

FACTSHEET

Roles and responsibilities during the Olympic Games

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The [Olympic Charter](#) highlights the three main constituent groups of the Olympic Movement and their different roles and responsibilities with regard to the Olympic Games. They are the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and the International Sports Federations (IFs). In addition to these three, the Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) can be added. They are responsible for the preparation and hosting of a particular edition of the Games.

“The Olympic Games are competitions between athletes in individual or team events and not between countries. They bring together the athletes selected by their respective NOCs, whose entries have been accepted by the IOC. They compete under the technical direction of the IFs concerned.” ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 1, Rule 6](#)).

The Games of the Olympiad are celebrated during the first year of an Olympiad, and the Olympic Winter Games during its third year. However, the preparation process for each edition of the Games lasts from before the start of the Candidature phase to the Closing Ceremony and beyond - usually more than nine years.

This factsheet will enable you to gain a clearer understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the key bodies within the Olympic Movement, which help to make the Olympic Games a success.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC)

The IOC is the guardian of the Olympic Games and the ultimate authority on any question relating to the Games. It entrusts the honour and responsibility of hosting the Games to a city, which is elected at the IOC Session. Part of the IOC’s mission is “to ensure

the regular celebration of the Olympic Games.” ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 1, Rule 2](#)). To this end, and following the recommendations of Olympic Agenda 2020, the IOC invites interested NOCs, cities or countries to come and discuss their plans and to learn more about organising the Games during an invitation phase.

This revolutionary new approach to electing hosts for Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games results in significant cost savings for potential hosts, as well as more sustainable projects and master plans. The reforms ensure the IOC remains in step with a rapidly changing world to deliver games that are better aligned with future hosts’ long-term development plans while maintaining the inherent magic of the games and providing the best possible experience for athletes. The IOC has made significant improvements to its approach to future hosts since the election of Thomas Bach as IOC President in 2013. The reforms began in 2014 with the unanimous approval by the IOC Session, of Olympic Agenda 2020 that, led to a major review of all aspects of organising the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games.

One of the key areas addressed by Olympic Agenda 2020 was the candidature procedure, with a new philosophy introduced that invited potential hosts to present projects that best fit their sporting, economic, social and environmental-planning needs rather than trying to fit the local context to the Games. The goal was to create Olympic projects that are less expensive and that maximise operational efficiencies, while also unlocking greater value for future hosts, with a strong emphasis on legacy and sustainability.

Building on the success of these initiatives, 2018 saw the adoption of the New Norm, additional reforms that provided Olympic hosts with even more flexibility in designing the Games to meet their long-term development goals. The IOC also increased the



assistance and expertise it and the wider Olympic Movement provided.

The new approach mirrors the rapidly changing world we live in: As the governing body of the Olympic Movement, the IOC has positioned itself at the vanguard of innovation and development to help deliver the best possible Olympic projects with the most benefits for Olympic stakeholders and future hosts alike.

The other key area where the IOC Session has a direct effect on the organisation of the Games is when it votes on the sports programme for the Games that will take place. In principle seven years before the Games, the IOC Executive Board (EB) submits a proposal of the initial sports programme to the IOC Session for a vote no later than the host of that Games is elected ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 5, Bye-law to Rule 45, section 1.1](#)).

The IOC's role following the election of the host is to provide support through finance, knowledge and expertise. This work is directed through the IOC Coordination Commissions that are created for each edition of the Games. The Commissions' role is defined in the Olympic Charter: *"In order to improve the organisation of the Olympic Games and cooperation amongst the IOC, the OCOG, the IFs and the NOCs, the President shall establish an Olympic Games Coordination Commission ("Coordination Commission"). The Coordination Commission shall include representatives of the IOC, the IFs, the NOCs and the athletes. The Chair of the Coordination Commission manages and implements the working relationship between such parties."* ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 5, Rule 37](#)).

It is also the IOC that is responsible for inviting the NOCs to participate in the Games, sending out invitations one year before the Opening Ceremony. The IOC does not only physically invite the NOCs to the Games, but through Olympic Solidarity, it is also involved in helping athletes from developing nations reach a suitable standard to participate in the Olympics, thus ensuring the universality of the Olympic Games.

During the Games, the IOC is the body responsible for implementing the World Anti-Doping Code, and all

those at the Games under the authority of the IOC are bound by this Code. During the Olympic Games, under the auspices of the IOC, it is the responsibility of the Organising Committee to collect urine and blood samples in compliance with the International Standard for Testing and Investigations. In addition, the IOC agrees on the number of tests to perform in collaboration with the IFs concerned, the Organising Committee and the laboratory accredited for the Olympic Games. The IOC decided in March 2016 to delegate the decisions on alleged anti-doping rule violations during the Olympic Games to an independent body, namely a new Anti-doping Division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). Any cases arising from these tests will then be handled by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) Anti-Doping Division.

Created by the IOC in 2001, Olympic Broadcast Services (OBS) acts as the Host Broadcaster for the Games and is chiefly responsible for providing the images and sound of the Games to the Rights-Holding Broadcasters (RHBs), allowing the watching world to get some outstanding images of the Games. In addition to OBS services, the IOC also helps to fund the Olympic Games by providing a significant contribution to the organising committee's budget from the revenues it (the IOC) generates.

The IOC is committed to controlling the cost of the Games and ensuring that their legacy will benefit the host and nation for many years after the Closing Ceremony. The effective transfer of knowledge and careful risk management are two further ways in which the IOC contributes to the Games' organisation. The IOC transfer of knowledge programmes, implemented by the IOC's Olympic Games Department, help organising committees to learn lessons from the past and to emulate best practices.

[Olympic Agenda 2020+5](#) is the new strategic roadmap that will determine the direction of the IOC and the Olympic Movement until 2025. It was unanimously approved at the 137th IOC Session in March 2021. Consisting of 15 recommendations, it builds on the results of Olympic Agenda 2020 and the title, Olympic Agenda 2020+5, has been chosen to reflect the fact that this new roadmap is the successor to Olympic Agenda 2020.



The National Olympic Committees (NOCs)

The IOC currently recognises 206 NOCs. The NOCs are the bodies that represent and promote the Olympic Movement within their respective countries and territories. The full mission and role of an NOC is described in Rule 27 of the Olympic Charter. Their principal mission is to “*develop, promote and protect the Olympic Movement in their respective countries, in accordance with the Olympic Charter.*” ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 4, Rule 27](#)).

The NOC is also a key player in the preparation of the Games; it is the role of the NOC to select the city that will represent it during the Candidature phase and to propose that city to the IOC. Once an application has been submitted to the IOC to host the Olympic Games, the NOC of the candidate city supervises, and is jointly responsible for, the actions and conduct of the city in relation to its candidature to host the Games.

When the Games are awarded, it is the NOC of the host, as well as the host itself, that are entrusted with the organisation of the Games, and it is the NOC that is responsible for the establishment of an OCOG. The NOC is also held jointly and severally liable, together with the OCOG and host, for all commitments concerning the Games, excluding the financial responsibility for the organisation and staging of the Games.

The most essential task that each NOC must perform for the Olympic Games is to constitute, organise and lead their teams. The NOC decides upon the entry of athletes proposed by their respective national federations. However, the selection of the athletes is not based solely upon the athletes’ performance, but also on his or her ability to serve as an example to the sporting youth of their country. It is also the NOC that is responsible for selecting the media to be accredited by the IOC for the Olympic Games.

During the Games, each NOC must appoint a Chef de Mission, who is the NOC’s main liaison with the IOC, the IFs and the OCOG. The Chef de Mission may also accomplish other functions assigned to him/her by the NOC. The Chef de Mission has the responsibility

for all the competitors, officials and other NOC team staff.

The NOCs are also responsible for the equipment, transport and accommodation of the members of their delegations, as well as for determining the clothing and uniforms to be worn and the equipment to be used by the delegation during the Games, with the exception of specialised equipment used by athletes during the sports competitions.

It is also the role of the NOC to invite their own dignitaries to the Games and to organise the distribution of tickets to sports fans within their own territory (except for the host nation which is managed directly by the Games organisers).

The International Sports Federations (IFs)

The IFs are essential to the success of the Olympic Games because it is the IFs that run their respective sports during the Games. Indeed, it is the IFs that set the rules for their sports and which are responsible for their technical control and direction.

They are also responsible for setting the eligibility criteria for the competitions at the Olympic Games and submitting the qualification systems to the IOC. The IFs also organise qualifying events in order to select the competitors or teams participating in the Games.

During the candidature process and following Olympic Agenda 2020, the IFs play an important role in analysing and providing feedback to the candidate cities on the technical aspects for the venues of their respective sports. This work continues even after the Games have been awarded, as the OCOG, the IOC, OBS and the IFs work in close collaboration on the sport and the characteristics of the technical facilities to be used during the Olympic Games.

The IFs validate the competition schedule for their respective events taking place during the Games and they also nominate the referees, judges and other technical officials. They establish the final results and ranking of each event and it is on the basis of these results that the IOC awards the medals to the athletes.



In the fight against doping, the IFs are also key players. They work in close collaboration with the IOC and the OCOG on this issue. Other forums for cooperation exist and the IFs also form part of the tripartite commission, made up of the IOC, NOCs and the IFs, which meets to discuss tripartite invitations.

The list of IFs on the Olympic programme

Sports on the programme of the XXIV Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022	
IBU	International Biathlon Union
IBSF	International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation
WCF	World Curling Federation
IIHF	International Ice Hockey Federation
FIL	International Luge Federation
ISU	International Skating Union
FIS	International Ski Federation

Sports on the programme of the Games of the XXXIII Olympiad Paris 2024	
WA	World Archery Federation
World Athletics	World Athletics
BWF	Badminton World Federation
WBSC	World Baseball Softball Confederation
FIBA	International Basketball Federation
	Boxing ¹
ICF	International Canoe Federation
UCI	Union Cycliste Internationale
WDSF	World DanceSport Federation
FEI	International Equestrian Federation
FIE	International Fencing Federation
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
IGF	International Golf Federation
FIG	International Gymnastics Federation
IHF	International Handball Federation
FIH	International Hockey Federation

¹ In the wake of AIBA's IOC recognition suspension, an Olympic Boxing Task Force (BTF) has been set up to help organise the sports qualification for, and tournament at, the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020.

IJF	International Judo Federation
UIPM	International Modern Pentathlon Union
FISA	World Rowing
World Rugby	World Rugby
WS	World Sailing
ISSF	International Shooting Sport Federation
World Skate	World Skate
IFSC	International Federation of Sport Climbing
ISA	International Surfing Association
FINA	International Swimming Federation
ITTF	International Tennis Table Federation
WT	World Taekwondo
ITF	International Tennis Federation
ITU	World Triathlon
FIVB	International Volleyball Federation
IWF	International Weightlifting Federation
UWW	United World Wrestling

The Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG)

The Olympic Charter states that “*The host of the Olympic Games shall be responsible for the establishment of an Organising Committee (“OCOG”), for the purpose of the organisation of the Games and in accordance with the provisions of the Olympic Host Contract referred to in Rule 36.*” ([Olympic Charter, Chapter 5, Rule 35](#)).

The executive body of the OCOG will include the IOC Members of the host country, the President and Secretary General of the NOC, and at least one member representing, and designated by, the host city. The executive body may also include representatives of public authorities and other leading figures.

The OCOG's work is largely guided by the Host City Contract - Principles (which the NOC and the host city enter into with the IOC upon being awarded the



Games), as well as by its Host City Contract – Operational Requirements, and by the candidature file and guarantees that the candidate city provided during the Candidature phase. This means that the OCOG is responsible for establishing functions and services for all aspects of the Games, such as sport, venues, finance, technology, accommodation, catering, media services, etc., as well as running the related operations during the Games. The OCOG is advised in this considerable challenge by the IOC Coordination Commission, which oversees the work of the OCOG and reports back to the IOC EB on the organising committee's progress.

However, the OCOG does not only have a close relationship with the IOC, but also with the NOCs and IFs. The OCOG deals with the NOCs on a wide range of subjects including athlete entries and the Olympic Village. With the IFs, the OCOG works on subjects like venue technical requirements, sports results and the competition schedule for the Games, as it is the IFs that are responsible for the technical aspects of their sports.

As well as working with the IOC, IFs, and NOCs, the OCOG also interacts with myriad partners and local stakeholders in order to deliver and host the Games, while leaving a lasting legacy. This can range from local authorities to worldwide Olympic partners to the highest levels of government in the host country, all of whom have a key role to play in making the Games a success.

As part of its work, the OCOG organises the Olympic Torch Relay, which sees the Olympic flame travel from Ancient Olympia in Greece to the Olympic cauldron in the host.

Other activities that the OCOG is responsible for during its life cycle can include ensuring that all Olympic marks are protected, organising the Cultural Olympiad, producing a roll of honour bearing the names of the medal winners and of those awarded diplomas in each event, and preparing the official report of the Games upon their completion.

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