



International  
Olympic  
Committee

2022

# **BASIC UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT**

Extract of the IOC Code of Ethics



International Olympic Committee  
Maison Olympique 1  
1007 Lausanne  
Switzerland

T + 41 21 621 61 11

F + 41 21 621 62 16

[www.olympics.com/ioc](http://www.olympics.com/ioc)

Published by the International Olympic Committee.  
September 2022. All rights reserved.

Printing by DidWeDo, Lausanne, Switzerland.  
Printed in Switzerland.

© International Olympic Committee

# Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement

---

## Preamble

Paragraph 5 of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism in the Olympic Charter reads: *“Recognising that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organisations within the Olympic Movement shall apply political neutrality. They have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sport, determining the structure and governance of their organisations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence and the responsibility for ensuring that principles of good governance be applied.”*

The Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement were first approved by the Olympic Congress in Copenhagen in 2009 and have been updated in the framework of Recommendation 14 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 – “Strengthen the Olympic Movement through good governance” – with a view to adjusting to the latest standards.

The internationally recognised standards of corporate governance have been reflected throughout this document, in addition to the various specific elements that should be taken into account in the context of sport and the Olympic Movement.

All members of the Olympic Movement shall adopt these Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance and reflect these standards in their respective rules, regulations, policies and operations.



## Principle 1

### Vision, mission and strategy of sports organisations

#### 1.1 Vision

The vision shall be clearly defined at the highest level of the organisation and publicly communicated.

#### 1.2 Mission and goals

The mission and goals shall include:

- Compliance with the Olympic Charter and the IOC Code of Ethics, including the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement
- The development and promotion of sport and its values
- Direct and indirect financial and technical support for athletes, sports development and the promotion of the Olympic values
- The organisation of, or participation in, competitions
- Ensuring a fair sporting contest at all times
- Protection of the members – the athletes and officials – from doping, manipulation of competitions, corruption in sport, all forms of discrimination and violence in sport, and all forms of harassment and abuse in sport
- The promotion of physical and mental health and well-being
- The promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures, with a view to striving for gender equality on and off the field of play
- Solidarity and social responsibility
- Respect for human rights within the framework of the sports organisation's activities
- Sustainable development and protection of the environment within the framework of the sports organisation's activities
- Awareness-raising for all stakeholders regarding the missions.

The mission and goals shall be publicly communicated and advocated.



### 1.3 Strategy

The strategy shall be aligned with the vision, mission and goals, and reviewed periodically.

The strategy shall be publicly communicated.

## Principle 2 Institutional governance

### 2.1 Structures

Sports organisations shall be established and operate in accordance with the applicable rules of the Olympic Movement, their respective statutes and regulations, and applicable laws.

Sports organisations shall include as members legal and/or physical persons that constitute the organisation and contribute to forming the will of the organisation.

The stakeholders should encompass all members of the organisation, as well as all external entities that are involved and have a link or relation with, or an interest in, the organisation.

The organisational structure shall be clearly identified, formalised and communicated. This includes, in particular, the governing bodies, the roles and responsibilities, the list of members and elected officials, and the administrative structure.

### 2.2 Regulatory framework

The statutes and regulations shall be clear, transparent and publicly available.

The statutes and regulations shall be reviewed and updated periodically.



The statutes shall include specific provisions relating, in particular, to the following:

- Compliance with the Olympic Charter, the IOC Code of Ethics, including the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement, the World Anti-Doping Code, and the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions
- The mission and goals and the roles and responsibilities
- Membership (including qualification and application for membership; rights and duties of members; termination or cessation of membership; disciplinary measures and sanctions; etc.)
- The organisational structure and governing bodies, including the General Assembly, the executive body, the commissions, ad hoc committees and key staff
- The governing bodies' roles and responsibilities
- Financial transparency
- Specific requirements and procedures to award and organise sports events, when applicable
- Disciplinary procedures, which shall respect the principles of due process, including, in particular, the right to be heard and the right to appeal
- Dispute resolution mechanisms
- The procedure to adopt and amend the statutes and regulations.

When drafting the statutes and regulations, specific attention shall be given to the applicable laws (depending on the legal status under which the sports organisation is registered in the country), e.g. laws on associations/non-governmental organisations/not-for-profit organisations, labour laws, laws on data protection, laws on tender processes, etc.

### 2.3 Governing bodies

The size of the governing bodies shall be appropriate to and consistent with the size of the organisation.



The roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies shall be clearly defined in the statutes, with a clear segregation of duties, in full compliance with the principles of checks and balances.

Governing bodies should be entitled to create standing or ad hoc committees with specific responsibilities.

The composition of the governing bodies shall be established in accordance with the statutes and applicable rules.

The organisation shall set out clear, open, appropriate and objective eligibility criteria to include, simultaneously, the required skills and expertise, and a fair, inclusive and diverse representation of the main components in its governing bodies, including in particular:

- A balanced representation of genders among the members (with a minimum of 30% of each gender)
- Athletes' representation with active participation in the decision-making processes
- A special focus on diversity and inclusion.

## 2.4 Accountability and transparency

### Accountability

- All governing bodies, the management and staff of sports organisations shall be accountable for their area of responsibility
- The executive body shall report to the General Assembly
- Management shall be accountable for the implementation of the decisions made by the governing bodies
- An annual activity report, including institutional information, main events and financial reports, should be publicly available.



## Transparency

In order to enhance transparency, sports organisations shall have a regularly updated website that includes the following elements (list not exhaustive):

- Vision, mission, goals and strategy;
- Organisational structure;
- List of elected officials and the management structure;
- Rules, regulations and policies;
- Main activities and decisions;
- Annual audited financial statements;
- Awarding procedure for sports events, when applicable.

This information shall be easily accessible on the website.

### 2.5 Democratic processes

All members shall have access, in due time, to the relevant information relating to meetings, including the agenda, the relevant documents, the minutes of the meetings, etc.

Governing bodies shall meet on a regular basis, taking into consideration their specific duties, and the General Assembly shall be held at least once a year.

Meetings may take place in person or remotely (through secure and appropriate electronic means).

All members shall have the right to express their opinion on the topics on the agenda.



## 2.6 Voting and elections

Voting members shall exercise their voting rights in accordance with the statutes and regulations.

The quorum for meetings and the majority required for decisions to be taken shall be clearly set out in the statutes and regulations.

The election process shall be governed by clear, democratic, transparent and fair rules.

The election process shall include:

- Eligibility rules, including vetting mechanisms through an independent electoral commission when applicable
- A clear procedure and deadlines to submit the nominations and communicate the list of eligible candidates
- Campaign rules, including a fair opportunity for each candidate to present their programme
- A clear voting procedure, which shall include a vote by secret ballot (electronic or paper)
- Dispute resolution mechanisms.

The election results shall be published.

## 2.7 Renewal of officials

In order to allow a periodic renewal of elected and appointed officials, and to promote access for new candidates, the following limitations should be considered:

- Term limit (e.g. no more than 3 or 4 consecutive terms or 12 or 16 consecutive years in the same role); and/or
- Age limit (e.g. not older than 70 or 75).



## 2.8 Appeals process

Any decision shall be grounded in and respect the principles of due process, including, in particular, the right to be heard and the right to appeal.

Any physical person or entity affected by a sports organisation's decision, after exhausting all internal dispute resolution mechanisms, shall have the right to submit an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Decisions could be made public where applicable.

## Principle 3 Ethical and integrity standards

### 3.1 Ethical principles

Sports organisations shall adopt ethical principles and rules, in compliance with the IOC Code of Ethics.

These principles and rules shall be endorsed by the governing body at the highest level and implemented throughout the entire organisation.

The implementation of the ethical principles and rules should be monitored by a designated individual within the organisation (e.g. compliance officer).

### 3.2 Ethics Commission

Sports organisations shall establish an Ethics Commission with independent representation from the governing bodies.

The mission of the Ethics Commission should be defined and mention the updates to the ethical rules.



The rules of procedure for potential breaches, measures/sanctions and the appeals process shall be provided.

The mission and composition of the Ethics Commission, as well as the above-mentioned rules, shall be published.

### 3.3 Qualifications, skills and integrity

All members of the governing bodies, management and staff of sports organisations shall have the appropriate competences, skills and integrity.

Appropriate due diligence and integrity checks should be conducted prior to election or appointment.

Specific regulations, including a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures, should be adopted.

Vacant staff positions should be advertised, including job descriptions, and a clear selection process should be established, including specific application deadlines and an assessment based on objective criteria.

The use of external experts to bring additional expertise in specific fields should be considered when necessary.

Staff and external experts shall have contracts established in accordance with the needs of the organisation and the applicable laws (e.g. labour law).

### 3.4 Conflict of interest

Sports organisations shall adopt and publish a conflict of interest policy prohibiting any situation of actual, potential and/or perceived conflict of interest. This policy may include prevention mechanisms (such as disclosure of interests) and detection mechanisms (such as conflict resolution).



The members of any decision-making body should be independent in their decisions; therefore, members facing an actual or perceived conflict of interest must be excluded from the decision-making process.

### 3.5 Anti-corruption

An anti-corruption policy shall be adopted and published; it shall cover, in particular, bribery, extortion, sextortion, fraud, money laundering and collusion.

The anti-corruption policy may be included in the ethics rules.

### 3.6 Contract management and procurement

Sports organisations shall follow an open tender process for major commercial and procurement contracts (other than events).

A contract management policy, including signature management, shall be set up.

Criteria for the procurement of goods and services shall be established, including due diligence (i.e. on human rights as appropriate).

### 3.7 Awarding of sporting events

The requirements and the process for awarding sports events shall be transparent and impartial; they shall be made publicly available in advance.

Sustainable development criteria (human rights, gender equality, environment and legacy) shall be included in the assessment process.

### 3.8 Fight against doping

A zero-tolerance approach in the fight against doping shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.



Sports organisations shall fight against doping and uphold an anti-doping policy.

Regulations on anti-doping shall be compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code.

Sports organisations shall protect the athletes, their entourages and sports officials from doping, in particular through robust prevention and educational programmes.

Sports organisations shall ensure that their anti-doping programme is independent and free from any real or perceived conflict of interest, e.g. the setting-up of a National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO) independent of sports bodies and anti-doping laboratories, and the delegation of International Federations' anti-doping programmes to the International Testing Agency (ITA), are encouraged.

### 3.9 Fight against manipulation of competitions

A zero-tolerance approach in the fight against manipulation of competitions shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.

Regulations regarding manipulation of competitions shall be compliant with the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions.

An appropriate mechanism shall be put in place to deal with breaches of the regulations on the manipulation of competitions (internally or externally).

Sports organisations shall protect the athletes, their entourages and sports officials from the risk of manipulation of competitions through robust prevention and educational programmes.

### 3.10 Safeguarding

A zero-tolerance approach to breaches of safeguarding principles shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.



A safe sport strategy shall be established and published to protect individuals from any form of harassment, exploitation and abuse; measures shall be implemented to ensure an effective and appropriate response to any safeguarding concerns.

A qualified, trained individual shall be designated within the organisation as a point of contact for any issue relating to safeguarding.

### 3.11 Reporting mechanism

Sports organisations shall have a confidential internal reporting mechanism for any type of breach of the organisation's regulations.

The reporting mechanism shall be easily accessible and minimise the risks of retaliation.

### 3.12 Education, training and internal communication

An induction programme for all new members (in particular Board members and staff) should be conducted.

Educational tools and regular training on ethics, integrity, good governance, prevention of doping, manipulation of competitions, and harassment and abuse shall be provided to all members (in particular Board members), staff and stakeholders (including athletes, athletes' entourage members, judges and referees, technical officials, volunteers, etc.).

Internal communication and regular meetings at all levels within the organisation should be promoted so that timely and informed decisions can be taken.

Good working conditions and a good working atmosphere should be established, as should incentives policies for staff.



## Principle 4

### Financial governance

#### 4.1 Financial transparency

Accounts shall be established in accordance with the applicable laws and the “true and fair view” principle.

All sports organisations shall adopt accounting principles (e.g. IFRS/GAAP) in the preparation of their financial statements.

The annual audited financial statements should be approved by the General Assembly and published.

A comprehensive pluri-annual financial plan, such as a quadrennial plan, should be approved.

Policies on travel/accommodation, allowances, per diems and benefits for officials (including members of the governing bodies) shall be adopted. The total amount of such allowances, per diems and benefits shall be separately indicated in the annual financial statements.

A remuneration policy for staff should be established.

A dual signature process shall be established, and individual signatures shall be avoided for binding financial and contractual obligations.

#### 4.2 Financial control

Precise and clear regulations ensuring checks and balances shall be established and published, and should be properly implemented and monitored to ensure effective and efficient use of funds and control.

Appropriate segregation of duties controls shall be established to avoid conflicting duties being assigned to the same individual.

A strategy to ensure diversification of income sources shall be established.

#### 4.3 Internal control and risk management

##### Internal control

- An internal control system for key processes and operations, including financial, shall be established and monitored within sports organisations.
- The structure of the internal control system should depend on the size of the organisation.

##### Risk management

A clear and appropriate risk management policy shall be established that takes into account the following elements:

- Identification of potential risks for the organisation, including corruption, financial, environmental, human rights, security and data protection requirements
- A risk assessment process
- Mitigating factors, including the diversification of income sources.
- Risk monitoring.

Risks related to third parties (clients, service providers, suppliers, commercial partners, intermediaries, subcontractors, etc.) shall be included in the risk assessment.

#### 4.4 Internal audit

An internal audit function should be established, including an internal auditor and/or an audit committee, depending on the size of the sports organisation.





An annual internal audit report shall be presented to the General Assembly.

#### 4.5 External audit

For all organisations, annual financial statements shall be audited by independent and qualified external auditors appointed by the General Assembly.

## Principle 5 Support to athletes

### 5.1 Athletes' rights and responsibilities

Appropriate measures should be taken to adopt and implement the Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration.

The right of athletes to participate in sports competitions and within applicable rules (including competition laws) shall be protected.

No form of discrimination on whatever grounds, be it race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, shall be tolerated.

### 5.2 Representation and active participation in the decision-making processes

The athletes' voice should be heard, and athletes should be represented with voting rights in the relevant decision-making bodies of sports organisations.

An Athletes' Commission shall be established within each sports organisation, with gender-balanced representation. Athletes' Commission members should be elected by their peers, and their terms should be in accordance with the IOC guidelines.



The Athletes' Commission should have an active role and the capacity to engage effectively with its constituents, and be involved in and consulted on any decisions that impact athletes.

### 5.3 Health and child protection

Sports organisations shall adopt rules for the protection of athletes' physical and mental health and to limit the risk of endangering athletes' health (medical supervision, number of days of competition, pollution, mental health, etc.).

Measures shall be taken to prohibit exploitation of young child athletes and to respect the rights of the child.

### 5.4 Insurance

Event insurance in case of death or serious injury shall be mandatory for all athletes.

Whenever and wherever possible, athletes shall be provided with social security coverage and/or special insurance policies.

The organisers of sports events shall obtain adequate insurance coverage.

### 5.5 Awareness-raising programmes

Robust prevention and education programmes shall be mandatory for the athletes, their entourages and all sports officials, including judges and referees, on the following (list not exhaustive):

- Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration
- Ethical values and integrity
- Non-discrimination policy
- Safe sport policy
- Physical and mental health risks

- Fight against doping
- Fight against manipulation of competitions
- Risks linked to unscrupulous recruiters and agents.

#### 5.6 Athletes' education and career management

Educational programmes, in particular through "Sport and Studies" programmes, should be encouraged.

Career management programmes should be made available and accessible for the athletes, to maximise their education and employment opportunities during and/or after their sports career.

## Principle 6

### **Solidarity – Social and sustainable development through sport**

#### 6.1 Distribution of resources

As a principle, financial resources which are proceeds from sport shall be allocated to sport, in particular for the development of sport and direct or indirect support to the athletes.

Financial revenues shall be distributed in a fair and efficient manner, in particular to ensure balanced and attractive competitions.

Appropriate resources shall be dedicated to gender-equal, inclusive and diverse sport.

A clear and transparent process for the allocation of financial revenues shall be established and published, in line with the sports development objectives.

Specific information on the direct and indirect support to athletes shall be available and communicated.



Specific mechanisms shall be established to ensure that the recipients of any financial support can be held accountable for the use of such funding

Resources should be distributed equitably to reduce disparities in access and opportunities, and the principle of solidarity should be taken into account when allocating resources.

## 6.2 Social and sustainable development in and through sport, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP)

### Environmental and social responsibility

The organisation shall aim to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones within its spheres of responsibility, which are 1) its direct operations, 2) the organisation of events, and 3) its impact on communities. It shall focus, in particular, on:

- Advancing gender equality, inclusion and diversity
- Respecting and promoting human rights
- Striving for environmental excellence
- Implementing sustainable sourcing.

### Social development through sport

- The development programme shall be set up in the framework of contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- The development of partnerships between different sports organisations should be encouraged
- The expansion and maintenance of sports facilities in developing countries should be promoted.

Development programmes shall be promoted in keeping with the type of the organisation, targeting underserved populations in particular. A process to measure the impact of this programme shall be set up where appropriate.



## Principle 7

### **Autonomy of the Olympic Movement – Harmonious relations with government authorities and external partners**

#### 7.1 Autonomy of the Olympic Movement

Sports organisations should preserve their autonomy and political neutrality in their operations and governance, and should reject any form of political, religious or economic pressures which may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter.

In this context, sports organisations should seek sources of financing compatible with the Fundamental Principles of Olympism and with a view to ensuring a diversification of revenues.

#### 7.2 Cooperation and coordination with government authorities and external partners

Harmonious relations and constructive partnerships between sports organisations and governmental or non-governmental organisations should be encouraged in the interest of sport and in order to help sports organisations fulfil their mission, provided however that the principle of autonomy is fully respected and that the sports organisations do not associate themselves with any activity which would be at odds with the Olympic Charter.

In particular, sports organisations and government authorities should work closely together and coordinate their actions, with mutual respect for each other's jurisdiction and responsibilities, and without any undue interference, in order to:

- contribute to the development of sport at their respective levels,
- support and protect the athletes, and fight against doping and any form of manipulation, corruption in sport, and harassment, abuse or violence in sport, and
- protect youth from crime through sport.



