

# ACTIVE4SME

## First Deliverable

**Co-creation of raising-awareness and educational strategies for scaling-up the implementation of physical activity in Small-and-medium-sized enterprises**

ERASMUS-SPORT-2024-SSCP  
Active4SME- SEP-211039012

April 2025

---

Anna Puig-Ribera<sup>1</sup> (PhD), Carles Gelonch<sup>2</sup> (MBA), Anna Codina-Nadal (MsC)<sup>1</sup>,  
Isaac Taberner (PhD)<sup>1</sup>, Ilkka Väänänen<sup>3</sup> (PhD)

<sup>1</sup>Sport and Physical Activity Research Group, Institute for Research and Innovation in Life and Health Sciences in Central Catalonia, University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia, Catalonia, Spain.

<sup>2</sup>Consell Esportiu de les Garrigues, Catalonia, Spain.

<sup>3</sup>ILE Coaching, Consulting & Counseling, Finland

## Index

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. FIRST DELIVERY: CO-CREATION OF RAISING-AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SMEs.....	3
3. ACTIVE4SME-CATALONIA.....	4
a) Context.....	4
b) Objectives of the co-creation sessions.....	5
c) Methodology of the co-creation sessions.....	5
d) Co-creation protocol and guidelines.....	6
e) Data collection and analysis.....	7
f) Results.....	8
g) Conclusions.....	19
4. ACTIVE4SME-FINLAND.....	21
a) Context.....	21
b) Data collection and analysis.....	22
c) Results.....	1

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tackling sedentary and physically inactive lifestyles in all age groups is a universal challenge to promote health, well-being, and productivity. The physical activity (PA) Strategy of the WHO European Region 2016–2025 emphasizes the essential role of workplaces in promoting PA to the adult population, for its potential to reach out all employees. However, insufficient scaling-up of effective, feasible and sustainable PA programs in most European workplaces is a challenge. In Europe, 99% of businesses are small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which experience greater difficulties and low scalability for implementing PA interventions. Scalability means embedding PA programs into the specific context of SMEs'. Given the limited evidence-to-practice on how to effectively scale-up and sustain PA interventions in SMEs, the Active4SME project aims to co-create and seek feasible solutions on key steps and processes for improving training, dissemination, and implementation of PA in SMEs.

Active4SME is carried out in two European geographical contexts: Finland (Active4SME-Finland) and Catalonia/Spain (Active4SME-Catalonia). A national analysis of European Barometry of Sports-472 revealed the highest level where most respondents said they engage in physical activities with some regularity in 17 EU Member States was Finland (54%). On the contrary, “never” was the most common answer in Spain by almost half of respondents (45%). Both countries are excellent cases representing two different contexts in Northern and Southern Europe for developing a proof-of-concept to implement PA in SMEs, as a pilot for an international broader use across Europe.

## 2. FIRST DELIVERY: CO-CREATION OF RAISING-AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SMEs.

In this first delivery, Active4SME presents the results of co-created solutions with SMEs to raise awareness and train employees and employers to support SMEs implementing PA interventions (contents, format and learning outcomes) into their work environment. It contains the results from the co-creation sessions implemented in SMEs (27<sup>th</sup> of February and 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2025) from two regions of Catalonia (Osona and Les Garrigues) and ) and three sessions the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 6<sup>th</sup> of February and 20<sup>th</sup> of March) from Päijät-Häme region in Finland.

**In Catalonia**, these sessions used co-design methodologies created and implemented by a company (named Science For Change) who are experts in generating innovative solutions through multidisciplinary collaboration and participatory approaches based on citizen science. These co-design methodologies, supported by cooperative planning, aimed to identify feasible and effective strategies to raise awareness and improve training for supporting the scalability and sustainability of implementing PA into the work environment of SMEs.

To achieve this purpose, results were structured in four key areas: (i) current PA programs already being implemented in SMEs (if any), (ii) motivations and barriers that influenced the implementation of PA in their work environment, (iii) solutions proposed to overcome each barrier for PA implementation, (iv) proposed actions to facilitate the integration of PA into their work environment.

**In Finland**, the first workshop session was facilitated by an action oriented think tank company (BrainStormCorner Ltd) who are experts in generating innovative solutions through multidisciplinary brainstorm sessions, and idea and project generation. The second session was organized with the Lahti Sports Hub (LADEC Ltd) who creates opportunities, develops innovative solutions, and connects sports businesses by identifying and supporting potential ventures. The last session was organized by the regional Päijät-Häme Physical Activity at Workplaces Network.

### 3. ACTIVE4SME-CATALONIA

#### a) Context

SMEs play a fundamental role in the business network of Catalonia, being responsible for a high percentage of the employment and productivity of the region. However, integration of PA in SMEs located in Catalonia remains a challenge that is influenced by the size of the enterprises (micro <10 employees, small 10-49 employees, medium 50-250 employees), the availability of resources and, the perception that workplace-based PA is not a priority,

In general, PA promotion in SMEs of Catalonia is still incipient, showing differences depending on the type and the economic sector of enterprises. While some SMEs have started implementing PA to promote employees' health and wellbeing, most SMEs are not implementing PA. Below, contextual information from both Catalan regions that participated in the co-creation sessions is presented, highlighting relevant similarities and differences.

**Les Garrigues.** The business network of Les Garrigues is characterized by its strong links to the agricultural sector and a high presence of micro-enterprises. Of the 992 businesses registered in the region, 84.4% are micro-enterprises with fewer than 10 workers, while only 0.5% correspond to large companies with more than 250 employees. The industrial sector and other services make up 29.59% of the business activity, followed by the agricultural sector (18.34%) and the hotel and catering industry (14.31%).

**Osona** is a region with a strong presence of the agri-food and industrial sector. The food industry accounts for 25.7% of the business volume. Most companies are micro-enterprises (82.4% with fewer than 10 employees), although the overall business turnover is significantly higher. Unlike les Garrigues, where the economy depends largely on agriculture and small businesses, Osona has a more diversified business network with a greater presence of manufacturing and advanced technology companies. This has a

positive influence on the ecosystem for incorporating PA into the work environment as some large companies, but not micro-and-small enterprises, have already begun to implement PA strategies to their employees.

### b) Objectives of the co-creation sessions

In order to increase awareness and improve training for implementing PA in SMEs , the aims of the co-creation sessions were threefold:

1. **To assess current level of awareness and integration of PA in SMEs**, identifying current practices implemented for promote PA in SMEs.
2. **To identify the main motivations and barriers** that SMEs face when trying to integrate PA in their enterprises, considering factors that may influence its implementation.
3. **To identify the most feasible and effective solutions/actions as well as the desired impact expectations** to promote the integration and implementation of PA in SMEs.

### c) Methodology of the co-creation sessions.

Based on the core elements of the RE-AIM framework for scaling up PA interventions (Reach, Efficacy/Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance) and Citizen's Science, twenty-one local SMEs from two counties in Catalonia (Osona, n=8; les Garrigues, n=13) were reached out to participate in two presential co-design sessions (2 hours each, March-April 2025). Sessions were conducted by two independent researchers' who were experts in co-design methodologies. Researchers belonged to an external company (Science For Change, SFC), to the project consortium for avoiding bias. SFC was responsible for the design, implementation of the sessions and data analysis.

The co-design methodology implemented was participatory, inclusive, flexible, and it was designed to be able to adapt to the particularities of different groups and contexts. The methodology used *Design Thinking* techniques implemented throughout the interactive Tools developed by SFC, facilitating collaborative work and the generation of practical solutions. The session rooms had two large tables, chairs for all participants and, a screen to show the PowerPoint presentation that guided the session (see Image 1).

Image 1: Rooms where the co-creation sessions were performed in Les Garrigues and Osona.



Each table accommodated up to a maximum of eight people working in a group. In Garrigues, representatives of SMEs (n=13) were divided in two groups, ensuring that each group had representation from the three sizes of SMEs and from different sectors. This enabled to maximize the exchange of ideas between different SMEs profiles and ensure a certain homogeneity between groups. In Osona, representatives of SMEs (n=8) were organized in one-only group.

#### d) Co-creation protocol and guidelines.

A structured co-creation protocol -aligned with the goals of the ACTIVE4SME project- was implemented in the co-creation sessions. The Co-creation protocol included the following categories of information:

1. **Start of the Session:** Welcome and organization of the SMEs' groups
2. **Presentation of ACTIVE4SME:** Presentation of the project and explanation of co-design rules and SFC tools.
3. **Status of PA implementation:** Identification of actions that were already being implemented to promote PA in the SMEs.
4. **Motivations and barriers:** Identification of motivations for implementing PA in SMEs and barriers that prevent SMEs implementing PA. Barriers were categorized according to the size of the enterprises.
5. **Problems and solutions:** The previously identified barriers were classified as internal (weaknesses) or external (threats). Then, solutions were proposed to address each barrier.
6. **Key stakeholders:** Key stakeholders who should be involved in facilitating PA integration in SMEs were identified. Stakeholders were classified according to their possible contributions in providing specific solutions for specific problems.
7. **Actions and impact expectations:** SMEs identified feasible and concrete actions to implement the solutions for PA previously identified. The expected impact and measurable indicators for each action was identified.
8. **Conclusions and session closing:** Conclusions were briefly presented, participation was thanked, and the next project steps were presented.

### e) Data collection and analysis.

SMEs from different sectors and varied sizes from Garrigues and Osona were recruited by *Consell Esportiu de les Garrigues* and *University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia* respectively. Both entities had access to the official list of SMEs by sectors, which was provided by the official business networks in both counties. SMEs were classified in groups according to size and economic sector. Once grouped, phone calls and emails were sent to convenient SMEs from each group to participate in one co-creation session. The dates and time for the co-creation sessions were agreed before inviting SMEs. The aim was to recruit up to 15 voluntary SMEs, which is considered an optimal number for co-creating.

In the co-creation sessions, SMEs used easily erasable water-based markers and erasers to express their opinions writing on hexagons of different colours. Each colour corresponded to a specific category of data that matched the co-creation protocol. For instance, blue hexagons were used to identify PA practices already being implemented in SMEs. Yellow hexagons were used to identify factors that would motivate SMEs implementing PA. Pink hexagons were used to identify barriers for implementing PA, and other colours were used to classify problems to PA implementation, problems and solutions, actions (including training and raising awareness) and stakeholders that should facilitate the solutions. This codification facilitated the identification of interrelationships between motivations, barriers, proposed solutions and stakeholders, allowing to identify how motivations and barriers complemented each other and how the proposed solutions responded to specific problems.

Data analysis systematized the information expressed collaboratively during the session by taking photographs of the table where the hexagons were placed, allowing for a visual documentation of the information (see Image 2).

Image 2: Hexagons with the written information of SMEs according to data categories.



Photographs of the tables with the hexagons were then integrated into an analysis document and a collaborative map was recreated. Special attention was paid to capturing the relationships between motivations, barriers and solutions. In this way, the analysis not only considered the information in isolation, but also explored how different data categories interconnected to give a comprehensive view of the context and possible courses of action. A final summary report was sent back to participants representing SMEs and the external observers of the sessions (n=2) for verification.

## f) Results.

### f.1. Participants

Participant SMEs according to size were micro (n=4), small (n=8) and medium (n=8). According to economic sectors, participant SMEs belonged to the agriculture (n=4), industry (n=3), construction (n=2), commerce (n=5), educational (n=2), health (n=2) and sports sector (n=2). The characteristics of the participating SMEs in Les Garrigues and Osona are shown in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Description of the participant SMEs from Les Garrigues.

#	Location	Company size	Sector
1	Arbeca, Lleida	0-9 workers	Agriculture
2	Les Borges Blanques, Lleida	0-9 workers	Automotive
3	Arbeca, Lleida	0-9 workers	Viticulture
4	Juncosa, Lleida	0-9 workers	Commerce
5	Lleida, Lleida	10-49 workers	Hospitality and catering
6	Juneda, Lleida	10-49 workers	Construction
7	Juneda, Lleida	10-49 workers	Administrator
8	L'Espluga Calba, Lleida	10-49 workers	Textiles
9	Juneda, Lleida	10-49 workers	Aviculture
10	Juneda, Lleida	10-49 workers	Industry
11	Juneda, Lleida	50-249 workers	Agriculture
12	Vinaixa, Lleida	50-249 workers	Construction
13	Juneda, Lleida	50-249 workers	3r sector

Table 2: Description of the participant SMEs from Osona.

#	Location	Company size	Sector
1	Vic, Barcelona	10-49 workers	Sports club
2	Sant Feliu de Llobregat, Barcelona	10-49 workers	Sports club
3	Vic, Barcelona	50-249 workers	Commerce
4	Vic, Barcelona	50-249 workers	Education
5	Vic, Barcelona	Missing	Education
6	Santa Cecília de Voltregà, Barcelona	50-249 workers	Commerce

7	Vic, Barcelona	50-249 workers	Healthcare
8	Vic, Barcelona	50-249 workers	Healthcare

## f.2. Status of Physical Activity Implementation in SMEs.

SMEs from Les Garrigues stated they were making efforts to integrate PA into their enterprises. Current practices included:

- 1. Encouraging an active lifestyle:** Some SMEs encouraged active mobility by providing specific spaces such as bike racks so employees could go to work cycling.
- 2. Spaces for PA:** Several SMEs had their own spaces such as changing rooms and showers to facilitate the practice of exercise, in addition to having nearby outdoor spaces to facilitate doing PA. Some SMEs sponsored the use of spaces outside the enterprise, such as local sports clubs, by offering discounts or promotions to gyms.
- 3. Activities for workers:** Some SMEs organized activities to encourage active participation, such as walks or joint races, and sporting events such as paddle tournaments or *rallies*.
- 4. Communication and awareness:** To raise awareness and motivate employees, some SMEs promoted messages to encourage walking or cycling to work. Videos were also available to employees for communicating the benefits of practising healthy habits for their physical and mental well-being. In addition, some SMEs had carried out training on healthy living to raise awareness among workers.

SMEs from Osona were highly aware of the importance of promoting PA to employees. PA practices that had been or were currently being implemented included:

- 1. Promotion of an active lifestyle:** Active mobility and exercise was encouraged in the daily work routine through motivational messages on the stairs and signs on the floor to encourage stair use. Some SMEs reported having set up bike lanes and specific spaces for parking bicycles, facilitating sustainable active travel to work.
- 2. Spaces for PA:** Some SMEs had conditioned spaces for practicing sports, including multi-sports rooms within the offices, in nearby sports areas and spaces to perform Pilates or yoga. Some SMEs also offered facilities such as bicycle parking and access to sports facilities with discounts or free registration fees.
- 3. Physical Activities for employees:** Some SMEs had integrated into working hours some yoga sessions, comprehensive wellness programs, and weekly stretching activities. Some SMEs had organized employees' to participate in charity races or sports as part of their healthy enterprise programs. Enterprises wanted to be acknowledged as a "Healthy Company" by national governments.
- 1. Communication and awareness:** To reinforce employees' participation on the physical activities organised and raise employee's awareness, some SMEs had carried out talks and workshops within the "Healthy Company" programs to promote employees' active lifestyles, physical and mental well-being.

### f.3. Motivations for integrating and implementing Physical Activity in SMEs

In Garrigues, SMEs shared the same motivations for integrating PA into their enterprise regardless of their size. Motivations for implementing PA included: **(i) improve the work environment by promoting cohesion, teamwork and a sense of belonging (ii) develop a positive brand image by promoting employees' care and well-being, (iii) reduce employees' sick leave and associated costs, (iv) increase productivity by having more motivated employees and retaining talent.**

In Osona, SMEs' motivations for implementing PA into the organization included: **(i) improvement of team cohesion and strengthening of the feeling of belonging, (ii) improvement of employees' care of well-being, (iii) promoting talent loyalty, increased productivity and improved brand image (becoming a Healthy Company).** These motivations were considered as key factors to integrate PA into their work culture and for **(iv) contributing to a healthier and more attractive work environment for their staff.**

### f.4. Barriers for implementing PA in SMEs.

SMEs identified barriers for implementing PA according to two categories: Internal and External. Internal barriers referred to factors related to the structure, organization and culture of the SMEs. External barriers referred to factors that were external to SMEs. The table below (Table 3) shows the internal and external barriers expressed by SMEs from Les Garrigues according to their size. Barriers with a tick (✓) show those SMEs that had identified that barrier while SMEs that had not identified that barrier are shown with a cross (✗).

Table 3: Internal and External barriers for implementing physical activity in SMEs from Les Garrigues.

Barriers	SMEs, 0-9 workers	SMEs, 10-49 workers	SMEs, 50-249 workers
<b>Internal Barriers</b>			
<b>Resources for physical activity:</b> Lack of time and budget. Planning PA for the enterprise requires time that companies don't have	✓	✓	✓
<b>Lack of spaces for physical activity</b>	✓	✓	✗
<b>Low participation and low adherence to PA activities</b> - Employees' lack of interest and awareness of health-enhancing benefits of PA. - Conciliation: Schedules and time available for employees to do AF	✓	✓	✓
<b>Employees' heterogeneity</b> regarding lifestyles, preferences, type of work activity and, cultures with different relationships to practising PA	✓	✓	✗
<b>Profitability of the PA initiatives</b> (profits vs. expenses)	✗	✓	✓

Poor comunicaci3n with employees	✓	✓	✓
<b>External Barriers</b>			
<b>Low participation and low adherence to PA activities</b> - Employees' lack of interest and awareness of health-enhancing benefits of PA. - Conciliation: Schedules and time available for employees to do AF	✓	✓	✓
<b>Employees' heterogeneity</b> regarding lifestyles, preferences, type of work activity and, cultures with different relationships to practising PA	✓	✓	✗
<b>Cultural.</b> In Catalonia and Spain, there is no habit or tradition of integrating PA in the working context. Workplace-based PA is not the norm (status quo)	✓	✓	✓

The table below (Table 4) shows the internal and external barriers expressed by SMEs from Osona according to their size. Barriers with a tick (✓) show those SMEs that had identified that barrier while SMEs that had not identified that barrier are shown with a cross (✗).

Table 4: Internal and External barriers for implementing physical activity in SMEs from Osona.

Barriers	SMEs, 10-49 workers	SMEs, 50-249 workers
<b>Internal Barriers</b>		
<b>Spaces:</b> Lack of spaces. Absence of appropriate facilities for practicing PA, which hinders their implementation.	✗	✓
<b>Work overload:</b> Lack of time and too much work. Planning, organizing and executing PA initiatives is an additional effort for SMEs as they do not have staff dedicated to that role. In most cases, this responsibility falls on employees with other responsibilities, which can lead to work overload.	✓	✗
<b>Scope:</b> Difficulties in reaching all the employees, especially if the enterprise is located in different buildings or cities. Designing activities that are accessible to all staff is a significant challenge. The lack of solutions tailored to different contexts and the geographic dispersion of employees prevents implementing PA equitably.	✗	✓
<b>External Barriers</b>		
<b>Low participation and lack of adherence:</b> - <b>Motivation:</b> Lack of awareness of the health-enhancing benefits of practicing physical activity and the risks of physical inactivity.	✓	✓

- Conciliation (employees' schedules and time). One of the main challenges is not only to recruit employees to participate in PA but also to maintain them in the long term. The difficulty of reconciling work responsibilities with personal life limits workers' availability to engage in additional activities.		
<b>Employees' heterogeneity.</b> Many employees are not desk-based workers (e.g. employees whose job tasks include exercising). The diversity of job tasks and employees' lifestyles makes it difficult to implement physical activities that are relevant and beneficial to the entire workforce. <i>In particular, in sectors where physical activity is part of the job tasks like industrial or sports workers, there is a perception that PA initiatives are not necessary.</i>	✓	✗
<b>Lack of external spaces:</b>	✓	✓

### f.5 Problems and solutions to the perceived barriers for implementing PA in SMEs.

After identifying the external and internal barriers that hinder the implementation of PA in their enterprises, SMEs from les Garrigues and Osona collaborated in the co-creation of solutions to overcome them. The tables below (Tables 5 and 6 respectively) lists the solutions co-identified by SMEs to overcome the internal and external barriers that hinder the implementation of PA.

Tabla 5: Solutions to overcome the internal and external barriers to implement physical activity in SMEs of Les Garrigues.

Solutions to barriers	
Internal Barriers	Solutions
<b>Lack of spaces that are adequate for physical activity.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repurposing and rethinking existing spaces in companies</li> <li>Creating new spaces, such as bike racks</li> </ul>
<b>Resources:</b> lack of time, budget and no structure for PA in the Human Resources Department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements to use nearby spaces</li> <li>Outsourcing HR services</li> <li>Flexibility and organization</li> </ul>
<b>Profitability of the PA initiatives</b> (profits vs. expenses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct analytical studies: Parameterize and measure</li> <li>Studies of workplace absences by activity</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of knowledge on how to implement physical activity in the enterprise.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formation:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivational on initiatives</li> <li>Encourage healthy habits with existing materials and spaces</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Fear that implementing PA Will become just another work-related obligation.</b>	<i>No solutions are provided</i>

<p>Poor communication with employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talks to workers</li> <li>• Communicate better, do personal pedagogy</li> </ul>
<p>Barreras externas Solutions</p>	
<p><b>Low participation and low adherence to PA activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employees' lack of interest and awareness of health-enhancing benefits of PA.</li> <li>- Conciliation: Schedules and time available for employees to do AF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility and organization: reorganize working time planning</li> <li>• Detection of the real needs of workers to propose initiatives that make sense for them. It is proposed that it is the interested person himself who requests it</li> <li>• Provide incentives to workers to do PA</li> <li>• Training:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-management and dynamization</li> <li>○ Physical and mental health:</li> <li>○ Good habits</li> <li>○ Talks and workshops to encourage motivation</li> <li>○ Psychosocial risks: Assessments, monitoring and corrective actions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Employees' heterogeneity</b> regarding lifestyles, preferences, type of work activity and, cultures with different relationships to practising PA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide incentives to workers</li> <li>• The interested party requests it so that we see it necessary.</li> <li>• Do age-appropriate activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cultural.</b> In Catalonia and Spain, there is no habit or tradition of integrating PA in the working context. Workplace-based PA is not the norm (status quo)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing your mindset</li> <li>• Talks and workshops to encourage motivation and see the value of PA, both for workers and managers</li> </ul>

Tabla 6: Solutions to overcome the internal and external barriers to implement physical activity in SMEs of Osona..

Barriers and solutions	
Internal Barriers	Solutions
<p><b>Lack of spaces.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for new spaces</li> <li>• Do outdoor activities</li> <li>• Rent outdoor spaces</li> <li>• Cooperation, networking between nearby companies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Work overload:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA more integrated to breaks in classrooms or offices</li> </ul>

External Barriers	Solutions
<b>Scope:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for geographical alternatives</li> <li>• Do outdoor activities</li> <li>• Rethink schedules WITH them</li> <li>• Rethink activities WITH them</li> <li>• Cooperation, networking between nearby companies</li> </ul>
<b>Low participation and lack of adherence:</b> - Motivation: Lack of awareness of the health-enhancing benefits of practicing physical activity and the risks of physical inactivity. - Conciliation (employees' schedules and time).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PA more integrated in classrooms or offices such as active breaks for fewer hours of sitting</li> <li>• Making activities more flexible</li> <li>• Communicate the importance of both physical and mental activity</li> <li>• Recognition and prestige</li> <li>• Aligning strategic team members to motivate the rest</li> </ul>
<b>Employees' heterogeneity.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making activities more flexible               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Rethinking schedules WITH workers</li> <li>◦ Rethinking activities WITH workers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To hold sports days every quarter and meet</li> <li>• Technician days from time to time on a fixed basis</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of external spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More public cardio-health spaces in the city</li> <li>• More bike lanes and pedestrian areas</li> <li>• Active breaks to spend fewer hours sitting (no external spaces required)</li> </ul>

### f.6. Feasible actions and expected impacts for the integration of the proposed solutions in AF.

The last phase of the session consisted of identifying concrete and feasible actions to implement the previously described PA solutions. It was highlighted that, in order to facilitate their integration, it was key to think of actions at two levels: (i) to create **conditions that would make the practice of PA more accessible** to employees and, (ii) to implement actions that would promote employees' **motivation and awareness** of the importance of maintaining an active life. In addition, SMEs were also asked to express **the expected impacts they would like to obtain through the actions proposed**. The expected impacts were aligned with the motivations expressed by SMEs in the initial part of the work session. To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed initiatives, different measurement methods (indicators) are used and adapted to each type of action

At Les Garrigues, the proposed actions developed collaboratively to improve motivation and raising awareness of the importance of maintaining an active life and the benefits of practicing physical activity included:

1. Provision of training on healthy habits in online and face-to-face formats for workers.
2. Installation of posters in the workplaces with infographics that raise awareness of the benefits of PA, adapted to the type of activity of the sector and worker
3. Development of motivational training aimed at both workers and managers, with the aim of discovering and integrating innovative PA initiatives within the company.
1. Conducting studies with visual supports (e.g., Power BI) to assess the impact of physical activity on health and work performance, allowing you to measure your business profitability

At Les Garrigues, the rest of the actions proposed to make PA more accessible to SMEs is shown in Table 7. Actions are presented according to the size and sector of the SMEs. The **expected impacts** of the implementation of these actions and the proposed measurements (indicators) are related to the motivations SMEs initially identified. The expected impacts and proposed measures are:

1. **Work climate surveys**, used to measure the impact of activities aimed at improving the physical and mental well-being of workers, improving the work environment and reducing stress.
2. **Percentage of sick leave**, comparing before and after the implementation of the actions, in those initiatives that seek to reduce sick leave, improve the physical and mental well-being of workers and build talent loyalty.
3. **Percentage increase in sales and productivity** to measure the increase in productivity, the improvement of brand identity and the increase in worker motivation.
4. **Percentage of attendance and adherence** to proposed activities and initiatives to measure improvement in workers' health and well-being
5. **Becoming a healthy company** is the indicator for the desired impact of becoming a healthy company, which also implies an improvement in the brand image and in the well-being of the workforce.

Table 7: Proposals for the most viable actions for the introduction of physical activity in SME at Les Garrigues

Company Sector (Size)	Solution	Format	Schedule	Expected impact	Measurement Method
-----------------------	----------	--------	----------	-----------------	--------------------

Agriculture (0-9 workers)	Training healthy habits	Online and in person	Agreed with the workers	Improve physical and emotional health of workers	% reduction in sick leave
	Place bike racks at the entrance	NA	NA	Improve Brand identity	% increase in sale
	Enable pedestrian route to reach the company	NA	NA	Increase in worker motivation	% increase in productivity
Automotive (0-9 workers)	Outings to promote physical and mental health	In person	A whole Saturday	Improved modo	Work environment survey
Viticulture (0-9 workers)	Free guided physical activity	In person	Leisure time	Increased worker motivation	<i>No measure provided</i>
Hospitality and catering (10-49 workers)	Awareness to promote healthy habits with the current material and spaces	Posters with infographics	On paper, in the workplace	Fewer sick leave	% reduction in sick leave
		Online training course	Agreed with the workers		
Construction (10-49 workers)	Study benefits of PA in the workplace	Power BI (or other visual support!)	<i>No information</i>	Be a healthy company	Becoming a healtht company  Improvement in physical and emotional well-being indices
				Reduction in sick leave	% sick leave
Administrator (10-49 workers)	Mindfulness sessions	In person	During the working day	Improving the work environment	Work environment survey
				Improve brand identity	<i>No measure provided</i>
Industry (10-49 workers)	Motivational training on innovative PA initiatives	In person	Leisure time	Improves worker's health and well-being	25% of staff join the programme
	Discounts for attractive activities	In person	Leisure time		
	Public transport to facilitate mobility in the region	NA	NA	NA	NA
Agriculture (10-49 workers)	Organization PA by departments	In person	During working hours	Improve work environment	Work environment survey
				Improve worker health and well-being	

				Increased productivity	% increase in productivity
<b>Construction (50-249 workers)</b>	Dissemination activities	Online and in person	Leisure time	Improve worker health and well-being	% attendance at activities
<b>3r sector (50-249 workers)</b>	Awareness training, healthy habits and group activities by department	In person	During working hours and on an anual basis	- Be a healthy company - Improve physical and emotional well-being index	Becoming a healthy company % reduction sick leave
	Active rest	In person	During working hours	- Reduce sick leave	
	Postural higiene and ergonomics workshops	In person	During working hours		

**In Osona, the proposed actions developed collaboratively in relation to motivation and awareness about the importance of maintaining an active life and benefits of physical activity included:**

1. Offer specific courses, such as training in postural hygiene or specific work guidelines according to the work activity.
2. Launching "Healthy Company" programs that include talks and workshops on well-being and healthy habits.
3. Individualised counselling, similar to a personal trainer, to raise awareness among workers about the importance of PA and increase their participation in initiatives

In Osona, the rest of the actions proposed to implement the solutions to improve accessibility of PA to SMEs are presented in Table 8, according to the size and sector of the company. The **expected impacts** of the implementation of these actions and the proposed measures (indicators) are:

1. **Work environment surveys**, used to measure the impact of activities aimed at improving the care and well-being of staff, improving care and reducing sick leave
2. **Percentage of sick leave**, comparing before and after the implementation of those actions that seek to reduce sick leave and improve employee satisfaction and reduce injuries.
3. **Percentage increase in productivity** to the activities and initiatives proposed to measure the knowledge of new workers, improved adherence and greater awareness of the importance of PA.
4. **Increased productivity** to measure improvement in concentration and performance, as well as reduction in sick leave
5. **Number of workers who cycle to work**, to measure the effectiveness of measures to promote cycling to the workplace.
6. **Increased collaboration between groups at mealtimes**, as a qualitative measure to measure the improvement of group cohesion, productivity and communication.
7. **Number of new workers** who get to know each other as a measure for improvement of group cohesion.

Table 8: Proposals for the most viable action for the introduction of physical activity in SMES in Osona

Company size	Solution	Format	Schedule	Impact	Measure
--------------	----------	--------	----------	--------	---------

<b>Sports club - 10-49 workers</b>	Meeting with all workers	In person and bi-annual	Agreed Schedule outside working hours (evening-morning)	Meet new workers	% attendance at activities
	Outings to learn about new sports organizations and participate in their activities.	In person, monthly/quarterly.	Morning hours, during working hours	Meet new entities at the regional level	# new entities
	Preventive strength training guidelines for sports instructors	Online, from home	Idifferent	Reduction in sick leave and improve stabilization	% reduction in sick leave
<b>Sports club- 10-49 workers</b>	Varied, playful and enriching activities 8that provide additional value to the individual, apart from the benefits of PA)	Consensus with the workforce	Consensus with the workforce	Employee satisfaction	Talen retention % reduction in sick leave
<b>Commerce - 50-249 workers</b>	Physiotherapy Service in the factory	At workplace	Adapted to each worker	Reduction sick leave	% reduction in sick leave
	Access to the gym and tutoring from a person trained in Physical Activity and Sports Sciences	Significant discounts at the gym	Consensus with the workforce	Reduction sick leave	% reduction in sick leave
	Universal and customized solution	It does not exist	It does not exist	NA	NA
	Individualized advice ≈ personal trainer	In the company	Consensus with the workforce	Increase awareness of PA Greater adherence of PA activities	% increase in awareness of PA % attendance at activities % reduction in sick leave
<b>Educational center 50-249 workers</b>	Generalize active breaks in classrooms and offices	In person: expert and motivating Support	8h and 20h	Improved care and well-being of staff Improve atention Reduced sick leave and absenteeism	% reduction sick leave %increased productivity Method: Focus group, survey

CESS	Review proposed outdoor activity	Presence, external Support, and motivation  2 year ahead: universalization  Incorporate the habit	8h and 20h	Improved care and well-being of staff  Woman workers  Improve attention  Reduced sick leave and absenteeism	% reduction sick leave  %increased productivity  Method: Focus group, survey
	Commerce 50-249 workers	Bike path to the logistic center		Improve worker mobility	Number of workers who cycle to work
Health sector company de 50-249 workers	"Healthier Company" challenge	In person and online	Once a month in the company	Improve work environment	Work environment survey
	Postural hygiene training	In person, individual, and group training	Combined depending on the type of work	Reduce injures and sick leave 30%	% reduction sick leave
Health sector company de 50-249 workers	Boosting activity	Excursions Meetings	Group meetings, one-off activities // reports, monitoring attendance, measuring and purchasing withdrawals	Improving group cohesion, productivity, and communication	Collaboration Groups in the dining room

### g) Conclusions

This co-creation study has shown that SMEs in both geographical contexts in Catalonia face specific challenges for the integration of PA.

1. At Les Garrigues, the need to change the status quo is underlined as well as overcoming the lack of knowledge about the implementation of PA and improving internal communication to prevent the perception that implementing PA as an additional burden. SMEs have no certainty about the profitability of introducing PA in their business contexts and therefore, high quality evaluation studies are required to verify that the known benefits of practicing PA are not overreached by the cost and effort of planning and implementing them.
2. At Osona, the challenges are focused on adapting activities to the diversity of the workforce and improving infrastructure, especially in companies with decentralized teams. The need to have professional figures experts on PA to support and personalize the proposed activities to each SME was also emphasized.

Becoming a *Healthy Company* is a prominent objective in both territories, which is related to the improvement of brand identity, as well as an additional guarantee in terms of the physical and mental well-being of its workers. SMEs converge on the importance of creating accessible conditions and promoting motivation through training and

communication strategies, laying the foundations for a greater integration of PA in the work environment.

Specifically, to the proposed solutions for raising awareness and improve motivation and training for implementing PA in the context of SMEs in Catalonia, the co-creation sessions concluded that the most feasible solutions would be:

1. Implement training and communication programs that involve talks, workshops and motivational courses, aimed at both workers and managers, with the aim of highlighting the value of an active lifestyle and promoting a healthy business culture. It was proposed to have experts in PA to promote motivation among their workers, whether they are external or internal by choosing strategic people within their workforces. In Osona, special emphasis was placed on agreeing schedules, formats and content with workers to improve participation and adherence

In both territories, it was mentioned that regardless of the type of activity, raising-awareness and training activities must also have an added value at an emotional level, fostering group cohesion and serving as an internal motivation to practice PA. Throughout the co-creation sessions, various training and awareness-raising initiatives have been proposed to promote PA in SMEs, which can be summarized as follows:

1. **Motivational and awareness-raising training on healthy habits and the importance of PA:** At Les Garrigues, the implementation of motivational training programs was proposed to promote healthy habits, taking advantage of the educational material and spaces already available. In Osona, training courses were also proposed for self-management and PA dynamization with talks and workshops aimed at raising awareness of the benefits of PA.
1. **Training in postural hygiene and preventive work guidelines:** In Osona, it was recommended to carry out courses on postural hygiene and specific work guidelines according to the work activity, aimed at preventing injuries and reducing sick leave, especially in sectors where ergonomics is a critical factor. It was also proposed to create awareness-raising materials in the form of posters that can be adapted to each job and sector.
2. **Training for company managers on how to integrate PA:** At Les Garrigues, it was proposed to provide training aimed at managers so that they can learn about innovative physical activities and learn how to implement them in their enterprises. This initiative responds to the expressed challenge of not knowing how to integrate PA into the work environment and promote it among workers, including strategies to effectively communicate these programs to the entire workforce.

## FINAL THOUGHTS from the first delivery of Active4SME-Catalonia

Co-creation sessions identified that although training and awareness-raising actions in SMEs were much needed in Catalonia, they alone would not be enough to promote a meaningful change in integrating PA into the work environment of SMEs. The importance of complementing training and awareness-raising actions with other actions that contribute towards creating a more favorable ecosystem to incorporate PA effectively into the work environment of SMEs was highlighted.

This is the reason why, as part of the co-creation sessions, SMEs co-identified key stakeholders that should be part of the system for creating a more favorable ecosystem to implement the PA solutions proposed. Results from stakeholders will be part of the second Active4SME deliverable, which will detail the optimal steps and processes to adapt and implement PA interventions - including raising awareness and training- to the specific needs and context of SMEs.

## 4. ACTIVE4SME-FINLAND

### a) Context

The Finnish Government will build a well-functioning, safe and fair society. A strong and committed Finland – Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government 20 June 2023 includes Get Finland Moving programme. The Finnish Government aims to increase physical activity in every age group. To achieve this, a cross-administrative action plan will be drawn up to promote physically active lifestyles and functional capacity. In addition, there is National strategy for physical activity promoting health and wellbeing 2020: On the move

Sports play a fundamental role in the Päijät-Häme. It is one of the regional focus areas of the Smart Specialization. There is Moving Päijät-Häme 2030 -Programme in Päijät-Häme region. Its aim is to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour for all people in the region. Physical activity is also an environmental act. The responsibility for promoting physical activity for the people of Päijät-Häme lies with the municipalities, the welfare region, clubs and organisations, workplaces, businesses, schools and educational establishments, decision-makers and many other actors. Each of us also has a responsibility for our own well-being and that of those close to us, and mobility in its various forms is a step towards better well-being for all of us.

The programme implements national objectives and continues the development work done in Päijät-Häme to increase physical activity and exercise among residents. The programme is also part of the implementation of Päijät-Häme's well-being plan. To

achieve the programme's objectives, we need extensive cooperation. In addition, each organisation can pick out the most appropriate objectives and measures and implement them. The aim is that the mobility programme will bring together those involved in mobility promotion work and will be actively used throughout Päijät-Häme.

### **b) Data collection and analysis.**

In first session the purpose was to describe the current state of physical activity in Päijät-Häme region. The “Status Quo Analysis” questionnaire was sent participants. The questionnaire had open-ended questions focusing on the current state. The questionnaire was divided into six thematic sections, focusing on the regional strategies and plans, stakeholders, activities, economics, and innovations (Table 9). The qualitative regional SWOT analysis was done based on the status quo.

Table 9. The sections regarding the current situation of physical activity in Päijät-Häme region.

Strategies and plans	Stakeholders	Activities	Economics	Innovations
Is there an explicit strategy of the region (regarding boosting innovation capacities and green upskilling)? If yes, please indicate the main goals, the date of issue, and other information you find interesting and relevant. If not, please explain why not.	Is there any cluster in the region?	What are the main sports and physical leisure activities in your region?	Describe the size and outline of the PS-related <u>production</u> in your region.	How many companies are active in your ecosystem on PA innovation (based on the past 5 years)
What does your RIS3 (Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategy say about sport and sport innovation?	If yes: What type of cluster is it?	Approximately how many of the inhabitants do sports regularly? (percentage of the population) <i>Practising sport, fitness or recreational (leisure) physical activities at least once a week</i>	Describe the size and outline of the PA-related <u>distribution</u> in your region.	How many startups come on PA innovation from your ecosystem (based on the past 5 years)
Are there any other plans, strategies and documents that support the PA industry? <i>If yes: Please, list them with the link if they are open access.</i>	How many cluster members do they have?	How many professionals (or similar) compete in your region? <sup>2</sup>	Are there any sport-related R&D&I activities regarding facilitating PA SME in digital & green upskilling in the region?	What is the estimated turnover on PA innovation in your region (based on the past 5 years)
	What are their focus areas?	Please, list the main PA events organized in the region every year.	If yes: to what industries and services do those R&D&I activities relate? (describe size and outline)	How many companies are active in your ecosystem on PA innovation (based on the past 5 years)
	What is the organizational form of each cluster member? (e.g. SME, University, R&D, agency etc.)	What kind of sports venues and how many are there in the region, and or what kind of sports infrastructures are in the region?	How and from what sources are these sport-related R&D&I activities financed? (describe size and outline)	
		What are the main sports and physical leisure activities in your region?	Are PA or any other sports-related issues included in the regional development strategy? (describe size and outline)	

		Approximately how many of the inhabitants do sports regularly? (percentage of the population) <i>Practising sport, fitness or recreational (leisure) physical activities at least once a week</i>	Are there any special marketing activities related to PA? (describe size and outline)	
		How many professionals (or similar) compete in your region? <sup>2</sup>	Is there any PA-related tourism in the region? If yes, please specify (describe the size and outline).	
			What PA events, now or in the upcoming year, are supported by the Government/regional government? (Indicate which government)	
			How would you evaluate PA business models existing in your region in each sport? <sup>3</sup>	

## c) Results

### f.1. Participants

The characteristics of the participating SMEs in Päijät-Häme are shown in tables 10-12.

Table 10: The participant (n=15) of the 14.1. session.

#	Organization	Name
1	Lahden kaupunki	Denis Mustonen
2	LUT	Tero Rantala
3	LADEC	Isto Vanhamäki
4	LADEC	Kimmo Seppänen
5	LADEC	Anri Vuori
6	LADEC	Jari Rask
7	Vierumäki	Jukka Tiikkaja
8	Pajulahti	Tero Kuorikoski
9	Pajulahti	Pauliina Hyvönen
10	Pajulahti	Virpi Remahl
11	Pajulahti	Heini Wennman
12	PHLU	Mai-Brit Salo
13	PHLU	Keijo Kylänpää
14	P-H hyvinvointialue	Risto Kuronen
15	Päijät-Hämeen liitto	Harri Kuusela
16	LAB-ammattikorkeakoulu	Sanna Kangas
17	LAB-ammattikorkeakoulu	Kirsi Kiiskinen
18	BrainStorm LTD	Juho Rissanen

Table 11: The participants (n=30) of the 6.4.session.

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

ERASMUS-SPORT-2024-SSCP

Project 101185143

Active4SME Physical Activity Promotion for Small and Medium Enterprises

PARTICIPANTS LIST

Name of the meeting: Power Breakfast – Hyvinvointi Bisneksen Kasvualustana

Place and date of the meeting: Lahti, FINLAND 6.2.2025

Host institution: Ilkka Väinänen (ILE Coaching Consulting Counseling)

Participants name	Participants Institution	Address of the institution (including country)	Participants email	Signature
Anri Vuori	LADEC	Niemenkata 23, Lahti	anri.vuori@ladedec.fi	[Signature]
Jarkko Saar	Toimintakeskus OY	Hämmentie 9, Lahti	saar.jarkko@toimintakeskus.fi	[Signature]
MELINA LAAKSONEN	LADEC	Niemenkata 23, LAHTI	melina.laaksonen@ladedec.fi	[Signature]
KIMMO SEPPÄNEN			kimmo.seppanen@ladedec.fi	[Signature]
Mina Pöytälammi	Mina Pöytälammi oy	Orimattila	mina.poytalammi@poytalammi.fi	[Signature]
Eeva Peltola	Nordic Trailist	Baicalon Spain	eeva.peltola@nordictrailist.com	[Signature]
Hanna Saloniemi	STREETS OY	Lehtik 3, Lahti	hanna.saloniemi@streets.fi	[Signature]
Sami Ukkonen	VALOISA KATU		sami.ukkonen@valoisa.fi	[Signature]
Reetta Laakkonen	Reetta Laakkonen Oy	Alcio 2 Lahti	reetta.laakkonen@reetta.fi	[Signature]
Nina Tuomola	Mielikäs Kehittämiskeskus Oy	Uusikatu 10, Lahti	nina.tuomola@mielikas.fi	[Signature]
Kati Tuomola	Lossiurheilun Keskus Oy	Uusikatu 10, Lahti	kati.tuomola@lossiurheilu.fi	[Signature]
Hannele Ojapello	Hansin Tupea Ky	Lahti	hannele.ojapello@hansin.fi	[Signature]
Mika Kuitava	Lahti Lyseum	Lahti	mika.kuitava@lahtilyseum.fi	[Signature]
Ilkka Väinänen	ILE Coaching Consulting Counseling	Lahti	ilkka.vainanen@ilecoaching.fi	[Signature]

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

Participants name	Participants Institution	Address of the institution (including country)	Participants email	Signature
Rita Mäkinen	Erms Oy	Hollola	rita.makinen@erms.fi	[Signature]
Petri Saarenpää	SPARK OY	Lahti	petri.saarenpaa@sparkteam.fi	[Signature]
Riikka Kallonen	Reissu Ruoti Pöytälammi Oy	Lahti	riikka.kallonen@reissuruoti.fi	[Signature]
Juha Pitkanen	TOPLINE MEDIA	Hollola	juha.pitkanen@toplinemedia.fi	[Signature]
SARJA KESTÄMÄ	LADEC OY	LAHTI	sarja.kestama@ladedec.fi	[Signature]
Will Hamäläinen	Puura Skateboarding	Lahti	will.hamalainen@puura.fi	[Signature]
Reda Oulmane	PHLU	Lahti	reda.oulmane@phlu.fi	[Signature]
Päivi Kangas	Yhönjärven Sapiiri	Lahti	paivi.kangas@yhoenjarven.fi	[Signature]
Heidi Simonsalo	Balanssi Oy	Lahti	heidi.simonsalo@balanssi.fi	[Signature]
HANNU HILJALA	LOTO GROUP	Lahti	hannu.hiljala@loto.fi	[Signature]
Vespa Challenge	Challenge Challenge	Lahti	vespa@challengechallenge.fi	[Signature]
Mia Heiniemi	Harjoitus Järjestämät Oy	Lahti	mia.heiniemi@harjoitusjarjestamät.fi	[Signature]
Nana Honkasalo	MAKULI	Lahti	nana.honkasalo@makuli.fi	[Signature]
Albert Kallunki	Taava Kallunki Oy	Lahti	albert.kallunki@taava.fi	[Signature]
Aura Martinen	SPARK TEAM	Lahti	aura@sparkteam.fi	[Signature]
Petri Perjämä	Headone Oy	Lahti	petri.perjama@headone.fi	[Signature]

Project Code: Project 101185143 Active4SME

In addition, there were nine live and 29 online participants in 20.3. session.

Table 12: Some participants of the 20.3. session.

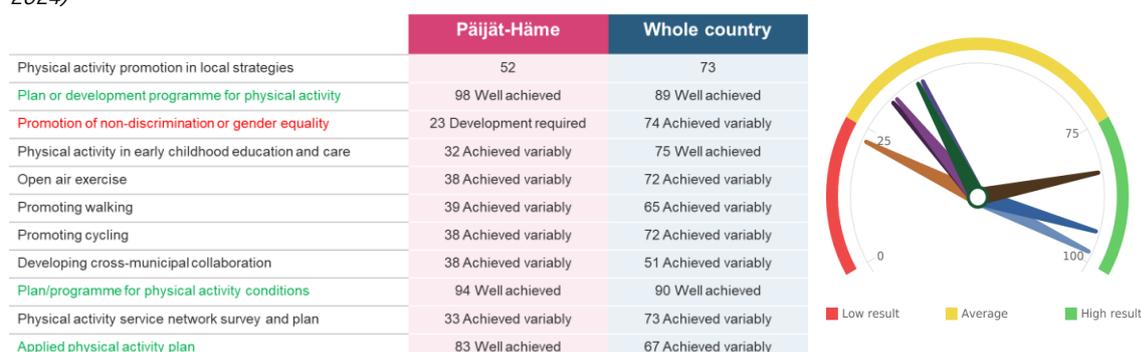
#	Organization	Name
1	PHLU	Reda Oulmane
2	Provincia	Anna-Kaisa Packalen
3	JAMK	Reetta Laakkonen
4	Provincia	HR Director
5	LADEC	Anri Vuori
6	LADEC	Melina Laaksonen

## f.2. Status of Physical Activity Implementation in Päijät-Häme

In Finland 74% of employees think their workplace supports staff to be more physically active. Based on the Eurobarometer 71 % of Finns exercise or play sport at least once a week. Almost half of men and more than a third of women achieve the recommended amount of physical activity for health. Older people were the least likely to achieve the health physical activity recommendation, with a third of men and a quarter of women aged 75 and over achieve the recommendation. Men aged 20-39 were the most likely to achieve the recommendation, with more than half of them doing so. Otherwise, differences between age groups are moderate. According to the recommendation on physical activity, the share of those with insufficient physical activity is 57,7 % in Päijät-Häme. (Healthy Finland Survey, THL)

According to the national physical functional capacity monitoring and feedback system (MOVE) for Finnish 5th and 8th grade pupils, it can be stated that physical functioning is potentially at a level that consumes or harms health and well-being for up to 401% of 5th and 8th graders in Päijät-Häme. The median results of the tests in Päijät-Häme are in line with the national medians (see Figure 1)

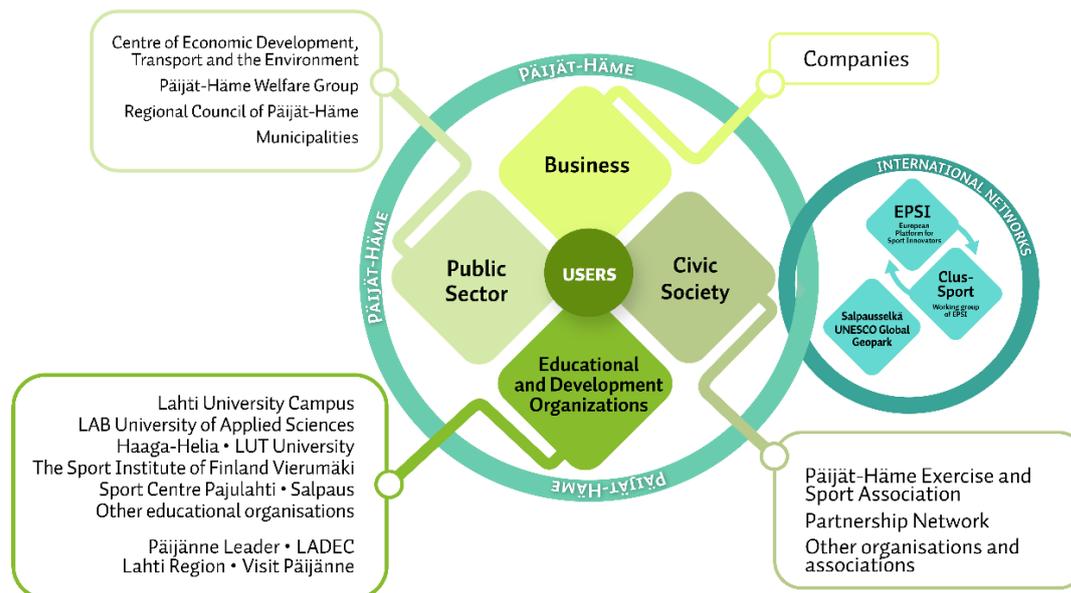
Figure 1: Physical activity promotion in local strategies: Päijät-Häme vs Finland (Finnish Institute of Health and Welfare 2024)



## Stakeholders

LAHTI SPORTS HUB is a regional competence and facility centre for the sports sector based on the regional infrastructure and know-how. The private-public physical activity ecosystem is built around more than 400 different sports disciplines, universities and other R&D operators in Päijät-Häme (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Private-public physical ecosystem in Päijät-Häme.



The quadruple helix of Sport & Leisure sector in Päijät-Häme region.

There are 54.647 licensed athletes in Päijät-Häme sport clubs (n=268) (Finnish sport club database). The total number of PA venues & infrastructure Lipas sport facility GIS-database in Päijät-Häme is 1335. They are distributed as following:

- Outdoor sports fields and parks (n=608)
- Off-road sports facilities (n=265)
- Indoor sports facilities (n=253)
- Water sports facilities (n=118)
- Animal sport venues (n=53)
- Recreation and camping areas (n=21)
- Boating, aviation and motor sports venues (n=17)

## SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis was performed for developing a strategic planning for implementing physical activity in SMEs (see Table 13). The component analysis of the SWOT Framework includes (i) Strengths, (ii) Weaknesses, (iii) Opportunities and (iv) Threats (see Table 13)

Table 13: SWOT analysis for promoting physical activity in SMEs from Finland.

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNAL ORIGIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User driven design</li> <li>• Events, mass events</li> <li>• International networks sustainability, sport</li> <li>• Unicity - startup culture on the horizon</li> <li>• Companies have enough policy institutional support, it's the communication culture &amp; rapid trial culture that lacks</li> <li>• Business + RDI collaboration opportunities exist - still, companies don't know when and how to use and reach universities</li> <li>• Functional society --&gt; engage</li> <li>• User-driver product service development opportunities</li> <li>• Systemic level infrastructure</li> <li>• Level of democracy</li> <li>• Green in city - open fo all: heath from green &amp; public green transport</li> <li>• Regional bicycle routes and geopark locations</li> <li>• EGC brand 2021</li> <li>• Nature / natural environment</li> <li>• 4 seasons</li> <li>• The world first CO2 neutral ice hockey team in the world (Pelicans)</li> <li>• Business know how to use sustainability label as a competitive factor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silos, public vs private</li> <li>• Communication culture</li> <li>• Over engineering</li> <li>• Different events for popularization of good practices, not only guides</li> <li>• Create a solid support base</li> <li>• Insight of habitants is missing</li> <li>• Only theoretical facts and brands, no human gaps or excellences</li> <li>• Practice what you preach in the city center</li> <li>• Innovation procurement</li> <li>• Green innovation festival for citizens and visitors, FUN!!!</li> <li>• Market the brands (the green zone") IRL + digital be proud, make it heard!</li> <li>• You are now entering the green zones of life! (like the blue zones, see Netflix)</li> <li>• Put focus on sustainability for innovation gaps</li> <li>• Environmental social &amp; governmental factors</li> <li>• Environmental education &amp; awareness raising</li> <li>• Collaboration to boost eco-innovations, and all the time new sustainability initiatives rising</li> <li>• Business understand why &amp; how to adopt &amp; communicate ESG-issues to their favor</li> </ul>
EXTERNAL ORIGIN	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory board on regional level with all stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of investors</li> <li>• Lack of radical innovations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radical innovation needs ownership = top-down</li> <li>• Share to multiply!</li> <li>• Social impact</li> <li>• SMASH &amp; SLUSH partnerships</li> <li>• Specialization/focus in the best values of the region</li> <li>• Mass events (“homemade” events)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- engage more with local sports associations - see them as enterprise, developing events together</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Networks</li> <li>• Other innovation environments close to Finland for science &amp; innovation capacities</li> <li>• Testbeds for unicorns to be soft landing capacity</li> <li>• Use sport-events participants as testbeds for new services</li> <li>• Call the IRL showcase downtown, the culture of movements</li> <li>• 4 seasons lead to business &amp; event opportunities</li> <li>• Openness to learn &amp; adopt new digital mindsets, trick for revenue</li> <li>• Storytelling/narrative “Lahti style”</li> <li>• From green zone(s) into the next futures (with ethics) &amp; combining them.</li> <li>• Carbon-neutrality in a couple of years</li> <li>• Ladec promotes &amp; guides companies to promote circular economy practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor in cultural views</li> <li>• Communication culture</li> <li>• Over engineering</li> <li>• Low digitalisation level</li> <li>• Another Finnish regions - competitors or partners?</li> </ul>
--	--	---

**The most feasible contents, format, schedule and learning outcomes of the physical activity at work places**

The interactive Why, How, What ecosystem model the most feasible activity contents and format specified into the Workplaces on the Move package (Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023) was presented as a summary in the last session. The package is based on the scenario that sedentary behavior of working age people cannot be resolved with the traditional approaches and by the physical activity professionals alone. Broader solutions are needed. The model is developed to identify the points of influence physical activity within the existing structures of Finnish work life. In collaboration with a working group consisting of specialists representing various stakeholders such as occupational health care, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, employers’ pension insurance, trade unions, employer advocacy organizations, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The following five distinctive impact pathways for physical activity within the existing solutions of the Finnish work life were identified and the recommendations have

three levels (Figure 3), each of which increases the level of activity, and the benefits achieved.

Figure 3. The recommendations for physical activity promotion at work ([www.liikkuvatyoelama.fi/en](http://www.liikkuvatyoelama.fi/en)).



### LEVEL 1: Physical activity is part of employee benefits

This is a good baseline that motivates personnel to be more physically active. Sports and well-being services are part of the employee benefits, in addition to which there are facilities and equipment for exercise. Furthermore, the personnel is informed about available services. At this level, the solutions are clear and often easy to implement for the employer. Remote work and the nature of the work should be taken into account in the solutions.

Financial support: Personnel is offered a flexible sports benefit.

- Financial support encourages personnel to exercise in the manner they choose.
- According to Finnish legislation, the employer can support an employee's physical activity tax-free up to EUR 400 per year. The employee benefit must be equally available to all employees.
- Company-owned or company-leased bicycles can be offered to employees tax-free up to EUR 1,200 a year.

Facilities and equipment: Personnel is provided with facilities and equipment for exercise, such as:

- Exercise equipment is available in break rooms
- Active commuting is made easier by safe bicycle parking, changing rooms and washroom facilities

Communication: The personnel is informed of the benefits and opportunities offered.

- Communication takes place regularly on multiple channels.
- The more active the communications, the bigger the percentage of the personnel using the services.

### LEVEL 2: Physical activity is part of the working day

At level 2, physical activity is an integral part of the working days. Active breaks help support recovery, level of alertness and coping. The solutions improve the staff's working capacity, health and well-being. The objective is for more and more people to participate in the exercise offered. At this level, it is important to draw up a physical activity plan.

Staff involvement: The personnel has an opportunity to influence the content of the exercise offered.

- Wishes and needs can be collected through open discussions or well-being surveys.
- Involving the personnel increases their motivation to be physically active.

Physical activity according to the nature of the work: Different work tasks require different kind of exercise.

1. For example, the activity level of sedentary working will be increased, and the recovery of employees doing physical work will be improved.
2. Co-operation with the occupational health care provider and the occupational health and safety officers helps to find specific solutions, taking into account the requirements and risks of the work.

Drawing up the plan: A physical activity plan is drawn up based on needs and wishes.

- It is enough to provide at least two other options alongside financial sports benefits and facilities or equipment. These may include exercise breaks, campaigns or physical activity measures offered by occupational health care.
- Personnel's feedback and experiences help in monitoring and developing the implementation of the plan. Occupational health care indicators may also be used.

### LEVEL 3: Physical activity is in the strategy

When physical activity is included in the strategy, it increases the intangible capital of the organization. This means that communality, atmosphere and productivity increase and the employer image improves. It helps not only to improve personal work ability, health and well-being but also brings benefits for the work community.

At level 3, management is human-oriented, personnel is involved, supervisors are trained and the promotion of well-being at work is systematic. The number of activities offered and the level of staff participation in the activities depends on the style of management.

The quality of management is a high priority: Physical activity at work is part of management.

- The physical activity plan is based on the organization's strategy or personnel strategy.

- The work community is involved and their wishes are considered. Cooperation with the occupational health care provider and the occupational health and safety officers is active.
- Management is trained in physical activity and well-being related issues.
- Physical activity is visible in the daily life of the work community in both talk and actions.
- When physical activity is encouraged by managers and colleagues, the motivation for staff participation increases.

### Solutions

1. Society provides more incentives to employers such as tax cuts.  
Currently in use:
  - Tax-free bicycle benefit
  - Tax-free Employee fringe benefits including sports & exercise.
  - Free Physical activity counselling
2. Workplace risks are assessed in a new way.  
The statutory risk assessment of work should include both physically demanding and inactive work. Physical activity can reduce risks in both.
3. Collaboration with occupational health care is more consistent  
By working together with occupational health care professionals, workplaces can:
  - Create effective strategies to promote physical activity,
  - Prevent sedentary behavior and
  - Enhance overall work capacity.
4. Psychological, physical and social balance is improved in the workplaces  
Physical activity is an effective way to improve the balance between all three.
5. Management training includes aspects of physical activity and recovery  
Effective leadership plays a crucial role in promoting employee well-being and work capacity.

In addition, there is a free planning tool (Viksu, available only in Finnish) that allows to create a travel to work and staff mobility plan that suits for SMEs. There are more than 60 measures to promote commuting and staff mobility, which can be used to design physical solutions to support employers' ability to physical activity.

### The most feasible steps and processes for increasing success of scalability of PA initiatives in SMEs

The ecosystem model of five solutions was presented for comments and evaluations, and after that disseminated widely to stakeholders for their benefit. As a result the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is strengthening the role of physical activity in occupational health care. Starting in the fall 2024, the five solutions has been served as a foundation for the extensive workplace development work led by the new government program: Get Finland Moving.

In order to encourage as many employees as possible to take advantage of the opportunities for physical activity offered by their employer, it is necessary to encourage and support employers to take the following measures:

- Provide personal coaching, physical activity advice or lifestyle guidance to people who are not exercising enough for their health or who need support to make lifestyle changes.
- Physical activity for fitness at work is included in the organization's human resources strategy and is managed as a whole.
- It is also possible for the employer to:
- Involve staff in planning physical activity content.
- Include employees in the planning of physical activity programs.
- Make use of existing campaigns.
- Organise and pay for benefits such as commuter tickets and bicycle benefits.
- Allow working time to be used for mobility.
- Reward successes.

Financial incentives for employers provided by society help to create a culture of physical activity in the workplace. Recreational and leisure activities for all staff at a reasonable cost are counted as tax-free staff benefits and are provided or organized by the vast majority of workplaces.

In Finland, the Occupational Safety and Health Act obliges employers to investigate, identify and assess the risks, hazards and stress factors for the safety and health of workers together with their staff. To ensure that the assessment of occupational risks takes into account. The following solutions are necessary to ensure that the risk assessment of work also takes into account prolonged sitting and standing and physically demanding work:

- The work risk assessment should include both physically demanding and inactive work.
- Risk assessment training includes risk management for physically demanding and inactive work. The importance of physical activity in maintaining and restoring fitness for work is also more strongly emphasized.

Employers have opportunities to influence working conditions through physical activity, for example:

- Working with staff to develop solutions for teleworking and hybrid working that encourage activity and mobility.
- Provide opportunities for active and restorative breaks during the working day.
- Encourage commuting.
- Provide accessible and appropriate changing rooms, washing facilities and cycle storage.

The health service is an important partner because it identifies people who are benefiting from increased physical activity and other lifestyle changes. More systematic action is needed in occupational health to promote a more systematic way of living a more physical lifestyle for clients.

When building a partnership with occupational health, it is important to pay attention to two things:

- Employers will be more aware of the opportunities and provision of occupational health care.
- The action plan between the workplace and the occupational health service should include should be set out how physical activity will be promoted and how measures will be monitored.

Proposals for improvements in occupational healthcare:

- The role of occupational physiotherapists should be strengthened in workplace surveys and occupational health promotion.
- The role of the occupational safety and health officer should be strengthened in workplace surveys and in the assessment of the importance of health at work and in drawing up action plans.
- Occupational health staff should be trained in physical activity counselling, lifestyle counselling and how to support clients' behavior change.
- More and more occupational health professionals are addressing the issue of physical activity with clients and know how to advise them on how to move forward.
- Collaboration between occupational health professionals works to support clients who are not physically active enough to be healthy to move towards a more physical lifestyle.
- Clients' health plans show how to increase physical activity.

In addition to occupational health, other important partners include sport and well-being service providers, organizations, municipalities and well-being regions. Their services should be integrated into workplace and occupational health measures.

Mental, physical and social balance is a prerequisite for human well-being. If this balance is upset, it can lead to stress, insomnia and mental well-being problems. Exercise is one way of increasing balance. Balance at work requires action from 1) society, 2) the employer, 3) the work community and 4) the individual.

1. Society can promote work-life balance through education policy, collective agreements and legislation.
2. The employer both enables and manages a balanced working life by ensuring a healthy and safe workplace, a balance between work demands and individual resources, and fair management. The employer also enables and authorizes the use of physical activity as a means of promoting fitness for work.
3. A benevolent and respectful workplace atmosphere promotes balance. Involving staff in the planning of physical activity content increases participation and supports well-being at work. The involvement and example of colleagues is important in encouraging physical activity.
4. Individuals contribute to their work-life balance by developing self-management skills. For example, the ability to prune and prioritize reduces the rush. Opportunities for a

physical and healthy working day should be exploited. Balance in working life is part of lifelong learning.

To ensure that the means to increase work capacity do not remain isolated measures and are actively used, the whole must be managed. This means that frontline workers need training/coaching in work capacity management, including physical activity and recovery.

In 15% of workplaces, physical activity is included in the strategy as a means of maintaining or improving staff performance. When physical activity is part of an organization's strategy, the benefits to the workplace community are achieved in addition to the personal fitness, health and well-being benefits of physical activity.

This means increased sense of community, a better working atmosphere, increased productivity and improved work performance. At a strategic level, mobility therefore increases the intangible capital of the organization.

Other opportunities for the employer include:

- Involving the whole work community: discussions, participation and other common practices in the work community, and joint action on health and safety.
- The employer and management set an example in the promotion of work capacity.

The following physical activity measures also increase the benefits in terms of work capacity and productivity (Figure 4):

- Maintaining one's own physical fitness, well-being and work capacity is included in all in all undergraduate, post-graduate, specialized and continuing education courses.
- Job-specific profiles will be created to describe the type of physical activity that contributes to work capacity in different occupational areas.
- Providing tools for workplaces to develop a mobility plan for staff and improve recovery.
- Effective communication creates a new image of mobility at work. In this case mobility is integrated into a range of work and fitness tools.
- Active involvement of employers' and employees' organizations and other workplace actors, training and communication on the theme of mobility.

Figure 4 Physical Activity measures that increases the benefits in terms of work capacity and productivity.

<p><b>Valittavanasi on yli 60 edistämistoimenpidettä</b></p>	<p><b>TYÖYHTEISÖTASO</b></p> <p><b>Tapahtumat, kampanjat ja kilpailut</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hankitaan oma liikunnanohjaaja tai nimitetään työyhteisöstä oma liikuntavastaava/liikuntälähtettiläs.</li> <li>Tuetaan henkilöstön vapaa-ajan liikuntavaroja, joukkueita, kerhoja ja osallistumista turnauksiin.</li> <li>Hyödynnetään julisteita ja yleisten tilojen näyttöruutuja liikuntakannusteiden jakamiseen.</li> <li>Järjestetään sisäisiä kampanjoita, haasteita tai kilpailuja (esim. Porraspäivät, Unelmien Liikuntapäivä).</li> <li>Merkittään kokouskutsuihin, jos kyseisen kokous on mahdollista toteuttaa kävelykokouksena.</li> <li>Ohjataan säännöllistä taukoliikuntaa tai tarjotaan henkilöstön käyttöön taukoliikuntasovellus.</li> <li>Järjestetään itse tai toteutetaan yhteistyökumppanin kanssa ostopalveluna viikoittaisia liikuntatunteja/-hetkiä.</li> <li>Tarjotaan työntäjien kustantamana kausittainen pyörähuolto.</li> <li>Osallistutaan valtakunnallisiin kävelyn ja/tai pyöräilyn edistämiskampanjoihin (esim. Kilometrikisa, Auton vapaapäivä).</li> <li>Järjestetään henkilökunnalle työmatkakävely- ja/tai pyöräilypäivä tai kampanjoita (esim. välinekirppis, kävelykokouspäivä).</li> </ul> <p><b>Olosuhteet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Työpaikalla on omia liikuntatiloja (esim. kuntosalit).</li> <li>Suunnitellaan taukotilat työn tarpeisiin (esim. fyysisesti raskasta työtä tekeville palauttava tila/venyttelynurkkaus, istumatyötä tekeville liikkumiseen aktivoiva tila).</li> <li>Työpaikalla on tarjolla taukoliikuntavälineitä (esim. kuminauha, kahvakuula, jumppapeppi).</li> <li>Tarjotaan lähi- ja etätöihin istumista vähentäviä ja fyysistä aktiivisuutta lisääviä työvälineitä (esim. säädettävät pöydät, työpistekuntopyörä/-kävelymatto).</li> <li>Hankitaan tai vuokrataan työpaikalle yhteiskäyttöauto työasiamatkoja varten.</li> <li>Rajoitetaan henkilöauton pysäköintimahdollisuuksia.</li> <li>Mahdollistetaan sähköpyörän lataaminen työpaikalla.</li> <li>Hankitaan yhteiseen käyttöön pyöräpumpu ja pyörän korjausvälineitä.</li> <li>Hankitaan työpaikalle asiointipyörä.</li> <li>Varmistetaan riittävät ja tarkoituksenmukaiset tilat vaatteiden säilytykseen.</li> <li>Tarjotaan riittävät ja tarkoituksenmukaiset tilat peseytymiseen ja vaatteiden vaihtamiseen.</li> <li>Varmistetaan riittävät ja tarkoituksenmukaiset tilat peseytymiseen ja vaatteiden vaihtamiseen.</li> <li>Varmistetaan, että pyörän säilytys on laadukasta ja turvallista (esim. runkolukituksen mahdollistava parkki, pyöräkatokset).</li> <li>Varmistetaan, että pyörän säilytyspaikkoja/-tiloja on riittävästi suhteessa henkilöstön määrään (esim. pyöräparkki, tila parkkihallin).</li> </ul> <p><b>Johtaminen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Otetaan työyhteisössä käyttöön kimpakäyttäjärjestelmä.</li> <li>Perehdyttää uudet työntekijät henkilöstöliikunnan ja työmatkaliikunnan mahdollisuuksiin.</li> <li>Kannustaa ja näyttää esimerkkiä liikunnallisesta elämäntavasta.</li> <li>Ottaa liikunnan ja fyysisen aktiivisuuden säännöllisesti esille henkilöstöpalaverissa, kehityskeskusteluissa, perehdytyksessä tai muissa sovitussa tilanteissa.</li> <li>Osallistuu tarjottuun työhyvinvoinnin tai työkykyjohtamisen koulutukseen, jossa on mukana myös liikunnan työkykyä lisäävänä keinona.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ORGANISAATIOTASO</b></p> <p><b>Taloudelliset kannustimet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tarjotaan mahdollisuus käyttää työaikaa liikuntaan sovittu määrä viikossa/kuukaudessa.</li> <li>Tarjotaan rahallinen liikuntaetu.</li> <li>Järjestetään johdolle ja esihenkilöille koulutusta liikkumisen merkityksestä työkykylle ja hyvinvoinnille sekä henkilöstöliikunnan järjestämisestä työpaikalla.</li> <li>Tarjotaan mahdollisuus työsuhteopkupyörän hankintaan.</li> <li>Sovitaan, että työmatkaliikkujen vaatteiden vaihtaminen ja suihkussa käyminen sisältyvät työaikaan.</li> <li>Laaditaan pelisäännöt eri kulkumuotojen korvaamisesta (esim. kilometrikorvasu pyörällä kulkemisesta).</li> <li>Tarjotaan mahdollisuus joukkoliikenteen työsuhteelliseksi pöytä.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hallinnolliset linjaukset</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hankitaan lainattavia matkakortteja päivän aikana tapahtuvaan työasiointiin.</li> <li>Sisällytetään työterveyshuollon kanssa tehtyyn sopimukseen fyysisen aktiivisuuden edistäminen ja seuranta.</li> <li>Mahdollistetaan työajan joustot / liukua työaika.</li> <li>Tiedotetaan työntäjien tarjoamista mahdollisuuksista liikkumisen lisäämiseen esim. intrassa, s-postilla, henkilöstötapaamisissa.</li> <li>Varmistetaan henkilöstön osallistuminen toimenpiteiden suunnitteluun ja valintaan.</li> <li>Määritellään toimenpiteisiin käytettävä budjetti ja seurataan toimenpiteiden toteutumista.</li> <li>Nimitetään henkilöstöliikunnan vastuuhenkilö(t) tai työryhmä.</li> <li>Työsuohdeautoiksi hankitaan sähkö- tai kaasuautoja.</li> <li>Seurataan työmatkojen kulkutapoja säännöllisin väliajoin (esim. kyselyin).</li> <li>Viestitään työmatkaliikunnan mahdollisuuksista.</li> <li>Nimitetään työmatkaliikunnan edistämisen vastuuhenkilö(t) tai työryhmä.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

## VIKSU toolkit

There are [Guidelines for promoting health at the workplace Off we go! - Health at workplaces](#)

with different lists of tips for workplaces e.g. [Exercise - Physically strenuous work](#)

[Exercise - Sedentary work Recovery Nutrition Sleep](#) and [Health promotion plan Health promotion plan](#)

There is also a WHO Toolkit to support SMEs promoting physical activity [WHO-EURO-2023-8209-47977-71019-eng.pdf](#)



*Financiado por la Unión Europea. Las opiniones y puntos de vista expresados solo comprometen a su(s) autor(es) y no reflejan necesariamente los de la Unión Europea o los de la Agencia Ejecutiva Europea de Educación y Cultura (EACEA). Ni la Unión Europea ni la EACEA pueden ser considerados responsables de ellos.*