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**Financing Sport Climbing development in Slovakia using Visegrad
Fund and Erasmus+ Sport**

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Declaration:

I undersigned, Anna Michalková, the student of Sport Diplomacy C-CZV-SDI at University of Economics Prague, hereby declare that the semester work presented in this report is my own work and has been carried out under the supervision guidance of Mgr. Ing. Kateřina Kočí, Ph. D.

This project work is not submitted to any other university for any other examination purpose. I have tried my level best to include all information in this report.

PLACE: Bratislava

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2 Abbreviation register

EU – European Union

IFSC – International Federation of Sport Climbing

IOC – International Olympic Committee

MINEDU - Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

R&D – Research and development

SMU JAMES – Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES

SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threads

3 Introduction

Sport is an integral part of life of people. It contributes to health, cooperation, it opens the dialogue and participation.

There are sports with history and new sports that are evolving partly from the historical ones. Sport climbing is one of the new sports originating historically in mountaineering. It is not widespread and it is rather a small sport. On the present, sport climbing is a new sport to debut at Summer Olympics Tokyo 2020.

Once a sport reaches the professional level it becomes a part of national marketing. From that moments it needs financial support for its continuous development. To be able to supply athletes with conditions, coaches with theory and methodology of training and institutions with means to promote the further progress.

The state support for the development of Sport Climbing in Slovakia is very limited. Therefore it is essential to be open to various grant schemes that are available for its further growth.

In this work I am going to focus on Erasmus+ Sport programmes from EU and Visegrad Grants from the regional Visegrad Fund operating in Central Europe basically for Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Poland.

4 Theme strength

The theme of financing Sport climbing using funds in Slovakia is a very relevant theme. The state resources are limited and this new sport needs to fundamentally develop all its needs in a short time in a fast changing environment.

When becoming Olympic sport new disciplines developed in sport climbing, new methods of training emerged and new technical equipment came up. Sport climbing evolves extremely fast in these days so the money is of high demand. Organizations have to share knowledge and implement all the changes effectively and in multilateral cooperation. This is where the financial support is essential and crucial. Otherwise, it is impossible to keep the pace with evolution of sport climbing in the world.

Financing the sport development generally is also a world's discussed topic. Investing in sport is seen as an advantage in physical literacy of citizens, as a challenge of being active for life and of course in securing high level of performance for the talented. Here is a nice quote from globalsportsjob.com:

“Governments across the world are finding themselves asking why they should invest in sports which actually is an easily answered question. High performance sport is often invested in as it raises the countries profile when they compete on the international stage, while investing in mass participation can help target health problems such as

obesity and cardiovascular disease. Investment in sport has been proven to be the best investment of any government program due to its high returns.”¹

State financial resources may be bound with objectives that are more general and less applicable in changing environment.

“However the governments growing input into sport is hindered by different components of the system (ministries of education, sport, recreation and health) that are failing to work together. Coaches from clubs, schools and national teams put different demands on their performers which puts focus on different goals that the athletes are set to achieve.”²

In this work I am going to explore granting through sport climbing, a small modern sport recently added to the Olympics. I am going to look closer at the possibilities to fund the sport development from grant programmes within the regional reach of Slovakia.

For this purpose I formed two research questions:

- i. What is the best way of using Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport in sport climbing development in Slovakia?
- ii. Do the grants help develop different goals in sport climbing than the state subsidy enables?

I will seek the answers to these questions in my work. At first I will compare the two grant schemes – Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport. I will look closer at state subsidy which is directed from Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MINEDU) to the Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES (SMU JAMES) that represents sport climbing. Then I will find the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a SWOT analysis of the two grant schemes. Lastly I will look at hints from practical experience with Erasmus+ Sport and Visegrad grants.

¹ Dr. Colin Higgs, Prof. Emeritus, 11 February 2015. Why and how governments should invest in sport. Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada, and Canadian Sport for Life Leadership Team. Available at: <https://www.globalsportsjobs.com/article/why-and-how-governments-should-invest-in-sport/>

² Ibid.

5 EU and Visegrad Fund

For this work I chose to look closer at regional funds that can be used in the region of Slovakia to support the development of sport climbing. These are basically EU and Visegrad Funds.

5.1 Erasmus+ Sport - EU cooperation in sport

European Union is enforcing its wide range of development through European Structural and Investment Funds.

However, sport development was quite limited until 2007 when the European Commission published the *White Paper on Sport*. It provided a basis for a more comprehensive EU sport policy which was followed in 2009 by the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty which gave the EU an explicit competence for sport.³

Erasmus+ (2014-2020) focusses on grassroots sports. "It can co-fund initiatives, helping to develop, share and implement innovative ideas and practices EU-wide, nationally and at regional and local level. Erasmus+ Sport will help develop sport's European dimension, boosting cooperation between sports organizations, public authorities and other parties."⁴

5.1.1 The main areas of focus of Erasmus+ Sport

- i. Exercise for health
- ii. Anti-doping action
- iii. Social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities
- iv. Combating racism and violence at sport events
- v. Good governance in sport
- vi. Dual careers for athletes

All of these areas can be well addressed when trying to develop sport climbing in Slovakia. They are very well designed for the modern development in sport.

³ HELLMUND Folker (Director EOC EU Office), 2017. *Guide to EU Sport Policy*. Brussels: EOC EU Office

⁴ Sports in the EU. The European Union. Available at: https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/sport_en

5.2 Visegrad Fund - regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe

Visegrad Fund is an international donor organization, established in 2000 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries—Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia to promote regional cooperation in the Visegrad region (V4) as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions.⁵

“The Fund does so by awarding €8 million through grants, scholarships and artist residencies provided annually by equal contributions of all the V4 countries. Other donor countries (Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States) have provided another €10 million through various grant schemes run by the Fund since 2012.”⁶

5.2.1 The main areas of support from Visegrad Fund

- i. Culture and common identity
- ii. Education and capacity building
- iii. Innovation, R&D, Entrepreneurship
- iv. Democratic values and media
- v. Public policy and Institutional Partnership
- vi. Regional Development, Environment and Tourism
- vii. Social Development

In application for sport development project in Visegrad Fund it is best to concentrate on the first two areas – culture and common identity, education and capacity building. All the others are defined for a very specific use and may be quite hard to apply on sport needs.

⁵ About us. Visegrad Fund. Available at: <https://www.visegradfund.org/about-us/the-fund/>

⁶ Ibid.

6 Sport supported by state subsidy in Slovakia

Sport is an essential part of life and governments should consider it as there is a number of positive effects on the society. There are signs of the sport being a priority in the last years in Slovakia. A new Act on Sport came into practice in 2016. Slovak Olympic Committee became a roof organization for all sports in Slovakia in 2019.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (MINEDU) annually supports all approved sports with state subsidies.

6.1 Sport organizations

Sport organizations affiliate like-minded people on the basis of their interest in certain sport. They are sport unions, federations and associations that basically unite both recreational and performance members clustered usually in smaller units - clubs. Thus, they stand for sport development in all possible directions. For each group the goals are different. Nevertheless, one without the other hardly makes sense. Therefore the unions have to carefully develop sport for both recreational and elite members.

Recreational sport includes the ideas of mass sport for all. It deals with activities for many actors - children, youth, adults and seniors. Its aim is to create infrastructure to develop a healthy lifestyle and positive values in the society. The goals are to attract masses for the sport and to ensure possibilities to perform sport without barriers. It aims to raise physical literacy of citizens.

Elite or performance sport is focused on a small group of very talented athletes with extraordinary achievements and their needs. Its goal is to gather unique support for the best to achieve even better results. Their results play role in motivation for the community as well as the country marketing.

Why is this needed? People like to watch extraordinary achievements of athletes. Positive values, pride and belonging are brought by these super athletes to society via broadcasted events where athletes accomplish their extra results. It is not only a marketing of a country, it is a way to integrate society with positive bonding.

For both groups, performance and recreational, it is necessary to develop in various ways. The ideas of fair play, healthy activities, coaching and competition, sharing training ideas and scientific knowledge, as well as infrastructure. However, these are basically the aims that organizations develop with the help of grants which we will have a closer look at in the next chapters. Now let us see what the state subsidies target to develop in sport organizations.

6.1.1 Areas, objectives and goals of state subsidy in Slovakia

The sport organizations in Slovakia gain state subsidies to support their sports. They receive financial resources from Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (MINEDU). A complicated formula calculates the level of subsidy of approved sports. This is how the government systematically promotes the sport development from the state resources.

State subsidy distribution rates and areas in Slovakia in accordance to § 69 5. Act on Sport in Slovakia (2015)⁷ are:

- i. minimum 15 % of dotation for youth sport development through sport clubs
- ii. minimum 20 % of dotation for talented athletes development
- iii. minimum 25 % of dotation for sport representation
- iv. maximum 15 % of dotation overheads of sport union
- v. maximum 30 % of dotation for infrastructure

Deriving from the above we can say that the state wants to act in sport development through clubs, talented athletes, representation, sport union and infrastructure. The MINEDU does not state clear goals, it focuses on the actors and on the share in the support rather than ideas or goals that sport organizations need to develop. The reason is also that the Act on Sport offers general directions rather than the detailed instructions to the areas and goals for sport development.

On one hand, this approach from MINEDU is very liberal and gives an open field of possible sport development. On the other, it may cause uneven and uncontrolled and rather hindered development of sports in Slovakia. The development may be dependent only on the focus of the chief personnel in unions, associations and federations. Which means that good chiefs will drive their organizations well and develop all necessary fields and the old-fashioned ones will stay stuck in the rigid structure of the state subsidy recalculation and will never act as an agent for any vital changes.

6.1.2 Sport climbing state subsidy in Slovakia

Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES (SMU JAMES) represents two small sports at the international level, mountaineering and sport climbing. Until 2017 they were subsidized in one common budget as seen in Figure 1 and the distribution of finance inside SMU JAMES was left upon the internal decision. From 2018 there are two separate budgets for the two, sport climbing and mountaineering.

⁷ Act on Sport in Slovakia (2015) Available at: http://www.ucps.sk/clanok-0-3230/Uplne_znenie_zakona_c_440_2015_Z_z_o_sporte_a_o_zmene_a_doplneni_niektorych_zakonov_v_zneni_zakona_c_354_2016_Z_z_a_zakona_c_335_2017_Z_z_s_dovodovou_spravou.html

Sport climbing is a small sport within SMU JAMES. The members of the union do not specify their sport preference so it is hard to say how many out of approximately 6 000 members of SMU JAMES are sport climbers and how many mountaineers. Many of the members are actually both.

<u>Years</u>	<u>State subsidy Sport unspecified</u>	<u>State subsidy Mountaineering</u>	<u>State subsidy Sport climbing</u>	<u>Top team Elite athletes subsidy</u>
<u>2015</u>	<u>19 000 Euro</u>			
<u>2016</u>	<u>24 000 Euro</u>			
<u>2017</u>	<u>30 000 Euro</u>			
<u>2018</u>		<u>30 699 Euro</u>	<u>5 915 Euro</u>	<u>21 586 Euro</u>
<u>2019</u>		<u>43 286 Euro</u>	<u>35 075 Euro</u>	<u>36 000 Euro</u>

Figure 1 The level of state subsidy in years 2015 - 2019 from The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic for The Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES, source: <https://www.minedu.sk/financovanie-sportu/>

As seen from Figure 1 the state subsidy for small sports like sport climbing is rather low in Slovakia. In 2019 it reached 35 075 Euro which seems promising. In the year 2018 it was only 5 915 Euro because the subsidy calculated by special formula started to distinguish sport climbing as a new sport in that year. In the same year a new budget phenomenon of MINEDU appeared – Top team, state subsidy for elite athletes. It is directed namely to the talented athletes for their individual advancement in sport. This part of subsidy can add to the development of the whole sport but it was not designed for this purpose, the purpose was to enable progress of elite athletes.

Compared to grants which are analyzed in the following chapters the state subsidies for sport climbing are considerably low in amount. Therefore it is necessary to search for grant support beyond national level. It is also nice not to depend only on state and evolve using other possible sources as the state support is insufficient.

6.2 Comparison of Visegrad and Erasmus grants suitable for sport development

In the figures below all the accessible information from Grant guidelines by Visegrad Fund and Erasmus+ Programme Guide were put into summary of grant types.

Main points of comparison of Erasmus+ Sport and Visegrad Grants that could be used for sport were countries involved and areas of cooperation, duration of the project, what grant covers, objectives and their annual changes, grant limits as well as the application process, information display, who could apply, program guides, approval period, selection rounds and the assessment criteria. All the content is valid for year 2019.

	Visegrad Fund		
Grant types	Visegrad Grants	Visegrad+ Grants	Strategic Grants
Countries cooperation	at least 3 V4 countries , in cross-boarder 2 is enough	at least 3 V4 countries	all V4
Areas of cooperation	share knowledge, enhance innovation, engage citizens	share knowledge, enhance innovation, engage citizens	share knowledge, enhance innovation, engage citizens
Max Duration of Project	18 months	18 months	12-36 months
Grant covers	100% of project budget inc. 15% overheads	100% of project budget inc. 15% overheads	100% of project budget inc. 15% overheads
Objectives and Goals 2019	1. culture and common identity, 2. education and capacity building, 3. innovation, R&D, entrepreneurship, 4. democratic values and the media, 5. public policy and institutional partnership, 6. regional development, environment and tourism, 7. social development	1. culture and common identity, 2. education and capacity building, 3. innovation, R&D, entrepreneurship, 4. democratic values and the media, 5. public policy and institutional partnership, 6. regional development, environment and tourism, 7. social development	1. sustainability of ideal from 1989, 2. 15+ years of the V4 in the EU, 3. new impetus to the eastern partnership and EU enlargement (Western Balkans)
Changes in objectives	slight changes announced annually	slight changes announced annually	slight changes announced annually
Grant limits	no limit, grant over 10 000 Eur needs Audit	no limit, grant over 10 000 Eur needs Audit	no limit, grant over 10 000 Eur needs Audit
Application process	videos, FAQs, contact the project managers latest 30 days before deadline, download the project guidelines, application online can be saved and finished later	videos, FAQs, contact the project managers latest 30 days before deadline, download the project guidelines, application online can be saved and finished later	videos, FAQs, contact the project managers latest 30 days before deadline, download the project guidelines, application online can be saved and finished later
Who can apply	non-governmental	non-governmental	non-governmental
Info display	appealing	appealing	appealing
How to apply	web site forms	web site forms	web site forms
Programme guide	30 pages of guidelines	30 pages of guidelines	30 pages of guidelines
Approval period	60 days	60 days	60 days
Selection rounds in a year	3	3	3
Assessment criteria	1. Project Relevance; 2. Visegrad Substance; 3. Quality & Impact; 4. Transparency & Accuracy; 5. Experience & Mission	1. Project Relevance; 2. Visegrad Substance; 3. Quality & Impact; 4. Transparency & Accuracy; 5. Experience & Mission	1. Project Relevance; 2. Visegrad Substance; 3. Quality & Impact; 4. Transparency & Accuracy; 5. Experience & Mission

Figure 2 Table of grant types and their features based upon Grant Guideline by Visegrad Fund 2019. Visegrad Grant Guidelines. Available at: <https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/uploads.mangoweb.org/shared-prod/visegradfund.org/uploads/2018/08/Grant-Guidelines-1.pdf>

	Erasmus+ Sport		
Grant types	Small Collaborative Partnerships	Collaborative Partnerships	Non-profit European Sport Events
Countries cooperation	at least 3 different programme countries	at least 5 different programme countries	10 different programme countries
Areas of cooperation	develop transfer, implement innovative outputs, dissemination and exploitation activities, promote innovative ideas related to sport and physical activity	develop transfer, implement innovative outputs, dissemination and exploitation activities, promote innovative ideas related to sport and physical activity	develop transfer, implement innovative outputs, dissemination and exploitation activities, promote innovative ideas related to sport and physical activity
Max Duration of Project	12-24 months	12-36 months	12 months
Grant covers	80% of total cost	80% of total cost	80% of total cost
Objectives and Goals 2019	1. social inclusion and equal opportunities; 2. European traditional sports and games; 3. mobility of volunteers, coaches, managers and staff, 4. protect athletes, especially youngest, from health and safety hazards, 5. promote education through sport.	1. cross border threats - doping, match fixing, violence; 2. good governance - dual careers of athletes; 3. voluntary activities - health enhancing physical activities, equal access to sport for all with focus to grassroots sport, 4. social inclusion, equal opportunities.	1. cross border threats - doping, match fixing, violence; 2. good governance - dual careers of athletes; 3. voluntary activities - health enhancing physical activities, equal access to sport for all with focus to grassroots sport, 4. social inclusion, equal opportunities.
Changes in objectives	slight changes announced annually	slight changes announced annually	slight changes announced annually
Grant limits	60 000 Eur	400 000 Eur	500 000 Eur (300 000 Eur "EU Week of Sport")
Application process	Erasmus info day, uneasy process of getting to the application form, need of registration number of programme partners, application online is detailed, freezes sometimes	Erasmus info day, uneasy process of getting to the application form, need of registration number of programme partners, application online is detailed, freezes sometimes	Erasmus info day, uneasy process of getting to the application form, need of registration number of programme partners, application online is detailed, freezes sometimes
Who can apply	non-profit organisations and public bodies	non-profit organisations and public bodies	non-profit organisations and public bodies
Info display	a bit more complicated	a bit more complicated	a bit more complicated
How to apply	web site forms	web site forms	web site forms
Programme guide	333 pages Erasmus+ Programme Guide	333 pages Erasmus+ Programme Guide	333 pages Erasmus+ Programme Guide
Approval period	4-6 month	4-6 month	4-6 month
Selection rounds in a year	1	1	1
Assessment Criteria	1. Formal Check - focus on eligibility and exclusion criteria; 2. Quality Assessment - operational and financial capacity; 3. Verification on risks of double funding	1. Formal Check - focus on eligibility and exclusion criteria; 2. Quality Assessment - operational and financial capacity; 3. Verification on risks of double funding	1. Formal Check - focus on eligibility and exclusion criteria; 2. Quality Assessment - operational and financial capacity; 3. Verification on risks of double funding

Figure 3 Table of grant types and their features based upon Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2019, (version 2, 15 January 2019) Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2019_en

6.2.1 Types of grants

The Visegrad Fund offers three basic grant programs – Visegrad, Visegrad+ and Strategic Grants. Erasmus+ Sport also offers three programs Small Collaborative Partnerships, Collaborative Partnerships and Non-profit European Events as shown in Figure 4.

They differ in several aspects which are to be discussed closer in sections below.

To support the development of sport all of these grants can be used. The goals have to be well defined in accordance with programme specific goals, priorities and objectives discussed further in the text.

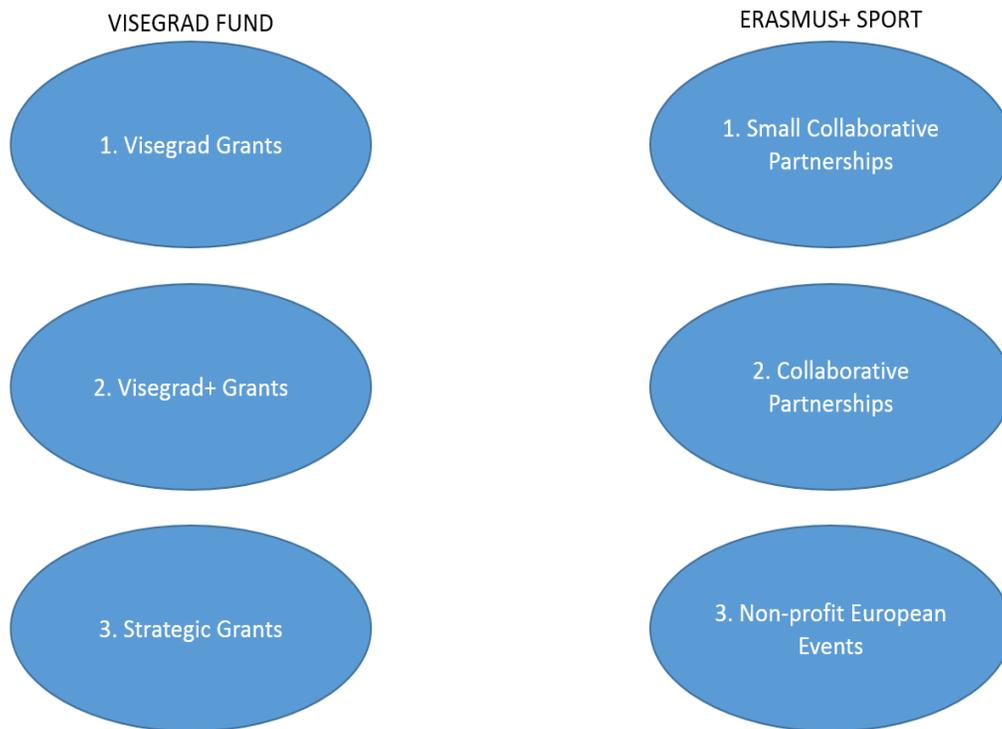


Figure 4 Table of grant types of Visegrad Fund and Erasmus+ Sport

6.2.2 Countries involved

As seen from the tables in Figure 6 and Figure 7 partnerships in Visegrad grants are rather limited to the regional area of V4 extended with one partner from Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries which applies only for Visegrad+ Grants. For Visegrad grants it is always an advantage to include partners from all V4 countries listed in Figure 6 – Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Poland even though guidelines mention that three of the four is enough.

The range of collaboration is much wider in case of Erasmus+ Sport. Except the EU and non-EU programme countries listed in Figure 5, depending on a programme it is possible to have Partner Countries Neighboring the EU or even Other Partner Countries from a numerous list. However, minimum five partners for collaborative partnerships must be from the list of programme countries in Figure 5.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

The Erasmus+ Programme is open to the following countries:

PROGRAMME COUNTRIES

The following countries can fully take part in all the Actions of the Erasmus+ Programme:

Member States of the European Union (EU) ⁹			
Belgium	Greece	Lithuania	Portugal
Bulgaria	Spain	Luxembourg	Romania
Czech Republic	France	Hungary	Slovenia
Denmark	Croatia	Malta	Slovakia
Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Finland
Estonia	Cyprus	Austria	Sweden
Ireland	Latvia	Poland	United Kingdom ¹⁰
Non EU Programme Countries			
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Iceland Liechtenstein	Norway Turkey Serbia ¹¹	

Figure 5 Eligible Countries (p. 22 in Erasmus+ Programme Guide), version 2, 15 January 2019) Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2019_en

Visegrad Grants (3xV4) max. 18 months	At least 3 organizations from 3 different V4 countries, including the applicant
Visegrad+ Grants (3xV4 + 1) max. 18 months	At least 3 organizations from 3 different V4 countries AND at least 1 organization from Western Balkan countries : <i>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia</i> OR Eastern Partnership countries: <i>Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine</i>
Strategic Grants (4xV4) min. 12 months, max. 36 months	At least 4 organizations from ALL four Visegrad countries: <i>Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia</i>
Cross-border Cooperation (2xV4) max. 18 months	At least 2 organizations from neighboring V4 countries. Only the following combinations are possible: CZ–PL CZ–SK HU–SK PL–SK

Figure 6 Project Partners (p. 3 in Visegrad Grant Guidelines) Available at: <https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/uploads.mangoweb.org/shared-prod/visegradfund.org/uploads/2018/08/Grant-Guidelines-1.pdf>

6.2.3 What bodies can apply

From the selected information we can assume that both Visegrad and Erasmus+ prefer non-governmental organizations as the grantees. However, for Visegrad grants also entrepreneurs can apply assuming that the grant will have nonprofit character as seen in Figure 7.

In case of Erasmus+ Sport (Figure 8), Collaborative Partnerships are open to any type of non-profit organizations and public bodies. The aim is to have diverse range of partners in order to benefit from different experiences and expertise in the project results.

Who can apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium of organizations of which 3 or more are based in different Visegrad countries • All types of non-governmental, civil society organizations (CSOs); municipalities and local governments; schools, higher education institutions; research and scientific bodies and public institutions are eligible as lead partner (applicant) and partners in the consortia • Market actors, e.g.: private entrepreneurs, companies – especially innovation and startup-related actors – with a legal entity are also eligible, but only if their Visegrad project is of nonprofit character.
Who cannot apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions of state administration (ministries, government agencies, embassies, state-funded cultural institutes, state-owned companies) • Natural persons (individual citizens) • Private entrepreneurs with/without a legal entity for funding their for-profit activities

Figure 7 Eligibility for applying (p.2 in Visegrad Grant Guidelines) Available at: <https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/uploads.mangoweb.org/shared-prod/visegradfund.org/uploads/2018/08/Grant-Guidelines-1.pdf>

Any organisation or public body, established in a Programme Country can apply from the Erasmus+ Programme in the field of Sport. For example, such organisations can be (non-exhaustive list):

- A public body in charge of sport at local, regional or national level
- A National Olympic Committee or National Sport confederation
- A sport organisation at local, regional, national, European or international level
- A national sports league
- A sport club
- An organisation or union representing athletes
- An organisation or unions representing professionals and volunteers in sport (such as coaches, managers, etc)
- An organisation representing the 'sport for all' movement
- An organisation active in the field of physical activity promotion
- An organisation representing the active leisure sector
- An organisation active in the field of education, training or youth.

A Collaborative Partnership is **transnational** and involves at least **five organisations** from **five different Programme Countries**.

All participating organisations must be identified at the time of applying for a grant.

Figure 8 Eligibility for applying (Collaborative Partnerships Erasmus+ Sport), version 2, 15 January 2019) Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/erasmus-programme-guide-2019_en

6.2.4 Project duration and grant level

In Visegrad and Visegrad+ grants the project duration is up to 18 months, Strategic grants 12-36 months. Visegrad grants do not state limits. Grants over 10 000 Euro are considered big and must have audit. The maximum grant level of grant is not mentioned in Visegrad case.

In Erasmus+ Sport Small Collaborative Partnerships take 12-24 months and the budget is up to 60 000 Euro, while Collaborative Partnerships last for 12-36 months with maximum budget of 400 000 Euro and Non-profit European Sport Events up to 12 months with the maximum budget of 300 000 Euro for European Week of Sport or 500 000 Euro for other non-profit events.

We can compare grant levels with the state subsidy for sport climbing over the last years where in Figure 1. We can see that the overall subsidy for sport climbing for year 2018 was 5 915 Euro and in 2019 it was 35 075 Euro. Visegrad and Erasmus + Sport operate with much higher budgets compared to state subsidy for sport climbing. Furthermore grant project duration is longer, more partners are involved and the areas of support are really interesting so the outcomes may be really beneficial. Let us look closer at the areas, objectives, goals and priorities of Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport.

6.2.5 Areas of grants

Looking closer at the grant areas for Visegrad it is clear that the sport development can be nicely addressed through them, e.g. knowledge share, innovation and engaging citizens. Also in case of Erasmus+ Sport the areas are very competent. Developing transfer, implementing innovative outputs, activities of dissemination and exploitation as well as promoting innovative ideas are key ways of modern sport development.

Slovak sport climbing projects basically involve cooperation, knowledge share as well as innovation and engagement.

For Visegrad grants the areas are:

- i. share knowledge
- ii. enhance innovation
- iii. engage citizens

Erasmus+ Sport areas are:

- i. develop transfer
- ii. implement innovative outputs
- iii. dissemination and exploitation activities
- iv. promote innovative ideas related to sport

6.2.6 Objectives and goals

In general the grant areas or priorities are set for long term. Slight changes are made annually in goals and objectives. For year 2019 they were set as follows.

6.2.6.1 *Visegrad Grant objectives*

To be able to use Visegrad grants for small sport development it is necessary to concentrate on first two objectives – culture and common identity and education and capacity building.

In Visegrad Grants 2019 there are seven objectives:

- i. culture and common identity,
- ii. education and capacity building,
- iii. innovation, R&D, entrepreneurship,
- iv. democratic values and the media,
- v. public policy and institutional partnership,
- vi. regional development, environment and tourism,
- vii. social development

For Visegrad Strategic Grants 2019 these 3 objectives apply:

- i. sustainability of ideal from 1989,
- ii. 15+ years of the V4 in the EU,
- iii. new impetus to the eastern partnership and EU enlargement (Western Balkans)

6.2.6.2 *Erasmus+ Sport Goals*

All of the Erasmus+ Sport goals are applicable on Sport Climbing development in Slovakia.

For Erasmus+ Sport 2019 there are five goals for small collaborative partnerships:

- i. social inclusion and equal opportunities;

- ii. European traditional sports and games;
- iii. mobility of volunteers, coaches, managers and staff,
- iv. protect athletes, especially youngest, from health and safety hazards,
- v. promote education through sport

For Erasmus+ Sport 2019 there are four goals for collaborative partnerships:

1. cross border threats - doping, match fixing, violence;
2. good governance - dual careers of athletes;
2. voluntary activities - health enhancing physical activities, equal access to sport for all with focus to grassroots sport,
3. social inclusion, equal opportunities

6.2.7 Guidelines and accessibility

Grant Guidelines for Visegrad Grants are written in 30 pages long document whereas the Erasmus+ Programme Guide is 333 pages long, the section on Sport is 10 pages long but some general parts must be applied so it may be vital to read also other sections. Both grants are applied for via web site forms accessible after creating an account. Accessibility of Visegrad grants seems much less complicated than the Erasmus+ Sport.

For both Visegrad Fund and Erasmus+ Sport the application forms are on their web site. The grantee creates an account to clearly fill in the online form. The form is active some time before the actual deadline. In Visegrad grant it is 30 days, in that period of time it is not possible to get an appointment at the Visegrad Fund office to receive more information about the grant.

In case grantees need any information they can ask for individual consultation at Visegrad Fund before the call for applications is activated. Erasmus+ Sport does the information dissemination via Info Days in Brussels. National Olympic Committees may spread the information about Erasmus+ Sport via workshops in their country to stimulate sport organizations to participate. For example Czech Olympic Committee organized Erasmus+ Sport Workshop on 2. February 2019 in Prague.

From the accessible information I can conclude that Erasmus+ Sport seems a bit more complicated as the information is quite voluminous in Programme Guide and the web page less transparent compared to Visegrad grants.

However, applying for Erasmus+ Sport seemed to me more accessible after I saw the real grant users speaking about their experience at the Erasmus+ Sport Workshop in Prague, which will be more discussed in the next two sections of my work.

7 Experience with grant programmes

My study journey included Erasmus+ workshop in Prague 2019 on 1. February. The workshop was held by Czech Olympic Committee. The aim was to help possible grantees with preparation of Erasmus+ Sport Project with practical beneficial examples.

The project types, the priorities and the reasons why to apply for the grants were clearly displayed. Emphasis was given on the partners and how to proceed in the phase of preparation and submission. And finally, how to deal with implementation, reporting and reimbursement.

As with all grants, it is important to receive the initial information that the grant exists. Then it is helpful to witness a positive review of a real beneficiary. After that the potential grantee starts trusting the scheme and searches for more information to be able to fit the scope of the sport development project well to the grant objectives. If there are no other barriers of entry and there is support of the sport or other non-profit organization, it is time to apply for the grant and carry it out successfully to address the elaborate needs.

7.1 Major hints of Erasmus+ Sport

The grantees of Erasmus+ Sport grants were speaking about their experience. I had a chance to interview some of them. Here are the major hints from successful applicants from Czech Olympic Committee, Czech Mountaineering Association and Czech Hockey Federation. Basic hints are pictured in Figure 9.

ERASMUS+ SPORT HINTS



Figure 9 Erasmus+ Sport Hints based on interviews 1.-3.

“Do not do project for project.”⁸ was a message from employee of Czech Olympic Committee.

“Do what you need and you will enjoy.”⁹ says the chairman of Czech Mountaineering Association.

“Choose diligent partners who you can rely on.”¹⁰ says the chairman of Czech Mountaineering Association.

“Do it for the opportunity to develop, not for the money.”¹¹ says the chairman of Czech Hockey Federation.

“The benefits from the project are definitely higher than what was expected.”¹² says the employee of Czech Olympic Committee.

All my respondents reacted very positively to Erasmus+ Sport Programs. They noted that in the end their projects were far more beneficial than they expected, especially in the fields that they did not consider so directly from the start.

All of them marked the preparation phase and reporting as the most difficult parts. The project itself went almost problem free. Some respondents noted that they did not see the same level of engagement from all partners. Generally there was more positive than

⁸ Interview 2.

⁹ Interview 3.

¹⁰ Interview 3.

¹¹ Interview 1.

¹² Interview 2.

negative approach. The greatest contribution was promotion of the organization and its activities. As well as sharing knowledge, gaining connections, friendships and partnerships of both people and organizations for the long term.

The hardest part was to engage partners into initial activities of the project and later also to administration. However, it was worth it.

Planning the scope into details is crucial. A well written project absolutely helps to proceed with the project. It is then easy to just follow the planned activities and have a forthcoming navigation through the work. The hint is to take enough time and engage partners in project planning.

7.1.1 Erasmus+ Climbing For Everybody

Slovakia via SHS JAMES was a partner in the Erasmus+ „Climbing for Everybody“, project organized by Czech Mountaineering Federation. We can have a look at the goals here.

“Project "Climbing for everybody" aims to disseminate and make the public aware of the activities related to the mountain and the values and traditions of the same in different countries, highlighting especially the potential and positive impact, even on health, activities carried out in the environment from mountaineering and Climbing Federation.”¹³

The project nicely covered all its aims in showing traditional values of climbing as they are perceived in different countries with climbing history. Discovering potential, impact on health and youth involvement were also the themes. The leading country representative said “he was satisfied with the outcomes of the project and they will be used further” ¹⁴

The state financial support would not be enough for such a large extent cooperation. Therefore the Erasmus+ Sport in the case of “Climbing for Everybody” was a vital help in sharing knowledge and building the potential far beyond what can be done with state subsidies mentioned in Chapter 6. This proves that using grants is an important in sport development activities.

7.2 Visegrad Fund project experience

I had a chance to be a successful grantee for two similar projects financed by Visegrad Grants. They both were named V4 Climbing Camps and they ran in years 2017 and 2019.

¹³ PROSERPIO, Ariana, 2016. Mountains 360. Available at: <http://climbingforeverybody.cai.it/en/pages/climbing-for-everybody/>

¹⁴ Interview 3.

7.2.1 V4 Climbing Camp

Climbing camps resulted from a need to share knowledge with neighboring countries. The sport climbing was unevenly developed in V4 region. The project reflected the need for knowledge share in V4 in two levels – coaches and athletes. For athletes trainings were organized, for the coaches meetings with educative part. Thus, the know-how was disseminated.

As a by-product of the camp we experienced connections building among athletes and coaches. A platform at social media was created to share ideas and information also in the long run.

In Slovakia we desperately needed a training for Speed climbing - one of the three sport climbing disciplines. Using Visegrad grant via V4 Climbing Camps we were able to show Slovak and also Hungarian coaches how to train Speed. They received contacts for the Polish and Czech coaches who are specialists in this discipline. They stay in further contact and organize common coaching and trainings. The athletes gained a motivation by training in mixed level groups. They made friends and are in touch through social media as well as trainings and competitions in real life.

This project would hardly be realized from state money in its large extent. We were able to gather 75 coaches and athletes in one 4-day event. As we could administer it from one budget it was much easier than to rely on four national supports which are sometimes not so well linked between the countries in terms of goals. Thus some countries would not be able to use their state subsidy for these aims. Finding a common platform was much easier and more flexible for cooperation.

The organizer of V4 climbing camp was a local club not by SMU JAMES. Here it is clear that grants can be used by non-governmental institutions also other than unions or associations. That gives various projects even more flexibility.

7.2.2 Major Hints of Visegrad Grants

My experience with Visegrad Grants was very positive. There are some vital hints. The online application form is well-arranged and easy to handle. Therefore it can nicely lead the grantee in preparation phase and also during the implementation.

It is vital to think about the objectives that are planned to accomplish. Formulate objectives well, plan the activities and the detailed budget. Write project with an idea of sport progress, not money gain. Find partners who will be supporting your ideas and cooperate on the scope.

As Visegrad grants are not basically directed for sport development, it is good to follow the objectives, read the Grant guidelines carefully and fit the project to them.

Remember, the overheads will not cover all your effort and needs. In addition the grant offers you a nice possibility to implement your special unique ideas into practice.

VISEGRAD GRANT HINTS

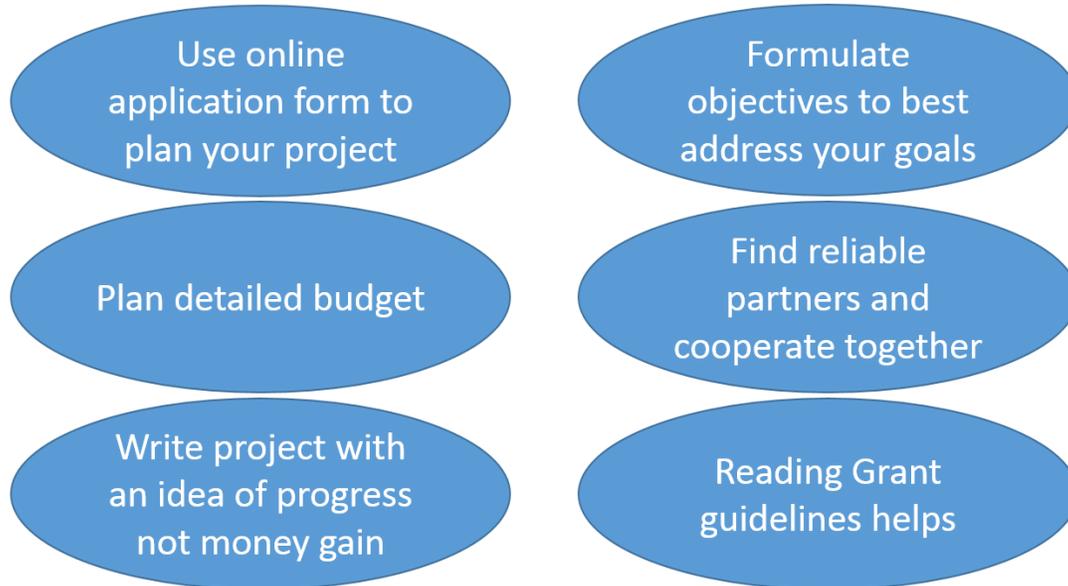


Figure 10 Visegrad Grant Hints based on my experience with Visegrad grants

8 Grant planning

To identify which of the presented grants is better suited for an intended sport development project, it may be useful to use SWOT technique for strategic planning.

SWOT analysis identifies strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats of an intended project. It was developed to identify internal factors and external factors favorable and unfavorable to achieving objectives.

I tried to use SWOT analysis to identify competitive advantage of the Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport in terms of sport development use.

8.1 Erasmus+ Sport SWOT analysis

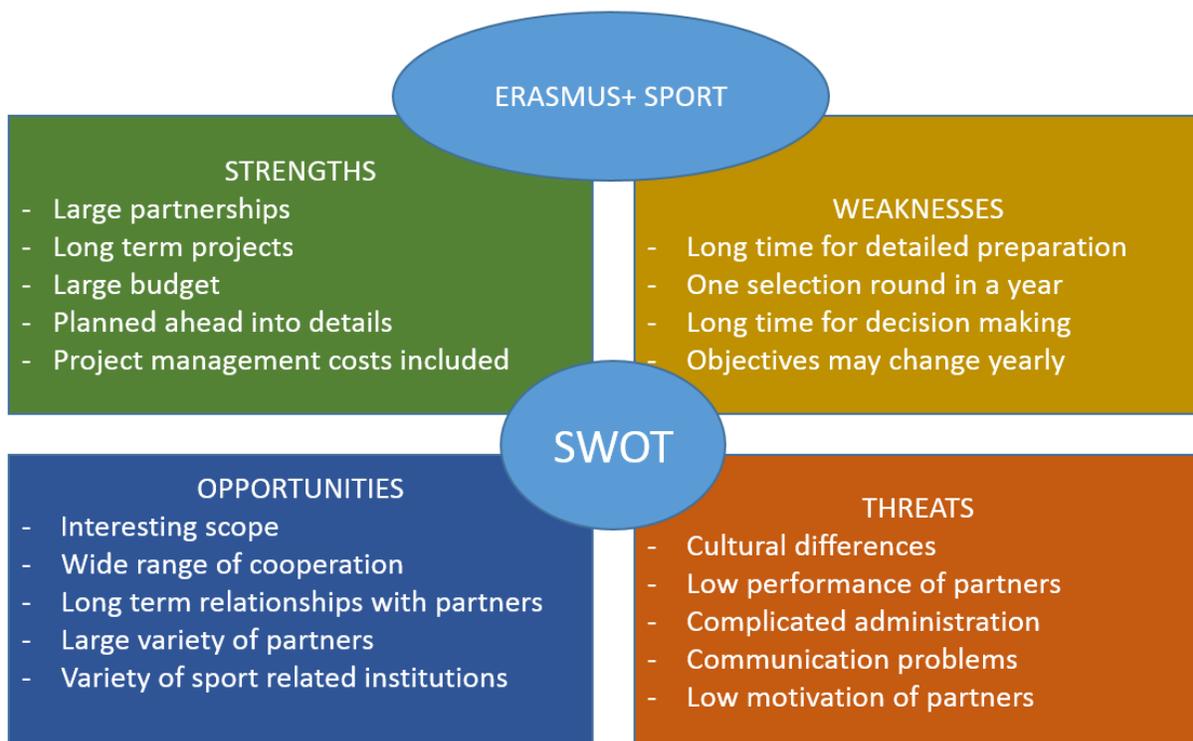


Figure 11 SWOT Analysis of Erasmus+ Sport

The main strengths of Erasmus+ Sport are numerous partnerships in long term projects with a large budget. The project, due to its application form structure, is planned into details and costs for managing it are included in the budget plan.

Opportunities conceal a wide range of cooperation within Europe. The projects in Erasmus+ Sport build long term relationships among various partner organizations.

The main weaknesses are just one selection round in a year and a long time for the project preparation as well as the approval. The administration burden is a considerable weakness.

Major threats origin in cultural differences of partners and their possible communication problems. The level of each partners´ engagement into project may vary which is another possible threat.

8.2 Visegrad Grant SWOT analysis

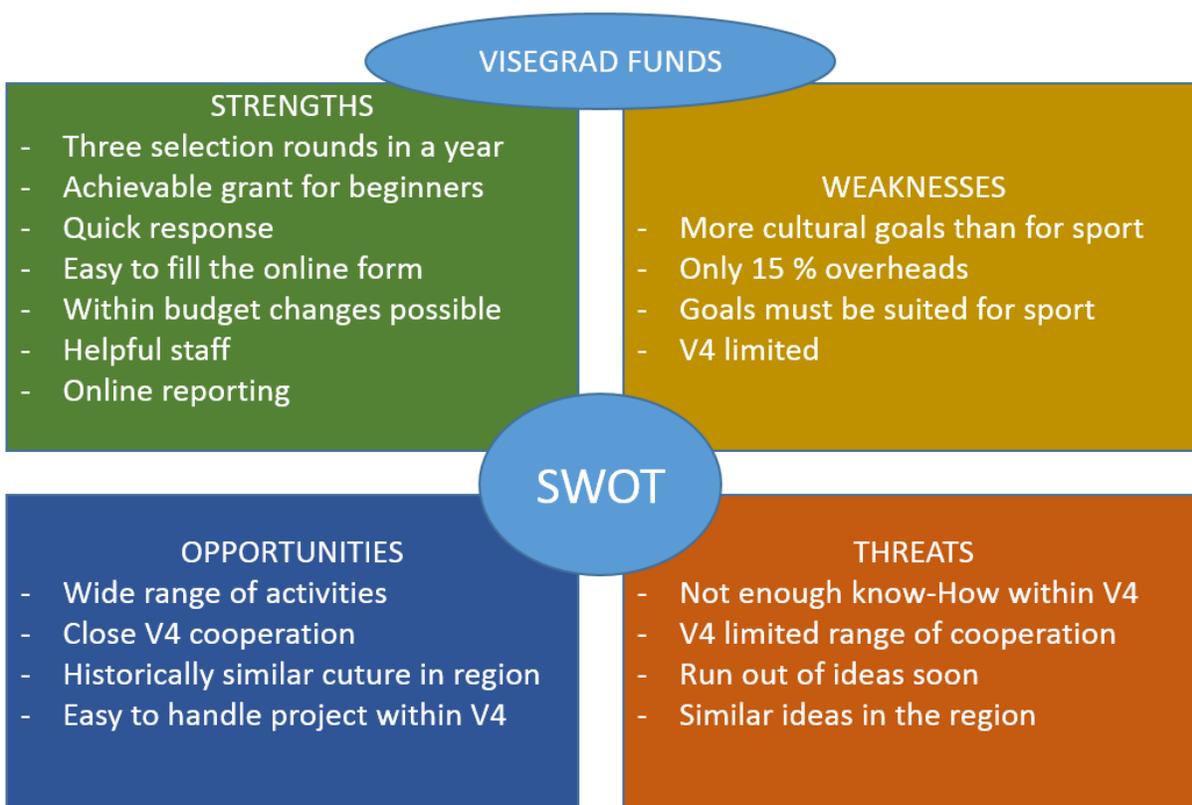


Figure 12 SWOT Analysis of Visegrad Funds

The main strengths of Visegrad grants are definitely grants available for grantees without previous granting experience, three selection rounds in a year and possibility to make slight changes in the budget. Visegrad staff is helpful and responds quickly.

Opportunities are to develop a nice project in a historically similar region which enables you to easily handle the project as the region is compact.

Weaknesses of Visegrad grants are that these grants are not focused on sport development, they deal more with cultural goals so for sport projects have to be fitted.

The overhead costs are quite low, they are not managerial costs only, they include also the administrative costs.

Threats that arise are mostly connected to the similarity which means that there may be limited influx of new ideas in the project within such a close region.

9 Answer to the research questions

Here I would like to answer the two research questions.

To answer the first question:

- i. What is the best way of using Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport in sport climbing development in Slovakia?

I see the opportunity to start granting sport climbing development using the Visegrad Grants as a short term platform in a smaller geographical region with only four neighboring partners and small projects. Goals should be sharing knowledge, building common identity, education and capacity.

If V4 cooperation works well, there will already be four partners to start a wider project in Europe which can be supported by Erasmus+ Sport. The expertise and experience from Visegrad can be an advantage.

In Erasmus+ Sport larger and long term projects with more partners and in greater range can take place. More sport-specific themes open: health, anti-doping, social inclusion, equal opportunities, combating racism and violence at sport events, good governance in sport and dual careers for athletes.

- ii. Do the grants help develop different goals in sport climbing than the state subsidy enables?

The state subsidy enables national sport development specified through actors: clubs, athletes, union, and areas: infrastructure, representation, talented athletes.

The goals given by grants are much wider with regional cooperation quality and more up-to-date sport development themes.

Sport climbing development from state resources will include reimbursement of training and representation costs of the talented athletes, some small support for the infrastructure and clubs.

On the other hand, grants offer no support for tangible assets like infrastructure. Visegrad and Erasmus+ Sport deal with the ideas of common interest that are vital to develop in sport to bring about fair play, knowledge share, inclusion or equal opportunities.

It can be said that the grants offer an extension to the necessities that are supported basically by state from dotation.

If sport climbing wants to develop properly and keep the pace with its fast developing counterparts in the world, it needs to take part in granted projects. What state has to offer will not be substantial.

10 Conclusion and advice

Grants offer quite a wide spectrum of sport development possibilities, different from those that are subsidized by state. This is why sport organizations should apply for grants with ambition to develop the sport in their focus. It is healthy to use various resources and not to rely on just one. In case of sport climbing in Slovak state subsidy is not really a substantial and sufficient source of finance. And, of course, sport may need other challenges than those set by the government. I believe that new areas of development may be even better addressed when applying for grant projects like Erasmus+ Sport and Visegrad Grants.

There are many ways of using the grants. It really depends on the grantee to find the best possible suit for their specific sport to develop. For me Visegrad grants offer a nice cooperation base within a small V4 region. However, in long term it is vital to cooperate in not so generic environment and in a larger field of display. This is what Erasmus+ Sport offers within Europe. It is nice to start with Visegrad Funds and then open the cooperation wider to Europe. The existing contacts from V4 will be a good base to start from when applying for Erasmus+ Sport.

Sport climbing in Slovakia needs to apply for grants as these offer ways to develop in terms of all modern aspects of sport – knowledge share, innovation implementation, citizens' engagement, promoting anti-doping actions, dual careers for athletes, social inclusion and good governance in sport.

Organizations seek ways to develop sport at all levels, sport for all, elite sport, sport for different age groups, children, youth, adults and elderly people. Which is what grant schemes address as well.

Most grants help to develop intangible aspects of sport. You will rarely find grants that will grant infrastructure. It is a limiting factor in a small sport development as the subsidies from state are not enough to build proper infrastructure. Most small sports depend on non-professional or extremely commercial sports grounds.

In search for sport granting I would also recommend to look closer at grants offered within the country. There are possibilities at state municipal and regional levels. The subsidies aim municipal and regional sport development, sometimes even infrastructure. In this way mainly smaller units like clubs and regional sport bodies can be granted.

Private foundations like Orange Foundation offer grants to pursue their public relation goals. Sport is on the focus.

There is also an international level of grants. International sport organizations may offer grant programmes. Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) is representing sport climbing worldwide, SMU JAMES is the member, too. IFSC is an Olympic Sport Federation. International federations usually have funds of support. In the moment IFSC does not, maybe because it is very young, it operates since 2007 it has not yet developed any grant programme. It is good to check for IFSC grants, they may develop soon.

All international sport organizations that represent Olympic sports are members of International Olympic Committee (IOC). IOC offers different scholarships to support sport development worldwide, mostly in less developed regions as well as new sports.

Different international funds can be used as there are ways of joining sport with other scopes – environmental, youth support programmes, human and social development etc. It may be interesting to look closer at Norway grants or Swiss Contribution as well.

The evolution of sport climbing in the world is too fast. Slovakia is a small country and sport climbing is a small but Olympic sport. We need to watch new trends and start a long term cooperation with others which is mostly possible through grant programmes.

State financial subsidy for sport climbing is rather limited and not optimal for the sport development. Small modern sport has a chance to develop only in multinational cooperation with other nations and that is exactly what grants offer. It is important to search for grant programmes to ensure further development in sport climbing in Slovakia.

11 Quotations

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8. Information on Erasmus+ “Climbing for Everybody” led by Czech Mountaineering Association	https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/11879446435-climbing-for-everybody/217471291184001/
9. Erasmus+ Sport 2019	https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/funding/sports_2019_en
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11. Visegrad Grant Types	https://www.visegradfund.org/apply/grants/
12. Visegrad Grant Objectives	https://www.visegradfund.org/apply/grants/visegrad-grants/?c=objectives
13. Act on Sport in Slovakia No. 440/2015 Coll.	https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2015-440

14. Sport Financing from MINEDU	https://www.minedu.sk/financovanie-sportu/
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Table of interviews done at Erasmus+ Sport Workshop in Prague at Czech Olympic Committee, 1. February, 2019:

1. Czech Hockey Federation employee	Erasmus+Sport Small Collaborative Partnership
2. Czech Olympic Committee employee	Erasmus+Sport Collaborative Partnership
3. Czech Mountaineering Association employee	Erasmus+Sport "Climbing For Everybody" Collaborative Partnership