sports particularly at a grassroots level.

There are four specific programs:



<p>Sports Envoy Program</p> <p>01</p> <p>Utilises professional athletes to travel on behalf of US Government to deliver high-impact programming</p>	<p>Sports Visitor Program</p> <p>02</p> <p>Brings youth athletes, coaches and administrators from around the world to US for sport exchanges to enhance dialogue and cross-cultural understanding</p>	<p>International Sports Programming Initiative</p> <p>03</p> <p>Uses sport to help underserved youth develop leadership skills, achieve academic success and promote tolerance and diversity in home communities</p>	<p>Global Sports Mentoring Program (GSMP)</p> <p>04</p> <p>Professional development exchange pairing leaders and American executives in sport sector for mentorship on inclusion and gender equality</p>
<p>More than 300 sports envoys representing more than 24 sports have participated, with almost 60 envoys sent annually</p>	<p>Over 700 non-elite youth athletes, coaches and administrators from over 50 countries participated in the program from 2017-2020</p>	<p>4,400 foreign and American participants since 2002 across 85 countries</p>	<p>340,000 directly impacted by GSMP alumni, with 180 sports organisations established by alumni and 10,000 volunteers mobilised</p>

Impact

Key takeaways for policymakers

The implementation of sports diplomacy strategies can often fail if the following key success factors are not in place

<p> Strategic alignment</p>	<p>Ensure strategic alignment between government objectives, foreign policy objectives, and sports diplomacy strategy</p>
<p> Stakeholder alignment</p>	<p>Engage, and co-develop strategy with key stakeholders across government, private sector and sports sector</p>
<p> Dedicated resources</p>	<p>Ensure dedicated team working with sport experts, with clear, accountable ringfenced budget</p>
<p> KPIs and monitoring</p>	<p>Establish clear definitions of success, KPIs (outcome metrics can be challenging here) and monitoring mechanisms</p>
<p> Athlete ambassadors</p>	<p>Effectively partner athletes and sporting personalities with international reach to act as sporting ambassadors</p>
<p> Event calendar</p>	<p>Focus on developing a longer-term calendar activations, rather than one-off events</p>
<p> Portfolio of activities</p>	<p>Consider a range of channels – representation, hosting, participation, communications, partnerships, sponsorships</p>