

Active ageing communities

AAC Handbook for National Fitness Associations

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



This handbook is for the partners participating in the project called 'Active Ageing Communities Project (AAC). This handbook, developed by EuropeActive, integrates the handbook already distributed as annex of the partner agreements at the beginning of the project which contained information on the project administration, quality management and dissemination actions.

This document aims to guide the six National Fitness Associations (NAS) partners of the Active Ageing Communities Project (AAC) to correctly delivery all the actions planned in the project application.

It is composed of six chapters:

1. National Associations Task Review
2. Club Recruitment Guidelines
3. The Preparatory Meetings
- 4 The National Seminars
5. Data Collection Plan
6. AAC Project Promotion

In case further information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

francesco.capuani@europeactive.eu

+32 (0) 2649 9044



EuropeActive
House of Sport
Avenue des Arts /Kunstlaan 43,
B-1040 Brussels, Belgium

T: +32 (0) 2649 9044 W: www.europeactive.eu and www.ereps.eu



The AAC Project

The EU recognises health-enhancing physical activity for older adults as one of the key policies of Erasmus+ and of the Silver Economy Strategy. The messaging of the importance of maintaining healthy lifestyles in later life is widespread, but it is not translating into action itself. Insufficient older adults are exercising to the WHO recommendations for longer active and independent living. Older people can also become socially excluded and more isolated.

The AAC main objective is to create communities for healthy and active older people in 18 fitness centres from 6 European countries, and in different community settings.

In detail the AAC aims to involve ~500 older adults and to have an adherence of 75% at the end of the proposed six months intervention. Family members who are already fitness users will encourage their parents and grandparents to join community-based activities leading into a framework of healthy lifestyles for their long-term participation.

The European fitness sector is one of the key actors capable of raising awareness among inactive older people and is already recognised as the largest participation sport at the European level. A majority of its 64,000 fitness clubs are community based.

The AAC programme will be set-up by the University of Southern Denmark experts and will address behavioural, mental, and socioeconomic barriers to physical activity in later life by proposing a mix of methodologies from already successful projects together with the new piloting based on an innovative intergenerational approach.

There will be a good practice guide (based on the programme impact evaluation) that can be used by other fitness and recreational sport centres around Europe to replicate the methodology. Two types of dissemination events will be organised to exploit the findings with a main conference in Brussels and national seminars involving fitness and recreational sporting bodies in the 6 participating countries.

National Associations Task Review:

- Attend Partner Meetings and host them when planned in the application.
- Support the University of Southern Denmark for the finalisation of the AAC Programme.
- Appoint 3 fitness centres respecting the criteria listed in this document.
- Support the 3 fitness centres clubs in the participant recruitment and programme implementation phases.
- Organise the preparatory meetings with the selected clubs to present the AAC Programme in detail.
- Overview the correct and coherent delivery of the AAC Programme.
- Collaborate with the three selected clubs during the data collection phase.
- Collect feedbacks from participants and the fitness staff clubs involved.
- Based on the collected data and feedbacks, draft a national report which will be part of the main AAC Report.
- Support EuropeActive in the translation of project outcomes, if necessary
- Contribute the delivery of the AAC Good Practice Guide
- Support the organisation of AAC Conference.
- Organise the AAC National Seminars after the AAC Conference to disseminate the project outcomes and methodology.

Club Recruitment Guidelines:

The overall level of physical activity of Europeans has decreased especially among elderlies and their memberships in fitness centres represent a limited percentage, far below the sector potential.

AAC offers an innovative programme on how to encourage older people to join centers and consequently highlight the social value of fitness for the promotion healthy lifestyles in communities. Moreover, the participation in an EU funded Project represents an added value for your club members for several reasons:

- The club will increase its visibility by being present in all dissemination activities carried by EuropeActive and the European Commission related to the project.
- The club will join a network of fitness centres from six European countries.
- Club representatives will be invited to present their work at the AAC events in Brussels and in other EU capitals.
- The club will increase the social connection with the local community.
- The club will implement an innovative programme promoting healthy lifestyle for older people which has the ambition to be followed in the coming years by other sport in the EU to increase the number of older people members in fitness and sport centres.

- The club staff will experience new form of intervention targeting elderlies and in so doing, improve their portfolio in working with older adults.

Each National Associations must recruit three fitness centers among their members. NAS are invited to select clubs:

- with which they will be able to establish a fruitful collaboration in all project lifetime
- from three different territorial settings.
- with experience in interventions for older adults and with trainers having at least one of the following criteria 1) Fitness trainer education (e.g. EQF3 or EQF4) or 2) Relevant physical education (e.g. Sport Science or Physiotherapy).
Furthermore, soft skills like communication, empathy and compassion is important when choosing the appropriated trainers.
- with all the practical means (equipment, rooms, cafes area, etc...) to implement the AAC Programme Interventions.
- with a strong presence and connection with their community (from social media engagement to physical events).

The Preparatory Meetings – May 2021

After the finalisation of the AAC Programme (scheduled for April 2021), the NAS are encouraged to organise preparatory meetings with the representatives of the three selected clubs. The meetings will serve to NAS to present in detail all the actions contained in the programme and clarify with the clubs any potential issues before the start of the interventions in June 2021.

Each club will form groups of 25/30 adults – over 65 – and implement the actions contained in the AAC Programme developed by the University of Southern Denmark which will be ready in April 2021. The selected participants should be in the so-called “contemplation phase” in which they intend to start being physical activity and conduct a healthier lifestyle in the next 6 months.

The detailed criteria for the participants selection will be addressed in the AAC Programme. If the meeting, due to Covid-19 restriction, will take place online, at least one author of the AAC Programme will be present to the meeting.

The National Seminars – Autumn 2022

The National Seminars will be organised in the autumn 2022 by each NAS in their countries to present the results of the AAC interventions and promote their methodology to national sport/fitness stakeholders and policy makers.

The Seminars will take place immediately after the AAC conference in Brussels where EuropeActive will present the Project Reports to representatives of European Institutions.

Each NAS is free to decide the exact date of the national seminars as well as the event format and the invitations.

Each association has a project budget of 1,600 EUR to support the seminar organisation.

The seminar must be attended, at least, by 15 people.

Differently from other expenses related to project activities, the expense evidence for the event organisation do not have to be submit to EuropeActive. However, it is important to take pictures/videos of the event to demonstrate that the Seminar took place.

Data Collection Plan

All participants will be assessed before and after the 6 months intervention to evaluate the effects of AAC program. The 6 months interventions should take place within the period between June 2021 and April 2022.

The data collection will include: Social demographics (e.g. age, sex, civil status), Anthropometrics (e.g. height and weight), Physical function (Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB), Muscle function (e.g. 5 RM test in a leg press machine) and some questionnaires (e.g. Physical Activity, Quality of Life, Loneliness). Furthermore, Process Evaluation will be assessed to evaluate the AAC program (e.g. implementation, retention, feasibility) by the clubs, trainers, and participants. The Process Evaluation will be conducted during and after the intervention with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The data collection will start when the first participants are recruited.

The data will be functional to the drafting of the **AAC Project Report** which is composed of:

- National Reports drafted by each NAS.
- European Report drafted SDU and EA for providing a general overview of the project results.
- External Evaluation Report drafted by the two appointed external researchers.

The Data Collection Timeline

May/June 2021

SDU/EA will send the data collection forms to NAS.

NAS are in charge of translating the necessary text (e.g. questionnaires).

The clubs will start baseline assessments when the first participants are recruited.

December 2021

NAS are responsible of collecting data for the mid-way evaluation:

NAS will communicate to the rest of partners the adherence level.

EA/SDU will have previously sent to NAS the forms for clubs and a sample of participants.

A partner meeting will be organized for evaluating the collected feedbacks

April 2022

NAS are responsible of collecting data for the final evaluation:

EA/SDU will have previously sent to NAS the forms to be filled by clubs and all participants. Furthermore, some clubs (e.g. trainers) and participant might be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview.

The forms will evaluate more in detailed than the ones of the mid-away evaluation, the experience of clubs and participants in the AAC Project.

The forms will be translated and distributed by NAS to clubs and participants.

May 2022

According to the data collected, each NAS will draft a national report, in English, which will have to be sent to SDU and EA.

The structure of the national reports will have to be the same.
It will be suggested by SDU.

Summer 2022

SDU/EA will complete the AAC Report.
the external researchers will draft the external evaluation report.

AAC Project Promotion

The promotion of the project is one of the most important task for the AAC partners.

The promotion may be broken down into three main “levels”

1. European, 2. National, 3. Local.

1. EuropeActive will use its European network to promote AAC, while SDU will disseminate it through specialized academic platforms.

2. NAS will promote the project outcomes throughout their national club members and other national sport stakeholders

3. The 18 clubs will promote the project at local level.

In this regard, NAS are called to:

- Encourage clubs to take pictures and video of the interventions (with formal consent of the participants).
Pictures and videos will be used on social media and in other dissemination channels by the EuropeActive and the European Commission.
Please send any visual contents to francesco.capuani@europeactive.eu
- Any social media content related to AAC must contain the hashtag #BeActive and the EuropeActive tag.
- Please inform EA with every dissemination tool you will be using for promote the project at national level (e.g. websites, newsletter articles, journals, magazines, etc..).
- Among the 18 clubs selected to join the AAC Project, 3 will be selected by EuropeActive to present their work at the AAC Conference in Brussels in front of representatives of the EU Institutions and European sport organizations.
- These 3 clubs will also be candidate by EuropeActive to the competition organized every year by the EU Commission which award the best projects dealing with the promotion of physical activity and social inclusion. The nominees club will receive 2,500 EUR the winner 10,000EUR

EuropeActive will provide NAS with dissemination printing materials which can be used by clubs as a background for pictures/videos of the interventions, by NAS at their national seminars and/or distributed to the participants, etc.

*Please have a look at project handbook attached to your partner agreements.
It contains all the rules related to the use of logos, websites, etc...*