EUROPEAN AQUATICS®

AQUATICS Social Responsibility SWIM SAFE EUROPE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

EA Swim Safe Europe (EA SSE) Certification

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1. What is the EA Swim Safe Europe (EA SSE) certification?

The EA SSE program is a European-wide initiative that recognizes the commitment of EA member federations to promoting swimming education, physical activity, and drowning prevention. Federations that apply for certification can receive one of three progressive certification levels based on their achievements.

This certification serves as a formal European recognition of a federation's strategic efforts to enhance swimming education and water safety. Federations that do not meet the highest certification level will receive recommendations aligned with the SSE Program to support their improvement, taking into account the specificities of the level they have achieved and the level they aim to reach.

2. Who can apply for the EA SSE certification?

The EA SSE certification is specially designed for EA member federations. However, public or private partnerships within a federation's national framework do not affect eligibility. In fact, ff a program is government-led, it may still be eligible for certification, provided that the National Federation ensures the educational and training components, as well as any necessary supervision, to meet certification levels.

3. How and when can federations apply?

Applications must be submitted within the established annual timeline for certification review:

- **January – June:** Period for submission of applications and required documents as outlined in the key requirements for LTS program certification.
- **July – September:** Review and certification process conducted by the technical commission.
- **September – October:** Approval period by the Bureau.

- November – December: Assignment of certification levels and official recognition of the levels achieved by programs and national federations.

To apply, federations must complete the EA SSE application form (available on the website through this *link*), which includes both direct input fields and document upload sections. The following documents must be submitted:

- EA_SSE_Excel Certification Form detailing applied actions (both main and complementary, if applicable) – available on the website through this link;
- Signed EA SSE_Declaration of Commitment – available on the website through this link;
- Annual Implementation Report, following the EA_SSE_Excel Certification Form provided, including evidence of all actions taken. (Not applicable for first-time applicants, only required for renewals).

4. How does the assessment process work?

The EA SSE technical commission evaluates each application and annual report based on four key implementation areas:

- Promotion: Actions that encourage swimming participation, particularly among children;
- Education: Initiatives that ensure high-quality swimming education programs e the alignment with the SSE framework;
- Training: Programs focused on the continuous development of swimming teachers;
- Evaluation: Internal assessments to measure program effectiveness and impact.

Federations must provide a self-reported summary with supporting evidence for their activities. The

5. What are the certification criteria?

The certification levels are determined based on a scoring system, where federations earn points as they meet and complete the various criteria and actions outlined in the certification application form. The form is designed with relative weightings to ensure a total of 100 achievable points

The three certification levels are defined as follows:

- BRONZE LEVEL – Achieved with a score between 0 and 40 points.
- SILVER LEVEL – Achieved with a score between 41 and 80 points.
- GOLD LEVEL – Achieved with a score of 81 points or above.

Federations accumulate points based on their implementation of actions across the four key areas: Promotion, Education, Training and Assessment.

The Excell certification form will provide a detailed breakdown of how each action contributes to the total score, ensuring a transparent and objective evaluation. The specific weighting of each action and its impact on the total score will be outlined in the description of the program and may be reviewed annually.

6. What is expected from certified federations?

Federations that receive EA SSE certification commit to supporting the program's overall objectives. Certified federations are expected to:

- Share best practices, experiences, and knowledge with other member federations;
- Provide additional documentation or evidence upon request for benchmarking purposes;
- Contribute data to the SSE Observatory to support the mapping of Learn to Swim (LTS) program implementation and development across Europe;
- Follow EA SSE branding guidelines when promoting their strategic programs (see attached document).

7. What should federations consider before applying?

Each federation must:

- Self-report on current initiatives (using the EA SSE application form);

- Complete all required forms and submit supporting evidence (e.g., photos, videos, websites, podcasts, interviews, news articles).

8. What are the benefits of certification?

Participation in the EA SSE program provides federations with international recognition of their efforts in promoting high-quality swimming education. Additional benefits include:

- A Certified European Learn to Swim Program aligned with European Aquatics Framework in line with the UN Agenda 2030 covering all ages between 3 and 10 years
- Increase the Level of the National Standards
- Increase the number of Swimmers training at National Level
- Develop their National Database (having a better overview of the number of people able to swim or not) – Better Monitoring
- Biggest leverage in front of the Governing Bodies – integration of water safety, swimming and first aid lessons into existing curricula of educational institutions / programs
- Access to the European Aquatics Development Platform (Education, Report, Communication tools etc...)
- Actively promote Drowning Prevention at a National level
- Contribute to the prevention of child deaths and protect investment in child development
- Support international cooperation – sharing lessons learned, experiences and best practices
- Promote research and development – Seek innovative solutions with European Aquatics to support rural areas and hard to reach communities.
- Participation in benchmarking studies to be promoted by the EA.

9. What support is available for federations that do not achieve the highest certification level?

Federations that do not achieve the Gold Level (i.e., those certified at Bronze or Silver Level, or non-certified federations) will receive recommendations aligned with the SSE Program to support their improvement, taking into account the specificities of the level they have achieved (Bronze
or Silver) and the level they aim to reach.

Annex (1)

EA SSE program overview

Recognition Requirements

CATEGORY	ACTION TYPE	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Promotion (20)	Main	Awareness campaigns on swimming & water safety	Campaigns to raise awareness on swimming and water safety for children, parents, and communities.	6
		Organizing swimming competitions or promotion events	Hosting national/international competitions or events to promote swimming.	6
	Complementary	Collaborations with schools, local gov., clubs	Collaborating with schools, local governments, and clubs to promote swimming locally.	3
		Swimming in public health/fitness campaigns	Including swimming in public health and fitness campaigns.	2
		Free/subsidized lessons for at-risk children	Providing free or subsidized lessons for underserved or at-risk children.	1
		Influencer and athlete partnerships	Partnering with sports influencers or professional swimmers to promote swimming.	1
		Learn-to-swim trial days	Organizing 'learn to swim' days with free trial lessons in local pools.	1

CATEGORY	ACTION TYPE	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Education (30)	Main	Structured swimming education program (EA-aligned)	Developing a structured swimming education program aligned with EA guidelines. Checklist mapping the educational content to the required standards for each certification level (Bronze, Silver, Gold).	12
		Water safety knowledge embedded in curriculum	Ensuring water safety knowledge is part of the curriculum.	8
	Complementary	Teaching materials (books, videos, online)	Creating and distributing books, videos, and/or online materials for swimming education.	4
		Regular updates to curriculum	Regularly updating curriculum to align with new research and trends.	2
		Use of digital platforms for learning	Using digital platforms, e-learning modules, or mobile apps to complement learning.	1
		Environmental awareness in swimming education	Integrating environmental awareness (e.g., ocean conservation) into swimming education.	1
		Multidisciplinary approach related to teaching in swimming	Swimmers are encouraged to take part in different aquatic disciplines that develop their fundamental sports skills (e.g., swimming, artistic swimming, water polo, and diving).	1
		Parent education on water safety	Developing parent education programs on water safety.	1

CATEGORY	ACTION TYPE	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Training (30)	Main	National certification for swimming teachers	Establishing a national certification process for swimming teachers.	10
		Ongoing professional development programs	Offering ongoing professional development programs for teachers.	6
	Complementary	License renewal & regular assessments	Implementing license renewal and regular assessments for swimming teachers.	5
		Specialized training for specific groups	Providing specialized teacher training for specific groups (e.g., children with disabilities).	4
		Mentorship programs for new teachers	Implementing mentorship programs where experienced instructors support new teachers.	2
		First aid & CPR refresher courses	Providing first aid and CPR refresher courses as part of training.	1
		Collaboration with coaches' associations for professional development	Supporting or maintaining collaboration with coaches' associations that focus on the professional development of swimming teachers.	1

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CATEGORY	ACTION TYPE	CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORE
Evaluation (20)	Main	Annual impact assessments (participation, safety, etc.)	Conducting annual impact assessments to evaluate participation and safety improvements (e.g., participation rates, skill development, safety improvements, general public awareness).	7
		Feedback system for participants, parents, teachers	Creating feedback systems for participants, parents, teachers, and pool managers (share experiences and suggestions to improve the programs, ensuring a continuous loop of program evaluation and refinement).	5
	Complementary	Third-party evaluation/audits	Using third-party evaluators to audit the program's outcomes.	2
		Comprehensive range of awards/badges to motivate children (or adults) at every stage of the program	Developing a structured system of awards or badges to recognize progress and achievements in swimming skills, water safety knowledge, and participation. This helps keep learners motivated and engaged throughout their swimming education journey.	2
		Standardized national swimming tests	Developing standardized national swimming tests, to assess swimming skills and water safety knowledge, particulalry in children.	2
		Long-term impact studies on public health, safety & participation	Conducting long-term studies on the impact of swimming programs on public health, safety, and participation rates in swimming (and/or dropout).	1
		Public dashboard for program success metrics	Creating a public dashboard to transparently share program success metrics (based on the aquatic skills framework).	1

Annex (2)

EA SSE image membership requirements

1. Logo Usage

1.1. The provisional Swim Safe Europe (SSE) logo may only be used on platforms owned and operated by certified partners. Including the partner's official website, websites of partner's regional/federal member associations, partner's social media accounts directly operated by the partner.

1.2. Use of the logo on third-party platforms requires prior approval from European Aquatics (EA).

1.3. The logo must not be altered, modified, or adapted without prior authorization from EA.

2. Co-Branding and Associations

2.1. The logo may be displayed alongside the logo of the national federation and/or associated political and governing bodies. The final version of the logo composite to be approved by EA.

2.2. The use of the logo in association with commercial partners or sponsoring entities is prohibited, unless expressly approved by EA.

3. Approved Platforms and Environments

3.1. The logo may be used in digital and printed materials related to the Swim Safe Europe program, including websites, social media, presentations, and institutional reports.

3.2. The use of the logo for merchandising, commercial products, or any other promotional or for sale material is prohibited, unless expressly approved by EA.

4. Final Considerations

4.1. The European Aquatics branding guidelines can be applied to the use of the logo, as the current SSE and EA logos are similar in size and shape.

4.2. Once the final logo is defined and registered as a trademark, a complete set of guidelines will be made available.

4.3. Until then, partners can access **the EA branding guidelines** through this *link* and direct any questions to EA.

For more information or approval requests, please contact European Aquatics.