



2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code

Models of Best Practice: National Classification

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International Paralympic Committee

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Introduction

This document is developed as a Model of Best Practice under the 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code (the Code), Article 12.3.1, on the roles and responsibilities of National Paralympic Committees.

Definitions

This Model of Best Practice uses the defined terms in the Code and International Standards. Further defined terms specific to this Model of Best Practice are as follows:

National Classification Code: the core document based on the IPC Athlete Classification Code that harmonizes policies, procedures, rules and regulations and establishes roles and responsibilities across all Para-sports at the national level.

National Classification Programme: the essential components identified for National Classification such as coordinating athlete participation opportunities, Classifier training opportunities and monitoring Code compliance.

National Classification Strategy: a plan for the development, support and implementation of policies, procedures, rules and regulations across all Para-sports; including the development of a National Classification Code.

Regional/ Supra-national Classification Strategy: a plan for the development, support and implementation of policies, procedures, rules and regulations across all Para-sports, in an area that includes more than one nation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Model of Best Practice is to promote the development and implementation of a National Classification Strategy, to provide recommended provisions for a National Classification Programme, including athlete classification opportunities, classifier training and certification, and monitoring Code compliance at the national level. The implementation of a National Classification Strategy will help ensure the efficient use of available resources, improve participants' experience of athlete evaluation, support athlete participation opportunities, strengthen athlete development pathways and ultimately increase the likelihood of sustainable medal winning performances.



It is recognised from the onset that there is no ‘one size fits all’ model; some National Paralympic Committees will have significant classification knowledge and resources while others may have very limited to no knowledge or resources. In addition, there is a diversity of national sport governing body models that must be considered when developing classification at the national level.

This Model of Best Practice does not provide a specified list of components or an order of importance for national classification. Nations must define and prioritise their own components for a National Classification Strategy; determining which are the most relevant and important based on their unique needs and resources.



1 National Classification Strategy

- 1.1 National Paralympic Committees, in co-operation with National Bodies should develop a National Classification Strategy which includes policies, procedures, rules, and regulations to:
 - 1.1.1 Co-ordinate national classification activities across sports in close co-operation with the respective National Bodies and International Federations. This will promote Athlete participation by increasing Athlete Evaluation and contribute to Athlete recruitment and Athlete development pathways;
 - 1.1.2 Co-ordinate Classifier training opportunities on the national level;
 - 1.1.3 Further understanding of classification by athletes and athlete support personnel; and
 - 1.1.4 Engage National Bodies in monitoring their own compliance with the Code.
- 1.2 Best practices for the implementation of these policies, procedures, rules, and regulations may include:
 - 1.2.1 Developing a National Classification Code, detailing the classification policies, procedures, rules and regulations to deliver the technical and operational requirements for Athlete Classification common across Para sports at the national level;
 - 1.2.2 Establishing a national classification committee and/or appointing a national classification manager;
 - 1.2.3 Creating a platform for knowledge and information exchange by all National Bodies;
 - 1.2.4 Creating co-ordinated and efficient means of communication with the National Bodies and with international stakeholders (IPC, International Federations, International Organisations of Sport for the Disabled and Regions);
 - 1.2.5 Tracking Athletes' allocated Sport Class to ensure that reasons for any changes are understood and captured;
 - 1.2.6 Developing models for resource sharing across National Bodies to increase support and resources available for such activities as:
 - Access to Classifiers and Classifier training,
 - managing protests and appeals,



- handling Classification data (such as reviewing medical diagnostic information) and
 - general classification education and awareness.
- 1.2.7 Co-ordinating a regional or supra-national classification strategy to increase resource availability for:
- Athlete Evaluation,
 - Classifier training and certification,
 - Sport Class specific events and
 - Classifier expertise (across impairment type).

2 National Athlete Classification

- 2.1 International Federation Classification Rules must be in compliance with the IPC Athlete Classification Code as well as the following International Standards:
- Eligible Impairments
 - Athlete Evaluation
 - Protests and Appeals
 - Classifier Personnel and Training
 - Data Protection

National Body Classification Rules should reflect the International Federation Classification Rules as much as is practical and should not be substantially different to ensure IPC Athlete Classification Code Compliance. As a consequence, National Body Classification Rules should include provisions related to:

- eligible impairments and minimal impairment criteria;
 - athlete evaluation, sports class and sports class status allocation;
 - protests and appeals;
 - classifier personnel, training and certification; and
 - data protection.
- 2.2 To achieve this goal, National Paralympic Committees and National Bodies may provide assistance including:



- 2.2.1 Encourage International Federations to achieve Code compliance and support them in achieving Code compliance if not yet attained. This support, provided from the National Bodies, could consist of actively contributing to International Federation Classification Rules (review) consultation processes, or request International Federations to initiate such processes in a regular and timely manner;
- 2.2.2 Organise national classification opportunities for Athletes prior to presenting for international classification; and/or
- 2.2.3 Implement temporary changes in sport-technical rules to meet participation, without compromising Code compliance requirements,

Comment to Article 2.2.3 Temporary sport rule changes may allow participation of Non Eligible Athletes and able-bodied Athletes and/or favour participation of female/ young or older Athletes. Such changes however must be made in the spirit of the principles of the Code and International Standards and it must be ensured that all Athletes involved understand the temporary nature of the change.

- 2.3 When allocating a national sport class to a “borderline” Athlete (or in other words an Athlete who is on the cusp of two different Sport Classes) National Paralympic Committees and National Bodies are strongly encouraged to allocate the Sport Class for Athletes with least impairment.

Comment to Article 2.3: This action should ensure that any subsequent changes to that Athlete’s Sport Class, both national and international are likely to be welcome to the Athlete concerned. It is preferable for that Athlete to compete in what is likely to be a more competitive class in the short terms as it adversely affects only that Athlete. If the Athlete was allocated the Sport Class for Athletes with more severe impairment that would adversely affect every Athlete in that class. It may lead to significant disappointment for that Athlete later on in their sports career when they were moved into a more competitive class.

3 National Data Governance

- 3.1 National Paralympic Committees and/or National Bodies should co-ordinate:
 - 3.1.1 The storage of Athlete classification data, in compliance with the International Standard for Classification Data protection and
 - 3.1.2 Provisions to allow exchange of Athlete data amongst various parties in cases where Athletes enter more than one sport, governed by different National Bodies.



- 3.2 National Paralympic Committees and/or National Bodies should co-ordinate Athlete data exchange in compliance with national legislation requirements when Athletes proceed to international classification (for example, adoption of mutually accessible databases).

4 National Classifier Training and Certification

- 4.1 Classifier training and certification should follow the same principles as set forth by the applicable International Federation policies, procedures, rules, and regulations for classifier training, curricular content and delivery, and certification requirements, which in turn need to comply with the International Standard for Classifier Personnel and Training.
- 4.2 There may be increased value in the training of national classifiers across sports on the basis of common elements of athlete evaluation and classifier certification across sports should be considered.

Comment to 4.2 For example, a neurologist may be qualified to pursue training and certification as a national classifier for those different sports that include the evaluation of Athletes with loss of muscle power or co-ordination impairments).

- 4.3 To efficiently and effectively achieve this goal, National Paralympic Committees and National Bodies should liaise with International Federations to:
- 4.3.1 Gain resources for curricular and course material and participation from International Federation classifiers and/ or classifier educators;
 - 4.3.2 Assess candidate classifier profiles (professional and sport qualifications); and
 - 4.3.3 Ensure classifier training builds the appropriate competencies, expertise and experiences to allow qualified classifiers to move to the international level.