



# **IF COMPLIANCE STRATEGY**

## **UNDER THE 2025 IPC CLASSIFICATION CODE AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

10 February 2025

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This document, referred to as the **Compliance Strategy**, details the IPC's approach in respect to:

1. implementing the 2025 IPC Classification Code (the **Code**) and accompanying International Standards: (i) the International Standard for Classification Personnel and Training (ii) the international Standard for Intentional Misrepresentation; and (iii) the International Standard for Classification Data Protection (together the **Standards**); and
2. running the Compliance programme with International Federations (**IFs**), International Organisations of Sports for the Disabled (**IOSDs**) and Recognised International Federations (**RIFs**) – collectively referred to in this Compliance Strategy as **IFs**, unless expressly stated otherwise.

The implementation of the Code by National Paralympic Committees (**NPCs**) is not covered in this Compliance Strategy.

The [2017 International Federations Compliance Review Strategy](#) focused on the adoption of Classification rules by IFs which were compliant with the 2015 IPC Athlete Classification Code (the **2015 Code**) and accompanying International Standards. The strategy included completing a self-assessment audit across 12 criteria, primarily looking at whether 2015 Code-compliant provisions were included in the respective IF's Classification rules. The practical implementation of the 12 criteria and the respective provisions in the IF's rules was not thereafter systematically monitored; the compliance threshold was set at having such rules in place.

The IPC's Compliance Strategy for the 2025 Code will focus primarily on the implementation of Classification rules using a criteria-based approach (by reference to 27 distinct Compliance criteria). The purpose of this Compliance Strategy is to detail the process on how IFs report Compliance to the IPC and how the IPC monitors Code Compliance in respect of those IFs.

For the avoidance of doubt, each IF is required to comply in full at all times with all its obligations under the Code and Standards, whether or not such obligation relates to any of these 27 criteria.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Code and Standards. If there are any inconsistencies between this document and the Code and Standards, the Code and Standards will prevail. Any capitalised terms not otherwise defined in this Compliance Strategy have the meaning given to them in the Code and Standards.

## **1.1 IPC CLASSIFICATION CODE AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS**

Classification is fundamental to the Paralympic Movement. A well-functioning Classification system is paramount for upholding and strengthening the integrity of Para sport. The Code and Standards provide the framework and requirements for how Classification systems should operate.

The Code is the fundamental document upon which Classification in the Paralympic Movement is based and it is designed to support the Paralympic Movement in developing effective Classification systems. It is intended to be specific enough to achieve harmonisation on Classification where standardisation is required and general enough in other areas to permit flexibility regarding the implementation of its principles.

Classification – as defined by the Code – is unique to Para sport and it is an ever-evolving area. Compliance with the Code and Standards is crucial to ensure that Classification is delivered to the highest possible standard across all Para sports, to ensure that Paralympic stakeholders – including athletes, coaches, administrators, the public, and the media – could have confidence in the Classification process and its outcomes. In this context, maintaining Code Compliance and following best practice models is the optimal way for Para sports to instil confidence that their Classification system is effective and fit-for-purpose.

## **1.2 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF THE 2025 IPC CLASSIFICATION CODE**

Following a three-year long consultation between 2021 and 2024, the Code was approved by the General Assembly in May 2024. The three Standards were subsequently approved by the IPC Governing Board later in 2024.

The Scope of the Code (Article 3 of the Code) extends to all IPC Members and RIFs. IFs must have all disciplines on the Paralympic Games Sport Programme compliant with the Code and RIFs must have at least one discipline compliant with the Code. Please see Appendix 1 for the key Code provisions concerning the Scope of the Code.

# **2 COMPLIANCE MISSION AND VISION**

## **2.1 COMPLIANCE MISSION**

To ensure Code-compliant Classification systems and accompanying processes are being implemented and enforced consistently and effectively across the Movement by all IPC Members.

## **2.2 COMPLIANCE VISION**

To achieve a positive Code Compliance culture underpinned by a shared commitment to the principles of Classification. Doing so will support the IPC's commitment to advance Classification across the Movement, thereby promoting greater understanding of Classification as well as giving Athletes and the wider public confidence in the integrity of Para sport.

## **2.3 APPROACH TO COMPLIANCE**

Taking into consideration the Compliance mission, previous experiences and learnings, as well as the nature of and challenges in Classification, this Compliance Strategy will look beyond the requirement for IFs to have Code-compliant provisions in their rules, and will also address how IF's rules are implemented in practice. The nature and nuances of Classification means that it is important for the Compliance Strategy not to be too rigid, and as the Code highlights to achieve harmonisation in areas where standardisation is required, and at the same time be general enough in other areas to permit flexibility to cater for the specific needs of each IF.

As expressed in the Compliance vision, the IPC seeks to encourage a positive culture of Code Compliance and foster a shared commitment to the principles of Classification. This can be achieved by encouraging dialogue, supporting IFs in proactively identifying and addressing Classification issues and helping to mitigate risks. The Compliance Strategy is therefore designed with the goal of enabling Compliance rather than simply aiming to penalise non-Compliance. That being said, it shall remain at all times the IF's obligation to achieve full Code Compliance, and it shall not be a defence or excuse that others did not help the IF to comply.

The preferred outcome will always be that IFs address Code Compliance matters of their own accord. Declaring an IF non-Compliant and imposing sanctions is the last resort measure in cases when it is clear that the IF has failed to take the necessary remedial action within the required timeframe(s), despite the IPC's encouragement and support to do so.

## **3 COMPLIANCE PRINCIPLES**

A positive Compliance culture can only be achieved through clear principles embraced by the IPC and IFs. This strategy aims to instil the following principles into the Compliance process:

- Collaboration (e.g., the IPC actively encourages collaboration and offers support in implementing the Code).
- Proactivity (e.g., the IF proactively informs the IPC of updates and changes to its Classification rules).
- Being approachable and contactable (e.g., the IF timely responds to inquiries from the IPC and vice versa).
- Encouraging open dialogue (e.g., the IF and IPC openly address issues and any challenges faced).
- Consistency (e.g., the IPC shares and enforces the same message consistently across IFs).
- Promoting Classification understanding and education (e.g., the IPC and the IF are able to communicate effectively on Classification).
- Having clear and fair processes and outcomes (e.g. measures for non-Compliance).
- Transparency (e.g. informing the relevant parties of organisational and rule changes).

## 4 IPC COMPLIANCE PRIORITIES

While all IPC Members are bound by the Code (Article 13.1.6 of the IPC Constitution), the Code Compliance responsibilities vary between the type of IPC Member.

Through this Compliance Strategy, the IPC will look to prioritise supporting and assessing Compliance by IFs in respect of sports/disciplines/medal events that are (in the following order of priority):

- 1) currently included on the Paralympic Games Programme;
- 2) in the process of being considered for inclusion on the Paralympic Games Programme; and
- 3) not included on the Paralympic Games programme and are not in the process of being considered for such inclusion.

The IPC may prioritise monitoring and ensuring Compliance with some of the 27 Compliance criteria over others in respect of each IF on a collective and/or individual basis, at the IPC's discretion.

## 5 COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Compliance activities may include:

- **Self-assessment surveys** - IFs assess their status of Compliance while reflecting on the questions related to the Compliance criteria and Code implementation. The self-assessment survey is envisaged to be an ongoing task (potentially once per the Paralympic Cycle) for all IFs.
- **Compliance calls** - individual online meetings to initiate and maintain the dialogue.
- **Compliance Plans** - plans developed in writing individually by each IF and approved by the IPC for the IF to achieve full Code Compliance. The Compliance Plan must specify the IF's Compliance goals/priorities, Compliance issue(s), and a working pathway in detailed steps towards Compliance, including identified responsibilities, timeframes, resources, risk assessment and desired outcomes. A template Compliance Plan will be provided by the IPC.
- **Audits** - independent information request in writing (e.g. letter format) that may cover individual IF-specific topics. The audits are envisaged to be conducted at the discretion of the IPC.
- **Compliance visits** - to observe the implementation of the rules and facilitate in-person dialogue, at the discretion of the IPC. The logistics of the Compliance visits would be arranged with the IF's management team, with a request to have the relevant personnel present and available.
- **Monitoring reports** - information provided (i) verbally as part of the dialogue during the Compliance calls or Compliance visits, and/or (ii) in writing prior to or following the Compliance visit, the audit and/or the self-assessment survey. The monitoring reports may include a summary of the IPC's review of the IF's implementation of a Compliance Plan and/or Remedial Action Plan, including the indication of the IF's individual Compliance priorities/goals and advice on the next steps towards Compliance.
- **Remedial Action Plans** - an action plan identified by the IPC for an IF in the event that the IPC identifies a Compliance issue(s) which the IF is not on track to address. Such a plan may include identification by the IPC of the specific Compliance issue(s) and timeframes for the IF to resolve the issue(s), failing which a referral to the IPC Governing Board in respect of the IF's non-Compliance may be necessary (stage 3).
- **Ongoing dialogue and consultation** - Dialogue and consultation with the IPC and other stakeholders (NPCs, athletes, classifiers, coaches and others).

## 6 COMPLIANCE PROCESS

The Compliance process flowchart is set out below (see *Figure 1*).

The process is divided into three stages:

- Stage 1.        Produce Compliance Plan**
- Stage 2.        Execute Compliance Plan or Remedial Action Plan**
- Stage 3.        (Only if applicable) - Referral to the Governing Board**

### Stage 1 – Produce Compliance Plan

In the first stage of producing the Compliance Plan, each IF is expected to respond to the self-assessment survey and produce a related Compliance Plan to implement each Compliance criterion. The timeframe for completing the self-assessment survey and Compliance Plan(s) is **1 December 2025**.

Should the IF not respond to this request, a meeting will be arranged to understand and address the situation. Should there be further delays in the IF responding to the self-assessment survey and/or developing the Compliance Plan, the IPC may already at this point report such lack of cooperation or progress to the IPC Governing Board and recommend addressing non-Compliance by the IF (stage 3).

### Stage 2 – Implementation of Compliance Plan or Remedial Action Plan

#### Implementation and maintenance of Compliance Plan

Once the IF has produced its Compliance Plan, the IF moves to stage 2 of the Compliance process. At stage 2, the IPC will assess the IF's Compliance Plan and engage further with the IF to endorse the implementation of the IF's Compliance Plan(s). As part of the assessment and dialogue with the IF, the IPC may request the IF to make amendments and/or additions to its Compliance Plan before the IPC endorses it.

Once the final Compliance Plan has been approved by the IPC, the IF is then expected to proceed with implementing the Compliance Plan. The implementation period may vary between IFs. Some criteria in the Compliance Plan may also be given a higher priority for implementation than others. An individualised approach is envisaged to be taken in respect to implementing the various elements of the Compliance Plan and scheduling periodic reviews of the progress against such implementation.

Each IF is expected to continue working towards full implementation of its Compliance Plan and address any issues or obstacles that may arise along the



way. This may involve, for example, the IF needing to invest additional resources and/or adjust the timeframe for implementation of the Compliance Plan, in agreement with the IPC.

If the IF reports and IPC confirms that the IF has fully implemented all the criteria identified in its Compliance Plans, the IF's focus should shift to maintaining its Compliance with such criteria.

### **Remedial Action Plans**

If, at any point during this Compliance stage 2, the IPC finds that there has been unsatisfactory progress in the IF's implementation and/or maintenance of its Compliance Plan, the IPC will engage with the IF in developing a Remedial Action Plan to identify and address the relevant issues. Should the IF successfully implement and complete the Remedial Action Plan in respect of the identified Compliance issues, the IF shifts its focus to maintaining Compliance with such criteria.

If, on the other hand, the Remedial Action Plan is not implemented, this may lead to the IPC reporting a Compliance issue to the IPC Governing Board and recommending that the IPC Governing Board make a decision addressing the non-Compliance by the IF (stage 3).

### **Stage 3 - (Only if applicable) - Referral to the Governing Board**

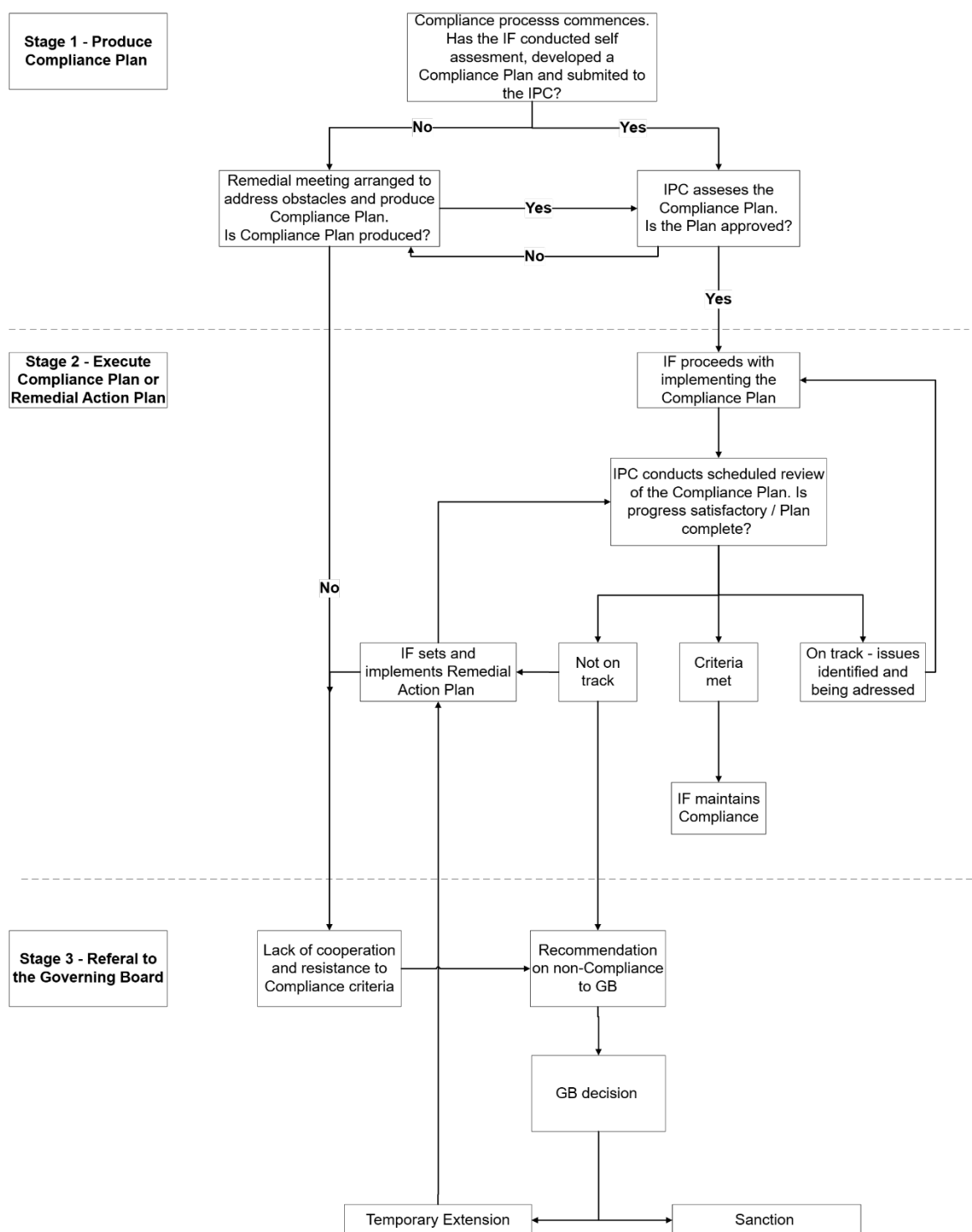
Stage 3 of the Compliance Process is reserved only for situations where Compliance issue(s) have **not** been resolved successfully between the IF and IPC management. In such instances, upon the recommendation of the IPC Classification Compliance and Oversight Committee, the IPC will refer the Compliance issue(s) in respect of the IF to the IPC Governing Board.

The IPC Governing Board will determine whether the IF is considered to be non-Compliant with the Code. At its discretion, the IPC Governing Board may grant a temporary extension to the IF to remedy the identified Compliance issue(s). By means of an example, a temporary extension may involve the IF implementing a Remedial Action Plan (as per stage 2) under a new timeframe.

Alternatively, the IPC Governing Board may impose a sanction on the IF in respect of its non-Compliance, in accordance with the terms of the Code and the IPC Constitution.

Each IF is expected and encouraged to successfully go through the Compliance process of the first two stages. Stage 3 is reserved solely for addressing any outstanding issues of non-Compliance.

**Figure 1: Compliance process flowchart**



## **7 COMPLIANCE TIMEFRAMES AND IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES**

The IPC will set timeframes for Code Compliance by each IF following the completion of stage 1 (the Compliance Plan). The timeframes may differ between IFs, depending on the circumstances of each IF. Different timeframes may be set for the completion of the various Compliance criteria or other steps of the Compliance process (for example, implementing the provisions of the model rules).

In stage 2 the IPC will monitor the IF's implementation and maintenance of their Compliance Plans and assess if further timeframes should be set or adjusted in respect of meeting any of the Compliance criteria or related steps.

## **8 COMPLIANCE CRITERIA**

Each IF will be primarily assessed against the following 27 Compliance criteria, identified based on the requirements and recommendations in the Code and Standards:

- 1) Purpose of Classification
- 2) Scope of the Code
- 3) Fundamental Principles
- 4) Fundamental principles - stage 1: Underlying Health Condition Assessment
- 5) Fundamental principles - stage 2: Eligible Impairment Assessment
- 6) Fundamental principles - stage 3: Minimum Impairment Criteria Assessment
- 7) Fundamental principles - stage 4: Sport Class Assessment, Sport Class Status allocation
- 8) Eligible Impairments definitions
- 9) Classification Panel provisions
- 10) Adaptive Equipment
- 11) Observation Assessment (if applicable)
- 12) Sport Class Status
- 13) General Provisions for Evaluation Sessions
- 14) Designations
- 15) Suspension or termination of the Evaluation Session

- 16) Location of the Evaluation Session
- 17) Notification And Publication - Classification Master List
- 18) Medical Review
- 19) Competition Formats
- 20) Protests
- 21) Appeals
- 22) Intentional Misrepresentation
- 23) Changes to the Classification system
- 24) Data protection regulations and processes
- 25) Classification Personnel and Training
- 26) Education and Awareness
- 27) Fit for purpose classification system (research and Best Practice models)

# APPENDIX ONE: REFERENCES TO CODE PROVISIONS

The articles below are directly derived from the Code (version 1 January 2025) as a reference to most relevant provisions in the context of this Compliance Strategy.

## APPENDIX 1: DEFINITIONS

**Compliance** means the implementation of rules, regulations, policies, and processes that adhere to the text, spirit, and intent of the Classification Code and International Standards.

## CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE OF CLASSIFICATION AND SCOPE OF THE CLASSIFICATION CODE

### 3. Scope and application of the Classification Code

3.1. All IPC Members and Recognised International Federations (**RIFs**) are bound by and must comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards, subject to the following:

3.1.1. International Federations are only required to comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards in relation to disciplines that are on the Paralympic Games Sport Programme. International Federations may choose to also apply the Classification Code and International Standards to disciplines outside of the Paralympic Games Sport Programme, but it is not mandatory to do so.

3.1.2. Each RIF must undertake to be bound by and to comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards in relation to at least one discipline that it administers. In respect of any such discipline(s), any reference in the Classification Code or the International Standards to (i) an International Federation will be deemed to include a RIF, and (ii) a National Federation will be deemed to include national members of a RIF, and any other relevant provisions will be read accordingly.

3.2. The Classification Code and International Standards apply to the following competitions (each, a **Covered Competition**):

3.2.1. the Paralympic Games;

3.2.2. World Championships;

- 3.2.3. any Competition that is part of the direct qualification pathway to participate in the Paralympic Games, as determined by the relevant International Federation;
- 3.2.4. any Competition where Observation Assessment may take place as part of a Classification process; and
- 3.2.5. any other event or Competition specified by the International Federation in its Classification rules.

International Federations may choose to also apply the Classification Code and International Standards to other competitions (for example, lower-level competitions), but it is not mandatory to do so.

- 3.3. All provisions of the Classification Code and International Standards are mandatory in substance. Some provisions of the Classification Code and International Standards must be incorporated without substantive change by each International Federation in its own rules. However, other provisions of the Classification Code and International Standards establish mandatory guiding principles that allow flexibility in the formulation of rules by each International Federation, or establish requirements that must be followed by each International Federation but need not be repeated in its own rules.

## CHAPTER 6: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 54. IPC

#### 54.1. The roles and responsibilities of the IPC include to:

- 54.1.1. develop, maintain, and monitor the implementation of the Classification Code and the International Standards;
- 54.1.2. develop and publish guidelines and models of best practice;
- 54.1.3. develop and deliver Classification education and awareness programmes for IPC Members, Athletes, Classifiers, and wider stakeholders;
- 54.1.4. increase awareness of the purpose, principles, and scientific rationale behind Classification amongst relevant stakeholders;
- 54.1.5. require, as a condition of membership, that all IPC Members are in Compliance with the Classification Code and the International Standards;
- 54.1.6. monitor IPC Member Compliance with the Classification Code and the International Standards; and

- 54.1.7. take appropriate action to ensure IPC Members comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards.

## **55. International Federations**

- 55.1. The roles and responsibilities of International Federations include to:

- 55.1.1. increase awareness of the purpose, principles, and scientific rationale behind Classification amongst relevant stakeholders in their respective sports;
- 55.1.2. develop, implement, and regularly review and publish Classification rules in Compliance with the Classification Code and the International Standards;
- 55.1.3. require, as a condition of membership, that their National Federations and other members are in Compliance with the Classification Code and the International Standards (to the extent applicable), and to take appropriate action to ensure such Compliance;
- 55.1.4. develop and deliver (where appropriate with the involvement of Athletes) Classification education and awareness programmes for National Federations, Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, and Classifiers which must, at a minimum, explain the International Federation's Classification rules and explain that those rules must comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards;
- 55.1.5. promote, initiate, and/or review Classification Research;
- 55.1.6. develop, implement, and maintain a clear Classifier recruitment, training, and development pathway;
- 55.1.7. cooperate fully, honestly, and in good faith with the IPC in connection with any investigations conducted by the IPC in relation to potential Intentional Misrepresentation or Compliance matters; and
- 55.1.8. ensure that their National Federations are subject to obligations in the International Federation's Classification rules to:
  - 55.1.8.1. provide the International Federation with all relevant Diagnostic Information required to enable the International Federation to assess the existence of an Underlying Health Condition and Eligible Impairment for an Athlete, and to ensure that all such information is complete, accurate, authentic, and relevant, and that the International Federation is informed of any changes to that information; and

- 55.1.8.2. ensure that Athletes comply with the responsibilities applicable to them in relation to Evaluation Sessions (including taking reasonable steps to ensure their attendance at such sessions).

## **CHAPTER 8: COMPLIANCE WITH THE CLASSIFICATION CODE**

### **64. Compliance by IPC Members**

- 64.1. Pursuant to Article 13.1.6 of the Constitution, each IPC Member must be in compliance with the Classification Code and the International Standards. In implementing the Classification Code and International Standards, IPC Members are encouraged to use the models of best practice recommended by the IPC.
- 64.2. The IPC, with the support of the Classification Compliance and Oversight Committee, will monitor the Compliance of IPC Members. To facilitate such monitoring, each IPC Member must, at the request of the IPC:
  - 64.2.1. report on its Compliance and accurately provide all of the information requested by the IPC; and
  - 64.2.2. explain the reasons for any non-Compliance and submit an action plan detailing the specific steps to be taken, and the timeframe within which those steps will be taken, to achieve Compliance.
- 64.3. The Governing Board will consider any explanation and proposed action plan for non-Compliance and, in exceptional circumstances, may grant the IPC Member a temporary extension to remedy the non-Compliance.
- 64.4. The Governing Board may impose sanctions on IPC Members for non-Compliance with the Classification Code and/or the International Standards pursuant to Article 15 of the Constitution.
- 64.5. The decision to sanction an IPC Member may be challenged by that IPC Member exclusively by appeal to the Appeals Tribunal pursuant to Article 18.2 of the Constitution.

### **65. Compliance by RIFs**

- 65.1. Pursuant to the RIF Regulations, each RIF is required to undertake to be bound by and to comply with the Classification Code and the International Standards in relation to at least one discipline that it administers.
- 65.2. The IPC, with the support of the Classification Compliance and Oversight Committee, may monitor the Compliance of RIFs on an ad hoc basis but is under no obligation to do so. To facilitate any such monitoring, each RIF must, at the request of the IPC:



- 65.2.1. report on its Compliance and accurately provide all of the information requested by the IPC; and
- 65.2.2. explain the reasons for any non-Compliance and submit an action plan detailing the specific steps to be taken, and the timeframe within which those steps will be taken, to achieve Compliance.
- 65.3. Pursuant to Article 20 of the Constitution, the Governing Board has absolute discretion to remove RIF status at any time with or without reasons.

## **66. Compliance monitoring and enforcement**

- 66.1. The IPC may issue supplementary regulations or guidelines from time to time to facilitate Compliance monitoring and enforcement.