

# Sport and Health in Action: SHIA Project Launches to Bridge Gaps through Innovation

The **SHIA (Sport and Health Innovation Accelerator)** project officially held its kick-off meeting at the Spanish National Sports Council, bringing together a diverse consortium dedicated to using sport as a lever for social change and health improvement. Project partners aligned on SHIA as an **opportunity to transform how Europe connects education and industry to drive innovation at the intersection of health and sports.**



Funded with **€1.5m under the Erasmus+ programme**, SHIA is a **36-month** initiative coordinated by **ADESP** (Asociación del Deporte Español). The project unites **12 partners from 11 countries** and one associated partner, including universities, civil society organisations and research institutes from across Europe.

The project bridges the gap between education, research, and industry by developing a **validated innovation acceleration programme** at the intersection of the health and sports sectors. To achieve this,

it will launch various pilot programmes to involve over 2,100 students, professionals and 50+ projects, utilizing agile methodologies to turn academic knowledge into market-ready solutions. A unique feature of the project is the creation of “**Innovation Villages**”: Living labs where startups, universities, and institutional stakeholders can co-create and test innovations in real-world environments.

"SHIA is the answer to ensuring scientific evidence guides product development," Fabián Quesada Gómez, Director General of ADESP noted. "We are not just launching a project; we are building a self-sustainable collaboration network that will foster a culture of innovation across Europe".

The project specifically responds to European challenges such as an **aging population** requiring preventive health solutions and a growing **digital divide** in sports technology. It also prioritizes **Green Transition** by integrating ecoresilience and sustainability approaches across its innovation tracks, which include Tech + Digital Sports, Grassroots Sports Innovation, or Active Living

The kick-off meeting allowed the consortium to align on the four main phases of the project:

- **Phase 1 (Research):** Challenge-based research and needs analysis.
- **Phase 2 (Design):** Developing the innovative education model and curriculum.
- **Phase 3 (Validate):** Field testing through an "Innovation Accelerator for Sports and Health" involving 150 participants across various pilot sites.
- **Phase 4 (Scale):** Establishing an operational strategy and collaborative networks to ensure EU-wide scalability.

"It is a great pleasure to see such good energy among the partners in the 'engine room' of this project," **said Elia Racamonde**, SHIA Coordinator. "With diversity as our strength, we are co-creating strategies and tools – from stakeholder mapping to innovation ecosystems – that will ensure every participant has the resources to excel in the evolving landscape of sport and health".

*[describe your organisation's role in SHIA]*



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**To learn more about the project and how to get engaged, contact:**

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- **SHIA Communication and Dissemination Lead:** Anna Gallinat (Global Health Connector): [anna@globalhealthconnector.com](mailto:anna@globalhealthconnector.com)

*Website and social media channels to come soon.*

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**List of project partners**

- Asociacion Del Deporte Espanol (ADESP)
- European Platform For Sports And Innovation (EPSI)
- Sport Et Citoyennete (3S)
- Otto-Friedrich-Universitaet Bamberg (UNI BA)
- Charles University (CU)
- Center For Health, Exercise And Sport Sciences (CHESS)
- Global Health Connector
- Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (IED)
- Systems Innovation Center Kft. (SCI)
- University Industry Innovation Network Bv (UIIN)
- Akmi Anonimi Ekpaideftiki Etairia (AKMI)
- Natsionalna Sportna Akademiya Vassil Levski (NSA)
- Cluster Sports & Technology y (Associated Partner)