

Elite sports events that reach and inspire more people in the Netherlands



Wanted: Entrepreneurs with ideas to enable elite sport events to reach and inspire more people in the Netherlands

Description of challenge/innovation aim

The Netherlands is a successful organiser of elite sports events. These include European and World championships in countless sports that deliver some great achievements in elite sport. Despite this, and with the exception of the Olympic Games and men's football, these events achieve only limited success in terms of reaching every street and household in the Netherlands. Reaching out to people across the Netherlands requires a targeted approach in staging an event. In most cases, this is not something for which other organisations from the business community or media will automatically take responsibility. There is also an additional challenge when it comes to the visibility of elite athletes with disabilities and elite sports events involving less well-known sports.

The central question that this innovation challenge addresses is: how do we ensure that elite sport events reach and inspire more people in the Netherlands? How do we generate pride and a feeling of connection with elite athletes, the relevant sports and/or the event among spectators and people living across the Netherlands? If you have a specific idea or partial solution for this, draw up a proposal and present it to us!

An elite sports event can have a valuable community impact in such areas as healthy lifestyle, the economy, social cohesion, well-being, identity and participation in sport. Successfully reaching and inspiring the community does not happen automatically and calls for a targeted approach with innovative interventions. This is an area in which there are untapped opportunities. If we can increase the impact of elite sports events, we can also help to add legitimacy to the investments that government authorities and businesses make or intend to make in sports events.

About us

[Sportinnovator](#) is the programme run by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) that aims to increase the impact of innovation in sport and contribute to a healthier society.

In a [national network of Sportinnovator centres](#), government authorities, academics, sports professionals and entrepreneurs are collaborating on groundbreaking innovations that facilitate achievements in elite and recreational sport, encouraging people to adopt a more active lifestyle.

The Sportinnovator programme is coordinated by the Sport Top Team and supported by ZonMw (Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development) and the Ministry of VWS. This challenge has been developed in cooperation with the NOC*NSF (Dutch Olympic Committee/Dutch Sports Federation) and others.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for concrete plans for innovations that enable elite sport events to reach and inspire more people in the Netherlands. The new solutions/partial solutions suggested will aim to get more people involved (on a once-only or repeated basis) with the event, the athlete(s) and their achievements. Reaching more people can result in a broader appreciation of and connection with the sport, the athletes and their achievements. In addition to enabling more people to become involved, innovations can also contribute to increasing people's engagement with events, athletes and/or their achievements. In any new solutions/partial solutions, the principles of fan engagement will be applied. If people are encouraged to

become involved and share the experience, whether it is at the event or remotely, they may also be inspired to adapt their own behaviour in such areas as healthy lifestyle, consumption, participation in sport or how they deal with people with disabilities.

More generally, the innovation must take account of the unique storytelling encapsulated by the event, the sport, the athlete and his or her achievements. This storytelling about sporting achievements, including an explanation of the sport, can evoke intense emotions in followers, including a sense of connection, pride, enjoyment or an appeal to the imagination. The content of the stories and the way in which they are told will be instrumental in achieving the desired impact.

Innovations can focus on one or more target groups. In this, the innovation will not only focus on the city or region where the event is happening and the people who would normally already be invited to follow this kind of event. Innovations can also contribute to improving links with other sectors outside sport, broadening the impact on wider society.

First application at EPC 2023

The innovation must have the potential to be used at a range of future elite sport events (especially European and world championships in the Netherlands). Part of the challenge will include collaboration with a specific elite sport event, with the innovation and the event joining forces in the run-up to the date for 'going live' in 2023. That will be approximately a year after the launch of the innovations that emerge from this challenge. The specific elite sport event to which the challenge is linked is the [European Para Championships](#) (EPC) in August 2023 in Rotterdam.

The EPC is a new event that combines various European championships for elite para-athletes. This event also has its own specific additional challenges, which are of relevance for the innovations to be developed. This is because it is a multi-sport event that focuses specifically on elite sport for people with a disability. Improving their visibility and the way in which they are valued as elite athletes by a wide Dutch public is an additional major challenge for the sport and for government authorities. One particular issue involves the potential difficulty in coming to grips with the different classifications in para-athletics, which are linked to the seriousness of the disability.

What is there to gain?

What makes it interesting to participate in the challenge/work with your organisation?

A total of **€200,000** (incl. VAT) is available and will be divided among 3-5 winners based on the proposals presented. A maximum of **€60,000** (incl. VAT) in costs will be reimbursed by Sportinnovator. Part of the budget (no more than 20% of the costs outlined in your budget) can be reserved for the implementation of the innovation at the EPC in 2023.

This innovation competition is a form of pre-commercial procurement. Companies will be given a development budget in line with market levels that should at least result in a viable product or the validation of a concept to be applied at the EPC in 2023. Ideally, a small-scale practical test will also be conducted during the development phase.

In addition to the development budget, Sportinnovator also offers an interesting network of collaborative partners and experts who will challenge you to further improve your solution and we can also arrange publicity via the Sportinnovator media channels. At the end of the project, we expect the company to be capable of independently upscaling and marketing their product. We will mobilise our network for you to achieve that. The innovations developed could prove especially valuable for government authorities, sponsors and businesses that are socially engaged. Sportinnovator will ensure that the innovations are placed in the spotlight, including by the Ministry of VWS, NOC*NSF and sports unions. We will help to facilitate coordination with events-related research and social activation programmes, partly linked to the

[Netherlands Elite Sports Events Strategy \(Nationale Topsportevenementen Strategie 2021-2030\)](#) and the Elite Sportsevents Coordination and Information Office (*Coördinatie- en Informatiepunt Topsportevenementen*).

What are we not looking for?

- We are not looking for innovations that focus specifically on the location or region in which the event takes place.
- We are not looking for innovations that focus solely on sponsorship and companies' marketing objectives.
- We are not focusing on providing funding for the regular production of images of sports events.
- We are not focusing on innovations that aim to position a sports event as a platform for innovation in a wider sense: the elite athlete, the sports event and/or sporting achievements must be integral parts of the innovation.
- We are not focusing on existing initiatives relating to the EPC.

Conditions for participation

If you present the winning proposal, at the time of the award, you must be:

- able to launch the project by the ultimate start date;
- be registered at the Chamber of Commerce (KvK)
- hold a Declaration of Conduct for Tenderers (*Gedragsverklaring Aanbesteden*, GVA);
- hold a statement from the Tax and Customs Administration concerning the company;
- have recent, valid and relevant corporate and/or professional liability insurance.

If you have the winning proposal and receive the engagement letter, the National Purchase Terms and Conditions (*Algemene Rijksinkoopvoorwaarden/ARVODI 2018*) will apply.

If the EPC 2023 is unable to go ahead in Rotterdam in August 2023, Sportinnovator will, in consultation with the parties involved, designate an alternative elite sport event for the application of the innovation.

Read [HERE](#) (in Dutch) all terms and conditions:

Your pitch (max. 6 pages/18 slides)

- **Description of solution:** please provide a brief description of the concept and how this contributes to the aim of this Challenge. Please also outline how the concept is distinct from what is already available on the market and provide information about the business case that demonstrates how the project can continue to exist in the longer term.
- **Description of the approach:** please describe what is necessary in order to develop the innovation and how the innovation will be subsequently applied at the EPC 2023. In the description, also include specific details, planning, necessary access/materials/data, risks and costs.
- **Description of the envisaged social value:** please describe concrete (and preferably measurable) targets and outline the social value that the innovation aims to achieve and how this is linked to the solution and approach.
- **Description of team:** please provide a brief description of the company, the team that will realise the innovation, any cooperation with partner organisations and how the ultimate target group will be involved. What do you expect from those involved in the EPC?

- **Quotation:** please specify the costs of the project. There is no set format for this, but it must be consistent with the rest of the proposal.

The proposal can be submitted in any format (presentation/slide deck, letter), but must be uploaded as a PDF file (A4 landscape or portrait) with a maximum size of 30MB. Any links to external sources will not be looked at.

Pitches in English are allowed

Timeline for Challenge

- 15 December 2021 – Launch of challenge
- **Tuesday, 11 January 2022, 2 PM** - online information meeting (not obliged)
- Wednesday 12 January, 12 PM: deadline for questions
- Thursday 18 January: publication of 'Information Notice' (*Nota van Inlichtingen*) (responses to questions)
- **Tuesday 8 February, 2PM: deadline for presentation of challenge proposal**

After you have presented your proposal, the timeline will be as follows:

- From 9 February until 1 March: evaluation of the proposals
- 3 March at the latest: invitations to be sent out for live pitch round
- **Wednesday 9 or Thursday 10 March:** live pitch
- 22 March at the latest: announcement of award to be sent out
- Ten calendar days: period for objecting to award decision
- 4 April 2022: engagement letter to be sent
- 15 May 2022: latest start date for implementation

Background information

There is no clear definition of the solutions/partial solutions or innovations that the market may devise. Some potential ideas include:

- The sharing of images and stories via new media channels combined with information about the sport and a link with recreational sport.
- Innovative side events (across the Netherlands) or the organisation of sports challenges in which children or adults have to deliver sporting achievements or have an opportunity to connect with an athlete or team at the event.
- The application of experience marketing principles aimed at enhancing the fan experience and connection with events, possibly supported by companies that are socially engaged.
- Impact in the domestic setting with virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), for example.

However, there are very probably other opportunities and new combinations for which this challenge is particularly suited.

Policy and research information is available on such issues as the [experience](#) and [social impact](#) of sports events, on the value to society of [elite sport](#), on [conditions in Paralympic sport](#) and [advice](#) (& essays) aimed at increasing the impact of sports events. A specific [analysis](#) of the contribution made by the EPC has also been conducted.