



International Workshop Agreement

IWA 46

Ethics and integrity in sport — Guidelines

Éthique et intégrité dans le sport — Lignes directrices

**First edition
2024-08**

Reference number
IWA 46:2024(en)

Full document details: [IWA 46-2024](#)

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Published in Switzerland

Contents

Page

Foreword	v
Introduction	vi
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	1
4 Integration of ethics and integrity principles	6
4.1 General	6
4.2 Governance and chain of responsibility	7
4.3 Strategy and planning	8
4.3.1 General	8
4.3.2 Existing situation and assessment of risk	8
4.3.3 Strategy, objectives and action plan	8
4.4 Evaluation and continual improvement	9
5 Ethics and integrity in sports organizations	10
5.1 General	10
5.2 Field of action 1: Democratic principles	11
5.2.1 General	11
5.2.2 Democratic principles at governance level	11
5.2.3 Democratic principles in the election process	12
5.2.4 Democratic principles in the exercise of power	13
5.2.5 Monitoring, measuring and corrective actions	14
5.3 Field of action 2: Financial transparency	14
5.3.1 General	14
5.3.2 Financial transparency at governance level	15
5.3.3 Preventive measures to promote financial transparency	16
5.3.4 Monitoring, checking and corrective measures	17
5.4 Field of action 3: Anti-corruption	18
5.4.1 General	18
5.4.2 Prevention, detection and management of attempted or proven acts of corruption	18
5.5 Field of action 4: Prevention of conflicts of interest	22
5.5.1 General	22
5.5.2 Prevention, detection and management of conflicts of interest at governance level	23
5.6 Field of action 5: Whistleblowing	25
5.6.1 General	25
5.6.2 Whistleblowing principles at governance level	26
5.6.3 Actions to facilitate and encourage whistleblowing	27
5.6.4 Monitoring, detection and corrective action	28
6 Ethics and integrity in sports competitions	28
6.1 General	28
6.2 Field of action 6: Manipulation of sports competitions	29
6.2.1 General	29
6.2.2 Managing risks at governance level	29
6.2.3 Preventive measures	30
6.2.4 Monitoring, detecting and addressing risks	31
6.3 Field of action 7: Anti-doping	32
6.3.1 General	32
6.3.2 Anti-doping principles at governance level	33
6.3.3 Preventive measures	33
6.3.4 Anti-doping controls	35
6.3.5 Monitoring, reporting and corrective action	35
6.4 Field of action 8: Mechanical and technological fraud	36

6.4.1	General	36
6.4.2	Governance principles	36
6.4.3	Preventive measures to address mechanical and technological fraud	36
6.4.4	Facilitation of technical checks on sports equipment	38
6.4.5	Monitoring, reporting and corrective action	38
7	Guidelines for ethics and integrity of individuals	39
7.1	General	39
7.2	Field of action 9: Violence, discrimination and incivility	39
7.2.1	General	39
7.2.2	Governance principles	41
7.2.3	Prevention of violence, discrimination and incivility	42
7.2.4	Monitoring, checking and corrective action	45
7.3	Field of action 10: Violence in sports arenas	45
7.3.1	General	45
7.3.2	Governance principles	46
7.3.3	Prevention of violence in sports arenas	46
7.3.4	Monitoring, checking and corrective action	48
7.4	Field of action 11: Safeguarding registered and professional athletes	49
7.4.1	General	49
7.4.2	Governance principles	49
7.4.3	Preventive measures to safeguard athletes	50
7.4.4	Monitoring, checking and corrective action	51
8	Communication	52
8.1	General	52
8.2	Communication strategy	52
8.2.1	General	52
8.2.2	Resources	52
8.2.3	Internal communication	53
8.2.4	External communication	54
8.2.5	Crisis communication	55
	Annex A (informative) Tool box	56
	Annex B (informative) Workshop contributors	61
	Bibliography	62

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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International Workshop Agreement IWA 46 was approved at a workshop hosted by the French Standardization Association (AFNOR), in association with the French Ministry of Sports and the Olympics and Paralympic Games, held in Paris, in June 2024.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

0.1 As a political, diplomatic and economic tool, sport, is at the heart of numerous aspects of society. Sport evolves in step with societal changes and can consequently be subject to tensions that challenge the very values it seeks to promote: justice, ethics, integrity, respect, fair play and honesty.

Illegal and unethical behaviour jeopardize these values and the overall appeal of sport, whether to the general public, governments or investors. Corruption, money laundering, match-fixing and breaches of human rights impact sport at all levels, and are likely to reduce confidence and trust in sport. For the sake of sporting values, sports organizations and relevant stakeholders should work together to combat these issues.

Combatting unethical practices in a professional manner and addressing financial and social shortcomings contributes to rebuilding trust and ensuring inclusion and equality.

This document provides guidelines on ethics and integrity for sports organizations, sports competitions and individuals. It applies to all types of sports organizations, including federations, professional leagues, decentralized bodies, sports associations, sports clubs, and competition organizers (private or otherwise), regardless of their size or location. This document also provides guidance on how sports organizations can limit risks relating to ethics and integrity.

0.2 The activities of sports organizations are often subject to the international codes and regulations of federations, such as the Olympic Charter of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).^[7] The IOC also requires the sports organizations it recognizes, as well as their individual members, to comply with the IOC Code of Ethics.^[8] Introduced in 1999, it is regularly updated and is an integral part of the Olympic Charter.

The IOC Code of Ethics promotes five fundamental principles:

- respect for the Olympic spirit;
- respect for the principle of the universality and political neutrality of the Olympic movement;
- respect for autonomy despite working with public authorities;
- respect for international conventions on the protection of human rights;
- protecting participants and keeping them safe.

The Code of Ethics reflects the Olympic values defended in the Charter and focuses on the notions of ethics, integrity and good governance. The Olympic Charter and Code of Ethics are mandatory for signatories. Any violation can lead to the application of sanctions, ranging from censure to revocation of the IOC's recognition of the party concerned. The National Olympic Committees and the International Sport Federations have adopted similar charters based on the IOC Charter.

NOTE 1 Some national sports organizations can also be subject to extraterritorial national laws of other countries, such as the UK Bribery Act (2010) applying in France, which uses definitions whose scope varies when applied within their territory or abroad.

NOTE 2 International conventions can also apply to sports organizations, such as those of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1997),^[22] the Council of Europe (1989),^[23] the United Nations (2004),^[24] the European Parliament's text on an integrated approach to Sport Policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity (2017),^[25] or the Macolin Convention (2014),^[26] some of which have been transposed into the national legislation of the States Parties.

0.3 At international and regional levels, organizations such as the Council of Europe play an active role in the fight for integrity in sport, as violations of regulations are tackled more effectively at a supranational level. The Council of Europe has been the driving force behind a number of initiatives, recommendations and international conventions.

To date, three major conventions have been written to improve the governance of sports organizations:

- the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events, adopted in 1985 following the Heysel Stadium disaster, which came into force in 2017;^{[27][28]}

- the Anti-Doping Convention of 1989, in force since 1990, which is the cornerstone of the fight against doping, integrity of sport and health of athletes;^[23]
- the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention), in force since 2019, which encourages the interlinking between national organizations that fight match-fixing and establishes binding regulations adopted by States Parties with a view to eliminating these practices.^[26]

The Council of Europe has also drafted a series of recommendations for the sports sector, such as:

- Rec(2005)8 on the principles of good governance in sport, adopted in 2005;^[29]
- CM/Rec(2018)12 on the promotion of good governance in sport;^[30]
- CM/Rec(2011)10 on the promotion of the integrity of sport against manipulation of results, notably match-fixing.^[31]

Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)9 on the revised Code of Sports Ethics, adopted in 2010, is accompanied by an appendix called the Code of Sports Ethics.^[32] This appendix helps define sports ethics and the responsibilities of governments and sports organizations in promoting integrity in sport, based on the motto “Fair play - the winning way”.

The aims of the recommendations issued by the Council of Europe are to:

- encourage Member States to coordinate and take effective measures to promote the implementation of policies of transparency and conform to democratic principles in sports governing bodies;
- reinforce confidence in sport;
- develop its role in society.

This document takes into account such international texts and initiatives, and provides aligned operational recommendations and evaluation criteria for sports organizations, to facilitate the process of integrating the principles of ethics and integrity into policies and procedures to combat unethical behaviour.

0.4 This document addresses the principles of ethics and integrity in three main areas:

- ethics and integrity of sports organizations;
- ethics and integrity of sports competitions;
- ethics and integrity of individuals.

Each of these comprises various fields of action, identified as being essential in terms of ethics and integrity, all of which should be taken into consideration:

- Field of action 1: Democratic principles;
- Field of action 2: Financial transparency;
- Field of action 3: Anti-corruption;
- Field of action 4: Prevention of conflicts of interest;
- Field of action 5: Whistleblowing;
- Field of action 6: Manipulation of sports competitions;
- Field of action 7: Anti-doping;
- Field of action 8: Mechanical and technological fraud;
- Field of action 9: Violence, discrimination and incivility;
- Field of action 10: Violence in sports arenas;

— Field of action 11: Safeguarding registered and professional athletes.

NOTE [Table B.1](#) provides a list of workshop contributors.

Ethics and integrity in sport — Guidelines

1 Scope

This document provides principles and guidelines on ethics and integrity for sports organizations to enable integration into policies, procedures and activities.

These principles have three main pillars:

- ethics and integrity of sports organizations;
- ethics and integrity of sports competitions;
- ethics and integrity of individuals.

This document is applicable to all types of sports organizations, including federations, professional leagues, decentralized bodies, sports associations, sports clubs and competition organizers (private or otherwise), regardless of their size or location.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

wrongdoing

action(s) or omission(s) that can cause harm to the *sports organization* (3.2) or one of its *stakeholders* (3.29)

Note 1 to entry: A wrongdoing primarily refers to violations of current national or international regulations, such as fraud, *corruption* (3.10) (e.g. bribes), discrimination, unauthorized use of public funds or resources, abuse of authority, conflict of interest, harassment, violence (including sexual violence), etc.

Note 2 to entry: Additionally, actions can also be considered reprehensible with respect to the internal rules set out, for example, in the organization's codes of conduct or in another relevant code of conduct: serious negligence, violation of the organization's governance policy or rules (particularly regarding the disclosure of *conflicts of interest* (3.9)), etc.

Note 3 to entry: A wrongdoing also includes actions or omissions that cause harm or risk of harm to human rights, the environment, public health and safety, or safe working practices or the public interest.

Note 4 to entry: A wrongdoing or the harm resulting from it can have occurred in the past, be currently occurring or can occur in the future.

Note 5 to entry: Potential harm can be determined by reference to a single event or a series of events.

[SOURCE: ISO 37002:2021, 3.8, modified — definition and notes to entry have been updated so they are relevant to a sport context.]

3.2**sports organization**

body that governs and promotes a sport, and/or organizes *sports competitions* (3.8)

Note 1 to entry: The term “sports organization” encompasses the various statuses that exist, such as sports associations, private sports companies and public sports institutions.

EXAMPLE National/international federations, leagues, clubs.

3.3**doping control officer**

person authorized by the competent authorities to carry out doping controls on athletes

3.4**whistleblowing**

reporting of *wrongdoing* (3.1) by a *whistleblower* (3.24) who has reasonable belief that the information is true at the time of reporting

Note 1 to entry: A report of a wrongdoing can be verbal, in person, in writing or in an electronic or digital format.

Note 2 to entry: To facilitate the handling of whistleblowing, it is preferable that the identity of the whistleblower be known. However, in order to protect whistleblowers, it is expected that wrongdoings can be reported anonymously.

[SOURCE: ISO 37002:2021, 3.10, modified — definition and note 2 to entry have been modified; note 3 to entry has been deleted.]

3.5**prohibited association**

act of using the services, paid or unpaid, of any *athlete support personnel* (3.31) who is the subject to a disciplinary, administrative or criminal sanction in connection with an anti-doping rule violation

Note 1 to entry: The Prohibited Association List, as established by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), lists the bans imposed on athletes and their support personnel who have committed anti-doping rule violations.

3.6**money laundering**

act of concealing the origin of illegally acquired money by reinvesting it in legal activities

EXAMPLE Money laundering from tax fraud is the reintroduction of money concealed from the tax authorities back into the economic circuit.

3.7**World Anti-Doping Code**

international code published by the World Anti-Doping Agency, harmonizing the anti-doping policies, rules and regulations of *sports organizations* (3.2) and public authorities

Note 1 to entry: The World Anti-Doping Code^[36] is accompanied by eight international standards^[37] designed to harmonize different areas of anti-doping: testing and investigations, laboratories, therapeutic use exemptions, list of prohibited substances and methods, protection of privacy and personal information, code compliance by signatories, education, and results management.

3.8**sports competition**

sports event, tournament, match or encounter that can result in a ranking, and which is organized in accordance with the rules established by a *sports organization* (3.2) or its affiliated organizations or, where applicable, in accordance with the rules of any other competent sports organization

3.9**conflict of interest**

situation of actual, potential and perceived interference between the function exercised within an organization and an individual interest or an interest linked to a function exercised in another organization, in such a way that this interference influences or appears to influence the loyal exercise of the function on behalf of this organization

Note 1 to entry: Conflicts of interest can concern all members involved in a *sports organization* (3.2), regardless of their status or decision-making capacity.

Note 2 to entry: Both direct and indirect interests should be considered, for example the interests of a third party (parent, spouse, associated or dependent people or groups).

Note 3 to entry: Financial and other types of gain resulting from a conflict of interest can be subject to criminal law.

3.10**corruption**

behaviour constituting a breach of the obligations of probity and integrity in the performance of functions, whether voluntary or not, that can give rise to disciplinary or criminal sanctions, or both

Note 1 to entry: Corruption can involve all *stakeholders* (3.29) in a *sports organization* (3.2), regardless of their status or decision-making capacity.

Note 2 to entry: In a more restrictive sense, the criminal offence of corruption differs from other breach-of-probity offences, such as influence peddling, extortion by public *officials* (3.25), favouritism, misappropriation of public funds and unlawful acquisition of interest.

3.11**courtsider**

gambler, or accomplice of a gambler, who attempts to transmit in real time, in any form, information relating to the *sports competition* (3.8) in progress, in order to place bets on the outcome of the competition before the close of online betting, thereby increasing their chances of financial gain

Note 1 to entry: This practice can be considered illegal, contravening any applicable regulations (e.g. *sports betting* (3.28), data transmission).

3.12**cyber violence**

aggressive and intentional act perpetrated by an individual or group using digital media against one or more victims

3.13**professional ethics**

set of duties imposed on certain categories of individuals in respect of their behaviour and actions towards others and the environment

3.14**doping**

administration or use of chemical substances or medical procedures defined by ad-hoc organizations in order to increase the physical and/or mental performance of an athlete or an animal

Note 1 to entry: The list of prohibited substances and methods is drawn up each year by the *World Anti-Doping Code* (3.7) and is included in national regulations as appropriate, or by national anti-doping organizations. Therapeutic use exemptions can also be issued on an individual basis.

3.15**sports arena**

sports facility, whether covered or not, designed to host *sports competitions* (3.8), which are open to the public

3.16**chaperone**

duly trained *official* (3.25), authorized by the sample collection authority to carry out specific tasks during a doping control

3.17 ethics

body of values, encompassing all the moral principles governing behaviour

Note 1 to entry: Ethics in the context of sport encompasses a number of values that sport should embody, including self-respect, equal opportunities, self-improvement, respect for others, the health of participants, friendship between peoples and the quest for excellence.

3.18 mechanical and technological fraud

mechanical and technological modifications to the sports equipment used, including the *sports arena* (3.15), with the aim of artificially improving an athlete's sporting performance, and in breach of the material, technical and technological rules laid down by international and national federal *sports organizations* (3.2)

3.19 governance of sports organizations

system by which a *sports organization* (3.2) makes and implements decisions in pursuit of its objectives

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.13, modified — term and definition have been updated so they are relevant to a sport context.]

3.20 Registered Testing Pool

pool of athletes identified as high priority, respectively, at international level by international federations and/or at national level by the relevant national anti-doping organization, and who are subject to focused in-competition and out-of-competition testing

3.21 ultras group

category of supporters, organized in the form of an association, who actively or even fanatically support their favourite team

3.22 top management

persons who control a *sports organization* (3.2) at the highest level, responsible for managing it in accordance with its statutes and the rules in force

Note 1 to entry: These people have the power to organize, allocate resources and represent the entity, which gives them a decisive role in implementing measures to promote respect for *ethics* (3.17) and integrity.

Note 2 to entry: The steering committee, general assembly, the board of directors and the executive committee generally make up the top management of organizations with associative status.

3.23 sport integrity

principle of consistency between the values embodied by sport and the attitude adopted in practice by its players and institutions

Note 1 to entry: It also aims to ensure that behaviour complies with applicable regulations.

3.24 whistleblower

person who discloses or reports a fact that brings to light illegal or dangerous behaviour threatening the integrity of a *sports organization* (3.2) or its members

3.25 official

individual who performs a formal supervisory role regarding the application of federal sports regulations during local, national or international *sports competitions* (3.8)

EXAMPLE Judge, referee, jury, race steward.

3.26**sports operator**

person responsible for preparing, maintaining and checking the conformity of sports equipment, in accordance with federal sports regulations

3.27**sports competition organizer**

natural or legal person under private law, other than a sports federation, that organizes *sports competitions* (3.8) open to licence holders in a discipline, and/or to which the relevant federation authority has delegated the authority

3.28**sports betting**

monetary wager on the progress and/or outcome of a *sports competition* (3.8), where gamblers' potential winnings depend on the accuracy of their predictions

Note 1 to entry: The nature of sports betting varies from sport to sport and can include various parameters relating to the competition, such as the score (final or intermediate), the players and the winning team.

3.29**stakeholder**

individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization

Note 1 to entry: Stakeholders can be external and internal. External stakeholders are natural and legal persons who are not part of the organization but are involved and have a link to, relationship with or interest in the *sports organization* (3.2) or could have an impact on it. Internal stakeholders are a group of individuals who are part of the sports organization.

EXAMPLE 1 External stakeholders include the organization's public or private partners, service providers, suppliers, associations and members.

EXAMPLE 2 Internal stakeholders include elected representatives, employees or volunteers working on behalf of the sports organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 26000:2010, 2.20, modified — note to entry and examples have been added.]

3.30**athlete biological passport**

programme that monitors selected biological variables specific to the athlete that indirectly reveal *doping* (3.14) through changes in those variables

Note 1 to entry: This electronic monitoring is implemented exclusively via the *Anti-Doping Administration and Management System* (3.36).

3.31**athlete support personnel**

person who works with and cares for athletes in the preparatory phase of a *sports competition* (3.8), or during the competition itself

EXAMPLE Coaches, therapists, sports directors, agents, team personnel, team *officials* (3.25), medical or paramedical staff.

3.32**national platform for the fight against the manipulation of sports competitions**

group of *stakeholders* (3.29) that acts as a hub for the gathering, collating and sharing of relevant information to combat match fixing, for promoting cooperation between relevant national and international stakeholders, and for raising awareness about this subject among those involved in sport

Note 1 to entry: The tasks of the national platforms are listed in Article 13 of the Macolin Convention.^[26]

EXAMPLE In France, the national platform for the fight against the manipulation of sports competitions is chaired by the French Ministry of Sport.

3.33**democratic principle**

form of governance in which power is exercised by all members of a community, either directly or through their elected representatives

3.34**point of contact****delegate**

designated person responsible for carrying out and coordinating the implementation of a mission within a *sports organization* (3.2) relating to his/her field of competence and who interfaces with the public authorities and/or private organizations

EXAMPLE Single points of contact (SPOC) in the field of the prevention of the manipulation of competitions.

3.35**steward**

person responsible for the reception, seating and safety of the public in *sports arenas* (3.15)

3.36**Anti-Doping Administration and Management System**

web-based management system for sharing information between organizations involved in anti-doping operations (partners and athletes), enabling the centralization of doping control-related information such as analyses results, therapeutic use exemptions (TUEs) and Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs)

3.37**financial transparency**

accessibility of information relating to financial decisions and activities affecting the organization and its *stakeholders* (3.29), and willingness to ensure clear, accurate, timely, honest and complete disclosure

Note 1 to entry: The principle of transparency does not require to disclose exclusive information, nor does it involve the provision of information of a confidential nature or that would contravene legal, commercial, security or personal privacy obligations.

3.38**vulnerable person**

person who is:

- a) under the age of 18;
- b) aged 18 or over but unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves against harm or exploitation, due to age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason; or
- c) aged 18 or over but has experienced or is experiencing poor mental health outcomes, as a result of the incident in question, due to their life experiences, or as a result of societal factors, including but not limited to individuals from diverse backgrounds facing disproportionate mental health impacts

4 Integration of ethics and integrity principles**4.1 General**

The sports organization should consider ethics and integrity in all of its activities and decisions. The related issues should be taken into account at the highest level, and incorporated into the organization's overall strategy.

Integrating ethics and integrity principles into all aspects of a sports organization requires top management's commitment and understanding at all levels of the organization.

The sports organization should establish processes to integrate the principles into all policies, strategies, structures and activities, to enable it to become an integral part of the organization's culture.

4.2 Governance and chain of responsibility

The sports organization should demonstrate commitment to ethics and integrity and ensure that operational efficiency is founded on democratic principles. The sports organization should take into account its context, including the type and size of relevant governing bodies and:

- a) ensure that members of governing bodies represent all members of the organization;
- b) define clear roles and responsibilities for each member of a governing body;
- c) establish an appropriate management structure throughout the organization;
- d) appoint competent persons at all levels of the chain of responsibility.

Depending on the size of the sports organization, its available resources and potential level of risk, the organization should appoint representatives responsible for ethics and integrity. To ensure that ethics and integrity objectives are understood and supported throughout the organization, these representatives should include elected and non-elected governing body members, operational managers and named points of contact.

The sports organization should consider establishing an ethics and integrity committee to advise, monitor and supervise the activities of the sports organization. The committee should be impartial and independent of the sports organization. The composition and duties of the committee should be clearly defined and processes to appoint members should be transparent.

Members of the ethics and integrity committee should include representatives from different departments, activities and skills (e.g. financial, medical, legal) and people from outside the sports organization. To avoid conflicts of interest and promote neutrality, the ethics and integrity committee should exclude:

- elected members of governing bodies and top management;
- anyone who has a contractual relationship (other than a sports licence) with the sports organization;
- persons with financial or similar interests linked to the organization.

The ethics and integrity committee should ensure conformity to democratic principles ([5.2](#)) by enforcing the rules relating to ethics and professional conduct. The committee should:

- ensure compliance with the election process, as defined in [5.2.3](#);
- cooperate with election and disciplinary commissions if abuses are observed or reported, and follow up reports with these bodies;
- formulate recommendations, proposals and remarks aimed at ensuring proper application of democratic principles;
- draw up an annual activity report containing recommendations or warnings, if appropriate.

NOTE 1 An organization chart can help facilitate understanding of the organization's structure and the roles of each individual.

NOTE 2 The process for appointing members to an ethics and integrity committee varies; however, its composition is expected to be validated by a collective governing body, such as the board of directors.

NOTE 3 An ethics and integrity committee has neither a disciplinary nor a sanctioning role.

4.3 Strategy and planning

4.3.1 General

The sports organization should take a systematic approach to strengthening ethics and integrity and implementing relevant processes. Top management should:

- a) ensure that ethics and integrity is embedded into organizational strategy;
- b) establish an ethics and integrity policy;
- c) assess risks to ethics and integrity;
- d) set specific objectives;
- e) plan actions to be taken;
- f) implement processes to measure, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of actions;
- g) commit to continual improvement of ethics and integrity performance.

Planning enables the sports organization to define requirements and processes that support informed decision-making. Effective planning ensures that defined processes can be followed if an ethics or integrity issue arises.

The sports organization should consult relevant external and internal stakeholders when planning (e.g. public authorities, private organizations involved in ethics and integrity issues, governing bodies, its own ethics and integrity committee).

4.3.2 Existing situation and assessment of risk

When planning, the sports organization should consider its current situation, ongoing actions and information available to determine what is needed.

The sports organization should take into account both the overall context and specific fields of action when assessing risk.

To assess risk at an overall level, the sports organization should determine external and internal issues with the potential to negatively impact ethics and integrity, including its management structure, decision-making processes and all of its activities.

The sports organization should use the overall assessment of risks to prioritize specific fields of action.

The sports organization should assess the risks related to specific activities, processes and procedures in relation to identified specific fields of action. The sports organization should determine the level of risk exposure and the adequacy of controls and resources to manage and reduce risks related to each field of action.

EXAMPLE Corruption-related risks can require a more detailed assessment of all the activities and processes in place.

4.3.3 Strategy, objectives and action plan

The sports organization should take into account the existing situation and assessment of risk (4.3.2) when developing its ethics and integrity strategy. The sports organization should include relevant external and internal stakeholders when developing the strategy and the action plan.

The sports organization should ensure that its ethics and integrity strategy and action plan clearly state what it wants to achieve. The strategy and action plan should include specific, measurable and actionable objectives.

The objectives and associated actions should identify:

- a) Target audiences – relevant stakeholders linked to the purpose of the organization, as determined during the initial risk assessment. The sports organization should identify the needs and expectations of different target audiences and prioritize actions to meet respective needs within the limits of operational resources.

NOTE The objectives and actions differ, depending on whether the sports organization is targeting directors, support personnel, athletes or the general public.

- b) Key messages – determining the content and the form of the message to be communicated.

These key messages should be adapted to each target audience, in order to stimulate interest and encourage people to adopt the desired attitudes or to take the desired measures. There should be a reasonable number of messages, which should be clear and easy to understand.

The format, content, appearance and usability of media should also be adapted to the target audience. There should be a transitional phase to confirm that the chosen activities and materials are relevant. For example, with regards to prevention of doping, stakeholders should encourage athletes to identify themselves as such to medical staff; regarding sexual violence, stakeholders should encourage people to report such situations.

- c) Implementation time frames.

The time taken to implement actions and achieve objectives can vary according to the context of the sports organization, including the external environment (e.g. partners, dependence on other organizations, legal framework) and internal factors such as the availability of financial, human and other resources.

A clear time frame and schedule should be defined for each activity, and a point of contact appointed to ensure its implementation.

- d) Allocated resources.

Wherever possible, a budget should be allocated to each objective and associated action.

Human resources should be allocated carefully, and the overall responsibility of the system should be assigned to the relevant person (e.g. point of contact/delegate, non-elected member or an operational manager).

It is also recommended to involve partners who can, in one way or another, support the implementation of actions (e.g. funding, tools, skills). These partners (i.e. public authorities and private organizations) can be identified during the development phase of the strategy and the action plan.

If the implementation of some actions requires the use of tools (e.g. publications, videos, posters) which have financial implications, it is recommended to check what is already available. Many resources already exist (see [Annex A](#)). In this respect, the participation of the main partners is very important.

4.4 Evaluation and continual improvement

The evaluation of the effectiveness of a global system or specific activity helps determine whether objectives have been achieved. Evaluation should be based on the continual monitoring and assessment of each action through measurable indicators. The sports organization should establish processes to enable internal auditing and facilitate external auditing if appropriate.

Evaluations should enable the sports organization to identify potential issues in established processes and make necessary changes to its systems and procedures. These results can also lead to an update of the initial situation and the risk analysis.

These changes should help to address any shortcomings and improve performance with respect to ethics and integrity.

The evaluation and implementation of corrective and preventive actions on a recurring basis constitute a continuous improvement process that is fundamental to the implementation of any policy. This performance improvement can be implemented at different levels:

- on a global basis: the sports organization's strategy is defined and then translated into operational objectives for the different activities (processes); achievement of objectives is linked to the implementation of actions that contribute to the continuous improvement process;
- on an ad hoc basis: the reporting of malfunctions or difficulties observed in daily activities facilitates the definition of corrective actions, which are also part of the continuous improvement approach.

The successful integration of ethics and integrity principles into sports organizations therefore depends on addressing these issues, from the establishment of policies and procedures through to the monitoring, control and evaluation of those procedures.

5 Ethics and integrity in sports organizations

5.1 General

The sports organization should ensure that it adopts a high ethical standard of governance, both in its structure and in all its activities (see [4.3.1](#)).

Integrity is expressed through adopting the highest standards of transparency and accountability. The sports organization should promote and respect the general principles of democracy and checks and balances. Top management should ensure conformity to internal rules at all levels of the sports organization and facilitate monitoring of actions by relevant stakeholders.

The sports organization should implement processes to identify and manage unethical behaviour. Risks to the sports organization include:

- financial;
- reputational;
- criminal;
- exclusion from competitions;
- distrust and withdrawal of stakeholders.

The sports organization should implement processes to address risks in specific fields of action to embed or maintain the highest levels integrity in both governance and operations.

The sports organization should establish transparent communication at all levels of the organization and in all activities to increase accountability for actions taken. The sports organization should ensure:

- a) dissemination of information relating to board meetings (e.g. agenda, associated documents, notice periods, frequency) within a reasonable time frame before the planned meeting, so that everyone has time to read through the information;
- b) publication in digital form of decisions made at the meetings of governing bodies (e.g. executive committee, board of directors, general assembly) through the provision of detailed meeting reports (e.g. transcribed minutes, decision logs);
- c) circulation of resolutions passed by local bodies (e.g. general assembly of the sports organization, comprising clubs) including resolutions relating to strategic decisions;
- d) publication of a comprehensive top management report annually and at each election cycle; the report should include a review of the economic and sporting situation, progress and results achieved on actions identified as priorities (e.g. training indicators, management of whistleblower reports).

The sports organization should ensure that all actions relating to the constitution of deliberative, consultative or participative bodies are maintained as documented information and shared via the organization's chosen communication media. Documented information should include official declarations, records of decisions and minutes or reports. The sports organization should provide an accessible list of available documents.

The sports organization should make this information available to all members of the sports organization and to the public, within the limits of the principle of confidentiality of individual decisions.

5.2 Field of action 1: Democratic principles

5.2.1 General

Democratic principles:

- relate to the appointment of directors, the transparent exercise of power and the control of power;
- are based on the fundamental values of equal rights, transparency and the separation of powers;
- depend on holding decision-makers accountable and regulating the way in which the organization operates.

The democratic process should involve relevant stakeholders, including consultation and participation in decision-making processes.

5.2.2 Democratic principles at governance level

The sports organization should implement a structure that promotes a balance of power and guides ethical decision-making.

Top management should:

- a) demonstrate commitment to uphold democratic principles;
- b) lead by example in both word and action;
- c) allocate sufficient resources to uphold democratic principles;
- d) conform to democratic principles when making decisions;
- e) be held accountable for ensuring democratic principles are conformed to throughout the management chain.

Top management can demonstrate its commitment to democratic principles through:

- personal and formal commitments by signing a dedicated document (e.g. statutes, internal requirements, charter or code of ethics);
- adoption of statutes, rules of procedure and other official texts that promote respect of and conformity to the principles;
- establishment of an ethics and integrity committee, with independent powers of judgement and no interference or instruction from the sports organization (see [4.2](#));
- participation in drafting rules relating to ethics and integrity, and their implementation;
- establishment of local representatives (e.g. control structure or points of contact/delegates);
- active cooperation with other bodies within the organization, such as the disciplinary committee.

The sports organization should establish an ethics and integrity charter and a code of professional conduct. The charter should include principles relating to the exercise of power (see [5.2.4](#)). The charter should also contain guidance on topics such as sporting values, the prevention of and fight against all forms of unethical behaviour and respect for the integrity of sport and individuals.

The sports organization should make the charter available to relevant stakeholders. Top management should ensure that the charter is applied in all circumstances, at all times, in all places and by all individuals concerned. The sports organization should ensure that the charter is circulated to all stakeholders including members of the organization, candidates for governance, directors, referees, support personnel and licence holders. Where appropriate, the charter should be signed in a suitable format by the target audience (see [4.3.3](#)).

Top management should respect the principles of equality and inclusion, which are essential to upholding democratic principles. The organization should demonstrate commitment to guaranteeing the widest possible access to leadership roles and missions, respecting each individual's skills and abilities, and making no distinction other than that of virtues and talents.

To achieve equality and inclusion, the sports organization should establish and implement a comprehensive policy that respects the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to ensure equal opportunities for all (e.g. access to positions of responsibility, salaries, training), regardless of gender, origin, disability or other characteristics.

The sports organization should appoint a dedicated EDI point of contact/representative to implement the policy.

The sports organization should incorporate the EDI policy in official texts (e.g. charter, code, articles of association) and formalize the rules and procedures for accessing and exercising power, enabling implementation and monitoring.

The sports organization should promote the EDI policy at all levels and make it a key principle of its culture.

5.2.3 Democratic principles in the election process

The sports organization should set out requirements for the governance of electoral operations, including respect for democratic principles, probity and transparency in the election process. The requirements should include credibility of elections, equal opportunities for candidates and ethical behaviour. The election process should take place under a clear procedure and independent supervision.

The sports organization should consider creating an electoral code that defines campaign procedures including: criteria relating to the composition of the electorate and eligibility criteria, secret ballots and majority voting systems.

To ensure that democratic principles are respected, the sports organization should:

- a) review election procedures regularly through a general assembly that allows for the equal expression of the majority, thereby giving legitimacy to the election process;
- b) review the appointment of sports representatives with voting rights at the general assembly every year;
- c) enable as many candidates as possible to express their interest, respecting equal rights and irrespective of an individual's diversity characteristics;
- d) ensure that the election process is accessible to everyone, via digital means, displays or personal/individual communication, within the time frame provided for in the official texts;
- e) make public all open positions for elections and non-staff appointments, including eligibility criteria for candidates and the application deadline;
- f) treat candidates equally at all stages of the election;
- g) introduce a defined, short period between the review of candidates' admissibility and the closing of candidacies, which encourages a plurality of candidates and democratic debate;
- h) enable equal use and distribution of communication means for all candidates, including speaking time;
- i) consider the creation of an association to manage candidates' campaign accounts, to ensure consistent allocation of resources and budgets.

Beyond the eligibility conditions specific to each sports organization, any application for a leadership role should be made subject to a commitment of integrity, designed to prevent any risk of deviance or breach of the ethics and integrity of the organization or individuals, thereby ensuring that the leaders of sports organizations display exemplary behaviour.

To achieve this, the sports organization should ensure that the credentials of each candidate are made available to the voting public before each election in which they are involved, so as to respect electoral fairness. The sports organization should ensure that election candidates declare any private or contractual interest that could lead to a conflict of interest inherent to their role (see [5.5](#)).

In the interests of transparency, control of power and efficiency of action, the sports organization should ensure that mandates are limited in time and at different levels of the organization. This can be achieved by limiting the term of the president of the sports organization (e.g. two to four years) and restricting the number of times an individual can be re-elected (restrictions can relate to consecutive terms, the total number of years served, or a combination of both) or the number of mandates an individual can serve.

The sports organization should consider establishing an election commission to ensure transparency of the election process throughout. The election commission should:

- be comprised of impartial individuals with no conflict of interest in the sports organization (e.g. from public authorities' national sports institutions); members of the election commission should not be part of the sports organization's top management or candidates in the election;
- appoint at least one competent member to review legal requirements and other requirements relating to electoral operations;
- have the power to refer cases, where necessary, to the ethics and integrity committee or the disciplinary committee, to guarantee candidates behave ethically.

5.2.4 Democratic principles in the exercise of power

The sports organization should define its composition, governing bodies and management structure in accordance with its size and activities, guaranteeing a balance of power and the principle of transparency in decision-making (see [4.2](#)). To achieve this, the sports organization should:

- a) establish a clear division of responsibilities between the various bodies, such as the general assembly, executive body, committees and disciplinary bodies;
- b) make sure the responsibilities assigned to each of these bodies support the balance of power between the bodies responsible for managing, supervising and controlling the organization's activities;
- c) make the terms of office of elected members of top management independent of terms of office associated with bodies such as the ethics and integrity committee or the election commission, to encourage periodic change to the membership of each body;
- d) establish requirements to manage incompatibility between roles within devolved bodies (e.g. someone already holding elected office in a regional league or departmental committee is not eligible for election to a federal body).
- e) make all relevant documents available and accessible to all stakeholders (e.g. articles of association, requirements, procedures and amendment procedures);
- f) enable decision-making by vote (e.g. for decisions affecting the sports organization's articles of association, requirements, policies, management structure, investments and loans);
- g) determine the necessary minimum numbers for voting and debates prior to voting.

In line with the EDI policy, the sports organization should encourage gender parity in all bodies and at all levels of responsibility. To achieve this, the sports organization can consider requiring balanced representation of all genders in top management and giving women access to key positions and decision-making roles (e.g. committee chair, general delegate). The organization should ensure that there is no discrimination in appointments (see [5.2.2](#)).

The sports organization should implement a system to promote fair representation on committees and in top management. This can involve increasing representation of territories, different stakeholders (e.g. coaches, referees, athletes, supporters) and activities (e.g. leisure activities, sporting disciplines).

The sports organization should establish a process to ensure participation and consultation of special committees when significant matters are discussed and decided by top management (e.g. schedules for athletes, disciplinary scales for referees, event ticket pricing for supporters).

5.2.5 Monitoring, measuring and corrective actions

The sports organization should establish, implement and maintain processes to ensure that all activities conform to democratic principles. This can include:

- a) conducting regular internal audits, to measure the effectiveness of and conformity to internal requirements;
- b) maintaining audit findings as documented information and publishing results on the sports organization's website;
- c) cooperating with stakeholders responsible for ethics and integrity (e.g. the ethics and integrity committee) and public authorities to set up external audits that promote and monitor conformity to democratic principles.

If any breaches of democratic principles are observed or reported, for example as a result of whistleblowing, checks and audits carried out during election periods, or in the exercise of power, the sports organization should impose administrative or disciplinary sanctions. The sanction is expected to be proportionate to the offence committed and fall within the range of sanctions described in internal or external requirements or the articles of association.

NOTE Legal requirements can apply.

5.3 Field of action 2: Financial transparency

5.3.1 General

Financial transparency involves communicating and making accessible accounts, results and all financial activities (e.g. contracts, transactions, player transfers) that concern and impact its members and stakeholders.

The sports organization should take into account that financial transparency is based on three main principles:

- accuracy and accessibility of information;
- accountability of managers;
- independence of the supervisory bodies.

NOTE 1 See [5.1](#) for further guidelines.

The sports organization should determine a financial transparency policy and implement processes appropriate to the financial volume of the sports organization.

The sports organization should ensure that its accounts and financial decisions are easily accessible and understandable.

Financial transparency can help the sports organization to combat risks such as:

- a) reputational risks (e.g. uncertainty about financial stability, doubts about the honesty of the organization's financial activities);
- b) collusion;

- c) money laundering;
- d) fraud;
- e) conflicts of interest;
- f) corruption;
- g) other commercial, financial and legal risks.

Financial transparency is therefore essential, not only for conformity to requirements, but also to ensure that internal and external stakeholders, such as sponsors, partners, suppliers, patrons, have confidence in the sports organization.

NOTE 2 Legal requirements can apply to financial transparency. Directors and employees (e.g. treasurer, chief financial officer, accountant) can be liable to legal sanctions.

5.3.2 Financial transparency at governance level

The sports organization should ensure that its governance structure promotes financial transparency and checking of decisions made.

Top management should demonstrate its commitment to financial transparency by:

- a) establishing a policy for financial decision-making procedures and accounts, and which includes the fight against collusion, money laundering, fraud, conflicts of interest and corruption;
- b) promoting the policy across the organization (e.g. via personal communications, the intranet or training programmes);
- c) establishing preventive, monitoring and control procedures;
- d) setting objectives and specifying priorities for action;
- e) ensuring systems are properly managed;
- f) allocating sufficient resources to enable effective implementation of systems;
- g) conforming to requirements when making decisions;
- h) setting a zero-tolerance policy for nonconformity and applying appropriate sanctions if requirements are not met;
- i) disclosing the financial compensation or allowances paid to directors (e.g. chairperson, chief executive officer, treasurer, chief financial officer).

The sports organization should ensure that top management demonstrates a personal commitment to financial transparency by, for example, implementing contractual clauses requiring individuals to implement and conform to financial transparency systems and processes.

The sports organization should consider establishing an independent financial committee responsible for dealing with any irregularities observed or reported. This committee should suggest possible approaches, initiate and oversee internal investigations, and be accountable for the monitoring of financial activities. The sports organization should ensure that the financial committee takes responsibility for:

- establishing requirements for committing funds and making payments;
- immediately informing top management of any irregularities detected;
- producing regular reports for top management review on meetings held with the public and private authorities responsible for financial monitoring;
- cooperating with public authorities responsible for conducting external audits (e.g. chartered accountants, auditors);