



Guidance notes for International Federations - Governance Obligations of National and Continental Member Federations

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1 About this document

This document sets out guidance for International Federations (IFs) on expected basic obligations which should be in place in their rules regarding the governance of the IF's National Federation (NF) members, and Continental Federations (where they exist).

The majority of the obligations are organised around the 2022 edition of the [Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance \(BUPGG\)](#). Some additional requirements relate to the [Olympic Charter](#).

The obligations concern the NF's relationship with the IF in its role as a member. It is understood that NFs may be required to comply with a separate set of governance requirements by government ministries and/or NOCs. Domestic laws will also of course prevail unless exclusions apply.

2 Source material for guidance on National Federation governance

This guidance builds on the output of the working group on National and Continental Federation governance, established by the ASOIF Governance Task Force, which held three meetings from November 2021 to May 2022, several months prior to the publication of the revised BUPGG.

Representatives from World Archery, World Rowing (FISA) and the World Baseball Softball Confederation kindly offered their time and expertise. These IFs are subsequently cited a number of times. The source material also includes multiple references to the Badminton World Federation and the International Tennis Federation as these were acknowledged as two IFs that have taken active steps in relation to NF governance. Several other IFs are cited in specific areas. GTF members and a number of other individuals also provided helpful input.

3 How to use this document

The sections below identify suggested topics to consider including in IF rules.

The topics are described in outline form only. In some cases, the terminology will vary slightly from that used within a particular IF but the general sense should be clear.

It is up to individual IFs to determine whether and to what extent each separate topic is relevant to them.

Most of the relevant IF rules which were reviewed related to National Federation members. However, many or all could equally apply to Continental Federations, where they are also members of the IF. As the role and standing of Continental Federations varies significantly among IFs, guidance on Continental Federations is not provided separately.

Note that this document is intended to be a tool and does not constitute legal advice.



4 Governance obligations for National Federation members of International Federations

4.1 The NF is a registered/incorporated organisation

4.1	The NF is a registered/incorporated organisation
About	The NF is a distinct legal entity, registered or incorporated in accordance with domestic law. Some but not all IFs set this as a requirement for their NF members.
Notes/issues	There is considerable diversity in the range of types of legal entity which NFs adopt around the world (voluntary association, charity, not-for-profit company etc). It is believed that many NFs do not currently take the form of an incorporated legal entity. There may be advantages for an NF in being a distinct legal entity, provided that the associated requirements are not disproportionately onerous. For example, it may limit the liability of the organisation's leaders and/or be a requirement if the NF seeks to apply for public funding.
BUPGG 2022 ref	2.2 Regulatory Framework: Regulatory framework references the legal status under which a sports organisation is registered. This is to ensure that statutes/constitution are compliant with domestic law.
IF example 1	BWF, Constitution 8.4 – Members
IF example 2	ITF, Constitution 3(a) – Applications for Membership
IF example 3	WBSC, Statutes Chapter 2, Article 7.3 (a) – Application for Membership

4.2 The NF statutes/constitution cover topics required by the BUPGG

4.2	The NF statutes/constitution cover topics required by the BUPGG
About	Some IFs have developed model statutes for new member NFs (or those making substantial revisions to their statutes). The BUPGG also provides a list of topics to be covered in the statutes.
BUPGG 2022 ref	2.2 Regulatory framework. The statutes and regulations shall be clear, transparent and publicly available. The statutes and regulations shall be reviewed and updated periodically. Statutes should include provision for the following:
A	Compliance with the Olympic Charter and the IOC Code of Ethics, including the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement (see also 4.3 below)
IF example	FEI model statutes – Introduction
B	The mission and goals and the roles and responsibilities
IF example	FEI model statutes – Article 2
C	Membership (including qualification and application for membership; rights and duties of members; termination or cessation of membership; disciplinary measures and sanctions; etc.)
IF example	World Archery Constitution Guide
D	The organisational structure and governing bodies, including the General Assembly, the executive body, the commissions, ad hoc committees and key staff



IF example	World Aquatics Good Governance Guide – 4 General Congress
E	The governing bodies' roles and responsibilities
F	Financial transparency
IF example	BWF constitution model has mandatory requirement for annual audited accounts and recognised accounting standards
G	Specific requirements and procedures to award and organise sports events, when applicable
H	Disciplinary procedures, which shall respect the principles of due process, including, in particular, the right to be heard and the right to appeal
I	Dispute resolution mechanisms
IF example	FEI model statutes – Article 21
J	The procedure to adopt and amend the statutes and regulations
IF example	BWF constitution model as mandatory requirement

4.3 The NF complies with the rules of the IF (and by extension with the Olympic Charter)

4.3.1	The NF states that it is subject to the rules of the IF (and by extension must comply with the Olympic Charter), including all their officials, bodies, members, athletes and support personnel
About	<p>Accepting the rules of the IF is a condition of membership. As a consequence of being subject to the IF rules, the NF will have to put in place a variety of rules and conduct activity, ranging from holding regular elections to management of ethics and implementing safeguarding procedures. The NF's officials, bodies, members, athletes and support personnel should commit to being bound by the NF rules.</p> <p>The full set of applicable rules and required activity will vary from one IF to another.</p> <p>The IF rules usually state explicitly that the IF and its members must comply with the Olympic Charter. The NF is therefore also under the jurisdiction of the Olympic Charter, even if the NF rules do not reference the Olympic Charter directly (see 4.2 above).</p>
Notes/issues	Monitoring the compliance of the NF with their own statutes and those of the IF of which they are a member is intended to be the subject of a separate guidance note.
Olympic Charter (2021) ref	<p>Rule 29: "To be recognised by an NOC and accepted as a member of such NOC, a national federation must exercise a specific, real and on-going sports activity, be affiliated to an IF recognised by the IOC and be governed by <i>and comply in all aspects with both the Olympic Charter and the rules of its IF.</i>"</p>
IF example 1	BWF, Constitution 8 – Members
IF example 2	World Rowing, Statutes 13 – Obligation of Member Federations
IF example 3	WBSC, Statutes Chapter 2, Article 8.5 (b) and (g)
IF example 4	World Archery, Constitution Appendix 6 – Olympic Charter
4.3.2	The NF states that it follows the anti-doping rules of the appropriate body
About	Explicit requirement in BUPGG (see below)
Notes/issues	At national level, World Anti-Doping Code compliance will usually involve implementing the rules of the relevant National Anti-Doping Organisation and Government as well as those of the IF.



<p>BUPGG 2022 ref</p>	<p>2.2 regulatory framework Statutes include specific provision for compliance with WADC.</p> <p>3.8 Fight Against Doping A zero-tolerance approach in the fight against doping shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.</p> <p>Sports organisations shall fight against doping and uphold an anti-doping policy.</p> <p>Regulations on anti-doping shall be compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code.</p> <p>Sports organisations shall protect the athletes, their entourages and sports officials from doping, in particular through robust prevention and educational programmes.</p> <p>Sports organisations shall ensure that their anti-doping programme is independent and free from any real or perceived conflict of interest, e.g. the setting-up of a National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO) independent of sports bodies and anti-doping laboratories, and the delegation of International Federations' anti-doping programmes to the International Testing Agency (ITA), are encouraged.</p>
<p>IF example 1</p>	<p>World Archery, Constitution 1.4.2.4.1 - Membership (also in sporting rules)</p>
<p>IF example 2</p>	<p>ITF, Bye-law 4 - Tennis Anti-Doping Programme</p>
<p>IF example 3</p>	<p>World Rowing, Statutes 13 1 1.1 (a) – Obligations of Member Federations</p>
<p>4.3.3</p>	<p>The NF states that it follows the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of Manipulation of Competitions</p>
<p>About</p>	<p>Explicit requirement in BUPGG (see below)</p>
<p>Notes/issues</p>	<p>At national level, compliance with the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of Manipulation of Competitions will require following IF rules. Domestic legislation may also apply.</p>
<p>BUPGG 2022 ref</p>	<p>3.9 Fight Against Manipulation of Competitions A zero-tolerance approach in the fight against manipulation of competitions shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.</p> <p>Regulations regarding manipulation of competitions shall be compliant with the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions.</p> <p>An appropriate mechanism shall be put in place to deal with breaches of the regulations on the manipulation of competitions (internally or externally).</p> <p>Sports organisations shall protect the athletes, their entourages and sports officials from the risk of manipulation of competitions through robust prevention and educational programmes.</p>
<p>IF example 1</p>	<p>ITF, Bye-law 5 – Tennis Anti-Corruption Program</p>
<p>IF example 2</p>	<p>WBSC, By-Laws regarding Sports Betting</p>
<p>IF example 3</p>	<p>BWF, Constitution 2.4: Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions</p>



4.3.4	The NF states that it recognises the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) as the final right of appeal, once any domestic processes have been completed with this rule applying to all their officials, bodies, members, athletes and support personnel
About	<p>Explicit requirement in BUPGG (see below)</p> <p>The NF's officials, bodies, members, athletes and support personnel should commit to being bound by the NF rules, including the jurisdiction of CAS</p>
Notes/issues	<p>In some cases there are internal NF and/or domestic appeal processes in place. The right of appeal to CAS will generally follow once any domestic processes have been completed.</p>
BUPGG 2022 ref	<p>2.8 Appeals process</p> <p>Any decision shall be grounded in and respect the principles of due process, including, in particular, the right to be heard and the right to appeal.</p> <p>Any physical person or entity affected by a sports organisation's decision, after exhausting all internal dispute resolution mechanisms, shall have the right to submit an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).</p> <p>Decisions could be made public where applicable.</p>
IF example 1	World Rowing, Statutes 13.2 – Obligations of Member Federations
IF example 2	BWF, Constitution 8.7 – Members
IF example 3	WSBC, Statutes 21.2 – Arbitration



4.4 The NF's members influence its decision-making through democratic processes

4.4	The NF's members influence its decision-making through democratic processes
About	<p>Members of NFs (whether they are individuals, organisations or a combination of the two) should be able to express their views and influence the NF's decisions through democratic processes, including voting at the General Assembly.</p> <p>In the event that the IF requests to monitor NF elections, such as through provision of observers, the NF should comply with the IF request.</p>
BUPGG 2022 ref	<p>2.5 Democratic processes All members shall have access, in due time, to the relevant information relating to meetings, including the agenda, the relevant documents, the minutes of the meetings, etc.</p> <p>Governing bodies shall meet on a regular basis, taking into consideration their specific duties, and the General Assembly shall be held at least once a year.</p> <p>Meetings may take place in person or remotely (through secure and appropriate electronic means).</p> <p>All members shall have the right to express their opinion on the topics on the agenda.</p> <p>2.6 Voting and elections Voting members shall exercise their voting rights in accordance with the statutes and regulations.</p> <p>The quorum for meetings and the majority required for decisions to be taken shall be clearly set out in the statutes and regulations.</p> <p>The election process shall be governed by clear, democratic, transparent and fair rules. The election process shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Eligibility rules, including vetting mechanisms through an independent electoral commission when applicable – A clear procedure and deadlines to submit the nominations and communicate the list of eligible candidates – Campaign rules, including a fair opportunity for each candidate to present their programme – A clear voting procedure, which shall include a vote by secret ballot (electronic or paper) – Dispute resolution mechanisms. <p>The election results shall be published.</p>
IF example 1	BWF Constitution guidelines



4.5 The NF states that it is autonomous

4.5.2	The NF states that it is autonomous
About	Explicit requirement in BUPGG (see below)
Notes/issues	The NF should be autonomous from political interference, consistent with the wording of the Olympic Charter, which is referenced in the BUPGG both in the Preamble and in Principle 7. However, there is a valid role for oversight by a government ministry and/or the NOC, for example in monitoring the NF's use of public funding. The BUPGG encourage coordination and constructive partnerships.
BUPGG 2022 ref	<p>7.1 Autonomy of the Olympic Movement Sports organisations should preserve their autonomy and political neutrality in their operations and governance, and should reject any form of political, religious or economic pressures which may prevent them from complying with the Olympic Charter.</p> <p>In this context, sports organisations should seek sources of financing compatible with the Fundamental Principles of Olympism and with a view to ensuring a diversification of revenues.</p> <p>7.2 Cooperation and coordination with government authorities and external partners Harmonious relations and constructive partnerships between sports organisations and governmental or non-governmental organisations should be encouraged in the interest of sport and in order to help sports organisations fulfil their mission, provided however that the principle of autonomy is fully respected and that the sports organisations do not associate themselves with any activity which would be at odds with the Olympic Charter.</p> <p>In particular, sports organisations and government authorities should work closely together and coordinate their actions, with mutual respect for each other's jurisdiction and responsibilities, and without any undue interference, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – contribute to the development of sport at their respective levels, – support and protect the athletes, and fight against doping and any form of manipulation, corruption in sport, and harassment, abuse or violence in sport, and – protect youth from crime through sport.
IF example 1	BWF, Constitution 5 – Autonomy
IF example 2	World Archery, Constitution 1.4.2.3 – Membership
IF example 3	World Rowing, Statutes 11 – Autonomy of Member Federations

4.6 The NF complies with IF safeguarding requirements

4.6	The NF complies with IF safeguarding requirements
About	<p>All actors in the Olympic Movement have a responsibility to ensure that individuals involved in sport in whatever capacity can do so in a safe environment.</p> <p>Domestic legislation will apply, in many cases.</p> <p>There is a relevant section in the BUPGG (see below).</p>
Notes/issues	IFs generally require NFs to carry out a number of actions to be compliant. See some examples below.



	<p>Some IFs may support directly in response to allegations of rule breaches at domestic level, depending on specific circumstances. Jurisdiction in particular cases may need to be discussed.</p> <p>There are a variety of existing resources, including the IOC Safeguarding Toolkit for IFs and NOCs.</p>
BUPGG 2022 ref	<p>3.10 Safeguarding: A zero-tolerance approach to breaches of safeguarding principles shall be adopted in all sports organisations at all levels.</p> <p>A safe sport strategy shall be established and published to protect individuals from any form of harassment, exploitation and abuse; measures shall be implemented to ensure an effective and appropriate response to any safeguarding concerns.</p> <p>A qualified, trained individual shall be designated within the organisation as a point of contact for any issue relating to safeguarding.</p>
IF example 1	ITF, Safeguarding Adults Policy
IF example 2	World Rowing, Safeguarding Participants in Rowing from Harassment & Abuse
IF example 3	WBSC, Harassment and Abuse By-Laws
4.6.1	Further examples of actions which the IF may require NFs to carry out to be compliant with safeguarding rules:
A	Adopt the IF's policy or an equivalent policy at national level
B	Define and implement appropriate safeguarding procedures to protect athletes, staff and officials from harassment and abuse, consistent with domestic legislation and the IF's policy (some support/templates may be available)
C	Prohibit all forms of harassment and abuse in the Code of Ethics or equivalent
D	Communicate the policy and procedures, providing training where needed
E	Receive reports of alleged incidents
F	Investigate reports through a disciplinary process following due process
G	Advise the IF about any disciplinary sanctions

4.7 The NF pays the applicable membership fee to the IF

4.7	The NF pays the applicable membership fee to the IF
About	As they are membership organisations, IFs generally set a membership fee to be payable annually by their NF members.
Notes/issues	<p>In many cases (but not all), the membership fees comprise a relatively small proportion of the IF's revenue, although the fee may represent a significant cost for some of the NFs. It may therefore be practical for the IF to find a way to avoid the need for small NFs to make an international payment in CHF (for example) and to reduce the administrative work involved.</p> <p>One approach used by IFs is to deduct the membership fee from a development grant paid by the IF, where such grants exist. Another approach is to waive the membership fee for smaller NFs, provided that appropriate requirements are met. The membership fee may also not be payable for new NFs until they have been a member for a period of time.</p>



	However, as IFs are membership organisations it remains reasonable for them to charge a proportionate membership fee as a condition of continuing membership.
BUPGG 2022 ref	2.2 Regulatory framework includes provision for statutes to include rights and obligations of membership
IF example 1	World Archery, Constitution 1.5.1 – Affiliation, 1.24 – Membership Fees and Penalties
IF example 2	World Rowing, Bye-laws to Article 13 – Subscriptions
IF example 3	WSBC, Statutes Chapter 2, 7.3.5 – Application for Membership

4.8 The NF demonstrates that it is “active” in promoting its sport

4.8	The NF demonstrates that it is “active” in promoting its sport
About	In order to further their mission, it is important for IFs that their member NFs are actively promoting the sport within their territory.
Notes/issues	There are a range of criteria that are used across IFs to determine whether or not an NF meets the requirement of being “active”. See some examples below. If needed, a scoring system can be developed to assess the level of activity.
Olympic Charter (2021) ref	Rule 29: “To be recognised by an NOC and accepted as a member of such NOC, a national federation must exercise a specific, <i>real and on-going sports activity</i> , be affiliated to an IF recognised by the IOC and be governed by and comply in all aspects with both the Olympic Charter and the rules of its IF.”
IF example 1	World Archery, Constitution 1.4.2.4.1 – being an active member
IF example 2	BWF, Constitution 13.1 – Ongoing Membership Requirements
4.8.1	Example criteria for determining level of NF activity:
A	NF responds to communications from the IF
B	NF enters athletes/teams in international competitions
C	NF enters athletes in multiple disciplines/categories in international competitions
D	NF organises adequate activity at national level (which may include national championships)
E	NF participates in the IF General Assembly
F	NF pays its membership fee on time
G	The IF may determine that an NF is in “good standing” when a number of the criteria are met with a defined procedure for NFs that fail to meet criteria.

4.9 The NF meets reporting requirements to the IF

4.9	The NF meets reporting requirements to the IF
About	The NF provides details as required by the IF to keep it informed
Notes/issues	IFs may conduct a survey for NF members on a regular basis and/or require NFs to inform them when there is relevant news, such as a change of leadership after an election. See some examples below. When an IF sets reporting requirements for NFs the responses may be used as a way to monitor the compliance of NFs. Some IFs also use information provided by their members to help categorise and understand the needs of NFs in terms of their level of development. Managing and analysing survey responses from well over 100 or more NFs is a significant administrative task for smaller IFs.



	It is intended that further details about IF surveys of NFs will be included in a future guidance note.
IF example 1	BWF Constitution 13.1 – Ongoing Membership Requirements
IF example 2	World Archery Constitution 1.4.2.4.1 – being an active member
IF example 3	World Rowing, Statutes 13.5 – Obligations of Member Federations, 14.2.2c Admission to membership, 18.5.1 – Continental Rowing Confederations
4.9.1	Basic information that IFs may require NFs to provide:
A	Contact details (at regular intervals or when there is a change)
B	Leadership of the NF (at regular intervals or when there is a change)
C	Activity over a given period of time
D	Use of any development support provided by the IF

4.10 The NF is officially recognised by the IF following due process

4.10	The NF is officially recognised by the IF following due process
About	The IF implements a recognition process for the applicant NF, as does the National Olympic Committee and/or the relevant government ministries and authorities, to determine whether an NF is the legitimate governing body in a country or region.
Notes/issues	<p>IFs sometimes experience difficulties in applying the recognition process for NFs, as do NOCs. Government ministries and authorities also sometimes have a separate recognition process. Many NOCs of course have NF members from non-Olympic sports.</p> <p>The Olympic Charter wording suggests (see below) that the IF would recognise the NF first. However, the procedure can vary from one IF to another. IFs may choose to consult with NOCs before granting recognition to an NF, which often takes place at the General Assembly. When there are disputes, such as rival organisations seeking recognition within a country, the NOC may be in a better position to understand the full context. In some cases, the NF might be recognised as the legitimate organisation but claims to leadership of the organisation could be ruled invalid.</p> <p>Some IFs believe that having a joint recognition process between NOCs and IFs would be helpful.</p>
Olympic Charter (2021) ref	<p>Rule 29:</p> <p>“To be recognised by an NOC and accepted as a member of such NOC, a national federation must exercise a specific, real and on-going sports activity, <i>be affiliated to an IF recognised by the IOC</i> and be governed by and comply in all aspects with both the Olympic Charter and the rules of its IF.”</p>
IF example 1	World Archery, Constitution 1.5 - Affiliation
IF example 2	BWF, Constitution 8 - Members
IF example 3	World Rowing, Statutes 14 – Admission to Membership
IF example 4	WBSC, Statutes Chapter 2, Article 7 – Application for Membership

5 Other BUPGG provisions should be considered

IFs are advised to study the updated BUPGG and determine whether there are other provisions that should be included among obligations for their NFs.