

# INFORMS

Innovative Forms of Employment in Sport



## GUIDE TO USING EMPLOYEE SHARING IN SPORT

# GUIDE TO USING EMPLOYEE SHARING IN SPORT

*IN-FORMS – Improving employability in sport through investigating, promoting and supporting innovative forms of employment in Europe*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

»	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
»	<b>EMPLOYEE SHARING</b>	<b>5</b>
»	<b>PART 1: GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>6</b>
»	<b>STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME</b>	<b>7</b>
	Step 1: Identify staffing needs that cannot be covered individually	7
	Step 2: Find an expert structure on employee sharing or partner organisations with similar needs	8
	Step 3: Ensure understanding of the model and legal framework	8
	Step 4: Organise the distribution of working time	9
	Step 5: Define financial contributions and cost-sharing mechanisms	9
	Step 6: Recruit and hire the employee through the applicable employee sharing model	10
	Step 7: Monitor and stabilise the arrangement over time	11
»	<b>SHORT CASE STUDIES FROM THE SPORT SECTOR</b>	<b>12</b>
»	<b>PART 2: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>13</b>

# INTRODUCTION

The guide you are about to read introduces employee sharing, a flexible form of employment that enables sports organizations to jointly employ professionals, helping them address specific needs while offering more diverse work opportunities.

It has been developed as part of the first European initiative focusing on new forms of employment in the sports sector and their potential to address challenges faced by employers.

This initiative is implemented through the [INFORMS](#) project, funded by the Erasmus+ Sport programme and running from January 2024 to December 2026.

The guide is designed as a **practical** and **accessible** step-by-step **guide**, aiming to help readers understand how this innovative form of employment operates in practice and how it can be implemented in real organisational settings. It focuses on operational decision-making, legal and regulatory considerations, and day-to-day implementation, rather than on abstract or purely theoretical concepts.

This guide is part of a series of three distinct guides, each addressing a different innovative form of employment relevant to the sports sector:

- > employee sharing
- > permanent intermittent contract
- > platform work

**Sport employers and employees in Europe, these guides aim to provide you with a clear and accessible introduction to each employment model.** By combining explanations, points to consider, and illustrative scenarios, the guides seek to support informed decision-making and to stimulate further reflection on how these forms of employment can be responsibly and effectively implemented in different sport sector contexts.

If you would like to explore these forms of employment in more depth, including the underlying theoretical concepts and further analysis, please refer to the [European research report on employment challenges and innovative forms of employment in sport](#).

# EMPLOYEE SHARING

Employee sharing is a form of employment in which one worker is employed to provide services to several organisations that individually do not have sufficient workload or resources to offer a full-time, stable position.

In the sports sector, employee sharing enables clubs, associations, local authorities, or other sport-related organisations to pool their needs and resources and jointly employ a professional whose working time is distributed among them. This model can be useful for a wide range of positions and for any organisation that cannot afford to recruit independently.

In the European sports context, employee sharing can be organised through different structures depending on national frameworks. It most commonly takes place through:

- > **Employers' Alliances**, which legally employ the worker and make them available to member organisations;
- > **Sports federations or umbrella sport bodies**, which recruit professionals and allocate their working time across affiliated clubs.


In some cases, a more informal arrangement exists whereby a single sport organisation acts as the formal employer and shares its employee with one or more partner organisations. For example, a sport club may employ a coach on a part-time or full-time contract and make them available to neighbouring clubs to deliver training sessions.

In a survey of 2 264 sport organisations which INFORMS carried out in 2024, we discovered employee sharing was highly recommended by employers using it.

Among the 14.1% of sports organisations that have used employee sharing:

- > 76.8% would recommend it to other employers in the sector;
- > 61.3% agreed that it allowed them to access workers whose skills and experience were guaranteed by a trusted organisation (e.g. a sports federation or an Employers' Alliance).

Furthermore, among the 55% of EU sports employers who are not familiar with employee sharing, 45% believe that this form of employment would benefit their organisation.



“Through employee sharing, we have experienced positive effects in terms of efficiency. It is also seen as easier to find employees for positions with fewer full-time equivalent posts when working with this alternative employment model. I intend to use employee sharing more often in the future. However, each association has its own agenda. While there is no competition, the interests of the different employers are different. They approach things differently, which means the cooperation between the associations does not always run smoothly.”

Manager at a Dutch sports federation

# PART 1: GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

| The research revealed the following advantages of platform work and some important points to consider.

## Advantages and points to consider for employers

### ADVANTAGES

#### Access to qualified staff despite limited needs

Sharing workforce allows sports organisations to recruit qualified staff they could not afford individually, supporting overall professionalisation.

#### Making employment more attractive

Offering a larger workload and a more stable employment makes positions sound more attractive to the potential employee.

#### Reducing administrative burden

The Employers' Alliance or federation manages contracts, payroll and HR, allowing each organisation to benefit from shared staff without handling employment administration themselves.

#### Improved service continuity for members and beneficiaries

Ensures regular activities (training, development, administration) that would otherwise be irregular.

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

#### Complex coordination between partners

Requires strong communication and clear agreements to avoid conflicts in schedules, responsibilities, or expectations.

#### Risk of conflicts of interest and less organizational loyalty

When an employee works for several organisations, priorities may compete, which can create tensions and weaken their sense of attachment to each structure.

#### Shared financial liability between partner organisations

Within an Employers' Alliance or federation-led model, all participating organisations remain financially responsible for the employee's salary and associated costs, which can create risks if one partner fails to meet its commitments.

#### Need for clear management and supervision

The employee is likely to have several supervisors from different organisations, which can create confusion without clear governance.



# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME

The following section presents the steps that sports employers should follow to implement an employee sharing scheme within their organisations. To illustrate it, we will use a fictional scenario in which a multi-sport club wants to use employee sharing to recruit coaches.

Across Europe, different models of employee sharing coexist (e.g. schemes managed by an Employers' Alliance or by national sports bodies). Employers should therefore be aware of the legal and regulatory framework in their respective countries, or seek guidance if needed, to ensure that the solution they adopt is compliant with national legislation. In the following fictional scenario, we are going to assume that the clubs receive support from an Employers' Alliance.

For further clarification, employers are encouraged to contact expert organisations for guidance in their respective countries.

## STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO EMPLOYEE SHARING IMPLEMENTATION

- Step 1: Identify staffing needs that cannot be covered individually
- Step 2: Find an expert structure on employee sharing or partner organisations with similar needs
- Step 3: Ensure understanding of the model and legal framework
- Step 4: Organise the distribution of working time
- Step 5: Define financial contributions and cost-sharing mechanisms
- Step 6: Recruit and hire the employee through the applicable employee sharing model
- Step 7: Monitor and stabilise the arrangement over time

### Scenario

Erik is the president of a multi-sport club that offers racket sports session to its members. The club already employs a tennis coach on a permanent contract but is looking to recruit an additional coach. At the same time, the club would like to hire a coach for its badminton section.

#### > Step 1: Identify staffing needs that cannot be covered individually

The first step consists of identifying the sport organization's operational and strategic needs that cannot be adequately addressed through existing staff, volunteers, or individual employment contracts. This usually concerns roles that require specific qualifications or expertise but for which the sport organization cannot offer sufficient working hours or financial stability on its own.

**Scenario:** As president of the multi-sport club, Erik reviews the club's staffing situation. While the club already employs a tennis coach on a permanent contract, the increasing number of members makes it necessary to recruit an additional coach. At the same time, the badminton section requires a qualified coach to ensure regular training sessions. However, the club does not have the capacity to offer sufficient working hours to both coaches, nor the human resources capacity to manage additional employment contracts and payroll independently. This encourages Erik to consider employee sharing as a more sustainable option for the club.

# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME

## > Step 2: Find an expert structure on employee sharing or partner organisations with similar needs

Once a potential need for employee sharing has been identified, the sport organisation should seek support from an expert organization, such as an Employers' Alliance, a national sports body, or partner organisations with similar staffing needs.

These structures can provide guidance on feasibility, legal arrangements, and available solutions, and may facilitate connections between potential partners and qualified staff.

**Scenario:** Erik discusses the club's staffing challenges with a fellow sports club president in his city, who has previous experience with employee sharing. Through this contact, Erik is introduced to a sports Employers' Alliance, which offers guidance and services to clubs interested in setting up employee-sharing arrangements. The Employers' Alliance explains the available support, including advice on organisational models, legal frameworks, and the practical implementation of shared coaching positions.

## > Step 3: Ensure understanding of the model and legal framework

Before proceeding with employee sharing, it is essential to understand how the scheme operates. This includes the organisational model (who employs the staff, who supervises them, and how working time is distributed), the legal and regulatory framework in your country, and the club's responsibilities as a host organisation. Key considerations include financial liability, payroll obligations, insurance, health and safety, and reporting duties towards the Employers' Alliance or national sports body.

**Scenario:** With support from the Employers' Alliance, Erik reviews the employee sharing scheme in detail. He learns that the coaches will be formally employed by the Employers' Alliance, while the multi-sport club will host them for the agreed hours. The club will be responsible for supervising daily activities, ensuring health and safety, and reporting any issues to the Alliance. Erik also understands the financial arrangements, including how the club will contribute proportionally to the salaries and associated costs. By clarifying these responsibilities, Erik ensures that the club is prepared to host the shared staff effectively and in full compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

**Please note:** This guide does not aim to provide a detailed description of employee sharing schemes and their legal frameworks in every EU country. Please be aware that legal frameworks may vary from one country to another.



Roles and responsibilities check

# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME

## > Step 4: Organise the distribution of working time

Once the roles have been agreed upon and the employee sharing scheme is clear, the organisation and the Employers' Alliance (or the national sports body) need to define how the employees' working time will be distributed. Clear allocation of hours ensures that the club's needs are met while respecting the employees' contractual arrangements with the Employers' Alliance (or the national sports body).

**Scenario:** Erik and the Employers' Alliance discuss the weekly schedules for the tennis and the badminton coaches. The tennis coach is needed at the club for 5 hours per week, while the badminton coach is required for 15 hours per week. The Employers' Alliance confirms that both positions could be offered through employee sharing. Erik understands that the selected coaches would work for his club for 5 and 15 hours a week but will also be doing other professional activities (either through other organisations managed by the Employers' Alliance or self-employment).

**Please note:** In this fictional scenario, Erik finds it relevant to use employee sharing for both positions. However, the club could have chosen to offer one position through employee sharing and hire the other directly or engage a self-employed coach. It is up to each organisation to decide whether employee sharing is the most appropriate form of employment for its specific context.



Working time schedule

## > Step 5: Define financial contributions and cost-sharing mechanisms

After defining working time, the organisation must determine how the costs of the shared employees will be distributed among the partners. This includes salaries, social security contributions, insurance, and any other employment-related costs. Clear agreements on financial contributions help avoid misunderstandings and ensure that the arrangement is sustainable.

In some cases, there may also be financial liability between partners within the Employers' Alliance, meaning each partner could be jointly responsible for costs if an issue arises.

**Scenario:** Erik and the Employers' Alliance agree on a cost-sharing model for the shared coaches. The club will contribute financially in proportion to the agreed working hours (5 hours for the tennis coach and 15 hours per week for the badminton coach) covering not only a share of the salaries but also part of the employment management and human resources costs. The Employers' Alliance remains responsible for payroll, insurance, and overall administrative management.

Erik also understands that, under the rules of the Employers' Alliance, partners may share financial liability, which encourages careful monitoring and clear agreements among all participating organisations.

**Please note:** The financial arrangements can vary depending on the structure of the Employers' Alliance and national regulations. It is essential to clearly define contributions, responsibilities, and potential liabilities before starting the employee-sharing arrangement.



Cost-sharing table

# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME

## > Step 6: Recruit and hire the employee through the applicable employee sharing model

Once the financial and organisational arrangements are in place, the recruitment and hiring process can begin. In an employee sharing scheme, the Employers' Alliance (or national sports body) acts as the legal employer and is therefore responsible for recruiting staff who meet the required qualifications, certifications, and/or professional standards. This ensures compliance with national regulations and guarantees the quality of services delivered to host organisations.

**Scenario:** As the legal employer, the Employers' Alliance leads the recruitment process for the shared coaches. Within its existing workforce, the Alliance already employs a qualified badminton coach who is currently working for another club and still has availability to work additional hours at Erik's multi-sport club. For the tennis coach, however, no existing employee fully matches the required profile. As a result, the Employers' Alliance launches a recruitment process to hire a newly qualified tennis coach. In both cases, the Alliance ensures that all staff meet the necessary qualifications, certifications, and professional standards.

Erik contributes to defining the profiles and may take part in interviews, while the Employers' Alliance remains responsible for employment contracts and regulatory compliance. Erik may also suggest potential candidates, provided they meet the required criteria.



Job description ready



# STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EMPLOYEE SHARING SCHEME

## > Step 7: Monitor and stabilise the arrangement over time

Once the shared employees are in place, ongoing coordination and follow-up among all partners are essential to ensure the smooth functioning of the employee-sharing arrangement. This includes regular communication between host organisations and the Employers' Alliance, monitoring workloads and working time, addressing operational or relational issues, and supporting the well-being of shared staff.

From the host organisations' perspective, this phase should also be seen as an opportunity to increase organisational stability and professionalisation. Over time, employee sharing can support a progressive structuring of jobs and, in some cases, may lead to more traditional forms of employment, such as permanent contracts, directly within the host organisation if resources make this possible.

**Scenario:** After the coaches begin their activities, Erik maintains regular contact with the Employers' Alliance to monitor how the employee-sharing arrangement is working. Coordination meetings are organised to review working schedules, workload distribution, and the satisfaction of both the coaches and the club. Based on this follow-up, minor adjustments are made to training schedules and responsibilities. After one season, Erik and the Employers' Alliance assess the overall impact of the arrangement and decide to stabilise the model, confirming the employee-sharing solution as a sustainable long-term option for the club.



Annual individual interview grid



The following examples illustrate how employee sharing can be implemented in different sport sector contexts and for a variety of professional roles. While the organisational models may differ depending on national frameworks and local needs, these examples highlight the flexibility of employee sharing and its potential to support the professionalisation and sustainability of sport organisations.

## Case study 1 — Shared communication officer between small clubs

Three local sport clubs (basketball, swimming, and athletics) jointly identified difficulties in managing their communication and social media activities. Individually, none of the clubs could offer enough working hours to recruit a qualified communication officer. Through a regional sport federation, they organised an employee sharing arrangement allowing one professional to work across the three organisations. The shared employee now manages digital communication, event promotion, and partnerships for all clubs. This has improved the visibility and professionalism of each organisation.

## Case study 2 — Shared physiotherapist in high-performance sport

Several semi-professional volleyball clubs decided to share the services of a sports physiotherapist during the competitive season. The physiotherapist is employed by a regional sport body and works according to a schedule agreed between the clubs. This arrangement allows athletes to access qualified medical support that the clubs could not afford individually. Regular coordination meetings help avoid scheduling conflicts during tournaments and training camps.

## Case study 3 — Shared administrative officer for rural sport organisations

In a rural area, four small sport associations faced increasing administrative and financial reporting obligations linked to public funding. To reduce the workload on volunteers, the associations created a shared administrative position through a local employee-sharing structure. The employee supports accounting, membership management, and funding applications across the different organisations. This arrangement has helped the clubs maintain their activities and improve their long-term sustainability.

## Case study 4 — Shared safeguarding officer between federations

Two national sport federations decided to share a safeguarding officer responsible for child protection and ethical sport policies. The specialist works part-time for each federation and supports the implementation of safeguarding procedures, awareness sessions, and reporting mechanisms. By sharing this expertise, both federations gained access to specialised competencies that would have been difficult to finance independently. The arrangement also encouraged cooperation and exchange of good practices between the organisations.

# PART 2: INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

## Understanding the employment relationships

**In an employee sharing scheme, the employee may work for several sport organisations while being formally employed by a single legal employer.** Depending on the national framework and the model used, this legal employer may be an Employers' Alliance, a sports federation, a national sport body, or another intermediary structure responsible for managing the employment relationship.

The employee's working hours are then distributed between different host organisations according to agreed schedules and responsibilities. While the legal employer generally manages the employment contract, payroll, and administrative obligations, the host organisations supervise the employee's day-to-day activities and working tasks within their respective structures.

Before entering an employee sharing arrangement, employees should ensure they clearly understand:

- who their legal employer is
- which organisations they will work for
- how responsibilities and supervision are divided between the different organisations involved

## Advantages and points to consider for employees

### ADVANTAGES

**More stable employment compared to multiple small contracts**  
One contract replaces fragmented jobs, providing higher stability and security.

**Broader professional experience**  
Working in several environments enhances skills, adaptability, and employability.

**Greater visibility and networking opportunities**  
Working across several organisations increase professional recognition and future opportunities.

**Improved life-balance**  
Employee sharing can provide more predictable and structured working hours than multiple short contracts, making it easier to balance professional responsibilities with personal life.

### POINTS TO CONSIDER

**Multiple workplace and mobility constraints**  
Frequent travel between organisations may increase fatigue and logistical challenges.

**Different organizational cultures and expectations**  
Adjusting to varied management styles can be demanding.

**Risk of workload imbalance**  
One organization may require more involvement than initially planned. This can lead to pressure and potential conflict.

## Points to consider

As an employee working within an employee sharing scheme, it is important to pay attention to the practical organisation of your work across different structures. Working for several sport organisations can provide broader professional experience and more stable employment, but it may also require greater adaptability and coordination.

Employees should pay particular attention to:

### > **Distribution of working hours between organisations**

How will my working hours be distributed between the different organisations, and who is responsible for coordinating my schedule?

### > **Travel time and mobility between workplaces**

Will travel time and transport costs between workplaces be considered or compensated? Is the travel time realistic?

### > **Differences in organisational cultures, expectations, and management styles**

What are the specific expectations and ways of working within each organisation?

### > **Communication and supervision arrangements with each host organisation**

Who will supervise my daily activities, and who should I contact if issues or conflicts arise?

### > **Balance of workload and responsibilities across different workplaces**

Will the organisations ensure my workload, responsibilities and travel time remain balanced and manageable across all workplaces?



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