



CODE OF GOVERNANCE

**Sports Federation and
Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China**

FOREWORD

The Code of Governance serves as a guiding framework to strengthen the governance structures and processes within the National Sports Associations (“NSA”), empowering them to deliver on their mandates effectively. It outlines the principles, values, and best practices that should underpin the operations of the NSA, promoting accountability, inclusivity, and good decision-making.

Considering the complexity and challenges that the NSA may encounter when implementing different governance principles, the Code of Governance goes beyond mere conceptualization and aims to offer explicit guidance and practical examples to facilitate the implementation of governance principles, empowering the NSA to translate into actionable steps and tangible outcomes. In this Code of Governance, you will find a comprehensive set of guidelines and procedures covering various aspects of governance, including but not limited to election of Board Directors, selection of athletes, management of coaches and umpires, handling of complaints, prevention of sexual harassment and child safeguarding. They are designed to be adaptable to the diverse needs and sizes of NSA, enabling them to adopt practices that align with their specific contexts while upholding the fundamental principles of good governance.

By adhering to the Code of Governance, the NSA can enhance its credibility, foster public trust, and attract the necessary support to develop and nurture sports talent in Hong Kong. Implementing effective governance practices is an ongoing journey that requires collective commitment, collaboration, and vigilance of all stakeholders involved in the sports arena. It will be our collective efforts to build a strong foundation for sports governance.

For the purpose of establishing this Code of Governance, the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China has consulted Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, Independent Commission Against Corruption, Dr. Davy WU, Senior Lecturer, Department of Accountancy, Economics and Finance and Associate Director, Centre for Corporate Governance and Financial Policy, of the Hong Kong Baptist University and Member Associations, and their inputs are gratefully acknowledged. Their invaluable contributions have helped shape this Code that will guide NSAs towards a future of enhanced governance in sports.

DISCLAIMER

The guidelines and procedures as contained in this Code of Governance are for general guidance only. They should be modified and adapted as appropriate to suit individual NSA’s circumstances and operational needs. Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China will not accept any liability, legal or otherwise, for loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any material including the guidelines and procedures in this Code of Governance. This Disclaimer has been translated into Chinese. If there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between the English version and the Chinese version, the English version shall prevail.

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CHAPTER 1

BOARD GOVERNANCE

CHAPTER 1 BOARD GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

Good governance is an essential component of a successful NSA and is integral to successful leadership by inducing trust and support. This ensures that all members have equal access to the resources and opportunities available within the NSA. Good governance also encourages innovation and transformation by providing a clear framework for decision-making. This allows the NSA to take advantage of new opportunities and respond quickly to risks and challenges.

The NSA should develop clear guidelines on board governance covering Board of Directors¹, functional committees, Board of Directors and General Meetings. Putting this set of practices and processes in place will assist the NSA to operate in an effective, accountable and responsible manner. This will include decision-making processes, operations and policies that are transparent, ethical and widely accepted as fair. Good governance enables successful policy implementation, compliance with legal regulations and organizational standards, as well as engagement with stakeholders. Overall, a strong governance structure offers reassurance that the NSA is minimizing the risk of being exposed to dangerous scenarios that will cause threats to the operations and reputation of the NSA as well as the stakeholders.

Ultimately, good governance leads to greater satisfaction amongst players, coaches, administrators, sponsors, and others involved in the sport. It is the NSA's responsibility to create an environment where everyone is fully aware that they are accountable for their actions.

The following practices are to help the Board of Directors and functional committees to enhance accountability, transparency and confidence in their leadership.

1.1 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE

The Code of Governance was developed based on five fundamental principles that form the core of a robust governance. These principles serve as a guiding beacon, outlining the

Note:

¹ In this Code of Governance, the term "Board of Directors" means the governing body of an NSA. In some NSAs, it may be referred to as "Council", "Executive Board", "Executive Committee" or "Management Committee", etc.

fundamental values and overarching concepts that underpin the governance practices. These principles include:

- 1.1.1 **Organizational Structure:** NSA should establish a clear and efficient governance framework to be executed by Board of Directors responsible for the NSA's long-term success. A well-defined governance structure not only ensures optimal decision-making for effective management, but also lays the foundation for organizational growth.
- 1.1.2 **People Diversity:** NSA should include individuals from varied backgrounds, thoughts, skillsets, and experiences that can formulate independent perspectives and facilitate constructive debates between members, thereby helping to formulate effective decision-making that would best align with the NSA's objectives and benefiting the community.
- 1.1.3 **Effective Communication:** NSA should maintain a high level of transparency and accountability. Through understanding & responding to stakeholder needs and maintaining open communication about organizational goals & performance, it effectively helps to ensure and facilitate engagement between various stakeholders.
- 1.1.4 **Standards and Conduct:** NSA should uphold a high ethical standard and foster an inclusive culture. Through embedding strong values, not only does it serve as an effective way to protect public investment and boost reputation, it also ensures that the NSA would be able to swiftly adapt to new challenges.
- 1.1.5 **Procedures and Processes:** NSA should establish proper policies, procedures, and processes to promote standardization, efficiency, and legal compliance, while also considering social and environmental impacts in decision-making. Through implementing effective controls, it helps to mitigate risks and ensure compliance, thereby enhancing public trust in the NSA.

1.2 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- 1.2.1 The Board of Directors should set the mission, objectives and strategies of the NSA and deliver the targeted results. In designing the objectives, the Board of Directors should comply with the Olympic Spirit and reflect a range of positive images of sporting. Strategic action plans should be set up for achieving the operational goals. A statement on compliance with the Olympic Charter, International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics and the Articles of Association of Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China should be publicized. Besides, compliance with the Code of International Federation/Asian Federation, where applicable should also be stated. Furthermore, a statement on compliance with ethical practices and relevant policies and procedures in its daily operation should be publicized.

1.3 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1.3.1 The Board of Directors should be responsible for ensuring the affairs of the NSA are properly managed. Terms of Reference should be documented, which include, but not limited to:

- a) Devise strategic directions and plans on the operations and development of its sport;
- b) Formulate and review policies, guidelines and procedures on major issues of governance for the NSA;
- c) Ensure that the NSA's guidelines and procedures comply with related rules, regulations and requirements from relevant authorities;
- d) Oversee the day-to-day operation of NSA, implementation of policies, guidelines and procedures and conduct risk assessment as appropriate;
- e) Delegate, such of its powers and duties, provided that the powers so delegated are specified in each case;
- f) Formulate annual operational plans and clear targets;
- g) Approve budgets & financial plans, and monitor financial situation;
- h) Appoint & dismiss members from functional committees and Appeal Panel according to the stipulated guidelines and procedures;
- i) Appoint and dismiss employees with such titles, powers and duties as well as remuneration according to the set down guidelines and procedures;
- j) Appoint an external auditor to audit the financial statements of the NSA;
- k) Consider any recommendation(s) on the revision of the guidelines and procedures;
- l) Communicate with stakeholders, including members, athletes, coaches, umpires, officials, sponsors, and the public and address complaints/concerns raised; and
- m) Evaluate performance of the NSA and its senior management.

1.3.2 The NSA should ensure that the Board of Directors are independent from the Secretariat. To segregate their roles and responsibilities, different persons, who are not related,

should be appointed to be the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the Person in charge of the Secretariat.

- 1.3.3 To enable all Board Directors, in particular, the Chairperson, directors, holders of key functions such as Secretary and Treasurer, to perform their respective functions effectively, their roles and responsibilities should be defined clearly and understood by the relevant parties. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat should also be laid down.
- 1.3.4 The NSA should set up the maximum tenure and length of term of office a person may serve on the Board of Directors. For example, they may make reference to the term and age limits recommended by International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics that the term limit may be no more than 3 or 4 consecutive terms or 12 or 16 consecutive years in the same roles and the age limit not older than 70 or 75. Subject to various considerations, a person may stay in the Board of Directors beyond the maximum tenure. In case where the NSA decides to allow a person to serve beyond the maximum tenure, special re-election conditions should be set up to ensure equal opportunity for all eligible persons within the NSA. Please refer to **Section 1.6** for detailed requirements on the nomination, election and re-election of Board of Directors and functional committee members.
- 1.3.5 No individual from the Board of Directors should be able to make any decision on his/her own. The Board Directors should be collectively responsible for the long-term success of the NSA. There should be perpetual discussions of proposals and concerns that demonstrate the best interest and success of the sport and the NSA.
- 1.3.6 All Board Directors should exercise their professional judgement, must act in the best interests of the NSA, and act in a manner consistent with their fiduciary duties.
- 1.3.7 No Board Directors of the NSA shall be appointed to any salaried office of the NSA, or any office of the NSA paid by fees and no remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth shall be given by the Association to any Board Directors.
- 1.3.8 The NSA should ensure that there is no duplicated role of staff as Board Directors unless as an ex-officio member.
- 1.3.9 The NSA should specify a minimum attendance rate required for Board Directors at Board of Directors meetings. For detailed requirements on meeting proceedings, please refer to **Section 1.8**.

- 1.3.10 The NSA should hold induction training to new Board Directors to ensure they have a proper understanding of the NSA's operations and business and are aware of their duties and responsibilities.

1.4 BOARD OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

- 1.4.1 The NSA should determine an appropriate size of the Board of Directors to meet its operational requirements.
- 1.4.2 The NSA should formulate and publicize comprehensive requirements on the composition of the Board of Directors.
- 1.4.3 The Board of Directors should comprise a mix of Board membership with consideration of diversity, experience, background and expertise required for effective governance and fair representation for the interests of major stakeholders.

1.5 FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEES

- 1.5.1 Functional committees have specific areas of focus and assist Board of Directors in providing oversight of the NSA's operations, ensuring that proper practices are followed in accordance with relevant laws and guidelines. Hence, functional committees play an important role in maintaining good governance.
- 1.5.2 The existence of functional committees such as Audit, Finance, and Athlete Selection Committees are considered to be instrumental. The Board of Directors should, as far as possible, establish such functional committees to provide oversight on finance, internal control and risk management, as well as athlete selection of the NSA.
- 1.5.3 If these functional committees are not established by the NSA, the Board of Directors should ensure that these functions are appropriately overseen by designated Board Director(s).
- 1.5.4 The NSA should establish other functional committees subject to its necessity and prevailing circumstances.
- 1.5.5 All members of the functional committees should pledge to uphold the principle of integrity and competency and fully understand their responsibilities.
- 1.5.6 The NSA should lay down the Terms of Reference of each functional committee which includes the following information (not exhaustive) in NSA's governance documents:

- a) Roles and responsibilities of the committee;
- b) Powers of the committee;
- c) Number of Committee Members;
- d) Composition of the committee, including the required expertise and professional background of the Committee Members;
- e) Nomination and appointment procedures;
- f) Tenure;
- g) Number of co-opt members;
- h) Meeting frequency;
- i) Quorum;
- j) Forms of meeting (e.g., whether virtual meeting is allowed);
- k) Records of discussion and decision-making process;
- l) Reporting lines; and
- m) Frequency of reporting to the Board of Directors.

1.5.7 Audit Committee

- a) The Audit Committee of the NSA should undertake the responsibility of overseeing the financial reporting and audit processes of the NSA independently and ensuring that the NSA is complying with legal and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Identify and report significant risks issues to the Board of Directors;
 - Recommend the appointment of external auditor and consult with the appointed external auditor on matters related to external audit; and
 - Oversee the effectiveness of the designated internal control and risk management system.

- b) The NSA should appoint a Board Director, who is neither the Chairperson of the Board of Directors nor other functional committees, as the Chairperson of the Audit Committee; and
- c) Amongst the Audit Committee members, there should be at least one member with relevant financial experience and/or risk expertise who can bring knowledge of accounting or finance, as well as internal control and risk management to the Audit Committee.

1.5.8 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for strategic planning on the management of finance, reviewing budget and providing financial advice to the Board of Directors on all matters related to financial operations of the NSA, including but not limited to:

- a) Oversee the financial planning and management;
- b) Establish financial strategy;
- c) Budgeting;
- d) Recommend policies and guidelines related to financial operation; and
- e) Review issues of income and expenditure, liquidity management and other applicable area.

1.5.9 In case where the NSA encounters insufficient resources and decides not to establish the Audit Committee and Finance Committee, the Board of Directors should:

- a) Assign a director preferably with expertise in accounting or auditing profession to review the NSA's budget and report to the Board of Directors; and
- b) Review the NSA's financial performance and perform an internal audit when needed.

1.5.10 Athlete Selection Committee

The Athlete Selection Committee is responsible for evaluating and selecting athletes for the upcoming international competition/multi-sports game in concern. Appointed Committee Members must have the expertise and the eligibility aligned to the

requirements set by the NSA. For detailed requirements on Athlete Selection Committee, please refer to *Chapter 3 Selection of Athletes*.

- 1.5.11 If the NSA lacks members possessing the requisite skills and expertise essential for a functional committee's work, it is advisable for the NSA to consider the inclusion of suitable individuals as co-opt members. Co-opt members can offer their expertise, knowledge and insights to augment the committee's capabilities as deemed necessary. The decision regarding the voting rights of such appointed co-opt members should be determined by the Board of Directors. Generally, co-opt members should not have voting rights on motions at Board of Directors' level. Should the Board of Directors opine that co-opt members could have voting rights at other levels, it should be stipulated clearly in the Terms of Reference of respective committee.

1.6 NOMINATION, ELECTION AND RE-ELECTION OF BOARD DIRECTORS AND FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 1.6.1 The NSA should establish and publicize a fair and transparent mechanism in the nomination and election process of Board Directors and functional committee members. Nomination and election procedures may differ for the Board of Directors and functional committees, but both should comply with the principle of transparency and ethics. The entire process and the result should be documented, and the information should be made available to the Board of Directors and relevant stakeholders as appropriate.
- 1.6.2 Election mechanism needs to set up clear eligibility criteria as stipulated in the Articles of Association and/or any other resolutions/decisions made by the Board of Directors such as experience, qualifications, contributions, attendance to NSA events/competitions, etc. Once they are set up, the NSA shall publicize the nomination process that includes channels, deadlines, independent oversight, and the announcement of appointment. To ensure fairness, all members of the NSA, as far as practicable, should be given the rights to nominate candidates, to be nominated and to vote for the final candidates using a secure and unbiased voting system.
- 1.6.3 The NSA may select the method of nomination and election that are deemed as appropriate for the roles. Yet, it must be ensured that all nominations are made on merit in line with the qualifications and skills required by the Board of Directors and functional committees. The NSA therefore needs to prepare a detailed list and descriptions of each position and specify nominating and voting rights of the members.

1.6.4 The Board of Directors should appoint a designated staff or an Election Committee for receiving nominations and reviewing their eligibilities after they have declared conflicts of interest.

1.6.5 The designated staff or Election Committee should verify the eligibility of voters and proxies (e.g. checking of membership status against the register of members, conduct authenticity check on appointed proxies) before casting of vote.

1.6.6 Board of Directors

a) The nomination guidelines and procedures for Board Directors should include:

- Eligibility of nomination and being nominated

Qualification, background, expertise and personal attributes required for nominee should be determined in advance. This is to ensure that nominee has the appropriate knowledge and skill set to be elected as a Board Director (i.e., it is suggested that NSA should appoint at least one Board Director with appropriate professional qualifications or related experience, such as legal, accounting or financial expertise). Proper eligibility requirement of nominator should be defined to ensure only registered members of the NSA are entitled to nominate candidates.

- Eligibility of voters

The eligibility requirements of voters and their voting rights should be defined. Common considerations in assessing whether a person is eligible to vote includes membership status, age and mental capacity, etc.

- Responsible person for handling nominations

Appropriate personnel should be deployed to handle the nominations, including but not limited to the collection of nominations and preparation of the candidates list.

- Timeline on call for nominations

Reasonable timeline of the nominations should be given and publicized to ensure nominators have sufficient time to tender their nominations.

- Declaration of interest

To ensure the nomination process is objective and fair, procedures for declaration of potential conflict of interest by the personnel who involves in the nomination process should be established.

b) The election guidelines and procedures for Board Directors shall include:

- Ballot list

The NSA should prepare a ballot list to offer the voters with details on each candidate's background, experience and goals.

- Voting method

The NSA should determine the voting method of the election, common examples of the voting method include vote by show of hands or by paper ballot.

- Definition of invalid vote

Invalid vote such as ballot with no markings or unclear intentions should be defined in advance to determine whether it would be voided.

- Dealing with equal vote

The NSA should establish a procedure to deal with the situation of two or more nominees getting equal vote that are eligible to be elected for the same position.

- Requirements on being successfully elected

The NSA should define the requirements on being successfully elected for both election and re-election, such as the minimum percentage of vote in favour, etc.

- Casting deadline

The NSA should specify the deadline for casting of ballots, after which no further ballots can be cast.

- Vote counting

The NSA should implement a transparent procedure for counting of votes, i.e., to count the ballots immediately after the casting deadline and in case this is not practicable, seal all ballots to prevent tampering, to ensure the votes be counted, tabulated and consolidated in an open manner, such as in the presence of representative of election observers and nominees, or have the whole process being videotaped.

- Scrutineer

To ensure the election is fair and legitimate, an independent observer should be deployed to monitor the election process.

- Ballot safeguarding

The NSA should put in place measures to guard against unauthorized tampering with the ballots cast (e.g. use of double-locked ballot boxes with keys separately kept).

- Ballot record

The votes and ballot record should be properly maintained.

1.6.7 Functional Committee

The NSA shall establish and publicize a fair and transparent mechanism in the appointment of functional committee members, which should include, but not limited to:

- a) Eligibility of appointment

To ensure the Committee Member has the right knowledge and skill set to carry out their duties, the qualification, background and expertise required for should be determined and laid down in advance. The qualification requirements for the member of each committee should be tailored to meet the specific needs and responsibilities of the respective committee.

- b) Maximum number of functional committees that a person can serve

The NSA should determine the maximum number of functional committees that a person can serve to ensure all Committee Members can devote sufficient time and make contributions to the NSA that are commensurate with their roles and responsibilities.

- c) Declaration of interest

To ensure the appointee acts in the best interest of the NSA, declaration on conflict of interest by the appointee should be performed at the time of appointment and regularly e.g., annually or biannually.

- d) Announcement on the appointment

The NSA should make the announcement of the appointment available to its stakeholders on a timely basis.

- 1.6.8 Guidelines and Procedures on Election of Board Directors and Appointment of Functional Committee and Co-opt Members is at ***Reference Material 1.1***.

1.7 SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION OF BOARD DIRECTORS

- 1.7.1 The NSA should establish a clear and transparent mechanism for the termination of Board Directors to protect the NSA from the negative impact caused by an individual Board Director engaging in unethical or improper behaviour. This can also demonstrate the NSA's commitment to ethical behaviour and accountability. If the NSA retains the right to suspend any director(s), delegation and suspension protocols shall be clearly outlined in the Articles of Association.
- 1.7.2 The NSA should outline the process and circumstances under which a Board Director may be suspended or terminated, and set up the procedures for filling vacancies for Board Directors resulting from suspension and termination, covering the factors for consideration (e.g. circumstances under which a vacancy may be filled), methods (e.g. appointment, by-election), duration of the term, approving authority and announcement of results.
- 1.7.3 If the Board Director is directly or indirectly interested in any contract with the NSA and fails to declare the nature of this interest in a matter as required by Section 536 of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622), the Board Director may be suspended or

terminated and may be liable to a Level 6 fine as defined by the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622).

1.8 CONDUCT OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND GENERAL MEETINGS

- 1.8.1 Acting with integrity and in a transparent manner are key elements of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors should meet periodically to discharge their duties and maintain a proper record of the meetings and decisions.
- 1.8.2 The NSA should ensure all meeting minutes are timely and accurately documented and should be confirmed by the attendees. The following information should be included in the meeting minutes:
- a) Members in attendance and absence;
 - b) Issues and topics being discussed;
 - c) Discussions and dissenting views; and
 - d) Resolution(s) passed or not passed.
- 1.8.3 To demonstrate compliance, the NSA should lay down the rules and procedures for convening meetings including Board of Directors and General Meetings in the governance documents. Key information should include, but not limited to:
- a) Frequency of the meeting;
 - b) Minimum notification period for convening the meetings;
 - c) Minimum delivery period of meeting agenda and discussion papers;
 - d) Meeting details (e.g., time, date, venue and whether virtual meeting is allowed);
 - e) Deadline for confirming attendance;
 - f) Deadline for proposing discussion topics or issues;
 - g) Quorum;

- h) Minimum attendance rate required of Board Directors at meetings;
- i) Rules of proceedings at meeting; and
- j) Resolution mechanism (e.g., by majority or by consensus).

1.8.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Conduct of Board of Directors Meeting and General Meeting is at ***Reference Material 1.2***.

1.9 COMPANY SECRETARY

- 1.9.1 The NSA must appoint a Company Secretary from the date of incorporation in accordance with Section 474 of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622), who can be an employee of the NSA or an external service provider engaged by the NSA.
- 1.9.2 The Company Secretary is responsible for supporting the Board of Directors by ensuring good information flow within the Board and that Board guidelines and procedures are followed. The Company Secretary is also responsible for advising the Board of Directors on governance matters and should also facilitate induction and professional development of Board Directors.

1.10 TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1.10.1 The NSA is responsible for ensuring a fair, unbiased, and inclusive process for all members. Transparency can be achieved through clear communication of the nomination and election process, including eligibility criteria, timelines, procedures, and publication of candidate profiles and their respective qualifications. This allows members to make informed decisions when voting and ensures that the best candidates are selected to serve on the Board of Directors.
- 1.10.2 Accountability is equally important, as it ensures that the Board Directors are held responsible for their actions and decisions. Accountability can be demonstrated through regular reporting, self-evaluation, and feedback mechanisms where the Board of Directors provides updates on its activities and decisions, and the members can have the opportunity to provide feedback and inquiry.
- 1.10.3 Through transparency and accountability, the NSA can build trust, promote inclusivity, and ensure that the most suitable candidates are selected to serve on the Board of Directors, contributing to the success and growth of the NSA. The following are recommended actions (not exhaustive) that NSA can take:

- a) Ensure operational transparency by making relevant information reachable to the public (e.g., posting it on its website);
- b) Keep publicized information up-to-date, especially during athlete selection and Board Directors election period;
- c) Make a commitment on compliance with good governance practices and publish the commitment statement on its website;
- d) Conduct periodic self-evaluation on the level of compliance with good governance practices. In case where the NSA is not able to comply with the good practices, the NSA should consider alternative measures to address the concerns raised by stakeholders and/or the public; and
- e) Publicize the following information:
 - Articles of Association
 - Mission and Goals
 - Strategic Plans
 - Annual Operational Plans and Targets
 - Annual Progress Report
 - Annual Financial Statement
 - Annual Summary of Cash Subvention
 - Organizational Chart
 - Composition of Board of Directors
 - Guidelines and Procedures on Election of Board Directors
 - Guidelines and Procedures on Appointment of Functional Committee and Co-opt Members
 - List of Functional Committees and Committee Members

- Terms of Reference of Functional Committees
- Guidelines and Procedures on Conduct of Board of Directors and General Meetings
- Code of Conduct for Board Directors and Committee Members
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Athletes
- Code of Conduct and Practice for Coaches
- Code of Conduct for Umpires
- Guidelines and Procedures on Athlete Selection
- Guidelines and Procedures on Formation/Appointment of Athlete Selection Committee
- Guidelines and Procedures on Appeal Mechanism
- Structure and Qualification of Coaches
- Guidelines and Procedures on Application of Training Course and Qualification Assessment of Coaches
- Registration and Renewal Mechanism for Coaches
- List of Registered Coaches
- Guidelines and Procedures on Assignment of Coaching Duties
- Structure and Qualification of Umpires
- Guidelines and Procedures on Application of Training Course and Qualification Assessment of Umpires
- Registration and Renewal Mechanism for Umpires

- List of Registered Umpires
- Guidelines and Procedures on Assignment of Adjudicating Duties
- Administration of Membership
- Guidelines and Procedures on Equal Opportunities
- Guidelines and Procedures on Prevention of Sexual Harassment
- Guidelines and Procedures on Child Safeguarding
- Guidelines and Procedures on Handling of Complaints
- Guidelines and Procedures on Personal Data Privacy Protection
- Guidelines and Procedures on Information Security
- Guidelines and Procedures on Handling of Social Media
- Guidelines and Procedures on Anti-Doping
- Minutes of Annual General Meeting
- Attendance Record for each Board of Directors' Meeting

1.11 REVIEW

1.11.1 The Board of Directors should conduct review on all Guidelines and Procedures at least once a year and/or as required. Upon reviewing the Guidelines and Procedures, the following information should be documented:

a) Review date

The date of review conducted by the Board of Directors.

b) Approval date

The date when the Guidelines and Procedures is approved by the Board of Directors.

c) Approval record

The approval of the revised Guidelines and Procedures given by the Board of Directors.

d) Next review date

To lay down the next review date for the Guidelines and Procedures based on the review frequency required.

1.11.2 The NSA should set up appropriate channels to periodically collect feedback from stakeholders within a timeframe.



CHAPTER 2

INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT

CHAPTER 2 INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

While good governance is the key to success in an association, integrity is the crux of governance that safeguards the frame of the Code of Conduct. The importance of integrity management cannot be overstated. The practice assures that all members of the association adhere to ethical principles and conduct themselves accordingly. This includes Board Directors, Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches, and umpires. It is the responsibility of NSA to provide guidance, training and support to its members to make certain that they are aware of their obligations.

Integrity management is also crucial in maintaining the integrity of the sport itself. Sports have a unique place in society, and public have high expectations of fair play and honest competition. Any breach of integrity will ruin the trust of the public and tarnish the reputation of the sport. Therefore, a dedicated approach to integrity management and transparency in decision-making should be adopted.

2.1 COMMITMENT TO INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT

- 2.1.1 Integrity management ensures the highest standards of honesty, transparency and accountability within the NSA. This is essential to promote fair play, maintain the trust of stakeholders, and uphold the reputation of the NSA. Therefore, the NSA should commit in proactive manner towards integrity management.
- 2.1.2 Board of Directors should demonstrate their clear determination in pursuing sound governance and fostering ethical culture within the NSA. The NSA should make a public statement of commitment to:
 - a) Comply with good governance practices and integrity management;
 - b) Adopt “zero tolerance” towards corruption and malpractice;
 - c) Comply with ethical practice, policies and procedures in the conduct of all business and activities of the NSA; and
 - d) Ensure election is conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

- 2.1.3 NSA should also be committed to enforce established disciplinary mechanism firmly with no double standards, and to organize activities promoting ethical cultures for the staff.

2.2 CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.2.1 The Code of Conduct sets up the ethical principles and behavioural expectations that members of the NSA are expected to follow. It provides a framework for behaviour that promotes a culture of integrity and accountability. It also helps to prevent misconduct by providing guidance on what are acceptable behaviour and what are not and help members to recognize the situations where their conduct may be inappropriate and guide them on how to respond.
- 2.2.2 The Code of Conduct establishes accountability by setting up consequences for misconduct. This will help members to understand and encourage them to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct. By adopting Code of Conduct, the NSA can ensure that it is promoting ethical behaviour and upholding the integrity of the sport. Therefore, the NSA should issue respective Codes of Conduct for Board Directors & Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches and umpires, in which requirements listed in *Sections 2.2.3 to 2.2.6* should be included, and circulate extracts of key probity requirements to relevant persons periodically as a reminder (e.g., circulate extracts before the festive seasons where gifts are commonly given). The NSA should also require the aforementioned personnel to adopt and comply respective Codes of Conduct.
- 2.2.3 Acceptance of Advantages
- a) The NSA should ensure Board Directors, Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches, and umpires are aware of the spirit and relevant regulations related to prohibition against “acceptance”, “solicitation” and “offering” of advantage (e.g., the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, Cap. 201). The NSA should circulate extracts from relevant regulations and/or arrange workshops to help staff building up a solid understanding of acceptance of advantages;
 - b) Remind the Board Directors, Committee Members and staff of prohibitions on solicitation or accepting advantages from persons with whom they have official dealings without proper permission. In some special circumstances, staff may be allowed to accept token gifts for administrative convenience without formal approval. In such case, NSA should determine the permissible value of token gifts. For approval on accepting advantages other than token gifts, the NSA should establish a formal approval procedure and determine the authority for relevant approval; and

- c) Formulate a standard template for reporting of acceptance of advantage and documenting management decisions on the disposal.

2.2.4 Acceptance of Entertainment

- a) Board Directors, Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches, and umpires shall avoid accepting lavish or frequent entertainment from persons to whom they have official dealings with; and
- b) To incorporate detailed guidelines on handling entertainment invitations in the NSA's Codes of Conduct, which includes:
 - Prior approval on acceptance of entertainment;
 - Designated authority for the approval;
 - Whether subsequent reporting of acceptance of entertainment is allowed, if prior approval is not applicable; and
 - Any mitigation actions on handling subsequent reporting.

2.2.5 Offer of Advantage

The NSA should remind the Board Directors, Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches, and umpires of prohibition from offering advantage to persons with whom they have official dealings.

2.2.6 Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest arises when individual's (including Board Directors, Committee Members and staff) "private interests" conflict with the interest of the NSA or his/her official duties. "Private interests" refer to any financial or other personal interests that individual (including staff working within the NSA, their family members or persons with other relations, their friends, clubs and NSA to which the staff belong, any other groups of people that staff may have connections with, or any person to whom the staff owes a favour or is obligated in any way) may concern. To deal with conflicts of interest, the NSA should:

- a) Require relevant persons to avoid and declare any actual or deemed concerns on conflicts of interest. Relevant persons include:

- Board Directors;

If a Board Director is in any way (directly or indirectly) interested in a transaction, arrangement or contract with the NSA that is significant in relation to the NSA's business and the Director's interest is material, the Director must declare his/her interest in accordance with Section 536 of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622).

- Functional committee members;
- Staff involved in decision-making process; and
- Athletes, coaches and umpires involved in the decision-making process (e.g., involved in determination of the athlete selection).

- b) Establish a mechanism for declaring conflicts of interest. A sound mechanism includes:

- Reporting system
 - One-tier system: conflicts of interest are reported only when they arise; or
 - Two-tier system: in addition to requirements on one-tier system, relevant persons should disclose their general pecuniary interests upon elected/appointed and at regular intervals after their appointment;
- Channels of declaration;
- Reporting line; and
- Standard template for declaration and record-keeping of conflicts of interest.

- c) Provide examples of conflicts of interest for relevant persons (e.g., relationship with the supplier of sport equipment when sourcing equipment for athlete trainings, relationship with potential athlete when selecting athletes for sport events) as references and establish guidelines for mitigation actions against the declared conflicts (e.g., prohibiting person who has declared interest from involvement in the decision-making process); and

- d) Documentation on declaration of conflicts of interest and subsequent actions taken should be properly maintained for future review. The NSA shall maintain a register

for recording Board Directors and Committee Members' interests upon their appointments and in case of any subsequent changes.

2.2.7 Compliance with the Code of Conduct

The NSA should specify disciplinary sanctions against breaches of the Code of Conduct (e.g., advice, warning, reprimand, dismissal, etc.) and should appoint a senior staff to handle enquiries and reports of non-compliance. All relevant parties must sign acknowledgement of Code of Conduct to signify that they agree and comply with the requirements of the Code.

2.2.8 Different sets of Code of Conduct for Board Directors and Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches and umpires are listed at ***Reference Materials 2.1 to 2.5*** respectively.

2.3 INTEGRITY AWARENESS BUILDING SESSIONS

2.3.1 Integrity awareness building sessions should be designed to promote integrity with a clear understanding of the ethical principles and values that underpin NSA. These sessions will enhance the understanding of integrity within the association, by providing knowledge about the guidelines and procedures related to integrity management and skills related to identifying and avoiding situations that can compromise their integrity.

2.3.2 These sessions will also help to build the culture of integrity by encouraging ethical behaviour and compliance with guidelines and procedures while reducing the risk of non-compliance and associated legal and reputational risks. Highest level of integrity can help building trust and demonstrate that NSA is an ethical and responsible association.

2.3.3 The NSA should:

- a) Conduct capacity building sessions for newly appointed Board Directors to familiarize them with the Code and relevant guidelines on anti-corruption;
- b) Arrange refresher sessions for serving Board Directors and staff to sustain their vigilance on integrity; and
- c) Conduct regular review on integrity management guidelines to align with the changes in legal framework as well as social and organizational environment.

2.4 PREVENTION OF THE MANIPULATION OF COMPETITIONS

- 2.4.1 Prevention of the manipulation of competitions should be incorporated to the NSA's integrity management guidelines and/or respective Codes of Conduct for Board Directors and Committee Members, staff, athletes, coaches and umpires to ensure the integrity and protect its participants by prohibiting any form of manipulation, including match-fixing, doping, and bribery, etc. The guidelines provide framework that protect the athletes and the competition from external threats, such as organized crime and gambling syndicates.
- 2.4.2 Consequences of manipulation can be severe as it may lead to criminal liability. It will ruin the trust of the public and tarnish the reputation of the sport. NSA should put clear guidelines and procedures in place to prevent, detect, and penalize any manipulation attempt. The NSA should also make explicit that all participants are held at the same standards of conduct and behaviour.
- 2.4.3 The NSA should demonstrate its commitment to fair play and accountability through anti-manipulation procedures. This sends a message to the public, sponsors, and stakeholders that the competition is conducted with the highest standards of ethical conduct. The NSA shall refer to "Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions" issued by the International Olympic Committee for more details.



CHAPTER 3

SELECTION OF ATHLETES

CHAPTER 3 SELECTION OF ATHLETES

INTRODUCTION

With the growing presence of Hong Kong athletes in international sports competitions, representation of fairness in the selection of athletes carries weight. The public expects fair and transparent procedures for selecting athletes who can best represent Hong Kong. Equal opportunity should be given to all qualified/aspiring athletes dreaming of showing their skills to the world. Hence, having robust selection process can secure and appoint best winning potential athletes. The NSA should uphold the highest standard of integrity, promote an ethical culture, and engage in effective evaluation to drive continuous improvement.

The NSA should be committed to establish a fair selection mechanism. The selection process should adhere to the principle of transparency and in compliance with the Code of Conduct. The NSA should seek to ensure close and effective communication with the stakeholders. The selection criteria must be readily available to all athletes, and the related information should be circulated in a timely manner.

The selection process should also be proceeded in a non-discriminatory and objective manner. All qualified/aspiring athletes should have equal opportunities to display their skills. Screening based upon discriminatory factors such as race or ethnicity should be strictly prohibited. All selection should be conducted on merit in line with the requirements of the NSA, the team and/or competitions. The NSA should place emphasis on independence when conducting the selection process. There should be no bias or any third-party influence in the selection process. The evaluation must be based solely on the performance and suitability of the athlete. The NSA and Athlete Selection Committee must demonstrate highest integrity in performing their duties.

3.1 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ATHLETE SELECTION

3.1.1 Athlete selection mechanism is an important aspect for building successful teams and achieving long-term success in sports. A good athlete selection mechanism should begin with solid fundamental principles which highlight the basis on identifying and selecting athletes who have the potential to perform well in a particular sport or event. To further elaborate the spirit of competitive sports, the NSA should make a public statement of commitment to:

- a) Promulgate the core values of equal opportunities and fair competition in athlete selection;

- b) Allow athletes fair and full opportunity to display their worthiness for selection and to fulfill the aims of the NSA at the competition;
- c) Ensure transparency in respect of information about the selection and the selection process, and timeliness in the dissemination of the information;
- d) Uphold the principle of impartiality in the selection process, including the formulation of a mechanism for declaring conflict of interest, actual or perceived, and the guidelines for taking appropriate actions following the declaration; and
- e) Adhere to ethical practices and compliance with the fundamental principles in athlete selection.

3.2 ATHLETE REGISTRATION

- 3.2.1 To facilitate the verification on the eligibility of athletes participating in an NSA event or competition, athlete registration and renewal guidelines shall be established and publicized to the public to promote fairness and transparency.
- 3.2.2 When the NSA sets up the registration and renewal guidelines, the following should be taken into consideration:
 - a) Eligibility criteria;
 - b) Registration requirements and necessary documents;
 - c) Renewal conditions and necessary documents;
 - d) Registration and renewal workflow (e.g., conduct and document the authenticity checks on applicants' claimed qualifications);
 - e) Registration approving authorities (e.g., for approval of renewal, waiving of fees);
 - f) Undertaking by applicants to abide by NSA's Code of Conduct for Athletes;
 - g) Registration and renewal period;
 - h) Validity duration;
 - i) Fees and fee-waiver arrangement;

- j) Time pledge for processing applications;
- k) Suspension and termination of registration status; and
- l) Appeal mechanism.

3.2.3 The NSA should require the athlete to declare that all information and documents submitted are genuine and correct. By submitting the documents, the athlete will be deemed to agree on further inspection by the NSA when needed. Falsification of documents may lead to the revocation of registration and being prohibited from enrolling in any athlete selection procedure.

3.3 SELECTION CRITERIA

3.3.1 Selection criteria is the first stage of demonstration of objectivity, fair and just competition in sports. The NSA should be committed to creating a fair environment for athletes to grow and compete. Selection criteria should be constructed in a way to best assess the ability and potential of the athlete, with clear standards and wording to avoid confusion among the athletes and the Selection Committee. Behind criteria in use, the NSA has to articulate the justification for each aspect of the criteria in regard of rationality.

3.3.2 The criteria should cover both quantitative and qualitative elements to fulfill objective and subjective criteria. All criteria should be assigned with a weighting.

3.3.3 The NSA may consider its objective criteria based on performance, such as ranking records and the applicable event performance history, etc. Athlete's final score in the weighting system should be the major determining factor for selection. The appropriateness of the selection criteria should also be assessed and considered in competitions of various nature.

3.3.4 The NSA could also assess the suitability of the athletes through supplementary assessment against the subjective criteria for certainty, taking heed of the gravity of the international competition/multi-sports games. The NSA may consider expert assessment of the athlete's winning chance having considered his/her psychological factor, competition results, latest performance and collective views of coaches in respect of the athlete's potential and ability for further assessment.

3.3.5 In order to facilitate the process of selection, the criteria should be disseminated in a timely manner to allow preparation for the best effort. The selection criteria should also be reviewed regularly to update with reference to the latest international standard.

3.3.6 When the NSA sets up the selection criteria, the following should be taken into consideration:

a) Objective(s) or target(s) for each type of event and competition

The selection of athletes varies based on different objectives and targets for a specific event or competition that the NSA would like to achieve. To ensure the most suitable athletes are selected, objectives and targets should be established for a specific event and competition (e.g., nurturing second-tier athletes in championship events corresponding to their levels, or selecting the best athletes for competing in world-class competitions, such as the Olympic Games and Asian Games, etc.);

b) Quantitative standards for objective selection criteria

To promote objective assessment of athletes' suitability, quantitative and objective criteria such as minimum world ranking and performance benchmarks, etc. should be established;

c) Qualification period(s)

If past performance is incorporated in the selection criteria, the NSA should set up and publicize the qualification period(s) in advance to facilitate sufficient time for preparation and application from eligible athletes;

d) Competitions or events recognized for selection

If past performance is incorporated in the selection criteria, the NSA should lay down and publicize names of competitions or events that are recognized for the selection in advance to facilitate sufficient time for preparation and application from eligible athletes;

e) Subjective criteria

The NSA should formulate subjective criteria to assess the athlete's suitability and competence towards the events or competitions (e.g., expert assessment of the athlete's winning chance having considered his/her psychological factor, competition results and latest performance, and collective views of coaches in respect of the athlete's attitude, potential and ability); and

- f) The corresponding weighting of each criterion

The NSA should determine weighting of each criterion with consideration on their level of importance.

3.4 SELECTION METHODS

- 3.4.1 Selection method is instrumental for the NSA to identify suitable athletes who meet NSA's objectives and targets of the event. Therefore, before progressing the selection process, the NSA should determine its selection method and publicize it. The rules for selection method should be reasonable and proportionate to the objectives of the NSA.

- 3.4.2 The NSA should determine the selection method which suits its needs most. Typical selection methods include:

- a) Direct nomination

The NSA should provide justifications for the direct nomination. Athletes who possess outstanding results in previous international competitions may automatically be selected by the NSA to participate in the events. The NSA should determine and announce list of recognized events and periods as well as their respective results prior to the selection date;

- b) Ranking/Point-system

Athletes may be selected based on their ranking within their sport. This can be determined by performance and/or ranking in selected competitions or a point system within a predetermined qualifying period;

- c) Coach assessment

When coach assessment is used in selection process, the NSA should provide detailed assessment guidelines to the coaches on factors to be considered (e.g., athlete's performance, experience, potential, etc.) and require the coaches to maintain proper documentation relating to the assessment and decision-making for future review;

- d) Trial event

Trial events may be held for athlete to compete. The trial events can be open to all athletes or limited to those who have met certain performance criteria. When

holding a trial event, the NSA should announce detailed information of the trial event in advance, such as enrolment period, event date and location, enrolment eligibility and qualifying performance standard for being selected; and

e) Combination of methods

If more than one selection methods are used, the NSA should determine and publicize the weighting of each result obtained from each selection method.

3.5 SELECTION PROCEDURES

3.5.1 Prior to initiating the process of selection, the NSA should publicize key information about the selection exercise to allow sufficient time for preparation by the athlete. The NSA should ensure that adequate selection information is publicized for respective competition/event (e.g., timeline, nomination/application channel, eligibility requirements, qualification, etc.).

3.5.2 The NSA may have its own discretion to determine the selection procedures and publicized on its website. Same criteria should be applied throughout the process regardless of the method used for the selection.

3.5.3 The selection exercise needs to be objective and should proceed in a timely manner. The Athlete Selection Committee should ensure the upholding of integrity and safeguard impartiality throughout the process of selection. Every stakeholder involved in the selection process should remain professional and unbiased. The NSA should timely publicize the following information:

a) Details of the selection exercise

The methods of selecting the athletes with key information, e.g., date, time, venue of selection, required documents and application channel/methods, etc.;

b) Number of athletes to be selected

Number of places available including replacements;

c) Replacement of athletes

The procedures for managing the replacement, including how replacement is selected and how he/she can be added to the team;

d) Removal of athletes

Detailed information on dealing with athlete removals, such as the reasons or circumstances of removal and designated person(s) for reviewing the removals, etc.;

e) Retention period for the selection document

The specified retention period for all documents relating to the athlete selection process;

f) Announcement date and method

The time pledge for the selection process which should include the date and channel for result announcement; and

g) Lodging an appeal against the selection result

An appeal mechanism should be in place to deal with any appeal against selection results.

3.5.4 Collecting Feedback

The NSA should set up appropriate channels and timeframe to periodically collect feedback from stakeholders. Examples on channels that are commonly used include questionnaires and open forum inviting interactive discussion, etc.

3.5.5 Guidelines and Procedures on Athlete Selection is at *Reference Material 3.1*.

3.6 ATHLETE SELECTION COMMITTEE

3.6.1 To facilitate the implementation of Guidelines and Procedures for Athlete Selection, the NSA should appoint people with appropriate skills, experience and knowledge to make effective and accurate decisions. The NSA should ensure that members appointed to the Athlete Selection Committee could satisfy the requirements and fulfill the obligations. Hence, there must be thorough screening of profile and background to appoint a Committee Member that can perform the role effectively.

3.6.2 Appointment procedures must observe the principle of independence with the utter exclusion of external/internal party's influence. This should be underlined as Athlete Selection Committee serves as representatives of the public eyes to find the best-fit for

the concerning international competitions/multi-sports games. There should be strict culture present within the committee to promote professionalism.

3.6.3 The NSA should have documented formal, inclusive, and transparent procedures for the appointment of Athlete Selection Committee members, and all appointments should be based on merit. Appointment process and results should be documented for records, and information should be available to the NSA and relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

3.6.4 To further safeguard the integrity of Athlete Selection Committee, members should report to the NSA for any potential conflict of interest. The NSA should contain independent voices and engage in constructive discussion or debate to enable good decision-making.

3.6.5 The NSA should set up the requirements on Athlete Selection Committee and the following should be included:

a) Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference should be drawn up to detail the specific scope of work, powers, duties and responsibilities;

b) Membership composition

A reasonable size of the committee should be determined;

c) Membership requirements

Members should possess related professional background and expertise. To ensure objectivity without prejudice, there should be at least one coach or umpire representative in the committee to share his/her professional views towards the selection;

d) Appointment of the Committee Members and Chairperson

The appointment process of Committee Members and Chairperson and their roles and responsibilities should be specified and clearly communicated;

e) Meeting frequency

Lay down the frequency of meeting and specify the minimum number of meeting to be conducted throughout the year to ensure there is proper oversight of the athlete selection process, e.g., the NSA should require the Committee Members to meet at least once before the commencement of the selection process to ensure the appropriateness of the selection method and selection criteria, to take part in actual selection process, and require another meeting after the selection exercise to review the appropriateness of the selection decision;

f) Attendance rate

Specify the minimum attendance rate required of members at meetings;

g) Reporting frequency

Determine the reporting frequency to the Board of Directors on committee's performance of duties and key matters so as to ensure an effective operation of the committee, e.g., the committee should be required to report to the Board of Directors on the selection process and outcome after each selection exercise;

h) Documentation of decision-making process of the athlete selection

A detailed record of the decision-making process of the athlete selection should be properly retained to demonstrate the proper conduct of the selection; and

i) Conflict of interest

To ensure the athlete selection is objective and fair, procedures of declaration of potential conflict of interest by the Committee Members should be established.

3.6.6 Guidelines and Procedures on Athlete Selection Committee is at ***Reference Material 3.2.***

3.7 APPEAL PANEL & PROCEDURES

3.7.1 In case if unexpected and unprecedented incidents occurred to an athlete during the selection process, the NSA should allow the athlete an opportunity to display his/her competency for fair judgement on his/her skills. Athletes should be provided with an avenue of appeal. Therefore, the NSA should formulate an appeal mechanism which includes an Appeal Panel and established procedures to handle the appeal. The NSA

should set clear eligibility, time limit, appeal channel, fee, method, and criteria that are readily available to the appellant.

3.7.2 Transparency, proportionality, non-discriminatory, and objectivity should be the core principles of the appeal mechanism. The appeal process should be discrete and just. The appeal submission should be accepted with high level of concern to examine whether the athlete has eligible ground(s) and within the reasonable time limit.

3.7.3 The Appeal Panel should consist of both members who involve and involve in the athlete selection process in order to make objective judgement without prejudice.

3.7.4 The appeal mechanism should include:

a) Appeal Panel

The NSA can determine whether to set up a standing Appeal Panel with designated members or an ad-hoc Appeal Panel and appoint members as appropriate.

The NSA should set up the requirements on Appeal Panel and the following should be included:

- Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference should be drawn up to detail the specific scope of work, powers, duties and responsibilities;

- Powers of the Appeal Panel

The powers of the Appeal Panel, such as powers to overrule the original selection decision, and/or to order a re-selection exercise, etc.;

- Panel composition

To ensure objectivity without prejudice, more than half of the members including the panel Chairperson should not be involved in the original selection;

- Size of the Panel

A reasonable size of the panel should be determined;

- Requirements on panel members

Qualification, background and expertise required for the panel should be determined and laid down in advance. This is to ensure the panel as a whole has the right knowledge and skill set;

- Appointment of the panel members and Chairperson

The appointment process of panel members and Chairperson and their roles and responsibilities should be specified and clearly communicated;

- Terms of appointment

If the NSA determines to set up a standing Athlete Selection Appeal Panel, terms of appointment, including the maximum tenure for panel members should be specified; and

- Formulation of membership database for Appeal Panel

If the NSA decide to establish and maintain a database for eligible appeal panel members, method of establishment (e.g., to invite eligible individuals to express their interest in serving the Appeal Panel), frequency of updating the database (e.g., to invite individuals to express their interests periodically) and type of information to be retained in the database should be decided.

b) Appeal Procedures

To ensure transparency and compliance to good governance, the NSA should establish and publicize detailed appeal procedures. The appeal procedures should include:

- Eligible grounds for appeal

Examples of eligible grounds attribute to the lodging of appeal can be provided to reduce ambiguity;

- Time frame for lodging an appeal

Reasonable time limit should be given and a standard period can be considered for all circumstances;

- Method for lodging an appeal

Acceptable channel for lodging an appeal should be specified, e.g., in writing, by post, or email, etc.;

- Rules of proceedings

The NSA should set up the following, which include, but not limited to:

- Quorum of the Appeal Panel;
- Mode of deliberation, e.g., paper-based judgement or conduct of hearing, in advance with consideration of the timeline and practicality;
- Information/documents to be provided to the panel for deliberation, e.g., case information, other precedents for reference, etc.; and
- If hearing is conducted, the following information should be provided to the panel members and the appellant:
 - Notice period of hearing;
 - Date/time of hearing;
 - Location of hearing;
 - Documents to be shared with the appellant prior to the appeal; and
 - Hearing procedures (e.g., whether appellants may make own representation or be allowed legal representation, etc.).
- Deliberation method (e.g., by a majority decision or by consensus);

The decision and follow-up actions, if any, made by the Appeal Panel should be reported to the Board of Directors and to state clearly whether the decision is final, whereby no further appeal can be made against the decision;

- The Appeal Panel should document the following information before closing the appeal:
 - Decision date;

- Discussion between panel members (e.g., salient points of discussion/views of individual panel members); and
- Reasons to come up with the decision.
- The time and method of notifying the appellant and respondent of the outcome;
- Requirement on comprehensive documentation of the decision-making process and the period of retention;
- Make a commitment in its appeal procedures that all information relating to the appeal is to be kept confidential; and
- Fee for lodging an appeal

The NSA should determine if a fee is required for lodging an appeal and the payment method. The amount of fee should be reasonable and proportionate to reflect the time and efforts incurred in the appeal process. The fee should not be a barrier to the lodging of appeal.

3.7.5 Guidelines and Procedures on Appeal Mechanism is at ***Reference Material 3.3.***

3.8 RELAXATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO ATHLETE SELECTION AND/OR GAMES

- 3.8.1 In cases whereby athletes have notable potential, skills, know-how, abilities of attaining standards of high-level games and/or obtained outstanding results, but for some reasons, e.g. different membership status; being members of affiliated clubs which are not entitled to nominate; unable to fulfill certain selection criteria, etc., they will be deprived of the opportunities to be considered for selection exercises and/or participating in games to demonstrate their sporting talents. Member Associations should seriously consider to take possible steps of relaxing entry requirements, selection criteria or setting up a system to cope with such exceptional situations subject to prevalent resources and circumstances. Relaxation includes, but not limited to age division; team qualifications; qualifying periods/events; etc.
- 3.8.2 Athletes, therefore, with notable potential & abilities and remarkable performance will not be buried and refrained from participating in selection and/or games by some set down rules or requirements. They can excel their capabilities so as representing their sports and Hong Kong to participate in competitions.



CHAPTER 4

MANAGEMENT OF COACHES AND UMPIRES

CHAPTER 4 MANAGEMENT OF COACHES AND UMPIRES

INTRODUCTION

Coaches and umpires play significant roles that impact various aspects of sports and competitions. Hence, it is essential for NSA to establish a framework on the management of coaches and umpires which is embedded with a system that selects, trains, and supervises coaches and umpires to ensure that they possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to perform their roles effectively.

A well-managed coaching and umpiring program can improve the quality of play, prevent injuries, and reduce the risk of disputes or controversies. By providing ongoing support, feedback, and recognition to coaches and umpires, the NSA can promote a culture of professional development and excellence in their respective fields, which leads to improved performance, increased job satisfaction, and retention of skilled & experienced coaches and umpires.

Effective management of coaches and umpires is crucial as it directly impacts the quality of the sport and the satisfaction of its participants. The NSA should make reference to the guidelines and procedures in the Reference Materials to establish a framework that aims at the highest level of integrity and fairness in the process.

4.1 QUALIFICATION AND REGISTRATION MECHANISM

- 4.1.1 The mechanism of qualification and registration helps to track whether coaches and umpires have met specific requirements and standards, ensuring that they are competent and professional in their respective fields. Having a registration mechanism allows the NSA to keep track of the development of coaches and umpires and determine if they are up-to-date with the latest rules and regulations, and that their performances are regularly monitored and evaluated. This promotes a culture of continuous improvement and professional development among coaches and umpires, which ultimately benefits the sport and its participants.
- 4.1.2 The mechanism will also help to protect the safety and well-being of athletes. As coaches and umpires are properly qualified and registered, they are more likely to be aware of the risks and dangers associated with the sport and take appropriate measures to prevent injuries. The NSA should prepare a detailed protocol on the training course enrolment, qualification assessment, registration, renewal, and handling of complaints.

To establish an effective and appropriate qualification and registration mechanism for coaches and umpires, the NSA should include information in the following list:

a) Overall Structure

Lay down the overall structure and qualification for coaches and umpires. The following elements should be included:

- Rationale and objectives of the structure;
- Numbers of levels;
- Features of each level;
- Pathways to each level;
- Continuous development requirements (e.g., attending workshops, refresher courses or re-validation tests, etc.); and
- Validity duration of each level.

b) Training Course and Qualification Assessment

Individuals who would like to be qualified as a coach/an umpire should attend relevant training courses and pass assessment to demonstrate his/her understanding of professional knowledge and meet the required standard. To maintain the quality of training course, the NSA should limit the number of participants for each course. The following elements should be included:

- Establish and publicize the path to each level with the following details:
 - Eligibility requirements;
 - Required training for each level, course syllabus, end-of-course assessment and mode of assessment;
 - Assessment criteria and weighting assigned to each criterion where applicable;
 - Minimum assessment results eligible for awarding qualification;

- Course enrolment details (e.g., period and channels for enrolment, available seats for each course, fees, etc.); and
- Allocation of course (e.g., by ballot or first-come, first-served basis).
- Lay down detailed procedures/workflow for processing course enrolment in the guidelines, which include:
 - Receiving applications;
 - Processing submitted documents and information;
 - Conducting eligibility check;
 - Handling of late enrolment;
 - Allocation of course enrolment;
 - Date of announcement of enrolment results;
 - Maximum number of participants in each training course; and
 - Way of notifying applicants of the results.
- Establish a solid mechanism for end-of-course assessment, which include, but not limited to the following:
 - Ensure the assessment contents, including question bank, selected questions for both written and practical examinations as well as the marking scheme, etc., are confidential and handled by designated staff;
 - Ensure the marking scheme incorporates all assessment aspects and corresponding marking standards;
 - If written examination is conducted, the NSA should ensure the name of the examinee cannot be seen by the examiner during the marking of paper;
 - The marking of paper should not be based solely on an examiner's judgment, but in accordance with the marking scheme;

- Two-marker system may be adopted where the average score is taken as the final marks or adopt one-marker system where the score is subject to a review mechanism;
 - Ensure all assessment results are properly documented by the examiner;
 - If attendance rate is one of the grading factors, it must be documented properly and accurately (e.g., conduct random checks between attendance records and on-site headcounts);
 - Final result should be reviewed by the approving authority to ensure the propriety on qualification awarded;
 - Timely announce the assessment results; and
 - Set up an appeal mechanism.
- In case where certificate is issued to qualified coach/umpire, the NSA shall ensure the certificate is issued to the right person. The stock of blank certificates should be safely kept. The NSA may adopt the following actions to manage its stock of blank certificates:
 - Maintain a complete record of movement of certificates;
 - Conduct regular checks of stock against record; and
 - Ensure copies of blank certificates are stored safely and properly.

c) Registration and Renewal

- Determine and publicize the mechanism for registration and renewal of registrations of coach and umpire. The following information should be included where applicable:
 - Registration requirements and necessary documents (e.g., holder of certain certificates or qualifications, etc.);
 - Renewal conditions (e.g., minimum coaching/umpiring hours in recognized courses, attendance of refresher training and proper conduct, etc.) and necessary documents;

- Registration and renewal workflow for processing application (e.g., conduct and document authenticity checks on applicants' claimed qualifications, etc.)
 - Approving authorities (e.g., for approval of registration and renewal, waiving of fees, etc.);
 - Undertaking by applicants to abide by NSA's Code of Conduct and Practice for Coaches/Code of Conduct for Umpires;
 - Registration and renewal period;
 - Validity duration;
 - Fees and fee-waiver arrangement; and
 - Time pledge for processing applications.
- The NSA should require the applicant to declare that all information and documents submitted are genuine and correct. By submitting the documents, the applicant will be deemed to agree on further checks by the NSA if necessary. Falsification of documents may lead to the revocation of registration and suspension from attending any qualification course or assessment within a specified period.
 - The NSA should check against the 'Complaint Records' to see if there is any previous substantiated complaint. Procedures for handling complaint records in processing applications (e.g. whether additional renewal conditions need to be imposed) and the respective approving authority should also be laid down.

4.2 UMPIRE NOMINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- 4.2.1 Having qualified and experienced umpires in competitions/events will improve the standard of play and prevent unnecessary disputes or controversies. Therefore, implementing a practice of screening and nomination for international qualifications will assist in selecting and training the best and most capable umpires to reach for international level. This can further enhance the credibility and reputation of the sport, while providing opportunities for development and recognition of umpires within the NSA. Hence, the NSA should establish and publicize application/nomination procedures and selection criteria to all registered umpires with details, which include,

but not limited to eligibility requirements, documents required, period, method & channel for application, selection procedures, notification of results and appeal mechanism, etc.

4.2.2 The NSA should appoint appropriate assessors to assess the applications/nominations and process the selection for making recommendation to the Board of Directors. The appointed assessors should ensure the decision-making process and final results are properly documented.

4.2.3 Nomination results should be announced to the public within the pledged period.

4.3 DATABASE OF REGISTERED COACHES AND REGISTERED UMPIRES

4.3.1 The NSA should establish and maintain a database of registered coaches and umpires, ensuring it is being timely updated, and to publicize the lists for general information.

4.4 ASSIGNMENT OF COACHING AND ADJUDICATING DUTIES

4.4.1 To ensure fairness and transparency in the assignment of coaching and adjudicating duties, the NSA should decide on the method of assignment and the assignment procedures should be defined clearly.

4.4.2 Apart from ensuring that all coaches and umpires meet the standards for qualifications and experiences, the NSA should require the application for coaching duties to be accompanied with a Sexual Conviction Record Check as a safeguarding measure.

4.4.3 The NSA needs to assess whether there is any conflict of interest such as personal interest or relationship and required the declaration on conflict of interest to be made appropriately.

4.4.4 The NSA should review the past performance and complaint records of coaches and umpires as factors for consideration in the assignment of duties.

4.4.5 The NSA should determine and publicize the method adopting in the assignment of duties to coaches and umpires. The NSA may consider the following approaches:

a) Open invitation

- If the assignment of duties to coaches and umpires is by way of open invitation, the NSA should ensure all eligible persons are notified of the service request, requirements, invitation period and duty assignment mechanism.
- In case when more than one applicant is interested in the same invitation, the assignment shall be arranged in a fair and transparent manner (e.g., decision by ballot or assignment on a fair share basis) where controls in respective procedures for assigning duties should be implemented, such as:
 - Lay down the procedures and authority for compilation and approval of the duty roster;
 - Record the reason for any out-of-turn invitation;
 - Require the balloting to be conducted in the presence of second staff; and
 - Document of the balloting process.
- The NSA should also allow reasonable time for the applicants to indicate their preferences, and should properly record the assignment process, especially for invitation that has more than one applicant.

b) Internal mapping

- If internal mapping is used to assign duties to coaches and umpires, the NSA should maintain and update the database on the availability and/or preference of eligible coaches and umpires on a regular basis. Meanwhile, the NSA should also conduct random supervisory checks on the mapping results and record the mapping process as well as the final duty assignments properly.

4.4.6 The NSA should timely notify the applicants of the duty assignment results.

4.4.7 Guidelines and Procedures on Training Course and Qualification Assessment of Coaches and Umpires and Assignment of Coaching and Adjudicating Duties is at ***Reference Material 4.1.***

4.5 HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST COACH/UMPIRE

- 4.5.1 Any complaints lodged against coaches and/or umpires should be handled in accordance with the Guidelines and Procedures stipulated in ***Reference Material 6.4*** Guidelines and Procedures on Handling of Complaints.



CHAPTER 5

ADMINISTRATION OF MEMBERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

A fair membership admission mechanism is essential to ensure equal opportunities for all applicants to access and benefit from the service, resources and opportunities provided by the NSA. A transparent and impartial admission process helps to prevent bias and promote diversity and inclusivity which are essential values in sports development. By upholding fairness and accountability in the membership admission process, NSA can gain the trust, support and participation from the public, which can enhance their impacts and sustainability from time to time.

To facilitate the admission process for membership, the NSA should state solid requirements on each type of membership. This comprises of clear description and responsibility of each type of membership.

5.1 ADMISSION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1.1 The NSA should be committed to establish fair application standard for aspiring applicants. Rules for admission serve only to safeguard the quality and standards of sporting activities. The application should adhere to the principles of transparency, proportionality, non-discriminatory, and objectivity as well as the availability of appeal in case of refusal for admission. The NSA should understand weight of inclusion or exclusion from the membership and that the result of exclusion can deprive accreditation or other advantages of the applicants.
- 5.1.2 All applications should meet the admission criteria and comply with the standard procedures.

- 5.1.3 To ensure the core value of justice and fairness, the NSA shall uphold the principles set down by the Competition Commission² when establishing its membership admission rules.
- 5.1.4 All unsuccessful applicants should be provided with reasons for the refusal and an avenue of appeal against the application result to the NSA.
- 5.1.5 The NSA should list out the following information regarding admission of membership for promulgation to the public, which should include:
- a) Types of membership;
 - b) Member's rights, responsibilities and obligations of each type of membership;
 - c) Admission criteria for each type of membership (e.g., age, observation period, etc.);
 - d) Membership renewal criteria;
 - e) Application and renewal procedures;
 - f) Documents and information required for admission and renewal of membership;
 - g) Mode of admission for each type of membership (e.g., by invitation/nomination/open application);
 - h) Application or nomination period where applicable;
 - i) Membership renewal deadline;
 - j) Application fee;
 - k) Annual subscription fee;
 - l) Means for settlement of membership application/renewal fee;

Note:

² *Competition Commission Advisory Bulletin on "Competition concerns regarding certain admission criteria and procedures of trade, sporting, professional and industry associations/bodies" dated 29 July 2021.*

- m) Channel for submission of nomination/application (e.g., by email/online application/in person);
- n) Assessment process; and
- o) Time pledge and methods on notification of results.

5.1.6 The NSA should lay out the assessment procedures, including areas subject to evaluation, standards required for each evaluation area, etc., before granting membership. The assessment procedures should include:

- a) Decision-making process (e.g., paper vetting, observation period, and/or deliberation by the Board of Directors); and
- b) Deliberation method (e.g., by majority or by consensus).

5.1.7 The NSA should be committed to complete the process within the time pledge. In case where delay occurs, the NSA should timely notify the applicant of the reason for the delay and the expected completion date.

5.2 MEMBERSHIP VALIDITY AND SUBSCRIPTION FEE

5.2.1 The NSA should set up the validity period of each type of membership.

5.2.2 The NSA should decide the amount of application fee and/or annual subscription fee for each type of membership as well as any arrangement for waiving of fee. All related information such as payment methods and the time when the subscription fee is due should be publicized for general information.

5.3 RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

5.3.1 Members should be in good standing in order to be eligible for renewal of membership. Information regarding the renewal, such as validity period, renewal fee, subscription fee and whether written application is required, etc., should be publicized for general information.

5.4 REGISTER OF MEMBERS

5.4.1 In accordance with Section 627 of the Companies Ordinance (Cap. 622), the NSA must enter in the register of members:

- a) Names and addresses of its members;
- b) Date on which each person is entered in the register as a member; and
- c) Date on which any person ceases to be a member.

5.5 APPEAL MECHANISM & PROCEDURES

5.5.1 If application for membership is declined or in dealing with cases of suspension and termination of membership, the applicant/member should be given a chance to express his/her views and to lodge an appeal. Therefore, the NSA should formulate an appeal mechanism which includes an Appeal Panel and established procedures to handle the appeal. The NSA should set clear eligibility, time limit, appeal channel, fee, method, criteria that are readily available to the appellant.

5.5.2 Transparency, proportionality, non-discriminatory, and objectivity should be the core principles of the appeal mechanism. The appeal process should be independent and just. The appeal submission should be accepted with concern and examined to decide whether the appellant has eligible ground(s) and within the reasonable time limit.

5.5.3 The appeal mechanism should include:

- a) Appeal Panel

The NSA should set up the requirements on Appeal Panel and the following should be included:

- Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference should be drawn up to detail the specific scope of work, powers, duties and responsibilities;

- Powers of the Appeal Panel

The powers of the Appeal Panel, such as to provide comments and make recommendation as deemed appropriate;

- Panel composition

More than half of the members including the panel Chairperson should not be involved in the original decision process;

- Size of the panel

A reasonable size of the panel should be determined;

- Requirements on panel members

Apart from requirements on background, qualification and expertise required from the panel member, consideration may also be given to invite an independent person to sit in the panel;

- Appointment of Chairperson and panel members

The appointment process of Chairperson & panel members and their roles & responsibilities should be specified and clearly communicated;

- Terms of appointment

If a standing Appeal Panel is to be set up, terms of appointment such as the maximum tenure for panel members should be specified; and

- Formulation of membership database for Appeal Panel

If the NSA decides to establish and maintain a database for eligible appeal panel members, method of establishment (e.g., to invite eligible individuals to express their interest in serving the Appeal Panel), frequency of updating the database (e.g., to invite individuals to express their interests periodically) and type of information to be retained in the database should be decided;

b) Appeal Procedures

To ensure transparency and compliance to good governance, the NSA should establish and publicize detailed appeal procedures. The appeal procedures should include:

- Eligible grounds for appeal

Examples of eligible grounds attribute to the lodging of appeal can be provided to reduce ambiguity;

- Timeframe for lodging an appeal

Reasonable time limit should be given and a standard period can be considered for all circumstances;

- Method for lodging an appeal

Acceptable channel for lodging an appeal should be specified, e.g., in writing, by post, or email, etc.;

- Rules of proceedings

The NSA should set up the following, which include, but not limited to:

- Quorum of the Appeal Panel;
- Mode of deliberation, e.g., paper-based judgement or conduct of hearing, in advance with consideration of the timeline and practicality;
- Information/documents to be provided to the panel for deliberation, e.g., case information, other precedents for reference, etc.; and
- If hearing is conducted, the following information should be provided to the panel members and the appellant:
 - Notice period of hearing;
 - Date/time of hearing;
 - Location of hearing;

- Documents to be shared to the appellant prior to the appeal; and
- Hearing procedures (e.g., whether appellants may make own representation or be allowed legal representation, etc.)
- Deliberation method (e.g., by a majority decision, or by consensus)

The decision and follow-up actions, if any, made by the Appeal Panel should be reported to the Board of Directors and to state clearly whether the decision is final, whereby no further appeal can be made against the decision;

- The Appeal Panel should document the following information before closing the appeal:
 - Decision date;
 - Discussion between panel members (e.g., salient points of discussion, views of each panel members); and
 - Reasons to come up with the decision.
- The time and method of notifying the appellant and respondent of the outcome;
- Requirement on comprehensive documentation of the decision-making process and the period of retention;
- Make a commitment in its appeal procedures that all information relating to the appeal should be kept confidential; and
- Fee for lodging an appeal

The NSA should determine if a fee is required for lodging an appeal and the payment method. The amount of fee should be reasonable and proportionate to reflect the time and efforts incurred in the appeal process. The fee should not be a barrier to the lodging of appeal.

5.6 WITHDRAWAL / RESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

5.6.1 Voluntary withdrawal

If a member decided to withdraw from the NSA, a written notice/letter stating the reason(s) should be submitted to the NSA. The NSA should acknowledge the receipt within a specified period and confirm the effective date of withdrawal. The NSA should post a notice of the withdrawal of such member on its website and designated channel(s).

5.7 ADJUSTMENT ON MEMBERSHIP

- 5.7.1 The NSA shall establish a system with appropriate procedures regarding adjustment to membership levels, including both higher and lower, in a transparent and impartial manner.

5.8 MEMBERSHIP SUSPENSION AND TERMINATION

- 5.8.1 If a member's action causes harm to other members or the NSA, or in any situation deemed detrimental to the NSA, the NSA reserves the right to take appropriate actions. The NSA should devise the criteria and procedures for membership suspension and/or termination, which should make known to all members during the admission process. A member should only be expelled on the basis of the equally relevant principles of transparency, proportionality, non-discriminatory, and objectivity.
- 5.8.2 The NSA should provide reasons for suspension/termination and rights of appeal to the concerned member, who should be formally notified. The NSA should list out the following in connection with the suspension/termination of membership, which include, but not limited to:
- a) Types of termination and suspension (e.g., voluntarily withdrawal or forced withdrawal);
 - b) Circumstances leading to suspension and termination;
 - c) Rights and obligations of member when his/her membership is being suspended or terminated;
 - d) Notice period;
 - e) Persons responsible for assessing membership suspension and termination;

- f) Decision-making procedures (e.g., decision made solely on paper-based documents or hearing process);
- g) Deliberation method (e.g., by majority or consensus); and
- h) Appeal mechanism.

5.8.3 The NSA may refer to requirements and guidelines laid down in **Section 5.5** when formulating the requirements on appeal mechanism and procedures on membership suspension and termination.

5.8.4 The NSA should notify the member concerned of the panel decision and justifications/reasoning according to the time pledge.

5.8.5 The NSA should timely publicize the suspension/termination of membership to the public. The announcement should include, if applicable:

- a) Name of member being suspended/terminated;
- b) Suspension/termination period; and/or
- c) Remedial actions required.

5.9 RETENTION PERIOD OF MEMBERSHIP DOCUMENTS

5.9.1 All documents in relation to the administration of membership, including membership application forms, evaluation forms and appeal records, etc. should be retained for reasonable period.

5.10 COMPLIANCE WITH THE PERSONAL DATA (PRIVACY) ORDINANCE

5.10.1 The NSA should be committed to handle all personal information obtained during membership application, renewal, suspension and termination processes in compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.



CHAPTER 6

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

CHAPTER 6 GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

As an NSA committed to promoting sports and ensuring fairness and integrity, various issues which generate concern should be addressed. These include equal opportunities, prevention of sexual harassment, child safeguarding, handling of complaints, personal data privacy protection, information security, handling of social media, anti-doping, accounting practices, procurement procedures, staff administration and personnel expenses. Through diligent administration, the NSA can establish inclusive policies, protect athletes' rights, maintain public trust, safeguard sensitive information, ensure financial accountability, foster a positive work environment, and uphold the NSA's mission of advancing sports and athletes at the aspired level.

6.1 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 6.1.1 Equal opportunities denote that all individuals regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, income, education background, family status, occupation, or other characteristics, have the same access to participate and receive the same treatment and opportunities. The NSA should provide an opportunity for each individual to display talent and adjudicate the results based on his/her skills. This applies to the selection of athlete, nomination and appointment of the Board Directors and Committee Members whichever deemed appropriate.
- 6.1.2 Equal opportunities also promote fairness and equity by ensuring that success is determined by merit, talent, and effort, rather than factors outside of an athlete's or applicant's control. It is also expected to prevent discrimination and bias by solely considering athlete's or candidate's abilities and performances on contributing to the objectives of the NSA. It also enhances the transparency and credibility. This further creates diverse leadership that leads creativity and innovation within the association, which ultimately benefits the NSA and its members.
- 6.1.3 The NSA is therefore expected to be inclusive and accommodating to the athlete or applicant to create an environment that reduces prejudice and breaks down barriers in order to foster greater social cohesion and equitable environment.
- 6.1.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Equal Opportunities is at ***Reference Material 6.1***.

6.2 PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- 6.2.1 The NSA should prioritize the safety and well-being of all members, including athletes, coaches, umpires and staff. Prevention of sexual harassment requires special attention to halt toxic environment that undermines the core values of sportsmanship, respect, and fair play. The NSA should establish clear and comprehensive guidelines and procedures for identifying and reporting incidents of sexual harassment, investigating, remedy and prevention.
- 6.2.2 Sexual harassment results in devastating impact on individuals and the community. It can lead to emotional distress, mental health issue, and even physical harm. The NSA shall provide ongoing education and training to all members of NSA, including athletes, coaches, umpires and staff. The training should be designed to promote awareness of sexual harassment, its impact, and ways to prevent it from occurring.
- 6.2.3 The practice of these guidelines demonstrates NSA's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all members as well as to sending a clear message that sexual harassment will not be tolerated and that any incidents will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- 6.2.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Prevention of Sexual Harassment is at ***Reference Material 6.2.***

6.3 CHILD SAFEGUARDING

- 6.3.1 The NSA has a responsibility to keep all children participating in the program safe from all forms of abuse, neglect, and harm. Guidelines and procedures on child safeguarding should be designed for preventing and responding to situations where a child may be at risk.
- 6.3.2 An effective child safeguarding guidelines and procedures serves to guide the staff and foster a culture to value the safety of children. The child safeguarding guidelines and procedures should include measures for screening and training all staff, coaches and volunteers who work with children, as well as direct reporting procedures for any related concerns or incidents. The NSA should list the steps that will be taken to respond and investigate any reports, and the support that will be provided to any child who has been affected.
- 6.3.3 The NSA should consider child safeguarding as top priority and must show commitment and accountability in creating an environment where all children are safe.

6.3.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Child Safeguarding is at ***Reference Material 6.3.***

6.4 HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

- 6.4.1 The NSA is responsible to address complaints in a professional and timely manner. Handling of complaints is an important aspect of providing high-quality services to members and stakeholders. When it is properly handled, it will help to build trust and confidence in the NSA, and further provide opportunity for the NSA to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes. Responding promptly to complaints demonstrates the NSA's commitment to accountability and transparency. Providing accessible process on handling of complaints further displays how accommodating NSA is for feedbacks and opinions. This will also help the NSA to understand public concerns and expectations, for making appropriate changes, if necessary.
- 6.4.2 The NSA should establish a handling mechanism in order to ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly and transparently. The mechanism should include channels for lodging of complaints (e.g. email address or phone number of the complaint-receiving office), clear instructions on how to lodge a complaint, who to address the complaint, and the expected timeframe for a response, etc. Once the investigation is completed, written reply to the complainant should be made, outlining the findings of the investigation and the actions that have been or will be taken as a result. All measures should be designed to ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability.
- 6.4.3 The NSA should encourage stakeholders and general public to report any irregularities, misconducts and malpractices. The NSA should make a statement of commitment to handle complaints and reports of misdeeds, especially the identity of the complainants, in strict confidence and an explicit assurance on the protection of the persons filing complaints (e.g. assure that no punishment for disclosures made with a reasonable belief that the information is true at the time it is disclosed, protect such persons from all forms of retaliation, disadvantage or discrimination in the NSAs linked to or resulting from complaints).
- 6.4.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Handling of Complaints is at ***Reference Material 6.4.***

6.5 PERSONAL DATA PRIVACY PROTECTION

- 6.5.1 The NSA has an obligation to comply with all applicable data protection laws and regulations, and is expected to handle all personal data securely and respect the privacy rights of individuals. The NSA should formulate a set of comprehensive data protection guidelines that outlines the approach to handle personal data, types of personal data collected, how they are used, stored and protected, etc. Appropriate technical and

organizational measures including encryption, access controls, and regular security assessment should be implemented. All staff who handle personal data should be briefed on data protection best practices and made aware of their responsibilities. It should be ensured that the data can only be accessed and used for legitimate purposes and not to be shared with unauthorized individuals or organizations.

- 6.5.2 Another responsibility is to inform the individuals/users their privacy rights in relation to their personal data. This includes providing clear information on how and what personal data is collected, how it is used, and stored, and providing the ability to access, correct, or delete their personal data when appropriate.
- 6.5.3 Guidelines and Procedures on Personal Data Privacy Protection is at ***Reference Material 6.5***.

6.6 INFORMATION SECURITY

- 6.6.1 As an NSA where public and members put trust in, it should exercise extra care by putting a mechanism in place to secure data systems from illegal access or use. Information security is of paramount importance, and the NSA is expected to take necessary precautions to safeguard all sensitive or proprietary information, such as member/staff/athlete records, intellectual property, communication, financial data, etc., in order to protect from cyber-attacks, data breaches, and/or other security threats.
- 6.6.2 The NSA should take extensive measures to ensure confidentiality and secure communication network. The NSA staff who have access and authority to handle sensitive information should be reminded accordingly. The NSA should prioritize the implementation of strict access controls, regular security assessments, and staff training programs. Failure to comply may result in significant financial penalties and reputational damage. The NSA should also devise contingency plans to respond to security incidents promptly. Information security is one of the areas which cannot be compromised.
- 6.6.3 Guidelines and Procedures on Information Security is at ***Reference Material 6.6***.

6.7 HANDLING OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- 6.7.1 All personnel including Board Directors, Committee Members, full time or part-time staff, athletes, coaches, umpires, and members of NSA should use social media responsibly, without compromising the integrity and reputation of the NSA. They are expected to handle their social media with care and should avoid sharing confidential information, such as team strategies, personal information of athletes or staff, etc.

- 6.7.2 While social media can be a powerful tool to connect with members and the public to promote the sport, it can also lead to negative consequences to the individuals and the NSA. All personnel should be respectful, which implies individuals should not engage in cyberbullying, derogatory comments, harassment, offensive and discriminatory opinions. Besides, individuals should be cautious of endorsing a product and/or services on social media, and mindful that the NSA itself is a brand. They should always exercise care in order to prevent conflict with the NSA values and evade any liability.
- 6.7.3 Guidelines and Procedures on Handling of Social Media is at ***Reference Material 6.7***.

6.8 ANTI-DOPING

- 6.8.1 Anti-doping, as a part of integrity management, aims to promote fair play, safety, and integrity in sports. The use of prohibited substances and prohibited methods can give athletes unfair advantage, jeopardize their health and well-being as well as undermine the credibility of the sport. Furthermore, doping can have severe consequences for the reputation of the NSA, its sponsor, and the stakeholders.
- 6.8.2 Following the principles of integrity, the NSA should comply with anti-doping guidelines and procedures in accordance with the values under “the Spirit of Sport” and eradicate doping in sport, following the international standards. The NSA should be responsible to protect the health of athletes and provide fair ground to perform their excellence by averting the use of prohibited substances and prohibited methods. The NSA should also practice recognition of and compliance with the rules of national anti-doping organization.
- 6.8.3 A comprehensive anti-doping guideline which includes roles and responsibilities of each party, education, testing, sanctions, and support for clean athletes, etc., is crucial to maintain the integrity of sport in terms of respect for rules and regulations, other competitor’s, fair competition, and a level playing field.
- 6.8.4 The NSA should put in place and publicize anti-doping guidelines which include the following items but not limited to:
- a) Roles and responsibilities of athletes;
 - b) Roles and responsibilities of athlete support personnel;
 - c) Roles and responsibilities of other persons subject to these anti-doping guidelines and procedures;

- d) Guidelines and procedures on processing violations of anti-doping; and
- e) Consequences of doping.

6.8.5 Guidelines and Procedures on Anti-doping is at ***Reference Material 6.8.***

6.9 ACCOUNTING

6.9.1 Effective accounting management is crucial for the financial health and transparency of the NSA. The NSA should maintain accurate and reliable financial records. Timely financial records of all transactions like income, expenses, assets and liabilities should be maintained. These records should be frequently updated and reconciled. Internal controls should also be in place to manage the risk of fraud and errors. These may include segregation of financial duties and authorization limits for expenditures and transactions, etc.

6.9.2 Financial statements, including income statements, balance sheets and cash flow statement, should be prepared periodically to provide an overview of NSA's financial situation and performance to the Board of Directors. The NSA should conduct regular audits to identify any irregularities and ensure proper accountability of funds. For NSAs under the LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme, they should comply with the stipulated Guidelines and Procedures on Accounting issued by LCSD.

6.9.3 Guidelines and Procedures on Accounting³ is at ***Reference Material 6.9.***

6.10 PROCUREMENT

6.10.1 When procuring goods and services, the NSA should follow principles of fair competition, prevention of conflict of interest, cost-effectiveness, transparency, and public accountability. Approval and authorization should be obtained from designated personnel before inviting suppliers to submit quotations. The NSA should adopt different types of procurement based on the amounts and nature of the purchase, including open tendering, restricted or single tendering, and general procurement.

Note:

³ *Guidelines and Procedures on Accounting refer to Sample of Accounting Procedures (Annex 12.12 of Chapter XII of "LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme (Block Grant) – Handbook for National Sports Associations" – as at September 2023).*

6.10.2 The NSA should be transparent in the opening of tenders and evaluate different bids and quotations received based on established criteria, such as technical specifications, pricing, and other relevant factors. Once the tender is approved by authorized personnel, the NSA should notify the contractors and invite them to enter a contract with the NSA. When none of the tenders fulfill the specifications and conditions, the tendering should be cancelled for amendments before subjected to re-tendering. For NSAs under the LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme, they should comply with the stipulated Guidelines and Procedures on Procurement issued by LCSD.

6.10.3 Guidelines and Procedures on Procurement⁴ is at **Reference Material 6.10**.

6.11 STAFF ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL EXPENSES

6.11.1 It is essential for the NSA to communicate important policies, procedures, and expectations to employees. Staff administration and personnel expenses of the NSA covers a spectrum of topics including employment procedures, performance appraisals, bonus and benefits, etc.

6.11.2 The NSA should establish guidelines on staff administration, and review regularly to reflect any changes in procedures to ensure the guidelines are updated and staff are aware of any changes that may impact on them. The staff administration guidelines should be made easily accessible to all employees, either by providing a physical copy or making it available in NSA portal.

6.11.3 To ensure that all funding received by the NSA is well spent, it is essential for the NSA to lay down clear procedures on personnel expenses. The NSA should review employee reimbursements regularly to ensure the appropriateness of the expenses claimed. For NSAs under the LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme, they should comply with the stipulated Guidelines and Procedures on Personnel Expenses issued by LCSD.

6.11.4 Guidelines and Procedures on Personnel Expenses⁵ is at **Reference Materials 6.11**.

Note:

⁴ *Guidelines and Procedures on Procurement refers to Sample of Procurement Policies and Guidelines (Annex 12.13 of Chapter XII of “LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme (Block Grant) – Handbook for National Sports Associations” – as at September 2023).*

⁵ *Guidelines and Procedures on Personnel Expenses refers to Personnel Expenses (Chapter III of “LCSD Sports Subvention Scheme (Block Grant) – Handbook for National Sports Associations” – as at September 2023).*



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