

## Headline 4.3 Decision-making processes

### 1. Definition

The decision-making process refers to the different steps of the process of preparing, taking, implementing, and monitoring political and strategic decisions by an organisation. This notion covers organisational aspects such as the division of tasks between the different entities of the organisation as well as a clear definition of responsibilities for all actors involved in the decision-making process.

In addition, practical aspects, including the channels through which member organisations are consulted and can express their views and opinions, are also part of the process. In this regard, an advanced decision-making system is based on the separation of powers between bodies in charge of preparing the decisions, those that take the strategic decisions, those in charge of implementing the decisions and those who control and assess the implementation.

### 2. Ideal scenario

The organisation has installed a clear and comprehensive decision-making process covering the various steps from the preparation of the decision, over the actual decision to the implementation, reporting and monitoring of the implementation. In this regard, the decision-making process is predictable as it is clearly defined in the statutes of the organisation and as it clearly defines the role and responsibilities of all actors involved at all stages of the process.

The decision-making process foresees a close collaboration between the various entities of the organisation involved in the preparation of the decisions (e.g. advisory commissions), in the decision-making itself (e.g. Board or the General Assembly), in the implementation of the decision by the management (e.g. Board of Directors) and the monitoring of the decisions. However, proper mechanisms for accountability and separation of powers ensure a balanced relationship between the entities, allow for a fair stakeholders' representation and avoid an oversized dominance by the Board. In order to support the technical work done by the Board and the staff, committees (commissions) have been created to cover relevant topics for the organisation. In this regard, each committee has a clearly defined task, purpose, competence and responsibilities to ensure that they provide the necessary input and expertise to the Board in line with the delegated task by the Board.

### 3. Risks

- Power of decision concentrated within a small number of persons.
- Unbalanced decision-making process and lack of representativeness of members' interests.
- Inability to implement strategies /decisions.
- Democratic deficit.
- Lack of expertise and decisions based on luck and goodwill rather than informed decision-making.

- Lack of ownership by members and member organisations.
- Lack of support for member organisations.
- Difficulties or inability to take decisions due to the lack of information on the content and consequences.
- Stakeholders and the management team do not endorse the strategy of the organisation.

#### 4. Instruments and key elements

<i>Instruments</i>	<i>Key elements</i>
<b>Setting up of committees/commissions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the size and the specific tasks of the organisation (e.g. NOC → selection commission for Olympic Games).</li> <li>• For each committee: a clear description of the role, tasks, responsibilities and composition (in support of the Board – each committee needs to have a specific purpose).</li> <li>• Clear description of required competencies of members.</li> <li>• Clear description of types of committees (e.g. differences between standing and ad-hoc committees) and opportunities for the Board to create committees in line with specific needs.</li> <li>• Decision-making and reporting arrangements towards the Board and other entities of the organisation (e.g. General Assembly).</li> <li>• Possibility to incorporate external experts.</li> <li>• Main provisions to be included in the statutes.</li> <li>• See also: Roadmap 4.2 on nomination/election commissions as a specific type of commission.</li> <li>• See also: Roadmap 4.4 on athletes’ commissions as a specific type of commission.</li> </ul>
<b>Decision-making process/procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearness of role, responsibilities and competencies.</li> <li>• Link with advisory bodies (e.g. committees).</li> <li>• Clear arrangements to involve and consult members of the organisation on relevant issues.</li> <li>• Predictability of the process.</li> <li>• Principles of checks and balances.</li> <li>• Procedures to avoid conflicts of interest.</li> <li>• Shared responsibilities for important decisions.</li> <li>• Inclusion of members within the process.</li> <li>• Communication and availability of documents (informed decision-making).</li> <li>• Linked to vision, mission and strategic objectives.</li> <li>• In line with the Financial Plan.</li> <li>• Reporting arrangements of the decisions to all member organisations and the public (when applicable).</li> <li>• Arrangements for the involvement of external experts.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up of decisions (implementation, monitoring and evaluation).</li> </ul>
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## 5. Good practice examples

### Example “Decision-making process/procedures”

**Organisation:** Australian Sports Commission – public body

**Description:** The Australian Sports Commission provides general “Sport Governance Principles” which aim to assist Board members, chief executive officers and managers of sporting organisations to develop as well as to provide the mechanisms for an entity to establish and to maintain an ethical culture through a committed self-regulatory approach; and provides members and stakeholders with benchmarks against which to gauge the entity’s performance. Each principle contains various subprinciples with “commentary and guidance” as additional documentation. Regarding decision-making processes, these principles focus mainly on the role of the Board. The various principles cover different aspects of decision-making including: the division of roles and powers, the process of the Board, governance systems, Board report and performance, stakeholder relationship and reporting, and finally, ethical and responsible decision-making. Additionally, an online course “The Start Line – Sport Governance Foundations” assists board members in understanding their duties and responsibilities.

**Further information:** [Sport Governance and Organisational Enhancement | Australian Sports Commission \(sportaus.gov.au\)](https://sportaus.gov.au)

### Example “Decision-making process/procedures”

**Organisation:** International Olympic Committee (IOC)

**Description:** The IOC has established a well-defined structure for its decision-making processes within its Olympic Charter, ensuring a clear separation of tasks among its various entities. The IOC Session is responsible for setting the core principles guiding the organization's strategies and actions. The Executive Board oversees the creation, implementation, and monitoring of all strategic decisions, regulations, and actions, including codes, rulings, and guidelines, with Bye-law 19 detailing the decision-making process within the board, such as quorum and voting procedures. The administration, led by the Director General and supported by sector-specific Directors, prepares, implements, and follows up on the decisions of the Session, Executive Board, and Commissions. Advisory Commissions, established to support these entities, have specific terms of reference and competencies as outlined in Bye-law 21, and include key groups like the Athletes’ Commission, Ethics Commission, and others. The IOC's decision-making process includes participation from IOC Members and other stakeholders like International Federations and National Olympic Committees, who can submit proposals and are encouraged to nominate representatives to the Commissions, playing crucial roles in implementing IOC decisions.

**Further information:**

[Olympic Documents - Athletes, Olympic Games, IOC and More \(olympics.com\)](https://olympics.com)

[The Organisation \(olympics.com\)](https://olympics.com)

### Example “Decision-making process/procedures” and “Setting up of committees”

**Organisation:** Swiss Olympic

**Description:** The decision-making procedures and structure of the Swiss Olympic Committee are clearly defined in its statutes, with the General Assembly, known as the "Parlement du Sport," positioned at the top. This assembly includes representatives from member federations, IOC Members, and athlete representatives, and is responsible for adopting the general strategy and action plan of the committee, as well as overseeing its implementation by approving annual reports and plans submitted by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee plays a central role in the decision-making process, preparing decisions for the General Assembly and ensuring their implementation through the administration and management. It includes representatives from member federations, the national government, and non-Olympic federations, and is also tasked with establishing working groups and advisory Commissions to assist in decision preparation. These provisions are further detailed in the internal regulations of the National Olympic Committee (NOC).

**Further information:** [Swiss Olympic - Strategie, Leitbild und Statuten](#)

### Example “Setting up of committees”

**Organisation:** European Volleyball Confederation (CEV)

**Description:** The CEV has established a dual system of advisory Commissions and Working Groups, both operating directly under the authority of the Board. The CEV General Regulations detail the creation, composition, and responsibilities of these entities. At least seven Commissions are mandated, covering areas such as sports organisation, finance, medical matters, beach volleyball, cups, legal issues, and refereeing, each reporting to the Board and the General Assembly with a requirement of at least one meeting per year. Additionally, the Board can establish Working Groups for specific purposes and durations, appointing a Board member as chair and ensuring a minimum of seven meeting days annually; these groups report solely to the Board. Each Commission must provide minutes and reports for the Board of Administrators and the General Assembly. To enhance coordination, the Presidents of both Commissions and Working Groups are invited to Board meetings.

**Further information:** [Documents | InsideCEV; leg\\_cev\\_2023\\_disciplinary-regulations\\_2023\\_corrected.pdf](#)

### Example “Setting up of committees”

**Organisation:** International Ski Federation (FIS)

**Description:** The International Ski Federation (FIS) has established a comprehensive system of expert advisory bodies to support the work of the FIS Council, provide recommendations, and assist in technical matters. This system includes several types of bodies:

- Committees, which address broad topics such as ethics, medical issues, legal affairs, and include an Athletes' Commission as well as sport-specific committees;
- Sub-committees, which focus on technical or specialized aspects of the different sports under FIS; and

- Working Groups, which are set up to address ad-hoc issues.

The roles and functions of these bodies are detailed in the "FIS Rules and Terms of Reference for Committees," available on the FIS website. This document is divided into three sections: one outlining the statutes governing these bodies, a "joint regulation for all committees" providing general guidelines, and specific "Terms of Reference and Tasks" for each committee, sub-committee, and working group. These rules cover the creation, member appointment procedures, and the relationship with the FIS Council, with the joint regulation specifically stipulating that all committee decisions require Council approval. Additionally, each body has specific terms of reference detailing its purpose, composition, and operational guidelines.

**Further information:** [FIS | General Regulations \(fis-ski.com\)](https://www.fis-ski.com)

#### Example "Setting up of committees" and "Decision-making process"

**Organisation:** National Olympic Committee of Australia (AOC)

**Description:** The statutes of the Australian Olympic Committee foresee the setting up of Commissions as well as Committees to support the work of the Executive Committee. The Constitution does not mention explicitly the type and the number of Commissions that must be established but imposes the adoption of a Charter to regulate the creation, composition and functioning of each potential Commission. With regard to this objective, the AOC has currently decided to establish three Commissions and six Committees:

- Athletes' Commission
- Finance Commission
- Medical Commission
- Audit & Risk Committee
- Corporate Governance Committee
- Culture Remuneration and Nominations Committee
- Indigenous Advisory Committee
- International Federation Engagement Committee
- Legacy and Impact Committee

The Medical Commission Charter details for instance the supportive role that the Commission must play by advising the Executive and Team Executives of the AOC regarding medical matters. In addition, the Chair of the Commission must present an annual report of the outcomes of meetings to the AOC Executive and relevant Team Executives. Duties and responsibilities of members of the commission are also clearly defined including provisions on conflict of interest. The Medical Commission is composed of up to four appointed members, ex-officio members and Olympic Chief Medical Officers.

**Further information:** [Governance | Australian Olympic Committee \(olympics.com.au\)](https://olympics.com.au)

## 6. Steps to the next level

<p>To level 2 ★★ “Emerging”</p>	<p>To level 3 ★★★ “Developing”</p>	<p>To level 4 ★★★★ “Established”</p>	<p>To level 5 ★★★★★ “Embedded”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and list specific areas in which internal structures could be set up to support the work of the Board.</li> <li>• Ensure that each Board meeting includes a discussion of open questions from the previous meeting and an overview of the follow-up of decisions taken during the previous meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide on some priority areas in which working groups can be set up to support the work of the Board. Set up the necessary working groups consisting of Board members and representatives of members or member organisations.</li> <li>• Include in the minutes of each Board meeting a clear list as an overview of the decisions taken by the Board. List these decisions according to importance and timing of execution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt clear rules and provisions to regulate the creation of committees, including the election of a Chair and the adoption of the composition and members of the group, to support the work of the Board.</li> <li>• Clearly define the role and functions of the committees, regarding the decision-making process. Define their relationship towards the Board as well as the General Assembly.</li> <li>• Explore possible ways to involve your members and member organisations in the decision-making process, including the nomination of representatives for committees.</li> <li>• Set up a budget line dedicated to supporting the setting up and the functioning of the committees.</li> <li>• Provide a regular update of all recent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine your statutes to regulate the creation of committees and to include the standing committees in significant areas such as Finance, Athletes’ and Ethics.</li> <li>• Clearly define the decision-making procedures of your organisation within the statutes. Define which body is responsible for preparing, taking, implementing and monitoring which decisions.</li> <li>• Define clear rules and procedures for each committee, including a definition of tasks and responsibilities, members, financial aspects as well as reporting of activities. Furthermore, specify their role in the decision-making process by defining their relationship towards the Board as well as the General Assembly.</li> </ul>



		<p>Board decisions related to the specific policy fields and include whether and how they have been implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the overview of Board decisions following each meeting is circulated to all staff members responsible for implementing the decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider which of the main arrangements for committees should additionally be included in the statutes.</li> <li>• Define clear profiles or job descriptions for members of each committee (competencies) and provide these profiles to members and member organisations. Encourage member organisations to nominate candidates in line with these profiles.</li> <li>• Provide organisational and financial support to facilitate the work of the committees. Ensure that the committees meet regularly. Ensure that the members have access to all relevant documents of the organisation.</li> <li>• Consider the necessity to include external experts as members of certain committees when certain expertise is missing and/or required.</li> <li>• Actively promote the work and</li> </ul>
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			<p>outcomes of the committees by making their reports available to members and by inviting the committees to present their reports at the meeting of the General Assembly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a regular update of all recent Board decisions related to the specific policy fields and include who or which department is responsible for the implementation and what is the timeline for implementation. If implemented and concluded, include how it has been implemented.</li> <li>• Conduct ex-post analysis of all decisions that have been implemented and provide an overview to the Board regularly.</li> <li>• Ensure that the overview of Board decisions following each meeting is circulated to all staff members responsible for implementing the decisions including the Board of Directors.</li> </ul>
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