



POWER

WOMEN ATHLETES IN SPORTS MEDIA

**Deliverable D3.1 – Output 2 POWER
Strategy & Guidelines for the Fair Portrayal of
Women Athletes in Sports Media**

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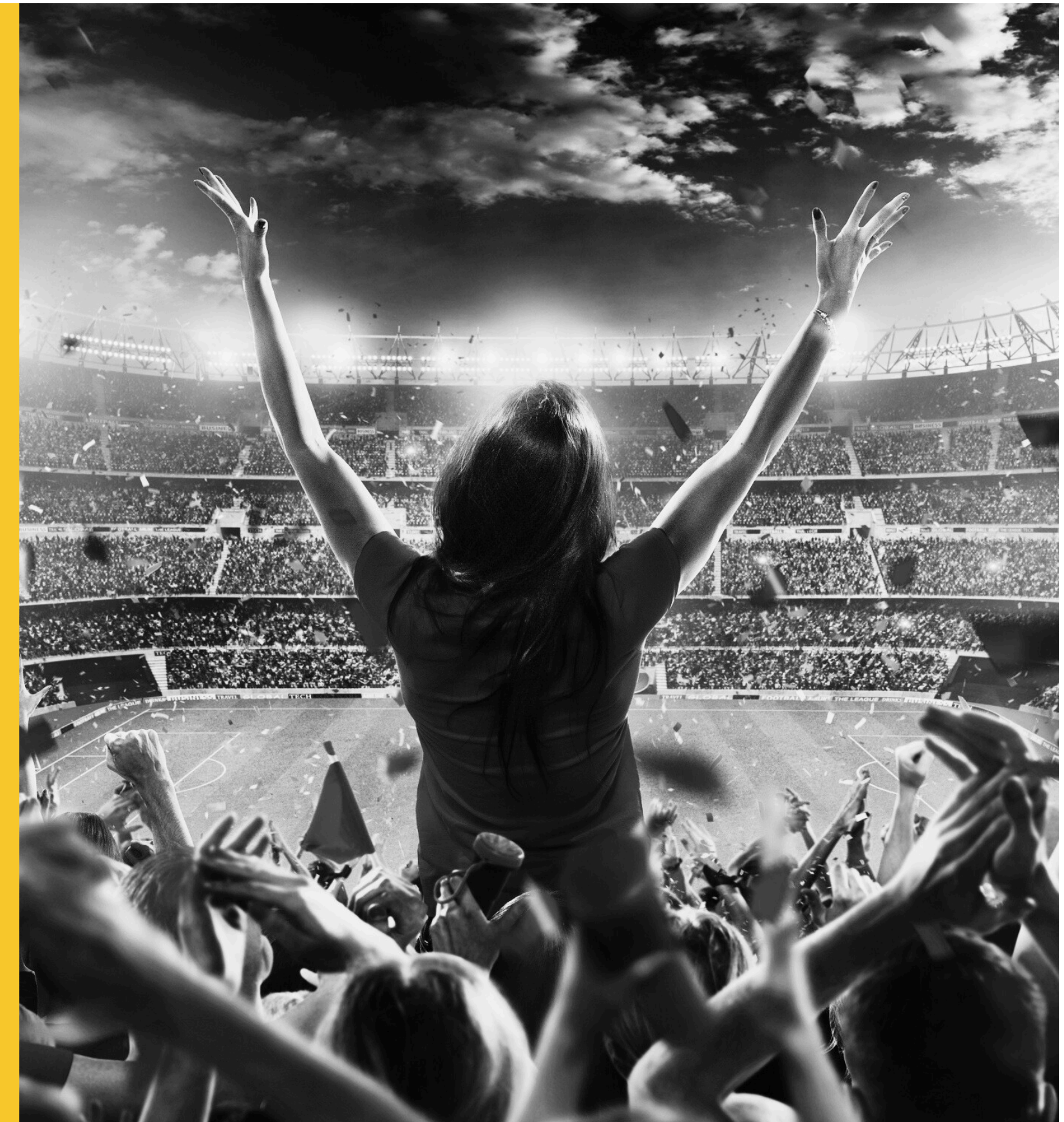
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WELCOME

Sport has the power to inspire, to unite, and to shape the way societies understand leadership, resilience and excellence. Yet across Europe, the portrayal of women athletes in sports media remains uneven, intermittent and often limited in scope. While progress has been made in recent years, women in sport continue to face structural underrepresentation, reduced visibility outside major events, and narratives that do not fully reflect the depth of their achievements, leadership and social impact.

Media representation is not a neutral act. It shapes public perception, influences sponsorship and investment, and determines which role models are visible to future generations. When women athletes are portrayed primarily through isolated successes, stereotyped narratives, or marginal coverage, their contribution to sport and society is diminished. Achieving equality in sport requires not only participation and performance opportunities, but also fair, continuous and respectful visibility.

The POWER project was created in response to this reality. The research conducted across multiple European countries identified persistent gaps in frequency of coverage, diversity of framing, visual representation, and editorial prioritisation. These findings highlight that the challenge is not only about avoiding stereotypes, but about addressing structural patterns that limit visibility and narrative diversity.

The POWER Strategy & Guidelines for the Fair Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media represent a collective commitment to change. This document offers practical, evidence-based guidance to media professionals, sports organisations and policymakers. It proposes concrete actions to ensure year-round visibility, diversified storytelling, balanced sports agendas, responsible visual standards, and institutional accountability.

As leaders in sport, we recognise that visibility is a form of power. By strengthening how women athletes are represented, we contribute to a more inclusive sporting culture, foster equal opportunities, and inspire the next generation of girls and young women to see themselves reflected in the stories of excellence that sport can offer. We invite media professionals, institutions and stakeholders across Europe to embrace these guidelines and join us in shaping a sporting narrative that is fair, representative and worthy of the athletes it celebrates.



Leila Marques

*Vice President of the International
Paralympic Committee*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Context

In this context, **POWER – The Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media** was developed as a Project funded by the **Erasmus+ Sport Programme**. The **POWER – The Portrayal of Women Athletes in Sports Media** project promotes fair, unbiased, and non-stereotypical representation of women athletes in the media. Through research, training, and awareness activities, POWER aims to foster a more inclusive and gender-equitable sports media landscape across Europe. The project also develops **practical tools**—training materials, national guidelines, and communication resources—to help media and sports professionals identify and challenge gender bias in their daily work.

The project is coordinated by the **Athens Network of Collaborating Experts (ANCE, Greece)** in collaboration with organisations from **Portugal – Sport Evolution Alliance (SEA)**, **Spain – Unió de Federacions Esportives de Catalunya (UFEC)**, **Italy – Istituto Italiano dei Media (ISIDEM)**, **Hungary – Budapest Association for International Sports (BAIS)**, and **Bulgaria – Association Mundus Bulgaria (AMB)**. With this document, the project aims to develop a **shared European strategy and practical guidelines** based on comprehensive research analysing how female athletes are represented in sports media across different national contexts.

This evidence base was gathered through **desk research** (bibliometric and literature review), **content analysis** (press, television, online, and social media), **focus groups** (with athletes, journalists, and media professionals), and a **cross-country comparative analysis** with a perception survey to 720 people in 6 countries. Building on these results, the project seeks to **improve gender balance and reduce stereotypical representation of women across all media formats**—creating fairer, more inclusive narratives within European sports communication.

Target Audiences

This document is designed for communication staff of sports organisations, public institutions, and non-governmental organisations, as well as professionals working in sports journalism and media.

It serves as a reference framework for all actors contributing to public communication in sport.

Structure and Objectives

1

The first section introduces: The project, its main objectives and the main problem statement.

2

The second section outlines the **POWER Strategy**, which translates the project's research findings and insights from international guidelines into clear goals, key messages, and a strategic action plan to guide media stakeholders, sports organisations, and content creators at both EU and national levels.

3

The third section presents **the POWER Guidelines**, focusing on the 6 national context that the project analysed in details. These guidelines are specific, practical, evidence-based recommendations for fair and inclusive representation of women athletes. They provide clear, actionable guidance for journalists, journalism students, editors, content creators, and communication professionals—ensuring portrayals are free from bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, and are adapted to local media environments and cultural contexts.

This document represents the main output of the POWER project Work Package 3 and it provides a base for implementation of policy recommendations, training programmes, and awareness-raising campaigns to promote gender equity in sport and media throughout Europe.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE POWER PROJECT

Gender inequality continues to affect all levels of sport, manifesting in unequal pay, limited access to resources, underrepresentation in leadership roles, and persistent stereotypes. Despite major progress in participation and performance, women athletes still receive **less attention, visibility, and promotion** than men. When covered, they are often depicted through biased narratives focusing on their looks, emotions, or family roles rather than their sporting achievements. Women are also underrepresented as journalists, commentators, and editorial decision-makers. As UNESCO notes, even though access to sports broadcasting has increased, the actual presence of women in these roles remains disproportionately low across Europe.

“Media representation is therefore both a symptom and a driver of inequality”.



Biased coverage reinforces gender norms, while balanced storytelling can inspire new generations, combat discrimination, and build a more inclusive sporting culture. Although international organisations like the IOC, UN Women, and the Council of Europe have issued guidance on gender equality in sports media, their implementation remains inconsistent. Moreover, there is a lack of **harmonised and up-to-date data** on how female athletes are portrayed across EU countries—a gap POWER directly addresses.

By promoting fair representation, the project contributes to gender equality through:

- **Challenging stereotypes**, showing women’s athleticism, leadership, and competitiveness.
- **Providing role models**, enhancing visibility and inspiration for girls and young women.
- **Combating discrimination**, by ensuring fair and accurate portrayals.
- **Stimulating investment**, since balanced coverage drives sponsorship and audience interest.



MAIN OBJECTIVES

- 1 Analyse** how women athletes are portrayed in the media in each partner country.
- 2 Develop** a shared European strategy and “gender equality in sports media” guidelines for journalists and communication professionals.
- 3 Train** journalists, media practitioners, students, and sports communication staff to apply these guidelines among other core materials.
- 4 Raise awareness** about fair representation and challenge gender bias in sport and media.

Problem Statement: Gender Bias in Sports Media

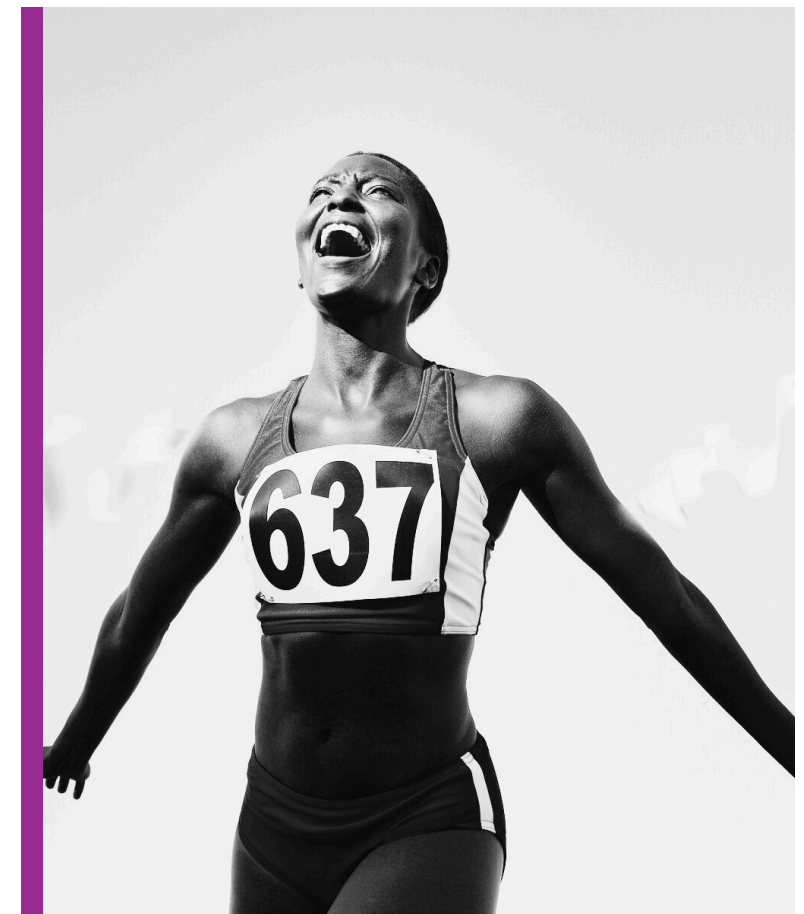
Media visibility is one of the most powerful indicators of social recognition. In sport, visibility determines who is celebrated, who is remembered, and who inspires the next generation. Yet, women athletes continue to occupy only a small fraction of sports news and airtime in Europe—often below 10% of total coverage. Even when present, **their representation tends to be framed through gendered lenses that highlight physical appearance, emotions, or personal life rather than skill, leadership, and professionalism.**

The research conducted within the POWER project demonstrates that this imbalance is not accidental but **structural**. Across all partner countries, **men’s sports dominate headlines and imagery**, while **women’s achievements are either marginalised or simplified**. The media also rarely shows women in positions of authority, such as coaches, referees, or decision-makers, perpetuating the perception of sport as a male domain.

Moreover, **digital and social media**—despite their potential for democratising visibility—often **replicate these same biases**. Some evidence suggests engagement metrics may favour men’s sport content, and **women athletes must rely heavily on self-promotion to gain attention**, increasing their workload and exposure to online harassment.

The consequences extend beyond the media sphere. Underrepresentation **limits women’s access to sponsorships, professional opportunities, and social influence**. It undermines their legitimacy as athletes and leaders, reduces the visibility of women’s sport at all levels, and reinforces stereotypes that discourage girls from pursuing athletic careers.

often below 10% of total coverage



Rationale for Strategy and Guidelines

The rationale for developing a Strategy and Guidelines for Fair Media Representation of Women Athletes emerges directly from these findings. POWER recognises that improving gender balance and unbiased representation in sports media requires more than awareness—it **demands systematic, structural change supported by data, practical tools, and institutional commitment.**

THE STRATEGY

The **Strategy** provides a coherent framework to guide media professionals, communication teams, bloggers, content creators and sports organisations toward sustainable equality-oriented practices. It is built on evidence gathered throughout comparative research across countries, it aims to empower journalists, editors, and communication professionals through training and help them to identify and challenge bias in their work. Furthermore, it encourages joint action between media, sports institutions, and policymakers to align communication standards with EU gender equality objectives.

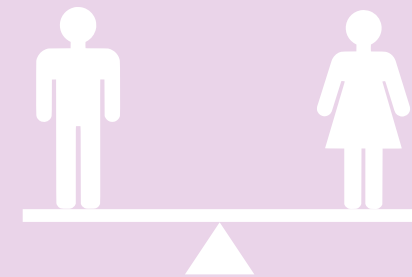


THE GUIDELINES

The **Guidelines** complement this strategic framework by offering practical, user-friendly tools to apply gender-sensitive approaches in daily communication by country. It guides readers through the national context by identifying the main gap, then gives hands on recommendations how to improve the situation in the concrete country.

Together, the Strategy and Guidelines aim to transform **visibility into equality**. They propose actionable pathways for journalists, students, editors, and organisations to:

- **Move from event-driven coverage to consistent and diverse representation of women athletes across disciplines and levels;**
- **Replace emotional or aesthetic framing with performance-based storytelling;**
- **Promote women's expertise and leadership roles in sport;**
- **Integrate gender equality objectives into communication policies, training curricula, and media evaluation systems; and.**
- **Strengthen cross-sector cooperation between sports bodies, media outlets, universities, and civil society**



Ultimately, the rationale behind the POWER Strategy and Guidelines is both strategic and transformative. By addressing the portrayal of women athletes, the project tackles one of the most visible symptoms of inequality—how women are seen—and, through that, contributes to changing how they are valued. The goal is not simply to increase the number of women featured in the media but to shift the narrative: from exception to norm, from stereotype to skill, and from tokenism to full equality in representation.

Main Lessons Learned and Gaps Identified

The POWER project's Work Package 2 (WP2) provided the analytical foundation for developing the project's strategy and guidelines. Through a combination of research, it examined how women athletes are represented across European media platforms.

Cross-Country Research and Shared Challenges

To assess the current landscape, partners conducted a national-level diagnosis across six countries. Across all these countries, the research revealed a shared imbalance: **there is limited coverage of women athletes compared to men counterparts.**

More specifically the analysis revealed these **structural and cultural patterns of inequality per country:**

Greece	Coverage focuses on women's personal traits; limited funding and sponsorship.
Spain	Underrepresentation persists despite sporting success; few women in leadership.
Bulgaria	Media attention limited to rhythmic gymnastics; low representation in governance.
Hungary	Recognition growing but structural inequalities in visibility remain.
Portugal	Rising participation but minimal and uneven media coverage.
Italy	Marginalisation in both traditional and digital media; few women in leadership or journalism.

Despite growing participation and visibility of women in sport, **media coverage remains highly unequal, fragmented, and stereotyped. Women athletes continue to appear less frequently, are described through narrower narratives, and are often portrayed through visuals that fail to convey professionalism, energy, or leadership.** Across all countries, gender-sensitive reporting practices depend largely on individual initiative rather than institutional policy, resulting in inconsistency and limited progress.

A cross-reading of the literature review, content analysis, and focus group discussions revealed that gender bias in sports media is structural rather than incidental. It manifests through recurring patterns of underrepresentation, lack of narrative diversity, visual imbalance, and institutional inertia. These trends are not isolated national issues—they reflect broader European-level challenges linked to how sports media value, plan, and narrate women's athletic achievements.

- Public interest in women's sport
- Recognition of women's achievements at elite levels
- Engagement through digital platforms.



At the same time, the research also highlighted promising developments: **growing public interest in women's sport, increasing recognition of women's achievements at elite levels, and stronger engagement through digital platforms.** However, these gains remain fragile without systematic editorial commitment, policy support, and professional capacity building.

Based on these insights, the POWER consortium **identified five key areas for improvement**, which together form the **backbone of the project's strategic recommendations.** Each area corresponds to a specific gap observed in the data and proposes pathways for structural change:

1	Visibility and consistency gap	the irregular and event-driven nature of women's sports coverage.
2	Narrative diversity gap	the limited storytelling that reduces women athletes to single-dimensional portrayals.
3	Structural imbalance gap	the disproportionate dominance of men's football overshadowing other disciplines.
4	Visual representation gap	the lack of dynamic, empowering imagery of women in sport.
5	Governance and accountability gap	the absence of institutional policies, monitoring tools, and accountability mechanisms to ensure gender equality in media coverage.

You can find the synthesis table of these five gaps together with the explanation in [Annex 1](#). Together, they outline the core lessons learned from the POWER research, offering a starting point for future action and policy alignment across the European sports media ecosystem.

II. POWER STRATEGY

The strategy translates research insights into **practical solutions** that can be applied by media professionals, students, communication teams in sports organisations, educators, and policymakers. It aims to move from analysis to implementation – offering inspiration, ideas and solutions for fostering **inclusive, fair, and gender- balanced media representation** of women in sport.

Through a coordinated, transnational approach, **the POWER Strategy seeks to transform how women athletes are portrayed, seen and valued.** By addressing the five key gaps identified in the research – visibility and consistency, narrative diversity, structural imbalance, visual representation, and governance and accountability – it provides a blueprint for long-term, sustainable change.

The strategy is organised into five interrelated parts:

1	Strategic Vision and Mission	defining the long-term aspiration and purpose guiding the strategy.
2	Overall Objective	outlining a general, yet specific goal for addressing the gaps, which can be applied to all media outlets independent of their sizes and nationalities.
3	Key Strategic Messages	summarising the central communication principles and awareness messages targeting different stakeholders.
4	Strategic Action Plan	from gaps to actions – this part details the goal for each gap identified with some specific recommended actions and examples of best practices for implementation.
5	Monitoring and Evaluation Approach	proposing mechanisms for tracking progress, assessing impact, and ensuring the strategy remains adaptive and effective.



Together, these components form a **comprehensive roadmap for action.** The POWER Strategy is not only a response to existing disparities in media representation but also a **forward-looking tool designed to inspire institutional change, enhance professional practice, and promote equality and diversity across all levels of the European sports media ecosystem, with long-term positive effects in all the aforementioned aspects.**

1. Strategic Vision and Mission of The Power Strategy

VISION



An inclusive European sports media landscape where women and men athletes receive equal visibility, recognition, and respect, and where media coverage reflects diversity, fairness, and professionalism without bias or stereotype.

MISSION



To transform sports media practices through evidence-based strategies, inclusive communication, and cross-sector collaboration – equipping journalists, editors, and sports organisations with the tools to ensure that the portrayal of women athletes is fair, balanced, and empowering across all media platforms.

2. Overarching Objective

The main objective of this document is set to reach the main vision and reach the mission just presented. It incorporates the POWER research findings and has considered other international studies. It is a single, overarching objective of the POWER Strategy.

OBJECTIVE

To embed gender equality and diversity into editorial policies and organisational structures through training in order to improve the portrayal of women in sports media.

- WHAT? ▶ Improving gender balance and visibility in sports media**

What is this objective about? → It is about embedding gender equality and inclusivity into every level of sports media practice – editorial choices, storytelling, visuals, and institutional policies – to ensure fair and continuous representation of women athletes.
- WHO? ▶ For you! For a sports media professional!**

Who is this objective for? → It applies to all actors in the sports media ecosystem – journalists, editors, photographers, content creators, broadcasters, and communication staff of sports organisations. It also addresses NGOs, federations, and policymakers who can support and monitor the change.
- WHY? ▶ To improve yourself as a media professional and develop your organisation!**

Why is this important? → Balanced representation strengthens journalistic integrity, supports audience diversity, boosts sponsorship and credibility, and aligns with EU values of equality and inclusion. It's not only fair – it's also good journalism and good business.
- HOW? ▶ By following the recommendations of the Action plan and Guidelines**

How can you achieve it? → By applying POWER's Action plan and guidelines: planning year-round coverage of women's sports, diversifying topics, adopting inclusive language and visuals, and introducing editorial gender balance targets and diversity strategy with internal monitoring.
- WHEN? ▶ You can already start today!**

When should these measures be implemented? → Immediately and progressively: start with quick wins (balanced coverage planning, inclusive language), then embed systemic measures (policies, audits, staff training) within one to three years.



TIP: Ask yourself these questions and see if you and your organisation need some improvement! If so, check the ACTION plan for further guidance!

GAP	ASK YOURSELF	Check	WHY DOES IT MATTER?
Visibility and consistency gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❓ Do we feature women's sports all year round, not just during major events? ❓ Are women's leagues and local competitions part of our regular content calendar? ❓ Do we plan interviews or features with women athletes outside of competition periods? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ ✅ ✅ 	Regular coverage builds loyal audiences, attracts new sponsorships, and enhances your outlet's reputation as a forward-thinking and inclusive media source. Consistency equals credibility – and commercial potential.
Narrative diversity gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❓ Are we showing women athletes as leaders, experts, or changemakers – not only as competitors? ❓ Do our stories focus on their skills, achievements, and experiences rather than looks or emotions? ❓ Do we include women's voices as commentators, analysts, or coaches? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ ✅ ✅ 	Diverse storytelling enriches your content, appeals to wider audiences, and positions your outlet as a source of fresh, authentic perspectives – not clichés. It also enhances engagement and reader trust.
Structural imbalance gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❓ Does men's football dominate our sports news and airtime? ❓ Are we giving equal space to diverse sports where women excel? ❓ Have we measured how much of our content is dedicated to women's competitions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ ✅ ✅ 	Diversifying sports coverage expands your audience base, strengthens your brand identity, and helps you tap into emerging markets and fan communities that are currently underserved.
Visual representation gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❓ Do our photos and videos show women athletes in action – powerful, dynamic, and professional? ❓ Are we avoiding objectifying or passive imagery? ❓ Do our visuals represent diversity in body types, age, and backgrounds? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ ✅ ✅ 	High-quality, empowering visuals boost professionalism and visual appeal. They also attract positive attention on social media, strengthen brand values, and demonstrate editorial integrity.
Governance and accountability gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❓ Do we follow clear principles or guidelines—personal or organisational—that ensure fair and balanced gender representation in all the sports content we produce or share? ❓ Do we track and monitor representation data? ❓ Have our teams received gender-sensitive reporting or visual storytelling training? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ ✅ ✅ 	Systematic equality practices protect your outlet's credibility, prevent reputational risk, and improve internal professionalism. Accountability makes fairness measurable – and sustainable.

3. Key Strategic Messages - Messaging Toolkit for Inclusive Sports

"Not sure how to talk about women in sport the right way? Here you'll find key messages and examples you can use in your campaigns, articles or posts – straight from the POWER research!"

1. Core Strategic Messages

Theme	Key Message / Slogan	Source / Reference
Visibility and Consistency	"Cover her season, not just her medal."	POWER WP2 Research; IOC Portrayal Guidelines for Gender Equality in Sport (2022)
Narrative Diversity	"Beyond the medal: tell the full story of women in sport."	UNESCO Gender Equality in Sports Media (2020); EBU Reimagining Sport (2021)
Structural Balance	"Equality in voice, diversity in story, power in fairness."	Council of Europe All In: Towards Gender Balance in Sport (2019)
Visual Representation	"Show her power, not her pose"	IOC Portrayal Guidelines; UN Women Unstereotype Alliance
Governance & Accountability	"Visibility builds equality - accountability sustains it."	POWER Research (WP2); EU Work Plan for Sport (2021-2024)

"Every story starts somewhere, often with YOU! Whether you are behind the camera, at the keyboard or in the boardroom, your choices decide WHO gets seen and HOW. Let's make those choices count!"

2. Key Messaging by Target Group

Target Group	Talking Point & Slogans	Supporting Sources
Journalists, students & Media Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Frame performance, not appearance." "Balanced coverage = better journalism." "Words matter – choose fairness." 	IOC Portrayal Guidelines (2022); UNESCO Gender Equality in Media (2019); POWER WP2
Bloggers & Content Creators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Your platform shapes sports culture." "Tell stories of strength, not stereotypes." "Inclusive content grows audiences." 	UN Women Media Compact on Gender Equality (2021); The Inclusion Playbook: Women's portrayals Media Guide (2023)
Communication Staff in Sports Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Your brand reflects your values – represent all athletes equally." "Visibility is part of your equality policy." "Promote women's sports all year round, not just on International Women's Day." 	EU High-Level Group on Gender Equality in Sport (2022); POWER Research
NGOs & Advocacy Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Visibility is power – support stories that reshape sport." "Equity in media strengthens equity in sport." "Partner with media to make change visible." 	Council of Europe All In (2019); UN Women Sport for Generation Equality (2021)



Inspiring Key Awareness & Campaign Phrases

- "Inclusive storytelling changes who leads tomorrow." – UNESCO Women in Sport Forum (2020)
- "More than sport: leadership, impact, identity." – Derived from POWER Focus Group findings
- "Equal airtime. Fair framing. Authentic voices." – Synthesised from EBU Pathways to Gender-Balanced Coverage (2021)



TIPS

- Language matters:** Avoid unnecessary gender qualifiers ("female referee") unless relevant.
- Show action:** Use dynamic, empowering images – avoid passive or sexualised poses.
- Diversify voices:** Include women as experts, commentators, and analysts.
- Tell broader stories:** Highlight leadership, social impact, and community engagement.
- Commit institutionally:** Integrate gender equality goals into editorial or communication policy.

4. Strategic Action Plan

POWER GAPS to ACTIONS

▶ **“Ready to turn ideas into action?”** This section shows how the POWER strategy can come to life – with concrete goals, proposed actions and real-life examples to help you close the five identified gaps in media representation.”

Indicators of Success / How to Measure Progress?

- ✔ quantifiable,
- ✔ applicable across contexts,
- ✔ aligned with the monitoring tools in Section 5.

Main gap	Explanation / implication	GOALS	Proposed actions	
 <p>Visibility and consistency</p>	<p>Media coverage of women athletes is irregular and event-driven, peaking during the Olympics or major tournaments, then disappearing for long periods. This prevents audiences from developing familiarity with athletes, teams, and storylines. It also reduces commercial visibility and sponsorship opportunities.</p>	<p>Strengthen the frequency and continuity of media coverage of women’s sports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote balanced media exposure. Editorial/media diversity targets. • Strengthen editorial planning and training to ensure continuous, year-round visibility of women’s sports. • Ensure regular visibility with a diversified agenda, including less publicised sports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Increase in number of published stories or broadcast segments about women’s sports (tracked quarterly). ✔ Audience engagement with women’s sports content (views, clicks, reach, comments). ✔ Inclusion of women’s sport coverage in weekly or monthly editorial schedules.
 <p>Narrative diversity</p>	<p>Media coverage of women athletes is often shaped by personal or emotional framing rather than their athletic skill and professionalism. Their broader roles as leaders, mentors, or changemakers are rarely highlighted, limiting public understanding of their full contribution to sport and society.</p>	<p>Broaden the portrayal of women athletes showcase their skills, leadership, and social impact through diverse, empowering stories and celebrate their full contribution to sport and society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose broader storytelling approaches to include leadership, social engagement, and personal development. Show them in action/leadership roles, focus on skill and achievement rather than aesthetics, femininity, or emotion. • Support training on gender-sensitive and inclusive reporting. • Highlight positive role models and diverse forms of success in sport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Proportion of content highlighting women athletes’ professional roles and achievements versus personal/lifestyle aspects (content coding). ✔ Number of in-depth or feature stories exploring leadership, activism, or community involvement. ✔ Use of balanced and empowering language verified through qualitative editorial review (e.g., “language audit” once per year). ✔ Increased recognition of women athletes’ contributions in headlines, captions, and story framing (measured through editorial review checklist).
 <p>Structural imbalance</p>	<p>The dominance of men’s football in newsrooms, broadcasting schedules, and sponsorship creates structural barriers to other sports’ visibility. This bias sidelines women’s sports and distorts public perception of athletic diversity. It also limits investment in alternative sports where women excel.</p>	<p>Encourage more equitable representation of women’s and less-publicised sports disciplines in media coverage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose more diverse media content to include a wider range of sports and competitions. • Strengthen institutional commitment to equal visibility across disciplines. • Promote public awareness on the value and competitiveness of women’s sports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ % of total sports content covering women’s or mixed-gender competitions beyond men’s football. ✔ Number of new or underrepresented sports disciplines featured in media content. ✔ Coverage diversity ✔ Number of media partnerships or collaborations established with women’s sports federations or associations.
 <p>Visual representation</p>	<p>Women athletes are underrepresented visually and often depicted in static, neutral, or passive ways. The lack of dynamic imagery contrasts with how male athletes are portrayed—in action, emotional, and powerful—thereby reinforcing unequal perceptions of energy, competitiveness, and value.</p>	<p>Ensure that images and videos of women athletes convey dynamism, professionalism, and diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visual representation by promoting dynamic, action-based images of women in sport. • Develop shared visual standards for equality and professionalism. Recommend non-sexualised, empowering imagery. • Encourage visual diversity in depicting roles, disciplines, and body types. Offers visual checklists or templates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ % of published or broadcast visuals depicting women in dynamic, active, and professional contexts (target ≥70%). ✔ Balance of gender representation in imagery (at least 40% women athletes in sports photo content). ✔ Proportion of visuals rated “green” in internal Visual Equality Audits (using traffic light system). ✔ Adoption of in-house visual guidelines and/or use of the “Visual Checklist for Equality” tool.
 <p>Governance and accountability</p>	<p>Most media outlets lack formal gender equality strategies, editorial policies, or monitoring mechanisms. Without institutional commitment or accountability tools, gender-sensitive reporting depends on individual effort rather than systemic practice. This perpetuates inconsistency and slow progress.</p>	<p>Integrate gender equality into media governance structures through policies, measurable targets, and monitoring systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish clear editorial guidelines and gender equality and diversity policies in sports media. Provide training modules on gender-sensitive language. Include more female journalists in media outlets. • Implement monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress and accountability. Establishes internal targets or KPIs. • Foster cooperation between media organisations, public institutions, and equality bodies. Encourage partnerships with federations and clubs to facilitate regular coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Existence of an internal gender equality or editorial diversity policy (Yes/No). ✔ Number or % of staff trained on gender-sensitive and inclusive reporting. ✔ Publication of annual or biannual equality progress reports or transparency statements. ✔ Representation of women in editorial, production, or leadership positions (increase from baseline). ✔ Regular use of the Editorial Gender Balance Scorecard or similar internal monitoring tool.



GOALS

HOW CAN WE REACH THEM?



*"See it in action!
Here's how the five gaps can be
addressed – with real-life examples,
tested ideas, and steps you can take in
your own media practice."*

GOAL 1: Strengthen the frequency and continuity of media coverage of women’s sports.

Addresses the visibility and continuity gap

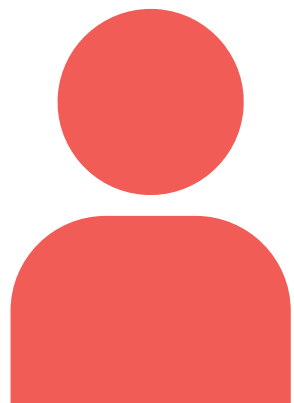


“Gender equality begins with the framing. Rewriting the narrative of women in the media is the most immediate contribution we can make to overcoming stereotypes, easing the media and social pressure that weighs especially on younger generations.”

Fiorenza Gherardi De Candei
Communication Manager and Press Officer, freelance

? Why this matters?

Consistent and visible coverage is key to normalising women’s presence in sport. When women’s competitions receive sustained attention beyond major events, audiences develop long-term engagement and recognition, helping to close the visibility gap.



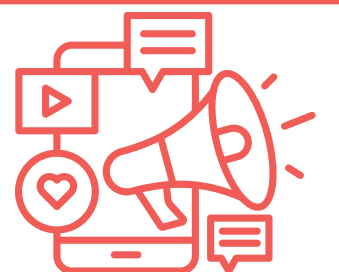
“Visibility doesn’t happen by chance... Across the world, media organisations are proving that consistent, high-quality coverage isn’t just possible, it’s the future! So, make sure you don’t get left behind, here’s some inspiring examples and how YOU can apply them!”

How to Address It: Inspiring Examples and Best Practices

Example / Source	What it shows	Practical Recommendations for Media Outlets
<p>IOC Portrayal Guidelines “Ensure Balanced and Continuous Coverage” (2024, p.17) Read here</p>	<p>Highlights the importance of regular and integrated coverage of women’s sport, rather than occasional reporting tied to major events. Encourages embedding women’s competitions into regular broadcast and publication schedules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate women’s sports into routine programming and sports pages, not as isolated or “special” features. Ensure equal space in results, previews, and match reports.
<p>IOC Portrayal Guidelines “Promote Women’s Sport Year-Round” (2024, p.17) Read here</p>	<p>Recommends proactive promotion of women’s events before, during, and after competitions to build audience familiarity and sustained engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop editorial calendars that include pre-event previews, live updates, and post-event follow-ups for women’s competitions to create narrative continuity.
<p>BBC Sport Case Study BBC #ChangeTheGame Campaign “Women’s Sport Trust” (2021, p.28) Read here</p>	<p>The BBC’s 2019 #ChangeTheGame campaign marked its biggest commitment to women’s sport, delivering year-round, cross-platform coverage of major events like the FIFA Women’s World Cup and Netball World Cup. The initiative significantly boosted audience engagement, attracted younger viewers, and improved the BBC’s association with women’s sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign dedicated editorial roles or champions for women’s sports. Ensure cross-platform promotion and equal visibility across website sections and social media feeds. Create integrated, multi-platform campaigns promoting women’s sport before, during, and after major events.
<p>The Telegraph Case Study “Women’s Sport Trust” (2021, p.27) Read here</p>	<p>The Telegraph (UK) integrated women’s sports into its year-round editorial planning through dedicated sections, daily coverage, and enhanced digital storytelling. Demonstrates how sustained visibility can be achieved when women’s sport becomes part of everyday editorial routines rather than special-event content. The case proves that consistent coverage builds audience interest, credibility, and commercial value over time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a permanent women’s sport section; employ specialised editors/reporters; Adopt a multi-platform plan (newsroom, print, podcast, social media). Track performance analytics to demonstrate audience growth.

Checklist - Quick reflection before publishing

- Do we provide previews, coverage, and follow-ups for women’s events to maintain visibility over time?
- Are women’s sports given equal prominence on our homepage, headlines, or broadcast line-up?
- Do we use social media consistently to promote women’s sports stories before and after competitions?
- Do we track and review the ratio of women’s to men’s sports coverage throughout the year?



GOAL 2: Broaden the portrayal of women athletes in sports media by showcasing their skills, leadership, and social impact through diverse, empowering stories and celebrate their full contribution to sport and society

Addresses the narrative diversity gap



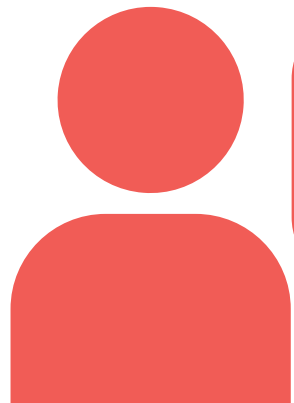
"We are more than moments of victory – we are leaders and teammates, driven by honest ambitions & striving for the best outcome."

Denia Kopita
Footballer & Skater



Why this matters?

How women are represented shapes public perception. By highlighting athletic skill, leadership, and social impact—not just personal lives or appearances—media can challenge stereotypes and present women athletes as full, multidimensional professionals.



"Wondering what this looks like in action? See how others are reshaping the story and leading the way!"

How to Address It: Inspiring Examples and Best Practices

Example / Source	What it shows	Practical Recommendations for Media Outlets
<p>Naomi Osaka essay in TIME</p> <p>"(2021)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>A first-person narrative that highlights Osaka's identity, activism, and mental health advocacy, not just athletic results. It humanises her as a multidimensional figure and it shows how giving athletes their own voice fosters empathy, authenticity, and public connection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage feature stories or interviews where women athletes share their voices directly. • Prioritise depth and self-representation over surface narratives. • Highlight social impact and human stories behind sporting success.
<p>IOC Portrayal Guidelines</p> <p>"Showcase Leadership and Character" (2024, p.18)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Recommends focusing on athletes' character, professionalism, and leadership to balance public perception. Emphasises avoiding questions or framing that reinforce domestic or gender stereotypes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate narrative diversity into editorial policy and training. • Review interview practices to avoid personal or family-focused questions. • Profile women athletes as leaders, innovators, and mentors.
<p>Nobody's Property</p> <p>"Teika Esport Femení Manual" (2023, p.26)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Illustrates how language can subtly undermine autonomy by defining female athletes in relation to men (e.g., "the wife of," "the daughter of"). Advocates for portraying women as independent professionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present women athletes as independent subjects of their stories. • Conduct periodic language audits to detect relational or diminishing expressions. • Include gender-aware language training for journalists.

Checklist - Quick reflection before publishing

- Does this story highlight the athlete's skill, professionalism, or leadership?
- Does it avoid stereotypes related to appearance, family, or emotions?
- Does it give voice and agency to the athlete?
- Does it contribute to a diverse and authentic image of women in sport?



GOAL 3: Encourage more equitable representation of women’s and less-publicised sports disciplines in media coverage

Addresses the structural imbalance gap

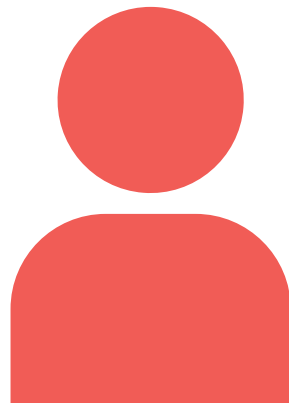


“Equality in sport begins when every discipline – and every athlete – has the chance to be seen, valued, and celebrated.”

Petra Schmitt
General Secretary,
Hungarian Tennis Federation

? Why this matters?

Men’s football dominates sports media, leaving limited room for other sports and female athletes to gain attention. Diversifying content strengthens equality, attracts new audiences, and showcases the full spectrum of athletic excellence.



“Quick reminder: men’s football is great, but it’s not the only game in town! Let’s share the spotlight and give opportunities to every sport! Here’s how change is already happening and how you can be a part of it!”

How to Address It: Inspiring Examples and Best Practices

Example / Source	What it shows	Practical Recommendations for Media Outlets
<p>Style Guide</p> <p>“Teika Esport Femení Manual” (2023, pp.39-42)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Provides guidelines for balanced media treatment of women’s sport, calling for equity in how often different disciplines are covered and how editorial focus is distributed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Style Guide as a reference to define which disciplines are under-represented in your coverage. • Set internal targets for the number of stories per sport outside football.
<p>IOC Portrayal Guidelines</p> <p>(2024, p.22)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Shows how sports organisations can support balanced coverage by ensuring that competition schedules, broadcast timings, and rights-holder agreements allow women’s and men’s events to receive equitable exposure. It highlights that equal sequencing and timing of events makes media planning fairer and more cost-efficient for outlets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate with rights owners and federations to schedule women’s events in favourable time-slots. • Push for gender-balanced event scheduling when covering tournaments. • Ensure editorial planning is informed by “fair timing” so women.
<p>UK Government</p> <p>(2015, pp.7-8)</p> <p>Women’s Sport Week</p> <p>Initiative, in “Women and Sport: Government Strategy”</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>A national campaign designed to boost visibility of women’s sport across multiple media outlets. Encouraged broadcasters, newspapers, and digital platforms to dedicate coverage to women’s sport during one week each year—creating momentum and lasting visibility beyond the campaign period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch annual themed media initiatives like – “Women’s Sport Week” in collaboration with federations and broadcasters. • Build cross-sector partnerships to sustain momentum throughout the year.

Checklist - Quick reflection before publishing

- Does our coverage reflect the diversity of women’s sports beyond football or other dominant disciplines?
- Do we give equal visibility to women’s competitions across different sports and levels (elite, national, local)?
- Are we offering balanced scheduling and prominence to women’s events in our headlines, broadcasts, or online pages?
- Does our storytelling help audiences discover new sports and athletes, broadening the overall image of women in sport?



GOAL 4: Ensure that images and videos of women athletes convey dynamism, professionalism, and diversity

Addresses the visual representation gap



"Every image can empower or diminish. Show women in motion – strong, focused, and free. That's where equality begins to look real."

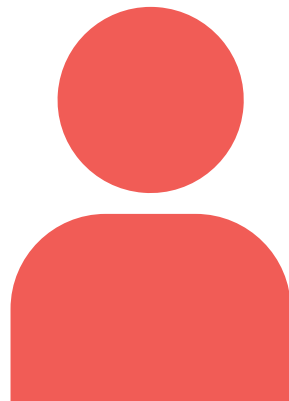
Leila Marques

Woman, Mom, M.D, GP & Family Medicine, IOC Diploma Sport Medicine Phy., 4 x Paralympic Swimmer, Multiple World Medallist, Vice-president Paralympic Committee Portugal, Vice-president International Paralympic Committee, Coordinator Working Group Gender Equality in Sport Portugal.)



Why this matters?

Images influence how audiences value athletes. Dynamic, action-oriented, and diverse visuals help portray women as powerful and professional, countering stereotypes that still persist in sports imagery.



"If an image is worth a thousand words, let's make sure ours tells the right story! See how others are redefining what powerful imagery looks like!"

How to Address It: Inspiring Examples and Best Practices

Example / Source	What it shows	Practical Recommendations for Media Outlets
<p>IOC Portrayal Guidelines – Imagery (2024 p.14)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Provides practical visual communication principles to portray women athletes with dynamism, professionalism, and respect. Encourages use of active imagery, balanced camera angles, and equal treatment across genders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt the IOC’s portrayal checklist to ensure women athletes are depicted as powerful, skilled, and diverse. • Train visual teams on equitable visual framing.
<p>Sport England – “This Girl Can” Campaign Interim Report (2014, p.21)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>A landmark campaign that redefined visual storytelling in sport by using real women rather than professional athletes or models. It challenges stereotypes about body image, confidence, and participation. Since its launch in 2015, the campaign has reached millions, with over 7 million YouTube views and strong evidence of behavioural impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use authentic, inclusive imagery that reflects real women’s experiences and confidence in sport. • Celebrate strength, diversity, and joy rather than perfection or aesthetics.
<p>Getty Images & Women’s Sport Trust Partnership (2021)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Partnership aimed at reshaping the commercial and editorial portrayal of women in sport, ensuring representation beyond stereotypes. Promotes dynamic, stereotype-free photo collections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with image providers and media partners to build diverse, stereotype-free photo libraries. • Set internal standards for non-sexualised, empowering imagery.

Checklist - Quick reflection before publishing

- Does this image capture action, skill, and intensity rather than still poses?
- Are women athletes framed with the same professionalism and energy as male athletes?
- Do our visuals represent different body types, ethnicities, and sporting disciplines?
- Have we avoided objectifying angles or unnecessary focus on appearance?



GOAL 5: Integrate gender equality into media governance structures through policies, measurable targets, and monitoring systems

Addresses the governance and accountability gap



“Change starts when inclusion becomes a policy, not a promise. Equality in media coverage should be measured, monitored, and made visible.”

Pepa Muñoz Quintana
presidenta de la Federació ACELL-Special Olympics

? Why this matters?

Lasting change requires structure. Clear internal policies, guidelines, and monitoring tools ensure that gender equality becomes part of everyday media practice—not a one-time initiative.



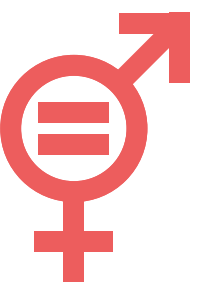
“Leaders, this one’s for you! Equality isn’t just a slogan or a trend, it’s a system you can build. Don’t be the last to act, here’s how others are already one step ahead!”

How to Address It: Inspiring Examples and Best Practices

Example / Source	What it shows	Practical Recommendations for Media Outlets
<p>UNESCO</p> <p>“Media and Gender Study” in Sport and Gender Equality Game Plan: Guidelines for Gender-Transformative Sport Policies and Programmes (2023, p.42)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Presents a best-practice case study from New Zealand (2019–present) illustrating a national effort to increase visibility of women in sports media. The initiative publishes annual reports, infographics, and case studies analysing women’s representation in media. Coverage of women’s sport has increased from 15% in 2020 to 27% in 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish regular monitoring and reporting systems on gender balance in sports media. Publish annual visibility reports and use data-driven storytelling to raise accountability among broadcasters and publishers. See Sport NZ Media Analysis for methodology and resources.
<p>UN Women</p> <p>Toolkit for a Sports Ecosystem with a Gender Perspective – Case Study: Women in News and Sport (WINS) Programme (2025, p.31)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Presents the Women in News and Sport (WINS) initiative, which supports women journalists and media professionals to strengthen gender equality in sports coverage. The Programme offers leadership training, mentorship, and professional development across Asia and the Pacific. It strengthens institutional capacity for gender-sensitive coverage and builds inclusive newsroom cultures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate capacity-building programmes and gender-sensitive leadership development within media organisations. Partner with initiatives like WINS to develop inclusive leadership pipelines and establish clear equality goals in editorial policies.
<p>UK Government</p> <p>Women in Sport Advisory Board Report (2015, p.22)</p> <p>Read here</p>	<p>Highlights the importance of cross-sector collaboration among different stakeholders: government departments, broadcasters, sports federations, and sponsors to improve the visibility and governance of women’s sport. The report identifies shared responsibility and coordinated communication as key to achieving cultural and structural change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage partnerships between media organisations, public institutions, and sport’s governing bodies to coordinate awareness campaigns and align gender equality goals. Establish regular multi-stakeholder forums or working groups to ensure consistent progress and accountability.

Checklist - Quick reflection before publishing

- Do we have written editorial policies promoting gender equality and inclusive representation?
- Is there a clear person or team responsible for monitoring gender balance in content and staffing?
- Are we collecting and reviewing gender-disaggregated data on coverage, authorship, and visibility?
- Are progress and results publicly communicated to ensure transparency and accountability?



"Fuel your ideas!

Fresh, inspiring media cases that put women's sports front with a hint of creativity."

Get Inspired! GOOD PRACTICES from all around the media world!

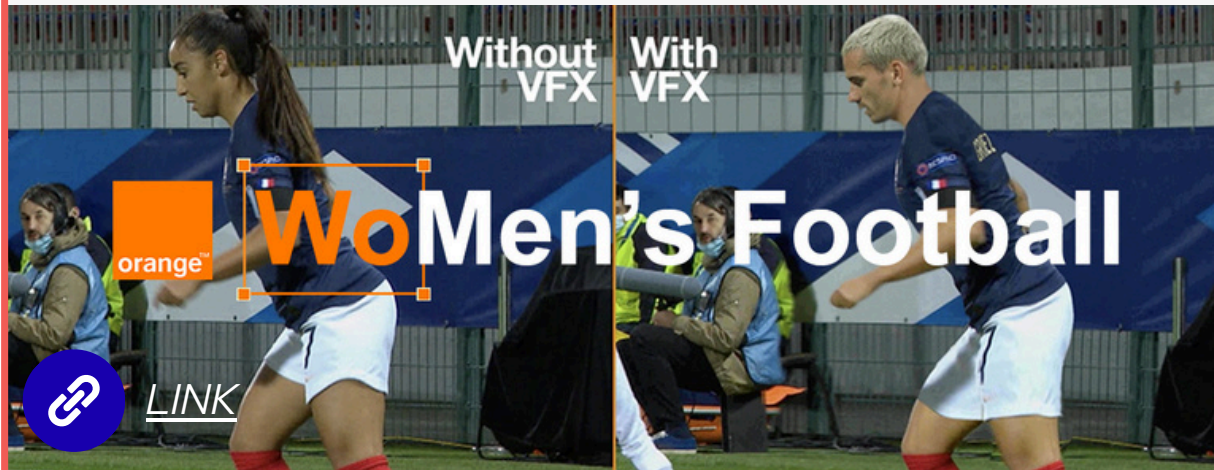


CASE 1

Year 2023

Orange - WoMen's Football / The Bleues' Highlights

France women's football team World Cup 2023 ad



CASE 2

Year 2024

Get Behind The Fight for Ladies Gaelic Football

Lidl Ireland



CASE 3

Year 2024

Everybody watches Women's Sport campaign



CASE 4

Year 2023

LUX: Change The Angle

Hey Camera



CASE 5

Year 2023

The Matildas Effect

FIFA Women's World Cup 2023



CASE 6

Year 2024

Simone Biles

I chose 'boundaries' over burnout and made Olympic history



5. Monitoring and evaluation approach

GENERAL OVERVIEW

TOOL

SELF-ASSESSMENT Checklist

- Where are we at the moment?
- What are the most critical areas where we have to improve?

“Think of this as your progress check!

Use these tools to measure how well you’re closing the gaps – and to keep improving step by step, whatever your role, your size or your platform. You can print out these checklist and tools to work together with your communication team in improving your communications on women’s sport.”

TIP

To ensure the effective implementation of the POWER Strategy, a flexible and practical monitoring framework has been designed. Each gap can be monitored **using different tools or evidence sources** – combining **quantitative, qualitative, and participatory methods**, while staying realistic and lightweight (so even small outlets or independent creators can use it). It provides media outlets, communication departments, and content creators with tools to self-assess their progress in promoting gender equality and balanced representation of women athletes.

Provides practical visual communication principles to portray women athletes with dynamism, professionalism, and respect. Encourages use of active imagery, balanced camera angles, and equal treatment across genders.

- ▶ **Purpose:** To help editors, journalists, and communication professionals evaluate how consistently and fairly women’s sports are represented in their coverage – and to identify areas for improvement.
- ▶ **Instructions:** For each statement, rate your current practice from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always).

Discuss results as a team and identify 2–3 priority actions for improvement.



1 Editorial Planning and Frequency

We regularly feature women athletes and teams in our sports coverage, not only during major events.
 Our editorial calendar includes women’s competitions and leagues year-round.
 We review gender balance in coverage during editorial meetings.
 We give equal prominence to women’s and men’s sports headlines and placement.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 Content Diversity and Story Angles

We publish stories about women athletes that go beyond results (e.g., leadership, coaching, activism).
 We quote or feature women experts, coaches, and analysts in our stories.
 We regularly cover less-publicised women’s sports and local competitions.
 We give equal space and depth to interviews and profiles of female and male athletes.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Institutional Practices and Monitoring

We track and report the gender ratio of sports coverage at least quarterly.
 Our organisation has editorial guidelines for gender balance and inclusive representation.
 We partner with federations, clubs, or NGOs to access women’s sports content.
 There is an internal contact point or diversity officer for media equality.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 Visual and Digital Representation

We use dynamic, action-based photos of women athletes, not only posed portraits.
 Every story about women athletes includes at least one relevant image or video.
 Our social media teams ensure gender-balanced posts and visibility.
 Captions and headlines use neutral, non-stereotypical language.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5 Audience and Impact

We analyse audience engagement data by gender of featured athletes.
 We gather audience feedback on our coverage of women’s sports.
 We promote sponsors or partners supporting women’s sports coverage.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection & Action

Score interpretation:

- 1–2: Critical gap – immediate improvement needed
- 3: Partial integration – develop structured measures
- 4–5: Strong practice – maintain and share as best practice

Next steps

- Identify 2–3 low-scoring areas
- Assign internal responsibility (editorial / digital / HR)
- Set quarterly review targets



1. VISIBILITY AND CONSISTENCY GAP

"Time for a reality check – how visible are women's sports in your outlet, really?" This self-assessment helps you turn good intentions into consistent action."

TOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT Checklist (Quarterly or Biannual Review)

Indicator	Guiding Question	Evidence / How to Check	Scoring (1-5)
Frequency of Coverage	How often do we publish or broadcast content on women's sports compared to men's sports?	Review publication/broadcast data for the last 3-6 months.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Continuity	Is coverage maintained year-round or only during major events (e.g. Olympics, World Cup)?	Analyse content calendar or editorial logs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Editorial Planning	Do we include women's sports in our regular editorial meetings, schedules, or content plans?	Check planning documents or meeting notes.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Visibility	Are women's sports stories given similar visibility (homepage, headlines, social media placement) as men's?	Review homepages, social posts, front pages, and headlines.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
Diversity of Sports	Are we featuring a range of women's sports, not only the most popular ones (e.g. football, gymnastics)?	Count how many different sports are represented in coverage.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5

SCORING GUIDE

1

Rarely / Never

3

Sometimes

5

Consistently / Fully Integrated



Suggested Follow-Up Action

If your average score is below 3, consider:



- Introducing a dedicated editorial calendar for women's sports.
- Setting internal visibility targets (e.g. "at least 40% of sports coverage should include women athletes")
- Sharing success stories with audiences to demonstrate ongoing commitment.



2. NARRATIVE DIVERSITY GAP

"Check your lenses! Let's uncover where your narratives narrow—and how to widen them with smarter story framing."

TOOL STORY FRAMING REFLECTION EXERCISE Mini Editorial Workshop

Format: 1-hour team workshop or individual reflection every 6 months.

How it works:

1 Select **10 recent stories or posts** featuring women athletes.

2 For each, categorise the dominant angle:

- Performance/Skill
- Leadership/Voice
- Social Impact/Activism
- Personal/Emotional

3 Discuss patterns: Are most stories about appearance, emotion, or personal life?

4 Identify 2-3 ways to rebalance future coverage (e.g., interview athletes about leadership, community roles).

Indicator: % of stories framed around skill/performance or leadership (target: +25% after 1 year).

Outcome: Improved editorial awareness of framing patterns and opportunities to tell more empowering stories.

Optional tool: Use a **free word cloud generator** (like WordArt.com) to visualise most-used words in your coverage – helps see if themes like "beauty," "mother," "victory," or "captain" dominate.



3. STRUCTURAL IMBALANCE GAP

"Spotlight check! How much of your coverage is just men's football? Let's find the gaps and start diversifying what audiences see."

TOOL	CONTENT MAPPING & DIVERSITY DASHBOARD			
Sport Type / Category	Men's Coverage (%)	Women's Coverage (%)	Mixed / Joint Coverage (%)	Planned Actions for Improvement
Football				
Athletics				
Basketball				
Swimming				
Handball				
Volleyball				
Other Sports				

Suggested monitoring steps:

- Conduct a **quarterly review** of coverage distribution by gender and sport.
- Make a visual chart of the outcomes so that it is clearly visible and comparable.
- You can include **digital and social media** metrics (e.g., posts, impressions, engagement).
- Compare results over time to track progress toward balanced representation quarterly with your team.



4. VISUAL REPRESENTATION GAP

"Remember what they say? A picture is worth a thousand words... What story do you want yours to tell?"

Purpose: Evaluate whether visual portrayals of women athletes are dynamic, empowering, and inclusive.

Suggested monitoring steps:

- Conduct a biannual visual audit of media content using this checklist.
- Use a simple "traffic light" system
 - green = balanced
 - yellow = needs improvement
 - red = problematic
- You can involve an external reviewer or gender consultant at least once a year.

TOOL	VISUAL CONTENT QUALITY REVIEW	
Criteria / Indicator	Observation	Action Needed
Are women shown in active, competitive, or leadership contexts?		
Are visuals respectful and free from sexualisation or objectification?		
Are facial expressions and body language aligned with athletic strength, focus, or determination?		
Do images portray diversity in body type, ethnicity, age, and ability?		
Are photos balanced in quality and prominence compared with men's sports?		
Are there enough dynamic in-action shots rather than passive or posed images?		
Is the visual tone consistent with equality-oriented communication principles?		
Are visuals compliant with ethical and consent standards for photography?		



5. GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

Purpose: Evaluate whether visual portrayals of women athletes are dynamic, empowering, and inclusive.

“Check the system! Equality needs tracking, not talk. Check how your policies, teams, and accountability systems measure up!”

TOOL	GENDER EQUALITY AND EDITORIAL ACCOUNTABILITY TRACKER		
Indicator Area	Monitoring Question	Status (Yes / No / In Progress)	Follow-up / Next Steps
Editorial Policies	Does the organisation have a gender equality or inclusive representation policy?		
Gender-Sensitive Guidelines	Are there internal guidelines or editorial standards promoting equal portrayal of women and men?		
Leadership & Staffing	What percentage of women hold editorial or management positions?		
Training & Capacity Building	Are staff regularly trained on gender-sensitive reporting and inclusive communication?		
Monitoring & Evaluation	Is there a regular internal or external audit on gender representation in content?		
Partnerships	Does the organisation cooperate with NGOs, equality bodies, or academic partners?		
Transparency & Reporting	Are progress results published or shared publicly (e.g., annual report)?		

Suggested monitoring steps:

- Conduct an annual institutional self-assessment and share findings internally.
- Use a weighted scoring system to track improvement over time (e.g., 1 = no action, 3 = partially implemented, 5 = fully implemented).
- Link results to editorial performance indicators or internal recognition systems.




“Sport is so powerful: it unites, includes, and gives meaning. Our responsibility is to make sure this power reaches every girl, with equal chances and fair visibility. When this happens, girls and women begin to believe in their place in sport and in the future they can build.”

Joanna Dochevska

Chairperson of Bulgarian Sports Development Association

III. GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION



The following section presents the practical **POWER Guidelines** for the fair and balanced portrayal of women athletes in sports media. These Guidelines translate the project's research findings and strategic priorities into clear, actionable recommendations that media professionals, content creators, and sports organisations can apply in their daily work.

Each country section follows a common structure, including: (1) key national findings and the principal gap identified through WP2 research, (2) tailored DOs and DON'Ts to support fair representation, and (3) a concrete good practice example with practical takeaways. In the English version, all six national guideline sections are included for cross-country learning. In the translated national versions, only the country-specific guidelines are presented, ensuring relevance and usability for local media contexts.

Media outlets, journalists, and content creators in each country are encouraged to use these Guidelines as a practical working tool. They can be applied flexibly to support editorial planning, story development, visual selection, and internal discussions on gender equality in sport. Whether used for self-reflection, team training, or newsroom policy development, the Guidelines are designed to help organisations identify gaps, improve daily practices, and make measurable progress towards fairer and more inclusive sports coverage.



A shared commitment to gender equality in sport

Sport reflects the values of our society, and achieving gender equality within it requires a shared and active commitment from all. While important progress has been made, ensuring fair and balanced representation of women athletes—particularly in the media—remains a collective responsibility that calls for continued action.

***In this process, the role of men is essential.** As leaders, decision-makers, and communicators within the sports ecosystem, **men have a responsibility to actively support gender equality, challenge existing biases, and promote more inclusive narratives.** Real and lasting change can only happen when this commitment is shared and embraced across the entire sector.*

The POWER project is a strong example of how collaboration can drive this change. Through the joint efforts of a dedicated European consortium, partners have worked together—combining research, expertise, and diverse national perspectives—to develop a Strategy and Guidelines that respond to real challenges and aim to transform how women athletes are portrayed in sports media.

For UFEC, it has been both a great honour and a privilege to lead this collective process. Working alongside such committed partners has reinforced the importance of cooperation in achieving meaningful and lasting impact. The POWER Strategy and Guidelines stand as a shared European commitment to building a more inclusive, balanced, and representative sporting narrative for future generations.



Gerard Esteva

*President of the Union of Catalan Sports Federations (UFEC),
President of Confederation of Unions of Spanish Autonomous Sports Federations (CUFADE)*

SPAIN

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

Spain is one of Europe's strongest countries for women's elite sport, with major international successes in football, basketball, water polo, and individual disciplines.

Public interest rises sharply during major tournaments, and national victories generate high media attention. However, the WP2 research shows that this visibility is still uneven, short-lived, and framed through persistent gender bias.

1. High visibility during major tournaments, especially in football, but sharp decline outside elite events.
2. Stereotyped storytelling still common, with frequent focus on emotions, appearance, or personal life instead of performance and expertise.
3. Low presence of women as commentators, experts, and decision-makers in sports media.

⚙️ MAIN GAP

Narrative Diversity Gap



Women often framed superficially, not as experts or leaders.

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- Provide **year-round coverage** of women's sports, not only during major tournaments.
- Focus on **performance, tactics, and achievements** in storytelling.
- Present women athletes as **leaders, captains, and experts**.
- Include **women as commentators and analysts** in sports programmes.
- **Use dynamic, action-based images** that show strength and competition.

✗ DON'T

- Don't limit coverage to **Olympics, World Cups, or finals only**.
- Don't describe success as **"surprising"** because the athlete is a woman.
- Don't prioritise **appearance, emotions, or private life** over sport.
- Don't define women **in relation to men** (partner, daughter, etc.).
- Don't exclude women from **expert debates and tactical analysis**.

SPAIN



GOOD PRACTICE

CSD Guidelines for the Media - Informative Representation of Women in Sport (Guía para los Medios de Comunicación: Representación Informativa de las Mujeres en el Deporte) - (Spain, Consejo Superior de Deportes (CSD), Government of Spain).



[Link](#)

Good practice inspiration

"Need ideas? This example shows what's already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality."

Why it matters for Spain?

- Provides an **official national reference** for correcting biased narratives in sports coverage.
- Helps media professionals identify and replace **common stereotypes** affecting Spanish women athletes.
- Encourages a shift from emotional or superficial storylines toward **performance-based, leadership-focused reporting**.
- Supports journalists with concrete linguistic and visual guidelines adapted to the Spanish media context.



The Spanish High Council for Sport (CSD) developed a national guideline for journalists and media outlets to promote fair, accurate, and non-stereotyped coverage of women in sport. The guide offers practical language recommendations, visual communication principles, and examples of biased vs. appropriate reporting. It directly addresses narrative stereotypes by encouraging journalists to focus on performance, leadership, and expertise, and to avoid relational or appearance-based framing.

Practical takeaway

- Use the CSD guideline as an editorial benchmark for headlines, interviews, and imagery.
- Incorporate its checklist into newsroom workflows to avoid stereotypes and ensure performance-centred framing.
- Train journalists and commentators using the guide's examples of biased vs. balanced reporting.

HUNGARY

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

WP2 research highlights that Hungary shows growing acknowledgement of successful female athletes, especially during major international competitions. However, structural inequalities persist: women's sports receive limited airtime and coverage outside elite events. Editorial decision-making remains male-dominated, and sponsorship disparities continue to affect visibility. Media narratives tend to highlight emotional, personal, or appearance-based aspects rather than consistently focusing on athletic performance and expertise.

- Women athletes gain visibility mainly when they achieve international success, but routine coverage remains limited.
- Leadership and editorial positions remain male-dominated.
- Funding and visibility inequalities persist across sports.

✚ MAIN GAP

Narrative Diversity Gap



Coverage does not consistently present women athletes as skilled professionals and leaders.

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- **Use performance-focused and skill-based language** in headlines, captions, and leads – emphasise athletic expertise, results, strategy, and teamwork over personal background.
- **Include women athletes in regular coverage**, not only during major international competitions (e.g., Olympics) – build visibility through continuous storytelling, even between events.
- **Highlight leadership, resilience, and tactical intelligence** as defining traits – showcase women as role models, captains, and mentors.
- **Diversify visual framing** – use images that depict active participation, effort, celebration, and team dynamics; prioritise athletic contexts over posed or passive visuals.
- **Seek women's perspectives** – quote female athletes, coaches, and professionals directly; let them speak on their training, goals, and experiences.

✗ DON'T

- **Don't describe women athletes in relation to men** – avoid phrases like "the wife of," "daughter of," or "female version of" a male athlete.
- **Don't focus on appearance, attire, or emotions** unless directly relevant to performance – avoid objectifying or sensational framing.
- **Don't use diminutives or infantilising language** – avoid terms like "girls" for adult athletes or patronising praise (e.g., "surprisingly strong").
- **Don't restrict coverage to emotional or human-interest angles** – ensure that journalistic value also lies in technical achievement and sporting relevance.
- **Don't frame success as exceptional just because the athlete is a woman** – present victories as results of training, discipline, and talent, not anomalies.

HUNGARY



GOOD PRACTICE

“Női sportvezetők reggelije” (Breakfast of Female Sports Leaders)

A notable and inspiring initiative in Hungary that exemplifies a structural commitment to gender equity in sport leadership is the “Női sportvezetők reggelije” (Breakfast of Female Sports Leaders), organised by the **Equity Committee of the Hungarian Olympic Committee (MOB Esélyegyenlőségi Bizottsága)**.

This event brought together female leaders from across Hungary’s sport ecosystem – including representatives from national sports federations and other key organisations – to share experiences, insights, and challenges related to women’s leadership in sport. The initiative was explicitly designed to build community, foster mutual support, and create sustained momentum for promoting women into leadership roles within Hungarian sport.

The breakfast served as more than a networking opportunity; it was a first step in building a more structured platform for ongoing professional exchange among women in sport governance. Participants engaged in roundtable discussions that highlighted both common hurdles and practical strategies for success, emphasising that invitations were based on **professional achievement and leadership competence**, not tokenism. The presence and opening remarks of senior sport leaders also reinforced the importance of women’s representation at all levels of sport administration.

Building on this positive experience, the Equity Committee has proposed the development of future workshops that would extend the reach and impact of this initiative. These workshops are envisioned to feature targeted professional development – for example, on negotiation, protocol, and leadership skills – for both women and men engaged in sport leadership roles. Such planned expansions reflect a commitment to institutionalising support mechanisms for women leaders in sport, leveraging the momentum created by the breakfast event to drive sustained capacity-building.

Good practice inspiration

“Need ideas? This example shows what’s already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality.”



Practical takeaway

- A. Create regular, structured networking opportunities that bring women sport leaders together: it can strengthen peer support, facilitate mentorship, and build a community.
- B. Focus on professional advancement and skill building: workshops with practical themes can empower women with tools that support career progression and influence in decision-making.
- C. Involve senior leadership in visibility and endorsement: it signals organisational commitment and highlight gender equity as a strategic priority.
- D. Document and share learnings publicly: reporting on outcomes and insights from such events helps reinforce accountability and motivates other organisations to adopt similar measures.



Link: [Magyar Olimpiai Bizottság](#)

GREECE NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

The POWER research shows that in Greece, women athletes receive low visibility in sports media, with coverage strongly concentrated around major international events. Everyday reporting remains dominated by men's sports. When women are covered, media narratives often focus on personal traits, emotions, and appearance, overshadowing athletic performance. Structural inequality persists, with very few women in coaching, leadership, or media decision-making roles, and women's sports receive disproportionately limited funding and sponsorship.

- Media visibility of women athletes is low and highly event-driven, peaking around major championships but disappearing during regular seasons.
- Coverage often highlights personal traits, emotions, or private life, overshadowing athletic performance.
- Visual representation is limited and often static rather than dynamic.

⚙️ MAIN GAP

Narrative Diversity Gap



Women athletes are frequently portrayed through personal or gendered narratives rather than their professional achievements.

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- Emphasise **athletic performance, skill, strategy, and results** in reporting, interviews, and storytelling.
- Use **performance-focused language** in headlines, captions, and commentary.
- Highlight women in **leadership or decision-making roles**, including coaching and team management.
- Provide **consistent coverage of women's sports throughout the season**.
- Support and advocate for **equal investment, funding, and sponsorship** for women's sports.

✗ DON'T

- Don't emphasise **looks, private life, or emotional reactions** instead of the athlete's abilities and results.
- Don't perpetuate the **idea that men's sports are more important** by giving women's events minimal coverage or resources.
- Don't report on women's sports **only when high-profile tournaments occur**.
- Don't **underreport or underfund women's sports**, reinforcing the imbalance with men's competitions.
- Don't sideline women from **positions of authority or strategic decision-making** in sports coverage and reporting.

GREECE



GOOD PRACTICE

Guide to Combating Gender Discrimination in the Media (**Οδηγός Καταπολέμησης των Διακρίσεων λόγω Φύλου στα ΜΜΕ**) - Greece

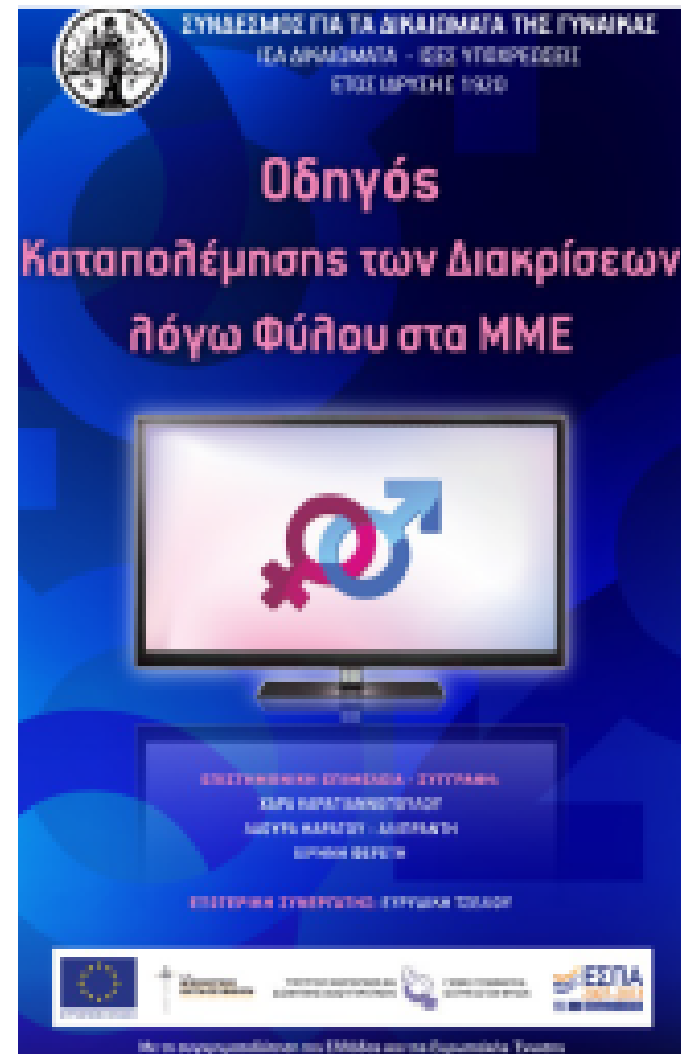


Link

In 2015, the Guide to Combating Gender Discrimination in the Media (**Οδηγός Καταπολέμησης των Διακρίσεων λόγω Φύλου στα ΜΜΕ**) was published in Greece by the League for Women Rights, providing practical guidance for journalists and media professionals on how to avoid gender stereotypes and discriminatory portrayals in media content. Although not sport-specific, the guide directly addresses key issues identified in Greece, such as gendered narratives, emphasis on appearance or emotions, and the marginalisation of women's professional roles. It promotes balanced language, responsible imagery, and fair representation across all media sectors. This initiative demonstrates that nationally developed tools already exist and can be adapted to sports media to improve the everyday visibility and professional portrayal of women athletes under existing Greek media conditions.

Good practice inspiration

"Need ideas? This example shows what's already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality."



Why it matters for Greece?

- Offers **practical tools**—language guidance, visual recommendations, and editorial checklists—that can help shift narratives from personal/emotional to performance- and leadership-focused.
- Supports efforts to increase **visibility and professional recognition** of women athletes, coaches, and leaders in sports reporting across all levels and seasons.
- Serves as a **national benchmark** for reducing gender bias in media, particularly important given the sporadic and tournament-focused coverage of women athletes in Greece.

Practical takeaway

- Apply gender-aware language and avoid appearance-, or emotion-based framing in sports reporting.
- Use imagery and captions that prioritise action, performance, and expertise.
- Integrate checklist-based reviews of sports content to identify and remove gender bias before publication.

ITALY

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

WP2 shows that in Italy, women athletes face persistent marginalisation in both traditional and digital media. Visibility is significantly lower than that of men's sports, and coverage often reinforces gender stereotypes. Women remain a small minority in sports governance and media production roles. Even as women's football gains some momentum, overall representation in news, features, and visual materials remains insufficient, affecting public perception and professional recognition.

- Women's sports remain marginal in both traditional and digital media, despite rising interest in women's football.
- Women are underrepresented in governance and in sports journalism roles.
- Images of women athletes are often static, symbolic, or secondary to men's content.

✚ MAIN GAP

Structural underrepresentation gap



Women are systematically underrepresented across media roles, leadership, and sports coverage.

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- Use **performance- and skill-based language** in headlines, captions, and commentary, emphasising results, tactics, preparation, and expertise.
- Ensure **consistent, year-round coverage** of women's sports, moving beyond event-based or exceptional reporting.
- Represent women athletes through **dynamic, action-oriented visuals** that convey competitiveness, physicality, and professionalism.
- Include women as **experts, commentators, analysts, coaches, and referees**, amplifying their voices beyond athletic performance alone.
- Highlight women's **leadership roles** within teams, federations, and sports institutions.
- Apply **gender-aware and inclusive language**, adapted to the Italian linguistic and cultural context, in all forms of sports communication.

✗ DON'T

- **Don't define women athletes in relation to men** (e.g. partner, daughter, wife of...).
- Don't prioritise appearance, emotions, or private life over sporting performance and professional competence.
- **Don't use diminutives**, infantilising expressions, or sexualised language.
- **Don't frame success as "surprising" or "exceptional"** because the athlete is a woman.
- **Don't marginalise women athletes visually** by relegating them to secondary, symbolic, or passive imagery.

ITALY



GOOD PRACTICE

FIGC – Professionalisation of Women's Football in Italy [Link](#)



Good practice inspiration

"Need ideas? This example shows what's already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality."

In 2022, the **Italian Football Federation (FIGC)** officially recognised women's football as a professional sport, representing a landmark reform for gender equality within the Italian sports system. This decision introduced contractual recognition, labour protections, and improved social security conditions for women players, while also strengthening the institutional legitimacy of women's football.

Although media coverage remains uneven, this structural reform demonstrates how **policy-level action can influence media narratives**, shifting the portrayal of women athletes from exceptional figures to recognised professionals. It provides a concrete national reference showing that institutional commitment can support more accurate, performance-based, and sustained media representation.

Why it matters for Italy?

- The professionalisation of women's football illustrates how **structural recognition enhances visibility, credibility, and narrative legitimacy**, offering media professionals a stronger framework for equitable coverage.

Practical takeaway

- A. Integrate structural recognition into editorial planning.
- B. Move from event-driven to continuous coverage.
- C. Apply performance-based and expertise-focused framing.
- D. Strengthen visual representation standards.
- E. Introduce basic accountability mechanisms.

PORTUGAL

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

In Portugal, the WP2 findings indicate growing female participation in sport but minimal and inconsistent media representation. Only a small portion of sports news space is dedicated to women's sport, with coverage concentrated on a few disciplines. Stereotypes remain common, and visual representation is weak, with fewer action photos and dynamic imagery of women athletes. Women's leadership in sports institutions and media remains limited, contributing to structural barriers.

- Growing female participation in sport is not reflected in daily media visibility.
- Coverage is sparse, fragmented, and focuses on a small number of disciplines.
- Visual materials featuring women athletes are limited and lack dynamism.

⚙️ MAIN GAP

Visibility and Consistency Gap



Women athletes are not included regularly enough to reach equality

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- Use **performance-focused** and **skill-based language** in headlines and captions.
- Build **year-round editorial planning** for women's sport (not only medals, finals, or major events), with minimum weekly/monthly targets across platforms.
- **Diversify the agenda** beyond football by systematically integrating women's coverage in multiple disciplines (including less publicised sports and grassroots contexts).
- **Expand storytelling** beyond performance: include leadership, career pathways, training processes, community contribution, and structural challenges affecting women athletes.
- **Use women athletes as expert voices** (quotes, analysis, tactical perspectives), and feature women as coaches, referees, practitioners, and leaders—not only as athletes.
- **Introduce gender-sensitive reporting training** (newsroom & comms teams) and checklists for headlines, captions, and image selection.

✗ DON'T

- **Don't describe women athletes in relation to men** (daughter, wife, girlfriend of...)
- **Don't treat women's sport as occasional content** (sporadic mentions without continuity).
- **Don't allow men's football to monopolise visibility** to the point that it erases women athletes and other disciplines from the daily agenda.
- **Don't limit women's narratives to "medal moments" only**; avoid reducing coverage to short, decontextualised achievements without sustained follow-up.
- **Don't rely on low-prominence visuals** (tiny images, static portraits only) or publish social posts without imagery when a relevant visual exists.

PORTUGAL

GOOD PRACTICE

Raparigas da Bola – “Hacked” sports news for a full week (Augmented Reality)



Link

This Portuguese initiative demonstrated—through an AR “takeover” of sports news—that there is **no lack of women’s sport stories**, only a lack of visibility. By presenting a full week of women athletes’ news, it showed how editorial choices can immediately shift public perception and prove audience interest when content is consistently available.

Good practice inspiration

“Need ideas? This example shows what’s already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality.”

Practical takeaway

- Create a recurring women’s sport slot/section.
- Schedule weekly visibility targets.
- Partner with federations/clubs for story pipelines.
- Ensure strong visuals and athlete voices across print, digital, and social platforms.



BULGARIA

NATIONAL GUIDELINES ON THE FAIR PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ATHLETES

Main findings and principal gap

★ MAIN FINDINGS

According to WP2, Bulgarian media coverage of women athletes is highly uneven and discipline-specific. Sports like rhythmic gymnastics receive substantial attention, while others remain nearly invisible. Overall visibility is low across press, television, and digital platforms. Women remain largely underrepresented in sports governance and leadership roles, limiting opportunities for agenda-setting. The lack of media diversification reinforces narrow public perceptions of women's sport in Bulgaria.

- Overall low representation of women in sports news across platforms.
- Limited presence of women in leadership roles within sport and media.
- Narrow portrayals restrict public perception of women athletes' diversity.

✚ MAIN GAP

Structural Imbalance Gap



One discipline receives most visibility while others are overshadowed, reinforcing inequality.

DOs & DON'Ts

How to use DOs and DON'Ts?

"These DOs and DON'Ts give you quick, everyday tips you can apply in your newsroom, press office, or content channel – no matter the size of your organisation."

✓ DO

- **Give attention to women's achievements across a wider range of disciplines** (not just traditionally visible ones).
- **Use gender-aware, achievement-oriented language**, avoiding descriptions that objectify or sexualise female athletes.
- **Showcase success narratives from different sports**, especially where women compete successfully but lack media visibility.
- **Support female voices** in sports journalism and editorial decision-making to help widen perspectives and editorial priorities.

✗ DON'T

- **Don't concentrate coverage only on one or two high-profile disciplines.**
- **Don't use language or visuals that reinforce gender stereotypes.**
- **Don't overlook low-visibility sports** where female athletes also compete and excel.
- **Don't report on women's sports only during major competitions.**

BULGARIA



GOOD PRACTICE

Ethical Code of the Bulgarian Media – Anti-Discrimination and Professional Reporting (Hosted by AEJ-Bulgaria; adopted by Bulgarian media organisations including the Union of Bulgarian Journalists)



Link

The Ethical Code of the Bulgarian Media provides **guidance to journalists to avoid discriminatory or biased reporting**. While the publicly available text does not explicitly list gender, it emphasises avoiding irrelevant references to personal characteristics and preventing language that diminishes professional competence. Applied to sports journalism, these principles encourage media coverage that **focuses on athletes' performance, results, training, and achievements** rather than appearance, age, or private life. This demonstrates that even without sport-specific rules, existing national ethical standards can guide gender-aware, non-stereotypical reporting in Bulgaria.

Good practice inspiration

"Need ideas? This example shows what's already working somewhere else – and how you can adapt it to your reality."



Why it matters for Bulgaria?

- **Provides a trusted national reference point for ethical reporting** that media professionals already recognise.
- **Encourages focus on professional achievement** rather than personal attributes, helping counter narrow or objectifying portrayals of women athletes.
- **Offers a practical framework** that can be applied immediately in sports journalism without requiring new institutional structures.

Practical takeaway

- Prioritize athletic performance, records, and professional achievements over personal appearance or private life.
- Review existing content for subtle bias, objectification, or stereotypical framing, and correct it.
- Create internal editorial guidelines or checklists inspired by the Ethical Code to ensure fair, professional, and inclusive coverage of women athletes across all sports disciplines.

IV. ANNEXES

- 1** Main identified GAPS deriving from the POWER (WP2) Research findings 2
 - 2** Core Principles and Values of the document 3
 - 3** Mapping of guidelines used 4
 - 4** Bibliography and references 5
-

IV. ANNEXES

1. Main identified GAPS deriving from the POWER (WP2) Research findings

MAIN IDENTIFIED GAP	Explanation / Implications	Area for Improvement (POWER study)	Observed Pattern (from POWER research)
Visibility and consistency gap	Media coverage of women athletes is irregular and event-driven, peaking during the Olympics or major tournaments, then disappearing for long periods. This prevents audiences from developing familiarity with athletes, teams, and storylines. It also reduces commercial visibility and sponsorship opportunities.	1. Frequency and Continuity of Coverage	Intermittent presence, concentrated in elite events; lack of year-round narratives.
Narrative diversity gap	Media coverage of women athletes is often shaped by personal or emotional framing rather than their athletic skill and professionalism. Their broader roles as leaders, mentors, or changemakers are rarely highlighted, limiting public understanding of their full contribution to sport and society.	2. Diversification of Framing	Focus almost exclusively on immediate sporting performance; little space for leadership, social impact, or personal stories.
Structural imbalance gap	The dominance of men's football in newsrooms, broadcasting schedules, and sponsorship creates structural barriers to other sports' visibility. This bias sidelines women's sports and distorts public perception of athletic diversity. It also limits investment in alternative sports where women excel.	3. Reducing the Disproportionate Weight of Men's Football	Editorial monopoly of men's football, even in countries with strong women's sports traditions.
Visual representation gap	Women athletes are underrepresented visually and often depicted in static, neutral, or passive ways. The lack of dynamic imagery contrasts with how male athletes are portrayed—in action, emotional, and powerful—thereby reinforcing unequal perceptions of energy, competitiveness, and value.	4. Consistent Use of Visual Elements	Frequent absence of images or limited use of static portraits; lack of visual dynamism.
Governance and accountability gap	Most media outlets lack formal gender equality strategies, editorial policies, or monitoring mechanisms. Without institutional commitment or accountability tools, gender-sensitive reporting depends on individual effort rather than systemic practice. This perpetuates inconsistency and slow progress.	5. Institutional Support and Editorial Policies	Lack of clear targets for gender balance in media coverage.

IV. ANNEXES

2. Core Principles and Values of the document

CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Research-Based Approach**

All recommendations and messages are informed by WP2 research findings and existing international standards, ensuring relevance and credibility.

- **Practical Orientation**

The strategy is designed as a usable and actionable resource for media professionals, content creators, and sports communicators, with concrete suggestions and real-life examples.

- **Adaptability to Local Contexts**

The strategy and guidelines are flexible, allowing for national adaptation that reflects local media landscapes, cultural norms, and language specificity.

- **Empowerment Through Awareness**

The strategy seeks to not only inform but also inspire behavior change, contributing to a more inclusive media culture that uplifts the voices and visibility of women in sport.

- **Collaboration and Shared Responsibility**

Gender-balanced representation in sports media requires collective commitment. The strategy encourages collaboration between media outlets, sports federations, educational institutions, and equality bodies to achieve systemic, lasting impact.

CORE VALUES

- **Gender Equality**

A commitment to equitable representation, treatment, and opportunity for women and men in all forms of sports media.

- **Diversity and Inclusion**

Recognition and reflection of the diversity of women athletes across backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, and identities.

- **Accuracy and Fairness in Representation**

Promotion of balanced, respectful, and non-stereotypical portrayals of women athletes, focusing on their skills, achievements, and leadership.

- **Ethical Communication**

Commitment to integrity and ethical journalism—avoiding sensationalism, sexualisation, or biased framing, and ensuring respectful, dignified storytelling.

- **Accountability and Transparency**

Promoting a culture of responsibility through regular monitoring, evaluation, and openness about progress in achieving gender equality goals in sports media.

IV. ANNEXES

3. Mapping of guidelines used

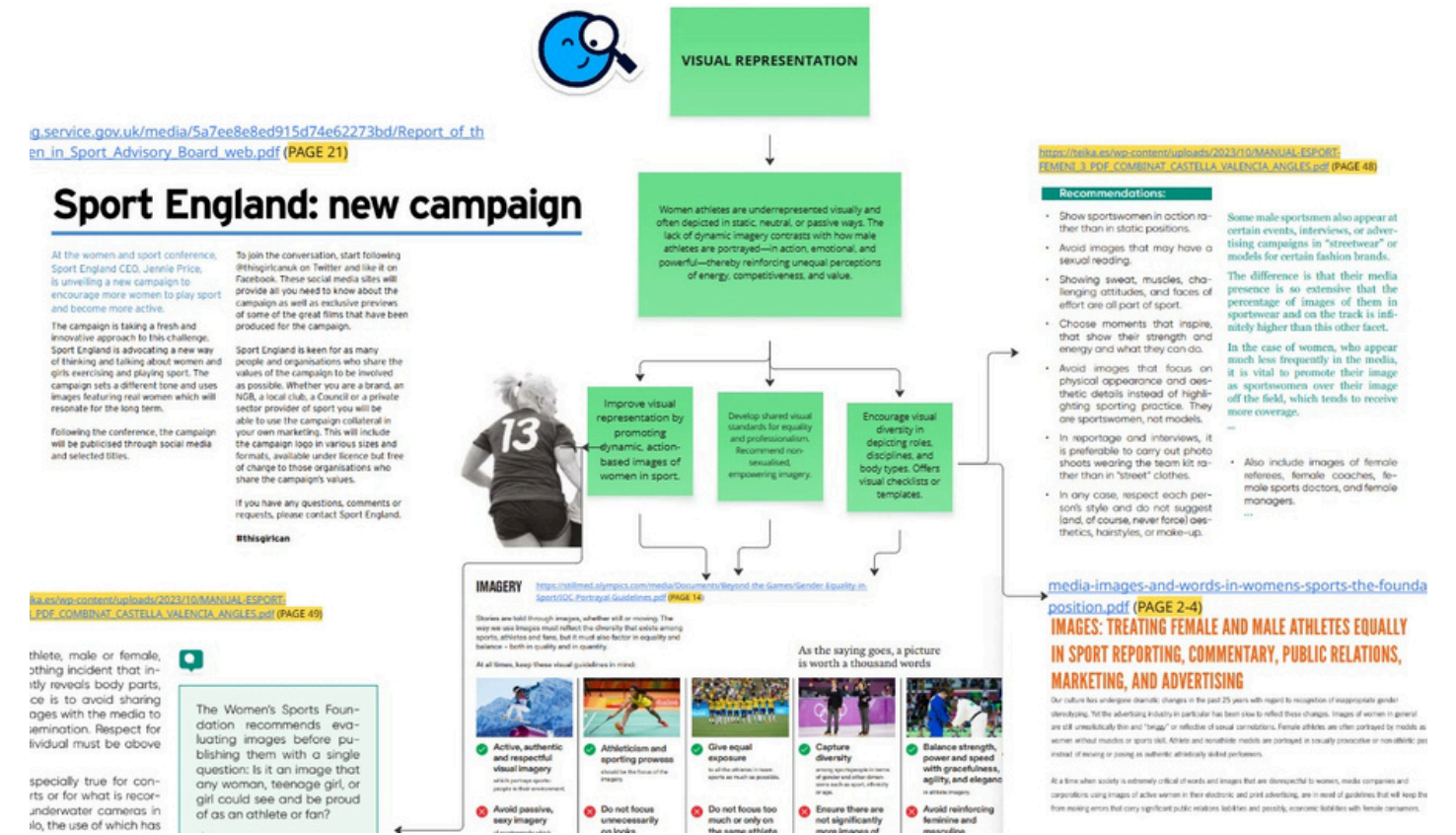
The project consortium carried out a structured and collaborative process to identify, analyse and evaluate existing guidelines related to the portrayal of women athletes in sports media. Each partner conducted a national mapping exercise using a jointly validated Identification Template and Evaluation Grid. Every organisation provided at least five relevant materials published in the last 10 years, resulting in a total of 50 guidelines and strategic documents collected from national, EU and international sources, including sports federations, public institutions, NGOs and media bodies.

These materials were systematically assessed based on common criteria, including their target audience, relevance to gender portrayal in sport, practical guidance, strengths and weaknesses, and their suitability as references for POWER outputs. Materials that were not recommended were excluded from further analysis. The remaining 42 documents were redistributed among partners for peer review, ensuring that each organisation analysed materials different from those they had originally submitted and, where necessary, aligned with language competences.

During the peer analysis phase the materials were examined in depth against the main gaps identified in WP2 research: visibility and consistency, narrative diversity, structural imbalance, visual representation, and governance and accountability. This ensured that the mapping process was directly linked to real challenges identified in the project’s research phase. The findings were organised in a visual “Miro board” mind map, allowing the consortium to clearly identify strengths, overlaps, and areas where guidance remains insufficient.

Finally a cross-comparison between WP2 findings and the analysed guidelines was conducted. This relevance and applicability assessment ensured that the future POWER Strategy and Guidelines would not duplicate existing resources but would instead address identified gaps in an innovative and evidence-based manner.

The key documents that fed POWER Strategy and Guidelines development are listed within the Annex IV.



IV. ANNEXES

4. Bibliography and references

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